Cyberbullying:
Definition, Behaviors, Correlates, and Adjustment Problems

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INTRODUCTION

Many youths have embraced digital technologies, such as mobile phones and the Internet. They often use these technologies daily (Lenhart, 2015). There are many benefits associated with youths' use of digital technologies, such as having the opportunity to communicate with anyone at anytime and in any location, access to information for leisure and school purposes at the click of a button, and easy access to entertainment (e.g., playing online games, watching videos). Despite these benefits, there are opportunities for negative interactions and experiences. These negative interactions and experiences might involve receiving unwanted electronic content via videos, images, and text, identity theft, misuse of personal information, utilizing fake or untrue information for school assignments, and sexual predation. Cyberbullying is another risk associated with youths' digital technology use.

Cyberbullying is often conceptualized as an extension of traditional bullying (Bauman, Underwood, & Card, 2013a; Grigg, 2012). Similar to traditional bullying, cyberbullying involves bullying behaviors that are perpetrated with malicious intent to cause harm to victim or victims through digital technology, such as email, instant messaging, social networking websites, and text messaging through mobile devices. The cyber context allows youths to keep their identity private or to remain anonymous. Because cyberbullies can remain anonymous, they often can harm their victims while also removing any concern for the consequences of their actions (Wright, 2014b). Furthermore, anonymity might lead youths to do or say things online that they would never do or say in the offline world. This is known as the online disinhibition effect (Suler, 2004; Wright, 2014a). Another characteristic of cyberbullying is that cyberbullies are capable of harming their victims in a shorter period of time. In particular, cyberbullies can spread a rumor much quicker in the online world than in the offline world. It might take minutes for a rumor to spread to the whole classroom, while it could take hours for this to occur in the offline world. In addition, cyberbullies can target victims as many times as they want and almost anywhere as well. No longer are victims safe in their own homes, as cyberbullying can follow them into their homes and other places they believe are safe. Cyberbullying can involve the bully and victim only, a bully and multiple victims, one bystander, or multiple bystanders. For example, a cyberbully might post a video making fun of someone and this video might receive thousands of watches, whereas being bullied in the lunchroom might be only visible to youths playing attention to what is happening. Due to these characteristics, cyberbullying is distinctive from traditional face-to-face bullying.

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature on cyberbullying among youths in elementary, middle, and high schools. The literature review draws on studies from different disciplines, including psychology, education, media studies, communication, social work, sociology, and computer science. These studies might also include those with cross-sectional, longitudinal, qualitative, quantitative, mixed

methods research designs. Another purpose is for these studies to explain cyberbullying in different countries in an effort to provide a much thorough review of the literature. The chapter is divided into six sections: a) background of cyberbullying, b) characteristics and risk factors associated with cyberbullying, c) negative consequences of cyberbullying, d) solutions and recommendations, e) future research directions, and f) conclusion.

BACKGROUND

Cyberbullying involves the use of digital technologies to hostilely and intentionally harass, embarrass, and intimidate others (Smith et al., 2013). The hostility and intentionality portions of this definition are key to defining cyberbullying, as these behaviors must include a desire to maliciously harm the victim or victims. Similar to traditional forms of face-to-face bullying, cyberbullying can sometimes include repetition and an imbalance of power. Repetition of cyberbullying acts is complex as sharing humiliating videos or text messages can be sent to the victim only, one bystander, or multiple bystanders (Bauman et al., 2013b). The nature of repetition in the cyber context makes it easier for bullies to continue the cycle of cyberbullying behaviors. It is possible for cyberbullies to distribute a humiliating video or text message to one person, and then for this person to share the content additional times with other people. The people can then also share the video or text message.

The use of digital technologies is a component of the cyberbullying definition that separates it from the definition of traditional face-to-face bullying (Curelaru, Iacob, & Abalasei, 2009). There are various digital technologies that can be used to perpetrate cyberbullying behaviors, such as sending unkind text messages and emails, theft of identity information, pretending to be someone else, making anonymous phone calls, sharing secrets about the victim by posting or sending the secret to someone else, spreading nasty rumors using social networking websites, threatening to harm someone, or uploading an embarrassing picture or video of the victim with malicious intent (Bauman et al., 2013a). Some other examples of cyberbullying behaviors are similar to those that occur in the offline world, such as harassment, insults, verbal attacks, teasing, physical threats, social exclusion, and humiliation. Cyberbullying can involve distributing explicit or embarrassing video through different mediums, including social networking sites, text messages, and online gaming sites, creating websites to defame someone else, and making fake social networking profiles using someone else's identity (Rideout et al., 2005).

Some cyberbullying behaviors have no offline equivalent, such as happy slapping and flaming (Rideout et al., 2005). Happy slapping is defined as a group of people who randomly insult another person while filming the incident on a mobile phone, and then these individuals will post the image(s) or video(s) online for others to see. Flaming involves posting provocative or offensive messages in a public forum with the intention of provoking an angry response or argument from members of the forum. Although cyberbullying behaviors can occur through different digital technologies, the most frequently used technologies include gaming consoles, instant messaging tools, and social networking websites (Ybarra et al., 2007).

Rates of Cyberbullying Behaviors

It is important to understand the prevalence rates of youths' involvement in cyberbullying as these rates indicate the likelihood that they will be involved in these behaviors. In one study on cyberbullying, Patchin and Hinduja (2006) found that 29% of youth in their sample reported that they were victimized by cyberbullying and that 47% indicated that they had witnessed cyberbullying as bystanders. Similarly,

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