Research paper on cyber bullying

Technology, Internet

With the advent of communication technology, the way in which many activities are done has changed over time. Whether these activities are ethical or unethical, there has been a rapid development in the methodologies that people use to ensure that they achieve their objectives. The internet and communication technology are major developments that have changed the way people do their duties over the last two decades (Trestan 2). Bullying, itself a vice in any given community, has been changed from its previous mode where young people would bully others physically and at a given location, to a situation where bullies use the internet communication to harass their targets (Wang, Iannotti, and Nansel 369). Therefore, cyber bullying is any form of harassment that takes place via the internet. Some of the most common methods through which cyber bullying takes place on the internet includes threatening, posting vicious forums, fake profiles on common websites, cruel and mean messages, name calling and others (Trestan 2).

Although the internet has brought about development in various ways, there are certain areas where it has resulted in more demerits rather than acting as a good tool for development, and only we human beings can ensure that access to and use of the internet is restricted so that such issues like cyber bullying are eliminated from our societies. It is quite arguable that if human beings take this as an advice and adhere to it, then cyber bullying and its resulting psychological problems will be a thing of the past (Wang, Iannotti, and Nansel 378). It is also arguable that each and every society would want to see a situation where teens and children are using the internet in a beneficial way, and where there are methods of fighting off cyber bullying

and other cyber crimes, but although this is the common ground, the differences occurs in the methodologies to be applied to ensure this happens (Shariff 23).

The society seems to be less concerned on the usage of the internet by children and youth, and in most of the cases we encourage them to involve themselves in cyber activities, without knowing the dangers that we expose our own young people to (Trestan 2). When a child or a young person is humiliated physically, it is very normal that the society condemns such as an action, and stern measures are taken to control the behavior of and punish the bully, whether at school or in the neighborhood. People fail to know that the form of bullying now common on the internet is even more dangerous than physical bullying (Trestan 2). This is because when a child or a young person is bullied by others, for example a very bad description of the teen's behavior is posted on websites, exchanged as messages or even photos – whether real or fake – are involved, then the victim will suffer psychologically, leading to other complications if the problem persists (Shariff 34). Cyber bullying seems to be an endless activity since there is little controls that have been established, and as long as the young people have access to the use of internet, then more of this will be observed (Wang, Iannotti, and Nansel 372).

Cyber bullying is on the increase each day, owing to the increase in technology. Mobile technology is a major technological improvement, which has become popular among young people. In most countries, the society has allowed child and teen use of mobile phones freely, provided the parents

have consented to this. In most countries, the parents are required to register the mobile phones for their children, and in most cases, this is the only regulation and registration requirement in addition to regular payments. Such mobile phones, once in the control of the young persons, will become a major form of both entertainment and bullying. Since the society has in many ways reduced bullying, teens have found a good way of bullying free of intervention buy the adults or the organizations like schools. Apart from sending and exchanging messages, bullies have found mobile internet a convenient way of targeting their victims. They contentiously post information that humiliates their victims, and there is little that the victims can do, given that owning and use of the gadgets is allowed and that there is little control of their use (Shariff 53).

As the society tries to cope up with physical sexual harassment, the cyber bullies have found a good way of sexually harassing their targets. The bullies just identify their victims, mostly young girls, and starts cyber bullying campaigns based on sexual differences (Campbell 69). In most cases, a bully may use ads and post them onto the internet, which offers the victim for sex to other persons without her consent. Real or faked photos are normally added onto these ads, and in most cases the bullies may include the real name of the victim, place of residence and other details. This will be an automatic sexual abuse and psychological humiliation on the victim (Campbell 68).

Whenever the internet has been used in bullying, for example in the online sexual harassment described above, a large number of people will get to

know since the internet is free to access. This means that the psychological humiliation will continue to increase after the very first post. Cyber bullying has been known to make children and teens involve themselves in furious debates on the internet, and when the victims attempt to revenge on the internet, more teens are involved in the activities, because it seems a good game to them (Campbell 73). It has also been observed that children and teens have involved themselves in physical fights as victims of cyber bullying try to revenge. Some have been reported to kill others in these fights, and this is the point that the society should reconsider the access and use of internet to children and teens.

Social websites have recently become a very popular platform for debates, and although they are intended for adults, in most cases the website owners only requires the clients to fill a very short online form that asks them the date of birth and some other few details (Campbell 69). Whether one cheats or not, the website has no mechanism of detecting this, and will automatically accept the membership of the client. Top get access to these websites, teens and children just fake their age and pretends to be adults, gain membership and involve themselves in debates (Campbell 69). Bullies will then target their victims from this point of view, and govern that these websites are free to use, free to post any information and in any language, the bullies then find a haven for their activities. In most cases, they may also use faked names in order to ensure that they conceal their identities, and thus continue harassing their victims throughout. Although as per the society this seems to be an adult affair since the websites are meant for adults only, the reality is that children are involved, and cyber bulling continues yet the

society is doing little to change this trend (Campbell 69). There have been reports of students posting nasty fake profiles on the social websites using another student's real name, contact information and even photos (Campbell 71). The victim are prone to getting weird messages, emails and even phone calls from strangers who are made to think that the profile is real. Some of these messages are calls may be mean, abusive, threatening and crude. The victims are affected both psychologically and mentally, as they receive strange messages which make them worry and develop fear. Psychologically speaking, this is type of bullying is very critical as in some cases it may make the victim try anything to escape the situation, including committing suicide (Campbell 71).

Our own laws also betray our own efforts to reduce these vices. For instance, whenever a school attempts control the possession and use of mobile phones, teens and their parents will always rush to courts of law to file cases against the school, accusing it of interfering with the children's rights. Almost always the school will lose in such a case, and finally other schools will try as much as possible to avoid such situations. This results into a situation where schools will have little they can do, thus providing the teens a good chance of involving themselves in bullying activities in addition to other cyber crimes (Campbell 69).

In recent years, schools have moved from depending on notice boards located within the school compound to a situation where the use of bulletin boards is adopted. In some schools, the students are allowed to post their own opinions in the bulletin boards (Campbell 72). This gives teens an

opportunity to post some information and commentaries that target each other within the school, and which normally results into cyber bullying. Rumors are some of the most common information posted by students in school bulletin boards, and in most cases these are never true. This ostracizes other students by peers, thus becoming a victim of bullying (Campbell 72).

As far as this situation holds, I believe that the society must act to contain the situation before it goes out of hand. Since the consequences of cyber bullying have been found to be adverse as mentioned above, no society would ever wish to have such a situation within it. An ideal way to eliminate cyber bullying is to start straight from the parents, the neighborhood, the school, then the school district and finally to the government. People should realize that cyber bullying has its effect on the victim's psychology, and given that the victim is a minor, there are high possibilities that the victim's mental growth and development will adversely be affected, and in most cases performance in class and in the social activities will be compromised. This is not good for any child. I believe that the parents could take control of internet gadgets such as modems and decoders and the computers to ensure that the child accesses the internet only for his or her benefit (search for knowledge) or for healthy entertainment. Schools and school districts, in consultation with the parents, should take control of the internet gadgets while the minors are at school to avoid cyber bullying. Above all, there must be laws governing the use of the internet gadgets by minors. The legislature could define which websites are good for minors and which ones are unsuitable, and at last define the process of arresting, prosecuting and the

possible penalties for the law breakers depending on whether the offender is the minor or any other adult found allowing minors to engage in cyber bullying activities. In addition, these laws should constantly be reviewed to keep up with the evolving technology. I believe that this is an ultimate strategy that would work perfectly in our society.

The common ground

The use of the internet is important to the development of our community, thus children and teens cannot be left out. It is important that children get to be conversant with the prevailing technology, which internet is a major part and parcel of. The society expects the children to be up to date with the increasingly changing world of technology (Kite 8). The society also expects that once they leave school and enter into adulthood, they must be skilled persons in order to fit in various job opportunities. In addition, the internet is a major source of knowledge and information that students need not only in class, but also which they may apply in real life activities. In this regard, we cannot run away from the fact that internet is good for our children, and should be allowed to involve themselves in internet activities (Kite 4).

However, as per this argument, the children access to and use of the internet should be under control in order to ensure that they benefit from it both socially and academically. What the society and the laws should try to control is the tens and children involvement in cyber bulling of any type, including involvement in social websites, mobile chats, mail chats and other activities that may result in one or more types of cyber bullying (Kite 6). There are several methods that we could use to ensure that this happens,

but we normally leave this on the hands of the teachers and the school in general to handle, yet whenever we feel that the institution is going beyond the children rights, we normally seek for courts interference, which may not solve the situation (Trestan 2). An ideal remedy would be to involve the parents/guardians, the school, the laws well as the internet providers to ensure that the society fights cyber bullying. This, I believe, is the target of each and every community, but what differs is that we have different points of view on how we should fight the vice. Despite these issues, laws have yet to define the variety or category of the websites suitable for minors and which ones are unsuitable. The law has also not defined whether cyber bullying is illegal or legitimate. In this regards, we can agree that our own laws are obsolete or are not up to date; rather what we use is the contemporary theory that certain websites are likened to exposing our children to situations that favors their behavioral change in the direction that the society does not hold right. Our common ground thus would be that cyber bullying is not illegal, but we must devise methodologies to cope with it.

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