

Method research
procedure
methodology
research proposal
sample

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



In order to explore cyber-bullying among students aged 13-19 years, understand teens' emotional and behavioral reactions to cyber-bullying, determine how teens define cyber-bullying and increase the understanding of the degree to which teenagers have either been victims of or participated in cyber-bullying, a mixed method approach will be used in the study. The approach mixes both qualitative and quantitative collection and data analysis techniques. A combination of the two approaches will create a more complete picture of the problem other than when they stand alone, (Creswell, 2008). The design will allow the views of participants to be effectively analyzed to determine their experiences, opinions on the problem and how cyber-bullying menace can be effectively addressed.

Cresswell (2008) documents that, the mixed approach allows for the simultaneous collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, merging the data and using the results to understand the problem. Quantitative research aims at supporting or contesting an existing hypothesis, and the data are often numerical and measurable, (Salkind, 2009). Instruments such as questionnaires collect data from a number of individuals which is often representative of a large population. Analysis is also numerical and is often reached at via statistical procedures with the key intention of either rejecting or failing to reject the hypothesis. In this study, the qualitative approach will seek to identify participants' opinions and experiences on cyber-bullying. A small sample size will provide in-depth information on every participant and their views. Combining qualitative and quantitative approach will provide a better understanding of Cyber-bullying among students aged 13-19 years. The quantitative approach will allow for a critical description of cyber-

bullying which is essential in establishing the awareness of participants in the research as well as provoking action among them.

Analyzing the advantages of the mixed method design, Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2010), documents that both approaches can balance the weaknesses of one of them, besides researchers are able to utilize all the available data collection tools rather than relying on either quantitative or qualitative research. Besides, questions that could not be answered by only qualitative or quantitative approach alone can be answered, multiple world view paradigms employed, and problems can be solved using both inductive and deductive thinking and numbers hence the approach is inherently practical. The value of mixed methods design for this study will be to discover the opinions, views and experiences of cyber-bullying as well as to determine the extent of the issue among school going teenagers aged between thirteen and nineteen years.

Participants

The research proposes to explore cyber-bullying among school going teenagers aged 13-19; hence the participants will be comprised of students between the ages from four different accessible high schools. The researcher will contact 15 high schools to determine which ones are open for research to be conducted. Mixed methods research allows for participants to be the same for both qualitative and quantitative collection so that data can be easily compared or converged. It is, however, inconceivable to carry out large scale mixed methods design due to time constraints and researcher experience. Fifty students between the ages 13-19 will be selected from each school to give a snap shot of opinions on the issue of cyber-bullying as

pertains to young people and social networking sites. A total of two hundred students from four different high schools will make up the sample for the questionnaire stage of the study. The sample will consist of both male and female participants who will be categorized into two groups; those between thirteen to fifteen years and those between sixteen and nineteen years. All the selected participants will be expected to fill in the questionnaire and the sample will consist of an equal number of males and females. There will be thirty females and thirty males for those between thirteen and eighteen years and seventy males and seventy females for those between ages 16 and nineteen. The students will be expected to voluntarily participate in the focus group. The focus group allows for the interaction of the teenagers on the conversation topic and also present their individual values with regards to cyber-bullying, (Vandebosch and Cleemput, 2008).

Research Design

The research will be implemented in two stages; the first stage will involve the use of an online questionnaire to generate quantitative data. The questionnaires will focus on how the internet and the social networking sites are used by students when in school and home, the opinions of the selected teenagers on cyber-bullying and the extent of the practice. The questionnaires will also allow participants to write comments and any other relevant opinions that may expand on questions with regards to cyber-bullying. The experiences will be ones that they may have either witnessed or been personally involved in. The questionnaire will be designed in such a way that data generated from the participants will focus on their use of the

internet and the social networking sites, their personal experiences on bullying and cyber-bullying, the experiences of their peers or any other person they know of bullying and cyber-bullying and their general opinions on cyber-bullying. The second stage of the research will entail the engagement of the focus group who will provide data solely for qualitative analysis. The focus group will provide further insight into the questions in the survey and their opinions on the issues of cyber-bullying will be looked at. The focus group will be structured as an open ended discussion thereby allowing for further discussion.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Plans

A questionnaire will be a valuable instrument in the study. According to Kothari (2005), a questionnaire provides a way to explore and discover factual information that entails measures of values, experiences, opinions, beliefs and attitudes. They are also simple and less time consuming hence allowing for quick responses, besides collation of questionnaire data is both manageable and efficient. The focus group will be a beneficial and a significant instrument in the study. According to Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2010), focus groups create an opportunity for participants to express their motives, experiences, perceptions and their views on a specific topic. The research will also be designed to ensure anonymity, safety and well-being of all participants. The questionnaire will be anonymous, and the subjects confidential besides, informed consent will be obtained from the school authority. The consent for the questionnaire participants will be implied by voluntary participation, the questionnaire will be concise taking

approximately fifteen minutes to complete ensuring greater willingness to participate. In the second section, the focus group will be comprised of twenty teenagers, ten females and ten males from each of the four institutions who will be engaged a discussion to provide further insight on the survey questions on cyber-bullying. The researcher will take notes on the responses of the discussion which will focus on various themes around cyber-bullying.

Proposed Analysis of the Data

Expected data will be from the results of both the questionnaires and the focus group discussion which will be categorized into three key sections, experiences, opinions and discussion. As noted above, the participants will be classified into two groups, the first group will be teenagers between 13 and 15 (n= 60) while the second group will be between ages 16 and 19 (n= 140). The results will focus on analyzing experiences and opinions. The opinions will aim to discover participant's use of the internet, and to provide a point of comparison between internet use and bullying. The participants will be expected to report their internet use both at home and at school besides specifying the actual kind of internet use. The participant's current status and opinions on social networking will also be analyzed, and the result will seek to establish whether there is a difference in access to and involvement in social networking sites between the two age groups 13-15 and 16-19. Results of the reasons for social networking such as to communicate with friends, to share photos and videos, to make new friends, to reconnect with old friends and to download music will also be analyzed.

The results will also seek to analyze the proportion of participant's involvement in traditional bullying, their experiences, whether they were bullied or not, whether they bullied others and whether there is a link between victimization and bullying and their correspondence with age. The results will also establish which percentage of the participants had been bullied through cell phones, and those who have been bullied through social network sites. The results will also distinguish whether there was a link between age and the likelihood of bullying besides, the researcher will be interested in establishing whether the participants knew someone else who had been a victim of cyber-bullying either through a social networking site or through a cell phone. The results will also seek to indicate whether the participants know more incidents of victimization comparative to personally being a victim and the relationship between the victim and the participant, whether a friend, a family member, a brother or just an acquaintance. Establishing how the participants or their acquaintances have been bullying will be practical in determining forms or combination of cyber-bullying behavior although expected results would include text messages or online social networking forums.

The results will also be specifically looking at how a cyber-bullying incident was handled or stopped, whether the victims of cyber-bullying reported the case to the social network provider, parents, school authorities or sought advice to ensure the bullying ceased.

Ensuring that the data are authentic will be a key priority in the overall design of the study. Creswell (2008) identifies content validity which is the extent to which the questions on the questionnaire are representative of all

the possible questions that the researcher could possible ask on the subject. To ensure validity, a pilot study will be conducted before the actual administration of the questionnaire so as to reinforce the clarity and structure of the questionnaire, provide feedback and possibly come up with additional questions on the issue. The researcher will also analyze the proportion of participants who have Cyber bullied other students, and also to establish whether and how their victims acted to stop the bullying. The descriptions by participants of cyber-bullying experiences, both from those who have been bullied and those who have bullied their counterparts, will allow the researcher to adequately comprehend the nature of cyber-bullying.

Opinions on statements concerning traditional bullying, cyber-bullying, and bullying involving cell phones and social networking sites will be rated on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The statements, will also be categorized by gender will include; strongly agree (1), agree (1), Not Sure (5), Disagree (4) and Strongly Disagree (5). The mean and standard deviation for each category of opinions will also be determined. The researcher will also look for whether there is a difference on the participant's opinions with regards to cyber-bullying for boys and girls. Research by Keith and Martin (2005) indicated that while boys were more likely to be bullied traditionally, cyber-bullying was likely to victimize both boys and girls although cyber-bullying was considered greater problems for girls while traditional bullying, a problem for boys. The participants' responses will also be analyzed to identify the age group in which cyber-bullying mostly occur. Questionnaire comments from the comments sections will also seek to

identify common themes from their responses. Finally, the focus group data results will be to supplement the questionnaires and the responses will be analyzed based on five themes: That cyber-bullying is different from traditional bullying, that the internet and cell phones make it easier for bullies, that there are long term effects of cyber-bullying, that cyber bullying is a complex phenomena that needs to be stopped and that cyber-bullying techniques are similar and can be identified. Conclusively, the results will be analyzed, and comparisons made based on the questionnaire responses and comments and the focus group discussion.

References

- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2010). Handbook of emergent methods. New York: Guilford Press. 7
- Keith, S. & Martin, E. M. (2005). Cyber-Bullying: Creating a Culture of Respect in a Cyber World. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 13(4): 224-228.
- Kothari, C. R. (2005). Research methodology: Methods & techniques. New Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd.
- Salkind, N. J. (2009). Exploring Research. Upper Saddle River, N. J: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Vandebosch, H. & Cleemput, V. K. (2008). Defining Cyber-bullying: A Qualitative Research

Into the Perceptions of Youngsters. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 11(4): 499-503.