

ネットいじめとは？欧米の先行研究からみるネットいじめの特徴，事例，関連統計

What is Cyberbullying and How does it Occur ?

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ABSTRACT

ここ数年，研究者たちは若者の間で増えているネットいじめについて関心をよせている．ネットいじめは北米，ヨーロッパ，アジアのテクノロジー先進国で増えており，Eメール，SNS，チャットルーム，携帯電話を使った問題行動が報告されている．しかし大人達はこの新しい現象を正しく理解していないようで，たびたび過小報告されている．また今はまだネットいじめに関する学術論文は限られている．したがって本論文の目的はネットいじめの定義，背景的理論，国際的な統計を示し，またネットいじめの方法，事例なども例証することにある．最後に今後のネットいじめの研究に関してもいくつかの提案をしている．

For the past few years, researchers have been concerned about a growing phenomenon, cyberbullying, among adolescents. Harassing and threatening behaviors through the use of technologies are reported. The incidences of cyberbullying have increased predominantly among students who are residents of technologically advanced countries throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. However, adults do not seem to understand the phenomenon well, and they often underestimate the incidence rate. As of its writing, only limited numbers of scholarly studies are available; thus, the purpose of the paper is to present the academic definition, theoretical frameworks, international prevalence, and related statistics of cyberbullying. The paper also illustrates the venues, method, and cases of cyberbullying. Finally, the author makes future research suggestions.

Introduction

For the past 30 years, bullying among youth has been a serious social and educational problem throughout the world. Since Olweus disseminated his seminal work in the 1980s, many researchers have examined various aspects of bullying and found that a large number of youth worldwide were involved in bullying. Even though bullying used to be considered a part of children's development (Campbell, 2005), bullying studies have significant implications because a large number of researchers have pointed out the relationship between bullying and negative emotional, physiological, and behavioral ramifications (Ledley et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993; O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Rigby & Slee, 1999). For example, victims of bullying are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and poor health (Olweus, 1993; O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Smith, 1999), and bullies are more likely to have criminal convictions later in life (Olweus, 1993).

Thirty years of bullying studies have helped researchers and educators understand a variety of characteristics of bullying; however, cyberbullying, a new problem among youth, is now creating serious challenges (Campbell, 2005; Lenhart, 2007; Li, 2006). Researchers have started examining the phenomenon for the last few years and are finding that cyberbullying is related to negative behavioral and psychological consequences as in traditional bullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Ybarra, 2004). For example, cyberbullying victimization is significantly associated with problematic behaviors such as abusing substances, cheating on school tests, and skipping school (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). On the other hand, perpetrators have low school commitment, use alcohol and cigarettes, and display problematic behaviors such as damaging property and assaulting others (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Considering the facts above, cyberbullying is

a significant public mental health concern and has real implications for adolescent development (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007; Ybarra, 2004). Thus, the purpose of the paper is to discuss the definition of cyberbullying, related statistics, theoretical frameworks, and how it occurs.

Statement of Problem

There are many studies available on computer-mediated communication (CMC) in a variety of fields, and studies have found how people behave differently in CMC. On the other hand, victimization through cyberbullying is not yet fully explored (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Limited numbers of studies suggest that cyberbullying is becoming more prevalent among youth worldwide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Li, 2006; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). Nevertheless, studies suggest that adults often underestimate the incidents. For example, "The percentage of parents reporting that their child was engaged in bullying on the Internet or via text messages was considerably lower (4.8%) than the percentage of children reporting to be engaged in bullying on the Internet or via text messages (17.3%)" (Dehue, Bolman, & Völlink, 2008, p. 219). In addition, about 30% of perspective teachers ($N=154$) do not believe that cyberbullying is a problem at school (Li, 2008). Moreover, poor parental monitoring on children's computer use is reported (Mason, 2008). As a result, most middle and high school students indicated that they did not believe adults at school could help them if they were cyberbullied (Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2007; Aoyama & Talbert, 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008). What is more, victims were reluctant to report cyberbullying to their parents because of the fear of losing online privileges or restriction of Internet use (Agatston et al., 2007; Juvonen & Gross, 2008). As a result, it is more difficult for adults to identify and intervene with cyberbullying among youth than traditional bullying.

The Definition of Cyberbullying

The scientific definition of cyberbullying is not simple. Currently, there is no operational definition among scholars because cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon (Kowalski et al., 2008). Thus, the definition varies depending on researchers. For example, Agatston et al. (2007) define cyberbullying as “Using the Internet or other digital technologies such as cellular phones and personal digital assistants to be intentionally mean or harass others” (p. 60), and Hinduja and Patchin (2007) define it as “Willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text” (p. 90).

On the other hand, the distinction between cyberbullying and other online harassment is not clear. For example, Finn (2004) described *cyberstalking* as “a variety of behaviors that involve (a) repeated threats and/or harassment (b) by the use of electronic mail or other computer-based communication (c) that would make a reasonable person afraid or concerned for their safety” (p. 469). Although other researchers made a distinction between cyberbullying which involves minors and cyberstalking or cyber-harassment which involves adults (Kowalski et al., 2008), these two terms are often used interchangeably.

In addition to the definition, other researchers include several important elements to explain cyberbullying. First, as in traditional bullying, cyberbullying also involves malicious aggressors who enjoy mistreating others (Dehue et al., 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). This point is supported by the study conducted by Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2008) which showed that students aged between 10 and 19 in Belgium clearly differentiated cyberbullying from teasing via the Internet or mobile phone. Second, power imbalance (e.g., physical strength and social competence) between victims and perpetrators is another characteristic of cyberbullying, although the power imbalance is not explained only by physical strength, but by

competence of technology use (Aricak et al., 2008). Finally, researchers have discussed that intentional harassment through electronic devices is repeated over time (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007; Smith et al., 2008). However, adolescents consider a single negative harassment via Internet or mobile phone to be cyberbullying when it followed traditional bullying (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008).

In sum, a conclusive definition of cyberbullying, which referred to the well-cited Olweus definition, will be “An aggressive, intentional act or behavior that is carried out by a group or an individual, *using electronic forms of contact*, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him/herself” (Smith et al., 2008, p. 376).

The Prevalence of Cyberbullying

The prevalence of cyberbullying varies greatly across studies depending on the definition, sample characteristics, and the types of technology examined (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). One of the earliest studies conducted between 1990 and 2000 by Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) shows that 19% of youth who use the Internet regularly ($N=1,498$) were involved in cyberbullying: 13% as perpetrators, 4% as victims, and 3% as bully-victims. The prevalence of cyberbullying among adolescents seems to be increasing each year as technology devices get smaller and more ubiquitous (Willard, 2007). When other researchers collected data in 2004 ($N=384$), approximately 30% of youth reported their victimization, and 11% had cyberbullied others (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Another study which surveyed nationally representative teenagers ($N=935$) in 2006 also reported the similar prevalence (Lenhart, 2007). The latest study shows that 72% of teens ($N=1,454$) were victimized online at least once in the past year and 13% of them reported having the experience 4 to 6 times (Juvonen & Gross, 2008).

As well as traditional bullying, cyberbullying cases occur internationally. In England, an early

study conducted by National Children's Home (NCH) in 2001 revealed that about 25% of youth aged between 11 and 19 ($N=856$) had experienced cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Moreover, post studies indicate that sixteen children committed suicide due to cyberbullying each year (Anderson & Sturm, 2007; Li, 2006). Another study on British youth also demonstrated that "33 percent had received nasty comments sent via email, chat, instant message, or text message" (Willard, 2007, p. 32). A study from the Netherlands also showed that about 16% of the youngsters had engaged in cyberbullying, while about 23% of the youngsters had been cyber-victims (Dehue et al., 2008). In Japan, 71% of high school students and 65% of middle school students among 265 schools have experienced cyberbullying (Yomiuri Online). Likewise, over 60% of students in China ($N=202$) have been involved with cyberbullying (Li, 2005). These findings suggest that quite a large number of students are involved in cyberbullying worldwide.

Theoretical Background of Cyberbullying

Researchers have linked bullying behaviors with theories of human behaviors or communication; however, fewer theories are available to explain cyberbullying. One theoretical model that can possibly explain the phenomena is *desinhibited behavioral effects* on the Internet (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Kowalski et al., 2008).

Joinson (1998) argues that in cyberspace people behave in a way they do not in real life because of the effects of disinhibition: "Disinhibition means that normal behavioral restraint can become lost or disregarded" (Mason, 2008, p. 328). For example, researchers have demonstrated people tend to behave more bluntly when communicating by e-mail or in other electronic venues. Moreover, misunderstandings, greater hostility, aggressive responses, and nonconforming behaviors are more likely in computer-mediated communication than

in face-to-face communication (McKenna & Bargh, 2000). In face-to-face interaction, people read the emotional reactions of others and modulate behaviors in response to the consequences (Kowalski et al., 2008). In other words, human behaviors are inhibited by social situations and public evaluations (Joinson, 1998). As mentioned earlier, aggression occurs as a result of frustration; however, "the absence of overt aggression after frustration was only due to inhibition evoked by the threat of punishment" (Berkowitz, 1989, p. 61).

Disinhibition effects are caused by deindividuation (Joinson, 1998). Deindividuation can occur when accountability cues are reduced; in other words, anonymity can reduce concerns about others' reactions (Joinson, 1998). Deindividuation also occurs when an individual's self-awareness is blocked or reduced by external factors because "it decreases the influence of internal (i.e., self) standards or guides to behavior, and increases the power of external, situational cues" (McKenna & Bargh, 2000, pp. 61-62).

Venues of Cyberbullying

Youth in the technology generation are being raised in an Internet-enabled society, and they use electronic tools rather than face-to-face interaction as the dominant means of communication (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Technology savvy teens can use various communication tools, such as email, cell phones, text messages, web pages, and instant messages for cyberbullying. Among these tools; however, the Internet seems the main venue. The study conducted by Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2008) suggests that most students between ages 10 and 19 in Belgium equated cyberbullying with bullying via the Internet. However, the term Internet has a broad meaning; thus, the next section reviews research findings and characteristics of cyberbullying with each electronic tool.

Email

One of the earliest forms of cyberbullying happened when a perpetrator sent mean or threatening emails to others (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Another form of email cyberbullying is called *outing and trickery* which refers that sensitive, private, or embarrassing information is disclosed by forwarding emails (Willard, 2007). *Outing and trickery* can occur in the context of a failed relationship in which one party distributes private information acquired during the relationship. In addition, *deception emails* are also reported in Japan (Yasukawa, 2008). There are websites to create deception emails: the web-based email services send a message a perpetrator created. The deception emails seem to be sent by someone who uses the email address. For example, students receive emails from their own email addresses which often contain a death notice. Perpetrators can also use multiple peers' email addresses to harass the targeted victim; thus, the victim student easily believes that s/he is completely rejected by a whole class (Yasukawa, 2008).

Instant Messages (IM) & Chat Rooms

Instant Messages (IM) is the medium most frequently used among youth for cyberbullying recently (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007). For example, 41% of youth aged between 8 and 15 have been called names, and 27% of them have engaged in name-calling on IM at least once (Dehue et al., 2008). Another study focusing on middle school students ($N=1,366$) also found that 12% of the students have logged on to a friend's IM and pretended to be them (Kite, Gable, & Fillipelli, 2009).

In addition to IM, cyberbullying via chatroom is also growing. Katzer et al. (2009) states that "Internet chatrooms appear to be domains for the exertion of verbal and psychological bullying" (p. 26). Likewise, Hinduja and Patchin (2008) found that youth were

most commonly victimized in a chat room.

Websites

Computer-savvy students often create Web pages such as voting/rating sites (Shariff, 2008), and perpetrators and audiences use those web pages where they enjoy hanging out without adult supervision because these pages are often inaccessible without ID and password (Yasukawa, 2008). In fact, 13% of the middle school students ($N=1,366$) agreed with the statement "I have posted mean or threatening things about another students online" (Kite et al., 2009). In these cases, the intended recipient is not the target, but the public who watch the website (Willard, 2007). Websites such as *JuicyCampus.com*, *Ratemyteacher.com*, or *Ratemyprofessor.com* sometimes invite cruel comments (Shariff, 2008). Similarly, in Japan, cyberbullying via unofficial school websites created by students are causing problems (Yasukawa, 2008).

Online Gaming

Although cyberbullying via online video gaming is also increasing (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009), there is no study focusing on the relationship between online video games and cyberbullying. However, qualitative interview data from one male high school student mentioned cyberbullying from adults to children via online gaming: he said, "On X-Box, it happens all the time because there are a lot of college kids and adults using that. Some really freak out when you beat them at their game" (Aoyama & Talbert, 2009). Another high school student who was interviewed after completing the questionnaire also indicated that a question about online gaming needs to be included in the questionnaire (Aoyama & Talbert, 2009).

Cell Phones

Recently, cyberbullying through cell phones with camera and video is becoming a problem. These can be used to capture embarrassing moments of victims that are later posted on, or sent across, the

Internet (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). For instance, it is reported that a perpetrator took private pictures of his peer at the rest room and attached the picture with a chain text. Chain text is an electronic type of chain letter which attempts to induce the recipient to forward a number of messages and then pass them on to as many recipients as possible. This particular message said: If you do not forward it, it will be your turn to be the next victim (Yasukawa, 2008).

As for the prevalence of cyberbullying via cell phone text messaging, research findings are inconsistent across cultures. In the Netherlands, “the percentage of pupils who had bullied or had been bullied via text messages was very low” (Dehue et al., 2008, p. 219); whereas, it is the most common media in Britain (Smith et al., 2008).

Social networking sites (SNS)

Social networking sites (SNS) have been very popular among youth because of the variety of features of personal websites/profiles, blogs, group discussions, messages/chats, and gaming (Mason, 2008). At the same time, impersonation and masquerading in SNS are also reported. Perpetrators who create a profile pretending to be somebody else try to make a victim look bad by posting negative information (Willard, 2007). These fake profiles often describe the victim as a sex addict and a shoplifter (Yasukawa, 2008). Cyberbullies also post victims’ personal information such as email and telephone number (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Impersonation and masquerading in SNS can happen because the exchange of passwords is believed to be evidence of true friendship among teens, especially girls (Willard, 2007).

YouTube

The incident called *Happy Slapping* that happened in Britain is the combination of traditional bullying and cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). A group of teens filmed themselves slapping and

beating up the targeted victim and posted it on YouTube with the title of “Happy Slapping” (Shariff, 2008). Another case in Australia reports that twelve boys filmed their behaviors including bullying a seventeen-year-old girl who has mild mental retardation. The boys made her perform sex acts, urinated on her, and posted the video on YouTube (Shariff, 2008). In some cases, pictures and videos are modified in humiliating ways by using software, such as Photoshop, and are posted on YouTube (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Shariff, 2008).

Methods of Cyberbullying

As traditional bullying takes various forms to harass peers, cyberbullying can occur in various ways as well. The most frequently used nature of harassments is name-calling and gossiping through instant messaging (Dehue et al., 2008). Students in Turkey, on the other hand, reported that the most common form was being insulted (Aricak et al., 2008). Another study shows that name-calling or insults are the most prevalent forms, and password violation is the next most common type (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). These inconsistencies may be due to the different samples (e.g., sex, age, and culture) and definitions.

Suggestions for Future Study

Considering the fact that traditional bullying victims can suffer from psychological problems, such as depression, anxiety, and social phobia, for long periods of time (Kowalski et al., 2008), cyberbullying research has the potential to play an important role in the field of educational psychology. Nevertheless, the field of cyberbullying research is still in its infancy, and due to the hidden nature of cyberbullying, little is known about children who are involved. For many schools and parents who wish to prevent and intervene in cyberbullying, knowing which children are at risk will be significant. Therefore, future studies need to identify profiles of

youth who may be involved in cyberbullying as a bully, a victim, or/and a bully-victim. The effective prevention and intervention of cyberbullying are impossible without knowing the characteristics of children who engage in cyberbullying. Thus, the author hopes that this paper helps other researchers and educators to increase the awareness of this new social problem among teens.

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