The psychological effects of cyber bullying

Abstract

The last few decades have resulted in major transformation across important areas of our physical, economical, social and cultural systems. These changes are due to emerging potential computer technologies and ever enhancing awareness of the people. Additionally, the strong, effective and highly swift sources of communications across the world have also added to the diversity being observed at international levels. These transformations have influenced almost every discipline, consequently leading to various psychological diversities. Presently, the people across the world appear to be highly updated regarding the developments and variations especially in the information technology.

It appears to be a natural phenomenon that the ever increasing usage of these technologies and facilities not only offers numerous advantages but some sort of predicaments also arises. The cyber bullying comes to be amongst one of these and is primarily related to the factors influencing the psychological aspects. The judgement of the psychological effects of the cyber bullying requires highlighting some highly critical factors such as the age group of the persons involved, the probable responses of the users/involved persons, the magnitude and nature of interaction occurs, the overall environment in context with attitudes and behaviours. In order to generate a comprehensive rationale of the psychological effects of cyber bullying, the researcher presented interviews and elaborated the responses in context with the literature.

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Chapter 1:

1. 1 Introduction

Presently, the Information Technologies are associated either directly or indirectly with every human being and influences the life at almost every crucial stage. When it comes to have interactions the role and influence of the information technology appears to be highly critical. It not only provides various advantages to the people living in a society but also facilitates them while having dealings across the borders. Along with advantages some sort of negative impacts also comes in the scenario which eventually leads to some sort of disturbances and losses. These negative impacts of information technology basically appear as a result of mismanagement and unethical dealings. The same sort of impact of information technology is witnessed in the cyber bullying. The cyber bullying normally occurs on the mediums including the internet, cellular phones and other devices which are utilized to send or post text/images intended to embarrass/hurt persons. This

phenomenon is also described by other researchers as the intentions to disturb persons in various ways such as sending continuous messages and mails to a person who rejects to have interaction. In continuation to this simple type of cyber bullying the intentions like sexual remarks, threats, pejorative labels (hate speech), posting false statement as a fact aimed at humiliation also comes under the cyber bullying.

1. 2 Title of the Research

The Psychological Effects of Cyber bullying

1. 3 Background of the Research

In the present era of globalization where the people are getting educated and close to each other with the use of various available communication resources. This diversity in the societies is leading the globe towards the environment where the people participate highly in various critical issues of the society. They are better informed and aware of their rights and privileges, this awareness and enhanced options of rapid communication leads to active participation. The people belonging to different portions of the societies strongly react to the changes and advancements around them at any level, hence, increasing the sensitivity and role of the information technology. This study aims to highlight the increasing impact and psychological effects of the cyber bullying. Therefore, a deep and critical insight of the factors related to the cyber bullying including the age group of the persons involved, the probable responses of the users/involved persons, the magnitude and nature of interaction occurs, the overall environment in context with attitudes and behaviours, are deemed necessary.

1. 4 Objectives of the Research

The paper aims to focus on the impacts and psychological effects of cyber bullying. Additionally, the probable solutions will also be presented in accordance with the finding and analysis of the literature and primary data being collected. Moreover, an analysis of the nature of the cyber bullying will also be carried out in order to generate an enhanced understanding of the impact. Therefore, the paper aims on achieving the following objectives:

The extents of knowledge general peoples have regarding the cyber bullying.

Analysing the probable causes and intentions behind this act.

Highlighting the areas which either directly or indirectly relates to the cyber bullying.

Gaining an insight of the psychological effects of cyber bullying.

Presenting possible solutions for controlling and diminishing the affects of cyber bullying.

1. 5 Overview of the dissertation structure

The entire report consists of certain areas which are listed and discussed below:

1. Introduction: This chapter introduces the main aspects of the research. This chapter includes title and what is the objective of research. Besides that, this chapter gives background of research. This chapter explains the fundamentals of cyber bullying and the implications regarding its psychological effects. The entire chapter concludes with different research

questions and an overview about the research methodology that what strategy of research will be utilized in this research paper.

2. Literature Review: This chapter analyses the basics of politics along with the role of international politics in context with the Iraq invasion by the coalition. These fundamentals are explained in detail with respect to different theoretical models. Emphasis of this chapter is laid on the theories that are directly associated with the scenario. Therefore, it can be said that this chapter would give an overall idea about all the major aspects and terminologies that are directly and indirectly associated with the scenario of cyber bullying. Furthermore, this chapter would form a mindset of the reader that whether the cyber bullying leads to psychological effects?

3. Research Methodologies: The research methodology that is used in the research is discussed in this chapter. Although there are different methods of doing the research but due to the limitations of research only secondary and primary sources are used. Secondary sources are extensively used in this paper and the entire research is based on books, peer-reviewed journals, scholarly articles etc.

4. Findings and Analysis: The findings and different interpretations of the results are included in this chapter and all the results that are achieved are interpreted into meaningful form for further research and analysis. A thematic analysis is undertaken in this regard which would clarify the statement that cyber bullying leads to various psychological effects?

5. Conclusions and Recommendations: The entire research is summarised in this chapter and limitations of the research and certain recommendations

are also discussed in this research paper. Besides that certain recommendations are also presented in this dissertation. This chapter can actually be considered as the crux of all the chapters as it summarises other chapters and concludes with the final results.

1. 6 Summary

This chapter as implied by the name sets up the scene for the entire dissertation and it focuses on different aspects like background of the research, objectives of the research and review of the methodology. The methodology section depicts that both quantitative and qualitative analysis will be used. The introduction chapter gives up an overview of the entire dissertation and it also elaborates the facts that what other chapters are included in this dissertation and what are their contents.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2. 1 Introduction

There has been difficulty defining ' bullying'. After analyzing multiple definitions, Greene (2000) suggested that there were five features that researchers had agreed on. " It is aggressive behavior or intentional " harm doing" which is carried out " repeatedly and over time" in an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power. The victim does not provoke bullying behavior by using verbal or physical aggression; and bullying occurs in familiar social groups." (Vandebosch and Van Cleemput, 2009)

A study in Ireland was carried out to see the effects of bullying. 363 boys out of the 1870 participants (19%) reported to have been bullied at some point

in their life. It was found that the odds ratio was four times higher to self-harm or commit suicide in boys that had experienced bullying, over the ones who hadn't. This study found psychological issues within the bullied boys. They had problems getting on with their schoolwork, their sexual orientation and physical abuse. (McMahon, E, Reulbach, U, Keeley, H, Perry, I and Arensman, E)

This study displays the harsh reality of bullying, however it doesn't end there, as general bullying has moved on with technology. In the past it was limited to the playground, now it follows victims home, and they are unable to escape.

Cyber bullying is seen as the new breed of bullying. Ten years ago this sort of bullying wasn't heard of. However, technology has now made it an issue.

Such things include the internet and mobile phones. The internet has several different aspects, which can lead to cyber bullying. For example these include, email, social networking sites, instant messaging and skype. Problems with these now reflect today's bullying phenomenon.

There have been different definitions of cyber bullying, one of which say suggested by Olweus (1993), ' A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself'. (Slideshare. net)

2. 2 Legislation against Cyber Bullying

Law and legislation regarding penalizing the bullying has been implemented mainly in U. S in many states including New York, Maryland and Rhode Island. The laws have now been passed by seven states against digital harassment in 2007. Ordinance has been passed which has stated online harassment as a crime and would be dealt with state punishment in Missouri. In June, 2008, Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-Calif.) and Rep. Kenny Hulshof (R-Mo.) proposed a federal law that would criminalize acts of cyber bullying. Lawmakers are trying to state new legislation against cyber bullying as there is no specific law in the books which deals with this particular crime. A new federal law is expected to be implemented soon as no one has been prosecuted yet under this crime. The proposed federal law would make it illegal to use electronic means to " coerce, intimidate, harass or cause other substantial emotional distress."

In August 2008, the California state legislature passed one of the first laws in the country to deal directly with cyber-bullying. The legislation, Assembly Bill, gives school administrators the authority to discipline students for bullying others offline or online. This law took effect, January 1, 2009. A recent ruling first seen in the UK determined that it is possible for an Internet Service Provider (ISP) to be liable for the content of sites which it hosts, setting a precedent that any ISP should treat a notice of complaint seriously and investigate it immediately.

2. 3 Eleven Facts about the Cyber Bullying

In the recent past, various researches have been conducted to ascertain the facts regarding the cyber bullying and under mentioned eleven facts have been derived: –

Round about 42 percent of the kids have been found bullied online with a ration of one out of every four have faced recurrence

Among this percentage, being ignored and disrespected were the most common forms of cyber bullying.

In the case of middle school students approximately 9 out of 10 have had their feelings hurt online.

About 75% have visited a Web site bashing another student.

Four out of ten middle school students have had their password(s) stolen and changed by a bully who then locked them out of their own account or sent communications posing as them.

About 21% of kids have received mean or threatening e-mails.

The psychological and emotional outcomes of cyber bullying are similar to real-life bullying outcomes, except for the reality that with cyber bullying there is often no escape. School ends at 3 p. m., while the Internet is available all the time.

The primary cyber bullying location where victimizing occurs, at 56%, is in chat rooms.

Girls are about twice as likely as boys to be victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying.

About 58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online. More than four out of ten say it has happened more than once.

Cyber bullying has increased in recent years. In a national survey of 10-17 year olds, twice as many children indicated they had been victims and perpetrators.

2. 4 The Harshest Impact of Cyber Bullying

The effects of cyber bullying are quite harsh and can badly affect youth in their life. The statistics show that all individuals adults or teens are being bullied in their life but it is more common to teens. Many parents worry about their kids spending time on the Internet. However, research shows that most parents aren't thinking about cyber bullies; most are more concerned with their child coming across a pornography Web site. An article at middleweb. com shows that cyber bullying should be at the top of every parents watch list. The article's disturbing opening paragraph follows:

" Only after Ryan Halligan hanged himself did his father realize what the 13-year-old had been doing online. Through three months' worth of links and instant messages saved on his home computer, Ryan's growing pain – and the callousness of his online tormentors – became clear. ' You're a loser,' one message jabbed. There were other taunts, Web searches on suicide, and, ultimately, threats to kill himself to get back at school bullies. ' Tonight's the night,' Ryan finally typed. ' It's about time,' the screen replied." This nightmare situation continued after Ryan's death on October 7, 2003, when

his father, after clicking on his son's saved links, found months of horrible messages directed to Ryan.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3. 1 Introduction

This dissertation was conducted in order to assess the background and psychological effects of cyber bullying. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilized in order to gather the important data by the researcher. Two research methods were used for gathering the data for the research which are namely survey and interview respectively. The data gathered from the survey was then processed and analyzed which was later compared to the Likert scale for data interpretation. The techniques used in this study are there to analyze the data presented in the research. The research conception, methods applied to the research and rationalization of the research methodology applied are discussed within the presented chapter. Various approaches such as quantitative, qualitative, and Likert scale approach are explained in the following chapters with their respective limitations and advantages. The chapter also sheds light on the most appropriate data collection methods for the current research. The data collection procedures utilised the primary and secondary research are also reviewed in this chapter. It is important to note here that this research was mainly based on the questionnaires and interviews even though other research methodologies were briefly discussed.

In order to specify the procedures and methodologies for collection and analysis of the data a master plan is used known as " Research Methodology". Series of rational decision making alternatives are being

presented in the research methodology. These alternatives depend upon a range of available options to the researchers. The unit of analysis, time dimension, the purpose of study, data processing, sampling design, and analysis of the data are presented in the research methodology. Mainly two techniques of research, Qualitative and quantitative are utilized. Though both of the methods have their own significance, the use of exploratory quantitative research design for this study appears to be appropriate.

3. 2 Research Design

Research is an endless effort for truth. It certainly brings to light new knowledge or corrects previous errors and misconceptions and adds to the existing body of knowledge in an orderly manner. This part deals with procedure adopted to conduct the study. The researcher had to depend on the related literature and structured questionnaires. Descriptive data were typically collected through a questionnaire survey, an interview or observation. A formal structure research method will be suitable for conducting such type of research especially when the data is quantitative. Therefore conclusive research method has been chosen. Decision making will be based on the findings based on results obtained from literature review and interviews. The type of conclusive research that will be adopting is descriptive research method. This method helps to estimate the perceptions of factors characteristics. It is also very supportive in making specific predictions. The method of survey for obtaining data is based on the response and questioning of respondents. In this method, a variety of questions are asked from respondents regarding their perception and influence on their decision. This will help us measure its worth in today's life.

3. 3 Primary Research

Primary research is the collection of data that does not exist. This can be through numerous forms: including interviews, questionnaires, telephone conversations, surveys, etc. The major merit with conducting primary research is that it accurate. However, the disadvantage of primary research is that it may be time consuming, as it involves dealing with people from various regions, the human sources may only become resourceful out of their own willingness, and this may take them quit sometimes before making up their minds to tell you what they know or give you their side stories about your questions (Focardi & Fabozzi, 1998).

3. 4 Secondary Research

The data acquired from secondary sources is very important in forming the base for the primary research to be carried out. Cost and time effectiveness are the biggest advantages of the secondary sources which attracts the users to use these sources. The limitations of secondary sources entails to reliability of the source and difficulty in finding recent and relevant data.

The secondary data is collected from articles, books, journals, reports and other reliable sources. Moreover other sources such as public libraries, Universities and government sources can also be used for the collection of secondary sources. These sources have extensive data available on different research areas. Data can also be collected from directories and catalogues available in libraries or internet (Reid and Bojanic 2009). Secondary research is the collection of existing data, that is, in contrast to primary research. For example: research on experiments or specific subjects. The merit of

secondary research is that it's not time consuming however a disadvantage is that the information retrieved may not be relevant.

3. 5 Data Collection

In research studies, the source of data is two-fold. Data comes from the inner world of libraries as well as from the outer world of human being. It is either the shelved data or it is the data acquired live from the people involved in the study. This research being in the technological advancements and judgment of psychological effects of cyber bullying, the researcher aims to collect data mainly from the respondents. After considering the various methods of data collection such as ethnographic style, survey, experimental style, and narrative enquiry, interviews have been chosen as it allows the collection of highest opinions within the time span of the project as well as the fact that the results could be accurately mapped and correlated to provide quantitative information.

3. 6 Interviews

In order to achieve the purpose of the investigation, the key focus lies on finding out which techniques should be applied. Interviews were the best method for understanding this research. " A respondent interview is one where the interviewer directs the interview and the interviewer responds to the questions of the researcher". And to add more weight on this observation, Borodzicz, (2004) stated that the standard survey interview is itself fundamentally slipped and that it therefore cannot give out as the ideal ideological model against which to assess other approaches. He also elaborates by describing interviews as the verbal exchange of information between two or more people for the principal purpose of one person or group

gathering information from the other. And that Semi structured interviews enable one to fix and control circumstances in order to collect appropriate data while remaining flexible and responsive (Borodzicz, 2004).

Structured interviews consist of closed-ended questions, where the structure of the questions, responses and the interview itself is decided prior to the interview. The interviewer has more control over the responses, and can lead the interview into the direction they want. However, the responses received are limited. Semi-structured interviews consist of closed and/or open-ended questions, allowing the interviewer to have some control over the responses and the interview. Although the open-ended questions allow the interviewee to express themselves and encourage them to present their views and opinions. Unstructured interviews consist of open-ended questions that do not restrict the interviewee's responses, therefore collecting a wide range of information. This kind of interview is more supple in-terms of the questions being asked and their ordering, all depending upon the interviewees responses.

3. 7 Sampling Design

3. 7. 1 Sampling Unit

Sampling unit will consist of people having age of 15 years or more. The people belong to various disciplines of life including the students; the youth, the professionals etc. will be included in the sampling unit. Both males and females will be interviewed.

3. 7. 2 Sample size

Sample size of 08 people will be used.

3. 7. 3 Sampling frame

Sampling frame includes the following age groups:

15-25 years

25-30 years

30 or more

3. 7. 4 Sampling technique

Sampling without replacement will be used. According to this approach one element cannot be selected again, once it is used it is removed from the list to ensure not be selected again.

3. 8 Ethical Consideration

All the measures adopted in this research are aimed to avoid any ethical violation. The research tactics will affect the people from whom data and information has been gathered, so to avoid any violation by pursuing the following points.

- I will not force a specific outcome; rather go with an open mind to accept whatever will be the finding

- I will respect the privacy of our participants

- Proper credits will be provided to the document sources, I know that our college does not accept plagiarism. Plagiarism is a fraudulent act of a researcher when he or she uses the writings of other writers without citing the source (Nueman, 2003). It is more like stealing the work of another

researcher, it also include the immoral action of obtaining information from internet sources without providing proper citation.

3. 9 Potential Problems and the Remedies

Many respondents are unaware of the asked question or are unable to transform the event in a descriptive way; hence conscious effort should be provided in allocating it at right place to right person.

Researcher must take care not to let their prior theoretical frame work or pre-conceived notion blind them to contrary event in a social setting.

Qualitative researcher need to be sensitive to distinction of race, sex, and age and to other major social divisions.(neuman, 2004)

The facts reveals in open ended questions, that it can be affected by individual biasness, for that I will concerned more than five responses before drawing any conclusion regarding particular variable or speculation.

3. 10 Validity of the research

Validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about. The information collected from the above mentioned and discussed sources will have a validity reason being that they will be gathered from the genuine sources such as the websites and details taken from the manager. Therefore it will be the information at its purest form and will 100% validity.

Chapter 4: Findings

4. 1 Introduction

In this chapter, the data gathered from the different respondents who have interviewed in connection with their experiences and opinions regarding the cyber bullying and its psychological effects is presented and analysed. This chapter discusses the results of the interviews conducted to the 08 chosen respondents. In order to assure clarity and high level of understanding the selected respondents were briefed prior to starting the survey process regarding various basic aspects of the study which include purpose, significance and objectives. In order to analyze the data, sections have been formulated for the findings. The first section presents a synopsis of the demographic profile of the participants. This profile was categorised in accordance with various factors including gender, age, academic background, and place of residence of the respondents. The view of respondents regarding cyber bullying will be discussed in the subsequent section and in the last section, their standpoint on the conception that cyber bullying leads to various psychological effects. Data collected from the survey was collected and analyzed to achieve the desired aim.

4. 2 Demographic characteristics

This section will discuss the demographic profile of 08 individuals who answered the survey by the researcher. The description of the respondents includes their gender, age, educational background, and their experience. The majority of the participants were male (74%) and the age bracket was 15-35 years which shows that most of the participants were quite related to frequent use of information technologies. Hence, it is expected that with

their experience, the responses of this population would be more reliable, accurate and authentic. This was as a result of personal judgement used by the researcher, in an attempt to gain as much diversity as possible.

4. 3 Perception of the Respondents

The following sections will present the data and results in accordance with Likert scale. It is worthwhile to mention here that the participants were presented a set of statements so they can express their agreement or disagreement using five-point scale, wherein 5 is equivalent to an answer that qualities a strong agreement and 1 as showing a strong disagreement. This will provide a better understanding about the observations of the following respondents.

4. 3. 1 Evaluation of Respondents Perception

It can be stated that the judgement of the psychological effects of cyber bullying requires in-depth analysis of the responses. In this regard, this part of the paper would present the evaluation and assessment of the responses generated from the collected data.

Statement

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Are you aware of the cyber bullying and have you ever involved?

3

5

—

—

—

Do you think the social networking sites are the main mediums of cyber bullying?

—

4

1

2

1

Do you consider that the social level supports extended to cater cyber bullying (including the assistance by academic institutes for students) is appropriate?

—

2

3

2

1

Do you think social networking sites do enough to prevent cyber bullying?

—

—

2

5

1

Do you think that cyber bullying leads to various psychological effects?

4

2

—

2

—

Table 1 Evaluation of Respondents Viewpoint

4. 4 Interview

This portion of the research will present a brief analysis of interview

conducted from the selected respondents.

Are you aware of the cyber bullying and have you ever involved?

The respondents appear to be not only very much aware of the term Cyber

Bullying but they were also having sufficient knowledge regarding the effects

of cyber bullying. They presented their views and experiences about the

cyber bullying. It was revealed that most of them have bullied in the past and some of them even have being bullied more than once. Despite of having being bullied with different types of mediums, maximum of the respondents were of the opinion that they have gone through severe sort of stress during that specific period. The factor of stress was noted at a high ratio in the kids and the ones affiliated with schooling. They stated that the period they remained disturb