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THE MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO COMBATING CYBER BULLYING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Cyber bullying is a growing pandemic that is presently most often experienced by young people, with the consequences expressed in schools, or bullying via the use of computers, as shown by the statistics. Many of the hallmarks of face-to-face bullying are present in cyber bullying, including a power imbalance and a sense of powerlessness on the side of the victim. Not surprisingly, targets of face-to-face bullying are increasingly resorting to the law, and targets of online bullying are likely to do likewise if the circumstances is appropriate. As a result, this study examines the many laws on criminal, civil, and vilification that may apply to cyber bullying cases and investigates the effectiveness of these laws in terms of resolving the power imbalance that exists between victims and bullies.

KEYWORDS: *Adolescence, Cyber Bullying, Psychosomatic Symptoms, Technologies, Vindication, Violence.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The widespread use of contemporary telecommunications in the digital age has provided enormous advantages to society as a result of its widespread use. It does, however, have a more sinister aspect to it as well. A good example of this is the phenomenon of 'cyber bullying,' which is defined as "the use of information and communication technology to encourage a person's intentional, repetitive, and aggressive conduct that is intended to harm others" by Canadian Bill Belsey and is defined as "the use of information and communication technology to encourage a person's intentional, repetitive, and aggressive conduct that is intended to harm others." Cyberbullying is a problem that affects people from all areas of life, but it is particularly prevalent among school kids at the moment.

As a result, for individuals who were born after 1982, electronic socializing and digital interactions have become a natural part of their daily life. These are known as the 'Net-Gen'. In fact, according to a 2005 Canadian survey, 94 percent of children used the Internet from their homes, with some children as young as fourth grade relying on the Internet to network with their classmates on a regular basis. As a result, it may not come as a surprise that the little amount of study that has been done on cyber bullying to far has focused mostly on this generation of digital natives. While there is reason to assume that cyber bullying will grow more common in older age groups as technology continues to infiltrate all aspects of life and

as digital natives move from youth to adulthood, there is little evidence to support this conclusion[1].

Technological tools such as social networking sites such as Myspace and Facebook, message boards, online forums, blogs, wikis, and e-mail, in addition to the increasingly ubiquitous mobile phone, have a high potential for being used against other users as a form of deception. The dangers of deviant adult predators abusing the Internet have been extensively highlighted and are generally understood by the public. However, it is only now being widely recognized that aggressive conduct using technology may have severe and long-lasting consequences on those who are targeted. Bullying victims, regardless of the form, often believe they are unable to resist or fight back against their assailants. Cyber bullying adds a new level to this sense of helplessness since it has the ability to strike the target at any time of day or night, seven days a week. A victim no longer has the option of relying on his or her own house as a safe haven from bullying actions. Victims of abuse, both civil and criminal, are increasingly turning to the legal system as a means of resolving the power imbalance that exists between them and their abusers, or at the at least of obtaining some kind of redress. The potential harm that victims may suffer as a result of acts that others may consider trivial or a "joke" justifies a closer look at whether the various laws that may be used are effective[2].

1.1 Concepts of Cyber bullying:

Cyber bullying may be described as an example of how technology is being utilized in bullying. A related question is whether the same concepts that apply to traditional face-to-face bullying apply equally to cyber bullying, or if new ways of thinking are needed in order to harass via technology. Face-to-face bullying is a complex problem, and the fact that sociological academics cannot even agree on the definition of the term doesn't help. Bullying, on the other hand, is considered by the majority of academics to be a kind of violence that includes at least four traits at its core. On closer inspection, these ideas would seem to be capable of being applied to cyber bullying at the very least. Second, the attacker intends to cause mental or bodily damage to the victim of their assault. Bullying is not something that happens by chance. It seems that the intent to do damage is also evident in cyber bullying situations. Second, the concept of a power imbalance is incorporated in most definitions of bullying, which is not surprising. When it comes to face-to-face bullying, the bully usually has a power advantage over the victim because of his or her height, age, or location. The bully, on the other hand, wants to maintain his or her anonymity in the instance of cyber bullying[3].

It is reasonable to suppose that the target will not feel any sense of power imbalance since he or she will not be aware of the other person's identity and traits, and therefore will not see himself or herself as being less powerful. Bullying, on the other hand, may be claimed to generate an imbalance of power just by the act of bullying itself. Furthermore, the anonymity of the bully, in and of itself, disadvantages the target and provides the bully with a degree of control over the victim. Face-to-face bullying is characterized by the recurrence of violence or the threat of more violence as its third basic premise. Both the attacker and the victim come to the conclusion that the assault will be maintained, resulting in the target's continued anxiety or dread. It would seem that this concept may be easily applied to cyber bullying situations. Technology provides easy ways for a seemingly endless torrent of hatred to be rained on the goal by a single individual. Finally, victims of face-to-face bullying are often unable to defend themselves or fight back because they are overwhelmed by feelings of helplessness, pain, and humiliation. Because of the worldwide reach of technology and the anonymity afforded to the aggressor, cyber bullying targets are no less helpless in the face of threats than, for example, a physically weaker target is at a disadvantage and powerless in the face of physical attacks from a face-to-face bully[4].

1.2 The Occurrence of Cyber bullying:

There has been very little published research on the prevalence of cyber bullying in the last several years. A significant amount of study has been conducted on the subject of cyber bullying among teenagers. This is probably reasonable given the fact that this is the birth of the first generation to grow up solely knowing a world that is linked to digital technology and the internet. Approximately 24.9 percent of adolescents in Canada reported being cyber bullied, according to a 2006 survey. According to an Australian research conducted in 2005, the incidence was just 14 percent, while a North American study conducted in 2004 discovered that only 7 percent had been verified to have been victims. According to another research, there has been a significant rise in the number of young individuals reporting cyber bullying targets, from 25 percent in 2002 to 35 percent in 2005. One issue that makes it difficult to make a meaningful comparison between these studies is the propensity of researchers to employ a variety of definitions of cyber bullying, which often include different forms of violence and do not adhere to generally accepted coexistence principles. The most that can be stated is that cyber bullying seems to affect about 20% of adolescents, which is a significant number in the context of this study [5]. The issue of whether males or girls are more likely to be cyber bullied remains unanswered, although no differences were identified in one study. The question of whether anybody who cyber bullies often engages in face-to-face bullying is likewise unclear. According to the same research, 64 percent of online bullies acknowledged that they were still engaging in face-to-face bullying behaviour.

1.3 The Implications of Cyber bullying:

The long-term effects of cyber bullying are still mostly unknown. Several media stories have linked suicides to the dead being recognized as cyber bullying targets, and it is unclear if this is true. Researchers have discovered that face-to-face bullying may cause victims to experience higher degrees of sadness, anxiety, and psychosomatic symptoms than they would otherwise experience. Further research has shown evidence of even more severe consequences for victims of domestic violence, including substantial bodily injury, attempts at self-harm, and verified suicides. It is possible that students who are bullied may have more behavioral issues and will feel socially inadequate, as well as higher levels of school absenteeism and poorer levels of academic competence. Bullying can have negative implications for future employment opportunities.

Despite the fact that there has been little study specifically on the impacts of cyber bullying, the fact that it may have much more severe repercussions than face-to-face bullying is owing to the wide range of features that can amplify the effect of the behaviour. In addition, depending on the circumstances, a wider audience, the bully's anonymity, the longer-lasting presence of the written word, and the flexibility to meet the target at any time and in any place, including the target's home, may all be advantages. In addition, cyber bullies will feel encouraged since they cannot see their targets or their instant responses, and they will believe that they will not be recognized as a result of the anonymity provided by the internet. It has been argued that anonymity would enhance the intensity of the assaults and allow them to continue for a longer period of time than they would otherwise be able to do face-to-face. However, although it is true that cyber bullying may only threaten physical violence rather than inflict it, research has shown that verbal and psychological bullying can have long-term detrimental consequences for the victim [6].

1.4 Cyber bullying as A Criminal Offence:

It may seem to some that the most severe response to bullying behaviour will be a criminal investigation and prosecution. First and foremost, the Director of Public Prosecutions may be unsure whether or not a case can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt in a specific instance, particularly when it comes to establishing the necessary intent to conduct the crime under consideration. The sheer existence of a police investigation, even if it is met with some

reluctance by the prosecuting authorities, may enable cyber bullying victims to regain a feeling of control and power that they would otherwise have lost if the abuser were not arrested and prosecuted. As a result, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the range of criminal offences that may be relevant.

1.5 Responsibilities in The Criminal Justice System:

When determining whether or not behaviour is illegal, one of the first questions to ask is whether or not the offender is regarded to be legally accountable for his or her actions. For young offenders, it is reasonable to assume that they lack the same capacity to comprehend the consequences of their actions, empathy for others, and the ability to control their impulses as would be reasonably anticipated of adults. It is only on the basis of age that criminal culpability is determined, and no other considerations are taken into consideration. Under common law, the age of criminal responsibility is seven years. As a result, this age has been raised to ten years in all Australian jurisdictions, which means that a cyber bully under the age of ten will never be held criminally responsible, whereas anyone between the ages of ten and fourteen can be held criminally responsible provided that a prosecutor can demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that the child knew he or she could not have committed the offence. To put it another way, it must be shown that the kid was aware that, as opposed to an act of just "naughtiness or infantile mischief," it was a wrong conduct of some severity on his or her part. In contrast, someone who is 14 years old or older is deemed to have the necessary mental capacity and is thus legally responsible for his or her acts[7].

1.6 Harassment and Stalking:

The past decade has witnessed an increase in the number of anti-stalking, bullying, and harassment legislation, both in Australia and across the world. Stalking laws are now in effect in both Australian jurisdictions, prohibiting conduct that is designed to annoy, threaten, or intimidate another person. In the words of one author, stalking is "one person's pursuit of what seems to be another's harassing or molestation campaign." Following the target, delivering articles to the target, sitting outside or driving by the target's house or office, and communicating with the target on a regular basis through phone, email, or text are all examples of common tactics. These offences have shown to be very helpful as part of a larger approach to control domestic abuse and similar behaviors in which a discrepancy in power is exploited in strange and scary ways, but which are still highly frightening. As a result, they are particularly relevant in the context of cyberbullying, when power imbalance is used in the same way as it does in all other forms of bullying[8].

2. DISCUSSION

In recent years, there has been a significant rise in the usage of modern technologies, such as the Internet and mobile phones. When it comes to education, the growing availability of new technologies may encourage students to connect with one another and to participate in collaborative learning activities. A large number of research studies have shown that the use of computers in the classroom may have a beneficial impact on learning throughout the curriculum. The advent of electronic communication into classrooms, on the other hand, carries with it a slew of issues that need our consideration. As an example, consider the growing and dangerous cyber bullying epidemic affecting schools, which refers to bullying others via the use of electronic communication equipment. Although many teachers and administrators are now aware of the issue of school bullying, just a minority are aware that kids are being harassed via the use of internet communication. Additionally, academics have yet to investigate the nature of cyber bullying, which is in contrast to the lack of knowledge among school officials. The increasing frequency and severity of cyber bullying calls on our educators, researchers, administrators, and law enforcement officials to take immediate and decisive action.

Teachers' understanding of what constitutes bullying and cyber bullying may be inconsistent. Many instructors believe that overt violence is the most important element, and that covert relational aggression is nothing more than squabbling and exclusion on the part of the students. Responses to a survey of pre-service teachers in the United States indicated that they regarded relational aggression as the least severe kind of bullying and that they were reluctant to act if such bullying happened. In certain cases, instructors may be ill-equipped to identify bullying-type actions because they do not have sufficient understanding of the subject matter. Educators may take the first step in developing a suitable skill set for dealing with bullying problems by becoming familiar with the range of bullying behaviors and undergoing empathy training[9].

In this digitally driven society, teachers and parents are usually lagging behind their students in terms of technical expertise, which results in insufficient supervision at school and at home, as well as a rise in cyber bullying and other forms of cyber bullying. A research conducted in Canada by Cassidy, Brown, and Jackson (in press) discovered that parents were typically inexperienced with newer forms of technology, such as blogs, with some admitting that even sending emails was a challenge. One of the most effective methods for bullying prevention is for instructors to get involved in the problem. However, this may be difficult if the teachers are not familiar with technological tools. As a result, researchers discovered that Australian instructors were more likely than their counterparts in other countries to concentrate on avoiding face-to-face bullying rather than cyber bullying. Teachers' lack of technological expertise and desire to act, according to the researchers, is a distinct kind of bullying that necessitates a multi-disciplinary strategy in both policy creation and teacher training. According to the researchers, cyber-themed school assemblies and curricular courses should be developed, managed, and delivered entirely by students themselves[10].

3. CONCLUSION

In recent years, cyber bullying has become more prevalent, especially among 'Generation Y,' or those born into the internet age. In many ways, cyber bullying is similar to face-to-face bullying, including the imbalance of power and the feelings of helplessness and incapacity experienced by the target to defend himself or herself. However, cyber bullying adds additional dimensions, such as the ability to reach the target at any time and from any location, as well as the perceived anonymity of the perpetrator. When it comes to familiarity with technology, there is little doubt that there is a generational difference between educators and students; this, in turn, limits educators' capacity to utilize technology in ways that promote politer online behaviour. Despite the fact that the younger educators were more familiar with technology and cyber bullying, only one (T3-B) had created a curriculum (even if it was just a few courses) to deal with the issue. Despite the fact that more than half of the educators stated that they were "very concerned" or "concerned" about cyber bullying, this concern had not been translated into policy or programmes, nor had it been manifested in their knowledge of what was happening with their students in their schools, according to the study. Numerous of the educators (including two administrators) were unable to identify any instances of cyber bullying, while several others were able to identify the same one or two incidents. Given the fact that 36 percent of students confessed to engaging in cyber bullying and 32 percent said that they had been victims, it can be fairly assumed that cyber bullying was occurring outside of the classroom.

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