Cyber bullying research proposal examples

Law, Criminal Justice

Research Question

What are the effects of the internet and social networks on Cyber bullying and to what extent has Cyber bullying been experienced among the youths?

Thesis Statement

Bullying is not a new terminology, and especially among the youths. It is a vice that has been in existence for long but one that is manifesting itself on new platforms with the advancement in technology. Some forms of bullying like nicknaming and stereotyping have stood ignored by adults; however, reality reveals that though mere, such bullying is as phoney as the physical bullying. It is never clear where third parties like parents or even legal officers should intervene in bullying because of the wide digital gap between adults and teens (Walker, 2010). It is astonishing how early teens start exploiting technology, and more so as concerns digital communication. The social networks that seem so banal and time wasting to adults is their virtual world to where they channel most of their time, as opposed to time spent on real life activities. Such platforms easily accessible by teens from their smart phones have encouraged Cyber bullying that in most cases starts as a game between teens, but which grows into some serious crime with time. Security and general life of teens are, therefore, exposed to danger to an extent that some victims of Cyber bullying commit suicide. This is the reason as to why this research is being undertaken (Backus, 2009).

Introduction

As stated earlier, bullying has been in existence long before the internet but has become severe with the emergence of the internet. Bullying used to be

experienced when one was away from home or from parents, but presently it follows people up to the comfort of their bedroom. Online bullying, technologically known as Cyber bullying is a staid predicament that leaves its victims hopeless and helpless.

What is Cyber bullying?

Cyber bullying is any aggravation that takes place online. This can be a comment made on the wall of one's Facebook or any other social media account, nasty name calling on chat rooms and video conferences and slanderous messages sent via emails or instant messaging (Kowalski, 2008).

Some examples of Cyber bullying are; a student receiving harassing and tormenting messages from unknown senders at home that they never get to meet or have no idea who these people are, name calling posts displayed all over spreading a fictitious rumor of an individual and which is considered true by peers, and impersonation on the social networks where a nasty content containing profile is created using one's name but remains unknown to them (Hannah, 2010).

Literature Review

Existing literature states that 30% of teens have experienced Cyber bullying through messages online, 10% have been threatened of physically being harmed by Cyber bullies. However, research shows that 16% of the victims did not share with anyone about their experience and 10% of those who shared were not helped to get out of their helpless situation.

As concerns statistics carried out by the i-SAFE foundation, more than 50% of teenagers have at some point been subjected to online bullying and almost the same number have acted as online bullies. According to its research, one in every three teenagers has been subjected to Cyber threats and 25% of youths have received threats repeatedly via the internet or their phones. This research also revealed that more than half of the online bullying victims do not report the matter.

According to research done by The Cyber bullying Research Centre, 80% of teenagers are regular users of cell phones hence a common media for Cyber bullying. More than half of teenagers have fall victim of this vice, and about 15% are regular victims. This research denotes nasty comments and rumor mongering as the main types of bullying used by Cyber bullies. It also reveals that both genders are subjects of bullying, though boys are more prone to threats as compared to girls. Cyber bullying also affects all races, and it causes people to have a low self esteem (Gould et. al, 2011).

Research Methods

Research strategy aids in coming up with a framework that is used for gathering and analyzing data that have been obtained during the research process (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Bryman and Bell (2007) further underscore the significance that is attached with the right choice of research strategy used as it helps to reveal various dimensions of research and processes. Moreover, the significance of choosing the suitable approach lies in " expressing casual connections between variables; generalizing to larger groups of individuals than those forming part of the investigation;

understanding behavior and the meaning of that behavior in its specific social context and having an overtime appreciation of social phenomena and their interconnections" (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

Instruments for Data collection

Questionnaires

The questionnaires will be directed to teenagers, system administrators, legal officers and parents. This method is popular especially when lofty inquiries are needed as it saves on time. Pilot test will be carried out on the developed questionnaires so as to test any weaknesses such as vague questions, difficulties in research questions such as wrong numbering and incorporate comments and suggestions from the respondents. Questions will be both open- (structured) and closed- (non structured) ended. Five-point Likert scale will be used in the research (Backus, 2009). Questionnaire is shown in appendix A.

Interviews

Interviews are the most prominent sources for case study information (As cited in Yin, 2003). Telephone- or personal- interviews will be used in the study. Semi-structured interviews will be carried out with teenagers and psychologists. Semi-structured interview is preferred as it is flexible (Kothari, 2004). An interview guide is shown in appendix B.

Validation of the instruments

According to Nahid (2003), " validity is concerned with whether the findings are remarkable about what they appear to be about". It refers to how well a research method measures what it claims to measure (Kothari, 2004). There

are three tests for researchers to test the validity: Construct, internal and external validities (As cited in Yin, 2003). Construct validity will be used in the research to test the validity of instruments and will involve three tactics: Use multiple sources of evidence (Questionnaire and interviews); Establish a chain of evidence and have key informants to review draft case study report and the questionnaire (As cited in Yin, 2003).

Method of Data Analysis

Firstly, the researcher gathers together all the data obtained from the participants. The researcher then arranges the items of information (e. g. statements) into various groups in a preliminary way.

According to Kothari (2004), before data is analyzed, it is edited (Involves examining collected raw data to detect errors or omission and correcting where possible), coded (process of assigning numerals to answers so that responses can be put into a limited number of categories), classified (grouping of data either based on attributes or class-intervals) and finally tabulated (Arranging data in a concise and logical order). Descriptive statistics and factor analysis will be used to help in drawing comparisons and conclusions (Hannah, 2010).

Findings

Why Do People Cyber bully?

Physical bullying is hard to commit due to fear of legal actions that may be taken against bullies, hence the rise and growth of Cyber bullying. One advantage with Cyber bullying is the ease with which, the bullies get away with the crime. In Cyber space bullies can remain anonymous to their victims

for as long as they want, unless thorough investigations that are so costly are conducted. But anyway, even these intense investigations at times work on assumptions and are not a sure means to catching up with the bullies (Gould et. al, 2011).

Identifying and working on victims on Cyber space is pretty easy, especially with the so crowded social networks. This makes Cyber bullying easier and fun to the bullies since they have so many victims at their disposal, and they can deal with multiple victims simultaneously. Idleness and lack of so much touch with the real world lures some teens into online bullying and harassment. People who were not instigators of bullying also are prone to Cyber bullying since the reactions of their victims will forever remain unknown to them (Walker, 2010).

Recommendations

What Can Be Done About Cyber bullying?

So much can be done to curb Cyber bullying. However, so much lies with the victim of bullying. The main thing is for the victim to ignore the bully, no matter how persistent the messages may be sent. It is beneficial for the victim not to play games in exchange; this eats so much into the confidence and esteem of the bully who eventually gives up on such a victim. This is so since a bully takes pride in countering the ideologies of their victims; a situation not availed by silence. However, the victim should keep the evidence as Cyber bullying only protects the identity of the bullies but avails the evidence (McQuade et. al, 2009).

The government's hand in all this is necessary for the security measures to materialize. Furthermore, it needs to develop its own legal plan to protect information assets users in the country which has three main objectives. The first, Prepare and Prevent, is aimed at preventing attacks and threats to users of the internet and especially teenagers who use social networks. The second, Detect and Respond, blend in well with risk response where cyber bullying attacks should be detected and assessed quickly to enable containment and recovery of affected users. The final one, Build Strong Foundations, delves into the need to promote legal, human, and organizational resources that will facilitate the accomplishment of the other two objectives for the prosperity of the nation and security of citizens.

Disaster Recovery Planning is another part of response that cyber bullying victims cannot afford to ignore. As a defensive measure, it allows a victim to withstand or regain former posture from cyber bullying attacks and disasters. Social engineering gimmicks can cause an internet user to give up pertinent information unknowingly when a hacker uses the name of a well known person or organization to deceive him or her. The site managers should cooperate with service providers and other stakeholders to sensitize teenagers on the dangers of social engineering and phishing.

Conclusion

Meeting the security challenge as concerns the use of social networks and cell phones in connection to cyber bullying cannot be done by parents alone; it requires a considerable level of cooperation between public and private stakeholders. In addition, the Internet has made the world a global village

which means that cyber bullying cases are not limited to geographical

locations, they can strike from anywhere in the world. Even more threatening

is the speed at which they can bombard teenagers who subject themselves

to the game without thinking. The social networks management needs to be

able to implement a risk management plan quickly and work with

international equivalents.

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