CYBERBULLYING: SELF EXPERIENCE AND PERCEPTION OF DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH’S STUDENTS WHO INVOLVE IN CYBERBULLYING

Sub-theme: cyberbullying

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Abstract

Bullying has everyone worried, because it can extremely affect to people who are being bullied. In this digital era cyberbullying has emerged as an electronic form of bullying that is hard to monitor. Humiliating, threatening or embarrassing in the form of text, e-mail, forums, or social media become increasingly common, especially among teenagers. Two of main reasons of being bullied can be because of appearance and social status. As many cyberbullying happen, it leads the researchers to conduct a research aiming to discover students of Department of English self experience also their perception for involvement in cyberbullying. The data is collected qualitatively by distributing questionnaire to the subject of the study. At the end, the study describes the various reasons and feeling among doers, victims, or can be both.

Keywords: cyberbullying, self experience, perception

Introduction

People are living much easier because of Internet nowadays. Both youth and adults have gotten the advantage of information and communication technologies (ICT). The easy access throughout this virtual world makes a lot of people are addicted with Internet. Generally, teenager especially middle school and high school students, and also college students are familiar with this Internet. They have been familiar with the kindness which is brought by the Internet. Along with the kindness of the easiness using Internet comes the harmfulness or risk, including the one that is the focus of this research: cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying itself can be defined as “cyberbullying uses language that can defame, threaten, harass, bully, exclude, discriminate, demean, humiliate, stalk, disclose personal information, or contain offensive, vulgar or derogatory comments which is intended to harm or hurt the recipient or victim. As we know that the definition can be vary depends on the experiences that everyone has undergone. Truth be told, everyone should have experienced becoming victim or perpetrator or even just become bystander. So that, they can perceive what cyberbullying is based on their own stories.

Commonly, cyberbullying research has been explored for several years yet it still focused at the middle and high school levels. So that, there are many ideas and attention toward cyberbullying at middle and high school students but less is known among college students. Besides, college students may have the highest chance to get harm of cyberbullying as most of them use the Internet and other forms of technology. Moreover, current data suggest that up to 20% of college students have experienced cyberbullying, though the specific perspectives of college students toward this phenomenon remains unclear.
Our goals for this study were to understand key issues from the perspectives of college students toward cyberbullying. Gaining this information would provide a deeper understanding of how cyberbullying is perceived by college students.

**Theoretical Framework**

According to Heidi and Katrien (2008), the term *cyberbullying* is often familiar to youngsters via the media and is usually connected with “bullying via the Internet.” When remarking to bullying that occurs via electronic means in general, it might therefore be worthwhile to consider the use of a more appropriate term (e.g., electronic bullying, digital bullying). Heidi and Katrien (2008) also stated that cyberbullying differs from forms of harassment by strangers aimed at one well-chosen target (e.g., pedophilic acts) or at a group of people (e.g., sending viruses or spam). Moreover, Heidi and Katrien (2008) said that other aspects that the respondents spontaneously answered are repetition and power imbalance.

Based on Chantal et al. (2014), the background data on ICT usage suggest that the majority use their computers in private (over half of respondents use the computer mainly in their bedroom). Most respondents spend quite a bit of time online daily. For their university course work, 54% spend one to two hours or less online per day, with female students generally spending more time online for university course work. During their free time, 59% spend three hours or more online per day, including 11% who spend more than six hours per day online during their free time, with male students generally spending more of their free time online. The evening hours of 6 pm to midnight are the peak usage hours, but afternoon usage is also common, both during the week and on weekends. The same top five online activities are preferred by both males and females, but in varying order.

Based on Chantal et al. (2014), over a third of all participants who had been cyberbullied reported that it affected their ability to do their assignments; it affected their relationships outside of the university; they experienced mental health issues; and/or they felt that their emotional security or their physical safety was threatened. The majority of respondents who had tried to stop the bullying against them reported that their efforts were unsuccessful.

Talking about the cause-effect of cyberbullying which is experienced by the victim, Raluca et al. (2013) stated that by using a self-report behavioral screening device, such as The Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS-21) and The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), they found data about emotional symptoms associated with cyberbullying. The results of their study suggest a significant association between face-to-face bullying and anxiety. Similarly, there was a significant association between experiencing both types of bullying (traditional and cyberbullying) and anxiety. Vandebosch and van Cleemput (2008) found that the main reason for students to bully others was the previous experience as victims in high school. Further work found a significant positive correlation between being a bully in university, high school and elementary school, with 21% of participants having been bullied (Chapell et al., 2006).

In order to prevent cyberbullying, Raluca et al. 2013 said that families and teachers should recognize the cyberbully or the victim and institutions must provide the guidance and
prevention activities meant to diminish bullying and cyberbullying consequences for the both victims and perpetrators.

**Methods**

This study is carried out in Department of English, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Negeri Malang. There were 34 students from various years. Participants were asked open-ended questionnaire as well as probing questions to share their thoughts on how they perceived; defined and reacted toward cyberbullying in their college life. Then, the data will be analyzed qualitatively to describe students’ perception toward Cyberbullying.

**Findings and Discussion**

**Students’ definition about cyberbullying**

![Figure 1. Students’ definition about cyberbullying](image)

Thirty four students of English Department of UM has responded to the questionnaire given by the researchers. Based on the question arisen about how far the respondents know about cyberbullying come to the results that 16 out of 34 students define cyberbullying as a one form of bullying which happens through internet. While other answers provided by the students are 14 students interpret it as crime that happens in social media, 2 persons answer as an act intended to hurt, frighten, and threaten someone, 1 states know nothing, and only 1 who answers correctly.

According to Cleemput and Vandebosch (2008), cyberbullying is a bullying action which happens both internet and mobile phones. Sending mean emails, texts or instant messages, posting hurtful things about someone on social media, or spreading rumors or gossip about someone through whatsapp broadcast are kinds of cyberbullying behaviour in real life. Ergo, it defines as bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, or tablets.
Figure 2. Students’ experience toward cyberbullying practices

The next thing to be discussed is by measuring the respondents’ experience whether as a perpetrator, victim, bystander, or never. According to Oxford Learners’ Dictionaries (2018), a perpetrator or a bully is a person who commits a crime or does something that is wrong or evil. While a victim is the one who got bullied and bystander is a person who sees something that is happening but is not involved.

To confirm whether cyberbullying mostly happen at Department of English of UM, the researchers raised question about their experience. The finding (see Figure 2) shows that the highest percentage among the four choice 35 % or means that 12 out of 34 students state that they never get involved in it and those who are as a perpetrator and victim in a time are also 12 people or 17 %. While, those who became as a perpetrator only are 5 people, and the rest 15 % experienced as a bystander or a witness. Some respondents who become the perpetrator declare their reasons of doing that, some of them are because he or she doesn't like the victim or maybe the victim did something in the past but the perpetrator hasn't forgiven the victim yet and the victim behaves inappropriately or unpleasantly. Meanwhile, the bystanders says that they only saw someone who were victimized without doing so.
The following question related to this is about how the respondents’ respond to the cyberbullying practices. Unfortunately, ignorance become the most choices (see Figure 3) by the respondents who experienced as a bully, bystander, or even they who do not. Some said that although they know cyber crime happened, they did not do anything, just keep quiet, or let them go. Meanwhile, 13 students state that they will take an action if it happens, such as reported the doer to the department, discreetly did couple of intimidations toward doer, reminds the perpetrator to stop bullying on any media, or even block their social media immediately. Besides, 2 out of 34 students will react depending on the case of bullying, whether it is too serious or not. The rest of the respondents says that s/he will keep doing it, whereas the other feel guilty because s/he plays a doer.

According to the question arisen to all of the respondents through questionnaire about their perception, most of them state that it is a bad deed that we must stop. It ruins people lives and may get them depressed or even do desperate thing. Suggestions are also given by them, such as ask parents to educate their children since childhood that cyberbullying is not a good deed, we should take a proper action because it might affect someone’s mental health, just be yourself and do not follow others, be ignorance or what others do, and be a good netizen.
Conclusion

According to the result of the study, the researchers conclude that although cyberbullying has widely emerged over the last several years, people do not really know what cyberbullying is. Instead of bullying that come into social media or everything connected to internet, it is actually all crime which happen using digital devices, such as embarrassing others through IG post, sending message intend to harass or mock the target, teasing others through social media, and many others. While, students’ experience toward it classified into being a perpetrator, bystander, both, and none (who do not get involved anymore). Responding that, unfortunate result come up that most students are being ignorance though it happens around them. While some of whom are taking an action and the rests are depend on the case, feel guilty and even keep doing it.

References


