Effectiveness of Cyber Bullying Sensitization Program (CBSP) to Reduce Cyber Bullying Behavior Among Middle School Children

Surabhi Negi, University of Mumbai, Mumbai, India
Sunita Magre, University of Mumbai, Mumbai, India

ABSTRACT

Cyber bullying is the unwise use of technology to harm and humiliate an individual or group over the Internet. The purpose of this article is to test the effectiveness of the cyber bullying sensitisation program (CBSP) to reduce the level of cyber bullying behaviour among middle school students. The sample was restricted to adolescents as they are the ones who are most exposed and vulnerable in the cyber space. A quasi-experimental pre-post design with intervention was adopted for the study. The participants of the study were comprised of 186 middle school students from two private schools in India. The experimental group had 94 participants while control groups had 92 participants. Statistical analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between pre- and post-test scores in the experimental group. No significant difference was found between the experiment and control group before the program, suggesting that the program was effective in helping students in reducing cyber bullying behaviour. The implications for prevention and intervention programs were discussed.

KEYWORDS

Cyber Bullying, Middle School Children, Quasi-Experimental Design, Sensitisation Program

INTRODUCTION

In this era of technological advancement where we have been able to transcend boundaries and break barriers with the aid of the Internet, cyber safety has emerged as a major concern. Online stalking, harassment, threats, sexting (sexual texting), all in the name of cyber bullying have caught the attention of educators and policy makers.

Cyber bullying, is a term first used and defined by Canadian educator Bill Belsey around the turn of the millennium (Campbell, 2005). He defines it as ‘the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others’ (Butler et al., 2008). Cyber bullying entails a systematic abuse of power, through information and communication technology by a cyber bully. A cyber bully is someone who uses technology to harass, embarrass, intimidate, or stalk someone else. Due to the electronic nature of cyber bullying, it has raised concerns as a victim may have a more difficult time gaining a reprieve from the cyber bully, given the fact an individual can be exposed to this form of bullying even when physically removed from the bully (Hay & Meldrum, 2009). Thus, life in cyberspace is often intertwined with life in the real world. Cyber bullying as defined above spreads like wild fire...
at school, as what happens during the day is discussed online at night and what takes place online at night is often discussed during the day (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).

It is evident from researches that adolescents around the globe are experiencing cyber bullying (Martin et al., 2018; Moore et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2008). Passive viewing as a bystander, experiencing the bully or performing the act of online harassment are the ways in which adolescents participate in cyber bullying (Moore, 2012; Moore; Smith et al., 2008; Agatston et al., 2007). Bullying in cyberspace, is sometimes much more dominant than the traditional bullying that occurs in and around school, due to the Internet’s unique features (Huang & Chou, 2010). It can be more devastating than traditional forms of bullying due to the much larger audience online. Additionally, the anonymity offered by the Internet permits a bully to be even more abusive online than she/he would be in person (Strom & Strom, 2005). Several characteristics distinguish cyber bullying from other forms of traditional bullying, such as:

Online bullying can impact youth in negative ways. In a report by Patchin and Hinduja in 2006, almost 30% of adolescents reported they were victims of online bullying, meaning they were ignored, disrespected, called names, threatened, picked on, made fun of, or had rumours spread about them to others. According to a new study published by The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), one in every four Indian teenagers has been a victim of cyber bullying. Studies have shown that cyber bullying results in psychological symptoms like aggression, loneliness and low self esteem among boys (Hase et al., 2015; Schoffstall & Cohen, 2011) and its effects have also been associated with poor mental health, sex and drug use among adolescents (Oshima, 2012; Akbulut, Sahin & Eristi, 2010) which is alarming for researchers, educationists and clinicians. Cyber bullying not only hampers mental health but also the academic performance of the victims (Musharraf & Anis-ul-Haque, 2018; Muzamil & Shah, 2016; Hase et al., 2015; Bannink et al., 2014).

There is not a single miraculous solution that will protect all adolescents from cyber bullying, but there are steps that can be taken to reduce its frequency and impact. Given the fact that the majority of teens do not feel that adults are capable of stopping cyber bullying from occurring, educators need to begin by communicating an awareness of the problem, a willingness to help, and by showing some action and fostering the self-esteem of youth (Negi, 2016; Feinberg & Robey, 2009; Cassidy et al., 2009). Studies conducted on the awareness campaigns and intervention programs towards cyber bullying have reaped positive returns. After attending these programs, reduction in online bullying incidents and towards Internet dependency was recorded in the participants (Rey, Casas & Ortega, 2016; Williford & Depaolis, 2016; Cross et al., 2016; Herrera, Kupczynski & Mundy, 2015; Wahab et al., 2015; Tanrikulu et al., 2015). Education is a remarkable tool that can be used in the prevention and eradication of online bullies. Therefore, a program to evoke sensitivity against cyber bullying among adolescents is a must.

### Table 1. Characteristics of cyber bullying

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<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Wide audience</td>
<td>Through the circulation of video clips on the Internet, although the bully may not be aware of the audience’s reactions.</td>
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<td>Anonymity</td>
<td>Cyber bullies are relatively protected by the anonymity of electronic forms of contact, which can safeguard them from punishment or retaliation.</td>
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<td>Total Access</td>
<td>Students who are victimized have no place to hide, and can be targeted anytime and anyplace.</td>
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<td>Complex Roles</td>
<td>Individuals often play multiple roles at once, such as cyber bully, target, and observer.</td>
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<td>Lack of immediate gratification</td>
<td>Students who cyber bully do not usually see the response of the victim, changing the satisfactions or inhibitions normally generated by traditional bullying.</td>
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Performance Evaluation and Scheme Selection of Person Re-Identification Algorithms in Video Surveillance