

PREVALENCE AND IMPACT OF CYBERBULLYING IN A SAMPLE OF INDONESIAN

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ABSTRACT: *In recent years cyberbullying has become widespread throughout junior high schools around the world, resulting in high numbers of adolescents affected by cybervictimization. Cybervictimization is associated with negative psychological health outcomes. The objective of the present study was to examine the impact and prevalence of cybervictimization in a sample of junior high school students in Jogjakarta, Indonesia. A total of 102 seventh grade students were involved in the study: 72 (70.6%) boys and 30 (29.4%) girls. The majority (80%) of the students in this study reported experiencing cybervictimization occasionally to almost every day. The results suggest a positive relationship between cybervictimization and level of students' psychological distress. General recommendations for anti cyberbullying programmes are discussed.*

Keywords : Cyberbullying, Cybervictimization, Psychological Distress, Junior High School Students

INTRODUCTION

The number of people using the Internet in Indonesia is growing considerably from year to year. In 2010, the number of Internet users in major Indonesian cities rose from 30-35% to 40-45%, reaching a total of 55 million Internet users by 2011 (MarkPlus, 2011). Ease of access to the internet in this country has increased with widespread availability of smartphone and other web-enabled technology (Weiss, 2014). A large proportion of Internet users in Indonesia (50-80%) are young people from 15-30 years of age (MarkPlus, 2011) with a considerable proportion of this age group using the Internet for social networking. Social media platforms such as Twitter (Hamayotsu, 2013) and Facebook (Abbott, 2013; Yulianti & Tung, 2013) have become the most popular means of online communication in Indonesia (Galih & Ngazis, 2012). It is estimated that 30 million people in Indonesia have a Twitter account (Semiocast, 2013) and up to 51 million have a Facebook account (The Global Review.com, 2013). With advancements in technology, people are now constantly connected to the online world and have access to social media 24 hours a day (Sticca, Ruggieri, Alsaker, & Perren, 2013).

Use of internet and social media is associated with both benefits and consequences. Positive benefits include access to information (Subrahmanyam & Šmahel, 2011), access to teaching and

learning resources (Louge, 2006), and increased levels of social support (Amichai-Hamburger & Hayat, 2011). Sense of community and social connectedness are valued in Indonesian culture; therefore, use of social media applications such as Twitter and Facebook is popular (Nugroho, 2011). Such online communities can provide space for people to discuss issues that might otherwise be associated with stereotyping in Indonesia (see Nugroho et al., 2012, for discussion). Although use of the internet and social media platforms is associated with clear benefits for Indonesian communities, the ubiquity of internet and social media has also been associated with considerable negative implications. This includes unwanted exposure to sexual material (Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolak, 2000), cybercrime (Tokunaga, 2010), cyberstalking (Sheridan & Grant, 2007) and cyberbullying (Langos, 2012).

Cyberbullying is a form of harassment and humiliation associated with significant psychosocial problems (Bastiaensens et al., 2014; Dehue, 2013; Ouytsel, Walrave, & Vandeboosch, 2014). This includes increased social anxiety (Juvonen & Gross, 2008), low self-esteem and depression (Campbell, Slee, Spears, Butler, & Kift, 2013). This form of bullying typically occurs through mobile phone and online social networking websites (Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009; Juvonen, & Gross, 2008; Vandeboosch, & Van Cleemput, 2008). While traditional highschool bullying is associated with abuse that occurs during school hours (Besley, 2009), cyberbullying can occur long after school has ended (Griezel, Craven, Yeung, & Finger, 2008). Issues concerning traditional bullying have been discussed extensively in the literature; however, cyberbullying is a rapidly developing phenomenon that past generations who grew up without constant digital access have not yet experienced (Samodra & Mariani, 2013). The harmful impact of cyberbullying is a growing area of concern amongst parents, teachers and researchers (Navarro, Serna, Martinez, & Ruiz-Oliva, 2013). In order to support young people in Indonesia who are exposed to cyberbullying, it is important to examine the frequency and impact of such events on this population.

RESEARCH METHODS

A questionnaire was developed for the purposes of this study after adapting items from previous research (Bauman, 2009; Kwan & Skoric, 2013; Li, 2005;). A pilot study was conducted to test the validity and reliability of questionnaire before being used to collect data. The consistency internal tests of reliability were carried out using Cronbach alpha, and content validity was assessed using professional judgment. Two external experts in the field of psychology were involved in checking items in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire contained general questions on the frequency of cyberbullying; i.e., “Have you ever experienced cyberbullying?” Response options included: never, once or twice, several times, often, almost every day. Questions measured the type of media used by bully, such as “What kind of online media was used by bully to harrass you?” (Response options included: email, phone call, text, Facebook, and video), who

perpetrated the abuse, and how they responded after being bullied, i.e., “What did you do when you experienced cyber victimization? (Response options included: ignored it, fight back, told the teacher, told the parent, told the police, and told a friend).

The questionnaire also contained a cyberbullying victimization scale which contained several items that measure the frequency of cyber victimization experienced by the participants (“I have received nasty messages on my social networking account (Facebook, twitter), mobile phone and email”. “I have received insults on my social network account (Facebook, Twitter), mobile phone and email”. “I have received unwanted sexual suggestions/ sexually explicit pictures on my social network account (Facebook, Twitter), mobile phone and email”). Response options comprised of a four-point scale, from e.g., “I have not been bullied” (scored 1), “only once or twice” (2), “two or three times a month” (3), and more than three times a month” (4).

The final section of the questionnaire was adapted from Beran and Li (2007). It contained psychological distress scale which had several items to indicate the severity of burden experienced by participants (if you have experienced cyberbullying, how it make you stress? I feel sad, angry, anxious, fear, cry, difficult to concentrate, miss the school, got low grade, and blame my self). The psychological distress measure had a four-point response scale, from e.g. “not stress at all” (scored 1), “little bit stress” (2), “quite made me stress” (3), and “very stressful” (4). Table 1 presents the results of reliability, the mean and standard deviation of the scale of this study.

Table 1. Reliability of Questionnaires				
Variable	α	M	SD	
Cyberbullying Victimization	0.810	14.86	4.80	
Psychological Distress	0.863	18.50	3.56	

DISCUSSION

Overall frequency data

Out of 102 junior high school students, results indicate that 14.28% (14) of the sample had never experienced cybervictimization, 25.5% (26) experienced it occasionally (*one or twice*), 20.6% (21) experienced it some of the time (*twice or three times*) and 27.5% (28) experienced it often (*four or five times*). The remaining 12.7% (13) of participants experienced cybervictimization almost every day (*more than five times*). Approximately 80% of the sample had experienced cybervictimization from occasionally to almost every day. In this sample, a total of 19.6% (20) had never experienced bullying in school, 10.8% (11) experienced occasional bullying, 29.4.9% (30) of participants experienced bullying several times and 27.5% (28) of participants experienced bullying often. The remaining 12.7% (13) of participants experienced bullying almost every day.

Gender, age, psychological distress, and cyberbullying victimization

There were no significant differences of gender in cyberbullying victimization. Boys and girls had equally experienced cybervictimization ($F_{(1,100)} = 2.418, p > .05$). Age had no significant association with cybervictimization ($F_{(1, 100)} = 1.784, p > .05$). There were no significant differences in psychological distress among boys and girls in the sample ($F_{(1, 100)} = 3.195, p > .05$).

Gender and cyberbullying act

There were significant differences in cyberbullying acts amongst boys and girls. Boys (mean = 1.3) committed slightly more cyberbullying acts than girls (mean = 1.1) ($F_{(1, 100)} = 5.556, p < .05$, eta square = .053). This result suggests that gender has a determinant effect on cyberbullying acts in this sample. *Type of cyberbully's media used*

There were no significant differences in psychological distress levels related to the type of cyberbullying media used (e.g., Facebook, phonecall, SMS) to commit cyberbullying abuse ($F_{(1,14)} = 1.013, p > .05$). This indicates that all media used by cyberbullies has significant impact on victims. Out of 102 students, 14 (14.28%) participants had never experienced cyberbullying. Many participants experienced cyberbullying on Facebook (28, 27.5%), Twitter (13, 12.7%) and SMS (13, 12.7%). The rest of the participants experienced cyberbullying via phonecall, Twitter, Youtube and Facebook (34, 33.6%).

Type of cyberbullying act

There were no significant differences in psychological distress levels related to the type of cyberbullying act (e.g., name calling, threat, etc) experienced by participants ($F_{(1, 12)} = 1.387, p > .05$). All types of cyberbullying acts had equal impact on those who reported experiencing it. The majority of participants had experienced name calling harassment (46, 45.1%). 12.7% (13) had experienced name calling and denigration (defamation) acts, while 5.9% (6) had only experienced denigration. 4.9% (5) of participants had experienced name calling, denigration and threats and 3.9% (4) of participants had experienced name calling and abusive threats. The remainder of participants (14, 13.7%) had experienced multiple types of cyberbullying act such as name calling, exposure to unwanted sexual materials, denigration, disclosure of personal information and threats.

Who does the cyberbullying?

53.9% (55) of participants in the sample did not know who committed cyberbullying against them. 11.8% (12) noted that the bully was their friend in class, 6.9% (7) reported that the bully was their former best friend, 9.8% (10) said that the bully was someone in their school, and 3.9% (4) of the participants said that the bully was someone from another school.

What did you do when you are cyberbullied?

Regarding what action was taken when the participants experienced cyberbullying, 48% (49) ignored the behaviour, 31.4% (32) fought back against the bully, 7.8% (8) told a teachers/school administrator, 6.9% (7) said that they tell their parent about it, and 5.9% (6) told a friend about what happened to them.

Psychological distress, cyberbullying and bullying victimization

Participants who never experienced cyberbullying had lower psychological distress levels compared with participants who often experienced cybervictimization ($F_{(4)} = 46.31$, $p < .001$, eta square = .656). Results indicate that 65.6% of the variance in psychological distress was attributed to experience of cybervictimisation?

The present study also found significant difference in the levels of psychological distress between participants who experienced traditional bullying in schools with participants who have never experienced bullying ($F_{(4)} = 123.883$, $p < .001$, eta square = .836). Results also indicate that 65.6% of the variance in psychological distress was attributed to experience of bullying?

The results suggest that there is a positive relationship between cybervictimization with the level of participants' psychological distress. The more often students experience cybervictimization, the higher levels of psychological distress experienced by them ($r = .288$, $p < .05$). The study also found a significant positive relationship between cyberbullying victimization with bullying victimization ($r = .727$, $p < .01$). Therefore, becoming a bullying victim is linked with an increased likelihood of also experiencing cyber victimization.

Online activity and cyberbullying

In this sample, 30 (29.4 %) participants indicated using the Internet to do homework, while 40.2 % (41) of the participants use the Internet more for social media activities such as facebook or twitter, while 23.5 % (24) participants are using the Internet to play games online. Participants who used the Internet for the purpose of online social networking (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Yahoo Messenger), and for online gaming, were more likely to experience cybervictimization than participants who used the Internet for academic tasks ($F_{(2)} = 101.22$, $p < .001$, eta square = .672). This suggests that Facebook and other online social networking is a gateway for cyberbullying.

CONCLUSION

The current study has several limitations. First, there needs to be further exploration of cyberbullying in Indonesia by having a more representative sample. In addition to having a larger sample size, participants from different regions of Indonesia (e.g., rural and urban) would have improved the generalizability of study findings. It should also be noted that our sample contained a higher proportion of boys than girls, which may have impacted on the relationships between variables observed in the results. Finally, as has been suggested in other research regarding cyberbullying and adolescent samples (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a: Kowalski et al., 2012: Sticca et al., 2013: Menesini et al., 2011: Kowalski & Limber, 2013), the use of longitudinal research would be beneficial in establishing predictors and outcomes associated with cyberbullying.

This study adds to the field of cyberbullying by providing data on the frequency and impact in a sample of Indonesian teenagers. Results indicate that cyberbullying was associated with psychological distress amongst the teenagers in our sample. Evidence based bullying prevention programs offer some promise in reducing incidences of cyberbullying in the future. More research is needed to effectively design a successful, targeted prevention

program suitable for highschool aged boys and girls. In conducting prevention program, present study suggests to look at gender and type of media online. Related to gender, boys should become the primary target to resolve in prevention program, while facebook should also being take care as the dominant media where young people experienced cyberbullying victimization.

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