

Impacts of Cyberbullying and Its Solutions

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Abstract: The paper examines the phenomenon of cyberbullying, characterized as the intentional use of digital communication tools for injury, intimidation, or harassment of others. It discusses the characteristics of cyberbullying, including its persistence, permanence, difficulty in detection, network tracking, and false accusations. The harmful effects of cyberbullying on teenagers—such as sadness, anxiety, low self-esteem, suicidal behavior, eating disorders and gastrointestinal problems—are explored in the paper. It emphasizes the intricate relationship between cyberbullying and suicidal conduct, pointing out the significance of gender differences and other aggravating elements. The solutions presented focus on the importance of parental involvement, communication, and positive attitudes in preventing cyberbullying. Strategies for victims include remaining calm, saving evidence, blocking and reporting attackers, seeking emotional support, and professional help if needed. Teachers are encouraged to raise awareness, educate students about online safety, provide support to victims, and collaborate with parents and relevant institutions. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for concerted efforts from various stakeholders to address the issue of cyberbullying effectively.

Keywords: cyberbullying, suicidal behavior, mental problem, physical impact, solutions of cyberbullying

1. Introduction

1.1. Definition

Cyberbullying is the act of harassing, intimidating, or harming others through digital communication channels such as social media or messaging apps. It entails frequent and intentional behavior targeted at someone, causing them mental anguish or humiliation. Spreading rumors, exposing private information, impersonation, threats, or posting objectionable content online are all examples of cyberbullying [1]. It is a deliberate and repeated injury caused by the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic gadgets [2]. Nevertheless, not all harmful behavior among teenagers is bullying. Firstly, bullying must be intentional, not accidental [3]. Bullying is intentional and repetitive harm to others, and accidental harm is not bullying. For example, in isolated events, neglecting someone individually and accidentally cannot be considered bullying. And if there is a repeated threat, that is the condition for bullying. Secondly, harassing mirrors a personal conduct standard as opposed to only a secluded Occasion. The main difference lies in the frequency of occurrence. For instance, a single argument or brawl with a person may not be bullying. But if someone is insulted and beaten

several times by the same person for several days, weeks, or months, it is bullying. Third, cyberbullying occurs via computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. Undoubtedly, this is the distinction between cyberbullying and traditional bullying. Due to the internet, cyberbullying can be carried out by anyone, even if the perpetrator and victim do not know each other in reality [4]. The anonymity of the internet also makes bullies more rampant.

1.2. The Characteristics of Cyberbullying

According to the nature of online bullying, it can be roughly divided into the following terms [5].

- Persistent cyberbullying: Because social media and messaging platforms are accessible to everyone, and due to the anonymity and complexity of the internet, online bullying has become a persistent phenomenon.
- Permanent cyberbullying: Because the content of bullying will always appear online, it is difficult for people who are bullied to break free from the shadow of being bullied, from the past to the future.
- Difficult to notice: Online bullying is often not as direct and violent as traditional bullying, but rather carried out through language, satire, and other means in the internet. This concealment makes it difficult for the victim to identify the bullying behavior, and most people, including parents and teachers, are unable to take measures to help the victim.
- Network tracking: Network tracking is a unique mode of network bullying, which includes monitoring, making false accusations, and offline tracking of threats. It is considered a serious form of online bullying. It may extend to a physical threat to the target victim.
- False accusation: This is another unique form of online bullying where the bully gains the trust of the victim by promising false security, and then leaks the victim's personal information to a third party, causing harm to the victim.

2. Impact of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying might have long-lasting negative physical, mental, and emotional effects for teens, like dejection, anxiety, diminished self-esteem, depression, suicidal behavior and thoughts, stomach illness, sleep difficulties and sleeping disorders.

2.1. Cyberbullying and Suicidal Conduct

Several researchers have investigated the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior in adolescents, discovering that those who are subjected to online bullying are bound to engage in self-harm and suicide behaviors.

Previous research surveyed all individuals under the age of 18 who presented to the emergency rooms of Kingston General or Hotel Dieu Hospitals in Kingston, Canada, between January 2011 and January 2015. Age, gender, abuse history, bullying history, type and duration of bullying, and diagnosis were all documented. After controlling for other factors, it was discovered that 77% of teenagers had been bullied, and 68.9% had suicidal ideation. Individuals who have experienced online bullying were 11.5 times more likely than the general population to have suicidal ideation [6]. Bullying and suicide thoughts have a complicated correlation that is typically mediated by the accumulation of many factors such as depression, violence, low self-esteem, loneliness, poor academic performance, and tension, which can contribute to an increase in suicidal impulses. Furthermore, researchers discovered that gender variations influence the link between bullying and suicidal behavior. Research shows that 15% of girls and 18% of boys aged 12 to 18 in Canada report being bullied at least twice in their lifetime [7]. Among the adult population in Canada, 38% of males

and 30% of females report being bullied at school age. Thus, it can be concluded that the correlation between male experiences of bullying and suicidal behavior is weaker, while females exhibit a more significant correlation. Bullying has been found to be on the rise in recent years, with the bullying rate rising from 6.3% in 2009 to 7.8% in 2011, with one out of every ten students experiencing weekly bullying. Compared to more traditional forms of bullying, online bullying may be a greater risk factor for suicidal ideation in adolescents [8]. Firstly, compared to teenagers who have been bullied through traditional methods, students who have been bullied through the internet report less being bullied or seek help from the outside world, which greatly increases their risk of suicidal behavior. Secondly, online bullying can be more destructive than traditional bullying. To be specific, in online bullying, victims may continue to be bullied regardless of time or location. Long-term exposure to such environments can also increase their likelihood of committing suicide. In addition, online bullies may be anonymous hence the consequences for them may be less severe.

2.2. Cyberbullying and Physical Impacts

2.2.1. Eating Disorder

This study compared the case group (eating disorders patients) and the control group (non eating disorders patients) aged 13 to 18 years old, and found that the case group scored significantly higher in terms of bullying behavior than the control group. According to specific data, only 35% of participants in the control group reported having encountered bullying behavior, compared to 70% of participants in the case group [9]. Therefore, we can conclude that bullying behavior is more likely to lead to eating disorders in people aged 13 to 18. At the same time, 45% of the participants in the case group stated that they have been trying to lose weight due to fear of being bullied, resulting in eating disorders caused by bullying behavior that are also related to excessive attention to body image. In addition, this study suggests that patients with eating disorders are more susceptible to bullying behavior, and these bullying behaviors can further exacerbate their symptoms of eating disorders [9].

2.2.2. Sleeping Disturbances

Any disruptions to regular sleep patterns, such as trouble falling asleep, frequent awakenings, and poor sleep quality, are referred to as sleep disorders. A study by Hinduja and Patchin investigated the relationship between victims of online bullying and various social and psychological variables, using American middle and high school students as samples. The research results show that victims of online bullying are more likely to experience sleep difficulties, such as difficulty falling asleep, nightmares, and daytime sleepiness [8]. Another study explored the relationship between online bullying and sleep quality in adolescents. Researchers have found that compared to people who have not participated in online bullying, both victims and perpetrators of online bullying have significantly poorer sleep quality [10].

2.2.3. Gastrointestinal Problems

Gastrointestinal problems and online bullying may seem unrelated, but research suggests an indirect relationship between them. Online bullying can have a detrimental effect on a person's mental health, just like other types of bullying. According to research, the stress and worry brought on by cyberbullying can have an impact on how well the digestive system works. When a person is under long-term stress, their body releases stress hormones, which can disrupt the digestive process and cause symptoms such as abdominal pain, nausea, altered bowel movements, or increased gastric acid secretion [11].

3. Solutions

3.1. For Parents

The prior study emphasizes that parents play a crucial role in preventing online bullying. As reported by the paper, one protective element is parents monitoring and participating in their children's internet activity. Research shows that teenagers whose parents actively monitor their use of digital media are less likely to participate in online bullying incidents. In addition, this article emphasizes the importance of communication between parents and children regarding online behavior. Parents have discussed the dangers of online bullying with children and established clear rules and consequences. That kind of children are unlikely to participate in online bullying. Parents' attitudes and behaviors also have a certain impact on online bullying. Children of parents who exhibit empathy and behave positively in daily life will exhibit positive behavior online. On the other hand, children of parents who use aggressive or negative strategies in conflict resolution are more likely to participate in online bullying.

In conclusion, parental supervision, open communication, and positive parental attitudes are important factors in preventing teenagers from participating in online bullying.

3.2. For Victims

Firstly, the victim should remain calm and not be provoked by the attacker's words or actions, avoiding making impulsive responses. At the same time, they should save all relevant evidence as much as possible, such as chat records, comments, and images. These pieces of evidence are significant in subsequent reporting or seeking help. In addition, victims can protect themselves by quickly blackmailing or blocking the attacker to avoid direct contact with them. They can also avoid further attacks by not responding to the attacker's comments. Furthermore, victims can ask for help from others when they are unable to handle the situation. They can tell trusted people around them, like friends and relatives, to obtain emotional comfort. If psychological distress is caused, victims can find psychologists and professional institutions to receive treatment. In serious cases, alarm measures can be taken to involve relevant departments in the investigation and take certain measures against the victims.

Consequently, when encountering online bullying, victims need to calm down, take appropriate measures, and actively seek support and assistance to solve the problem.

3.3. For Teachers

Teachers can discuss the issue of online bullying in class, raise students' awareness, and teach them how to protect their own and others' safety thus preventing students from participating in or being subjected to online bullying. Additionally, teachers can organize online security education activities, and invite experts, police officers, and other relevant personnel to give lectures to increase students' prevention awareness of online bullying. When students seek help from them, teachers should help them ask for help from relevant institutions, take the initiative to care for the bullied students, communicate with them timely, and provide them with positive encouragement and support. Teachers should also strengthen communication with parents and jointly pay attention to students' cybersecurity issues. Through regular communication with parents, teachers can prompt understanding of students' online situations, identify problems, and collaborate to solve them.

In summary, teachers should actively pay attention to students' cybersecurity issues, provide necessary assistance and support, and work together with parents and all sectors of society to prevent and solve the problem of cyberbullying.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, cyberbullying is the act of using digital communication platforms to harm, intimidate, or harass individuals. It can have serious and long-lasting negative effects on teens, including emotional distress, decreased self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and even suicidal thoughts and behaviors. The persistence, secrecy and difficulty in detecting of cyberbullying make it particularly harmful. Eating disorders, sleep difficulties, and gastrointestinal problems are all physical effects related to online bullying.

To solve the problem of cyberbullying, various solutions can be implemented. Parents play a crucial role in preventing online bullying, as they need to actively monitor their children's online activities, establish clear rules and consequences, and demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviors. For victims, it is important to remain calm, collect evidence, ignore or report the perpetrator, and seek emotional support from trusted individuals, requiring relevant departments to participate when necessary. Teachers can raise awareness, organize cybersecurity education activities, and provide support for bullied students, communicate with parents, collaborate with relevant institutions in order to prevent and respond to cyberbullying.

Overall, addressing cyberbullying requires the joint efforts of parents, victims, teachers, and the entire society, we can build a more safe online environment for everyone by taking preventive measures, increasing awareness, and giving support.

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