



The emergence of cyberbullying in childhood: Parent and teacher perspectives



Claire P. Monks^{a,*}, Jess Mahdavi^b, Katie Rix^a

^a University of Greenwich, UK

^b Lansdowne Primary Academy, Gateway Learning Community Trust, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 19 June 2015

Accepted 16 February 2016

Available online 22 March 2016

Keywords:

Cyberbullying
Primary school
Children
Parents
Teachers

ABSTRACT

This study examined the awareness and perceptions of parents/guardians and school staff regarding cyberbullying among primary school-aged pupils. Eight focus groups (total sample size $N = 41$) explored the emergence of cyberbullying, characteristics of cyberbullies and cybervictims, the impact of cyberbullying, and the role of adult supervision. Participants were generally aware of cyberbullying and its various forms and felt that it could occur among primary school-aged pupils. Thematic analysis was used to identify themes emerging from the focus groups. Relating to the emergence of cyberbullying, themes included children's ability (literacy and computer skills), access to ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and external factors such as peer pressure. When asked about the characteristics of children involved in cyberbullying, themes included the relationship between involvement in cyberbullying and traditional bullying, the role of gender, and different motivations for cyberbullying. None of the groups felt that cyberbullying was less upsetting for victims than traditional bullying and themes surrounding the impact of cyberbullying referred to the nature of cyberbullying and discussions relating to the characteristics of the victim were raised. When talking about the role of adult intervention, participants mentioned the use of rules/restrictions and the perceived generation gap in ICT skills. Participants agreed that supervision of Internet and mobile phone use at home would be beneficial, but was less in accord regarding the usefulness of supervision at school. The findings are discussed in terms of their implications for research and interventions.

© 2016 Colegio Oficial de Psicólogos de Madrid. Published by Elsevier España, S.L.U. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

La aparición del cyberbullying en la infancia: la perspectiva de padres y profesores

RESUMEN

El estudio analiza la conciencia y la percepción de padres/tutores y personal del colegio en relación al *cyberbullying* en alumnos de la escuela primaria. Ocho grupos focales (con una muestra total de $N = 41$) exploraron la aparición del *cyberbullying*, las características de los ciberacosadores y de las cibervíctimas, la repercusión del *cyberbullying* y el papel que juega la supervisión adulta. Los participantes por lo general eran conscientes del *cyberbullying* y de sus variadas formas y pensaban que podría darse en los alumnos de primaria. Se utilizó el análisis temático para detectar los temas que surgían de los grupos focales. Relacionados con la aparición del *cyberbullying*, los temas incluían las habilidades de los niños (conocimientos y destrezas informáticas), el acceso a las tecnologías de la información y comunicación (TIC) y factores externos como la presión de compañeros. Cuando se les preguntaba por las características de los niños que se veían afectados por el *cyberbullying*, entre los temas estaba la relación entre implicación en el *cyberbullying* y el *bullying* tradicional,

Palabras clave:

Cyberbullying
Escuela primaria
Niños
Padres
Profesores

* Corresponding author. Department of Psychology. Social Work and Counselling. University of Greenwich. London, SE9 2UG, England.
E-mail address: c.p.monks@greenwich.ac.uk (C.P. Monks).

el papel del género y la motivación por el *cyberbullying*. Ninguno de los grupos creyó que el *cyberbullying* fuese menos molesto para las víctimas que el *bullying* tradicional y los temas alrededor del impacto del *cyberbullying* aludían a la naturaleza del *cyberbullying*, suscitándose debates relativos a las características de la víctima. Cuando se hablaba del papel de la intervención adulta, los participantes mencionaban la utilización de reglas/restricciones y de la brecha generacional que se percibía en las destrezas en el uso de las TIC. Los participantes estaban de acuerdo en que la supervisión del uso de Internet y móvil en casa sería beneficiosa, pero estaban menos de acuerdo en la utilidad de la supervisión en el colegio. Se comentan los resultados en cuanto a su implicación para la investigación y las intervenciones.

© 2016 Colegio Oficial de Psicólogos de Madrid. Publicado por Elsevier España, S.L.U. Este es un artículo Open Access bajo la licencia CC BY-NC-ND (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Research indicates that children have access to ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and are making use of it from a young age. In the UK, almost all children aged between 8 and 17 years report using the Internet, with approximately 80% of households with children having Internet access (Byron Review, 2008). Similar levels of Internet access are reported in Australia: 91% of households with children under 15 years have access to the Internet (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Children are using the Internet regularly. In the Netherlands, 84% of seven year olds had access to the Internet at home, with more than a quarter using the Internet daily or almost every day (27%) (Pääjärvi, 2012). Furthermore, children appear to have access to the Internet in more private areas of their homes (such as their bedrooms). In a sample in the USA, a fifth of three to six year olds had a computer in their bedroom (Vittrup, Snider, Rose, & Rippy, 2014) and approximately a third of 9 to 10 year olds surveyed in seven European countries reported going online at least weekly in their bedrooms (using a variety of different devices) (Livingstone, Mascheroni, Ólafsson, & Haddon, 2014).

Children are using the Internet to connect with others; in Australia, 11% of 9 to 11 year olds reported using the Internet for social networking, rising to almost half of those aged 12–14 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). More than a quarter of 9 to 10 year olds (27%) in a European study of seven countries reported having a profile on a social networking site (Livingstone et al., 2014a,b). In the UK, 30% of 7 to 11 year olds reported having social networking accounts (Broadbent, Fell, Green, & Gardner, 2013) and virtual world accounts (Holloway, Green, & Livingstone, 2013). There is also a high level of mobile phone access among children (Byron Review, 2008; Mobile Life Youth Report, 2006). Monks, Ortega, Robinson, and Worlidge (2009) found that 72% of 7 to 11 year olds in a UK sample owned a mobile phone (although whether these were smartphones was not reported). More recently, a large-scale European study indicated that 46% of 9 to 16 year olds owned a smartphone, with variability across countries; smartphone ownership was highest in Denmark compared with the UK, Italy, Ireland, Belgium, Portugal, and Romania (Mascheroni & Ólafsson, 2015). With the growth in Internet-enabled smartphones and access to the Internet through game consoles, televisions, and laptops, Internet access is becoming more available most of the time. Although there are many social and academic benefits to children going online, there are potential risks including involvement in cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying

A considerable and growing international body of research has focused on the nature and extent of cyberbullying (Cassidy, Faucher, & Jackson, 2013a). Generally, cyberbullying has been defined as a form of intimidation, harassment, and mistreatment on the part of an individual or group towards another, which involves the use of technological means to channel the aggression repeatedly and involving an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the target (Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, &

Solomon, 2010; Mora-Merchán & Ortega, 2007; Ortega, Calmaestra, & Mora-Merchán, 2008; Smith et al., 2008; Talwar, Gomez-Garibello, & Shariff, 2014). Rivers, Chesney, and Coyne (2011) note that cyberbullying can include abusive or silent phone calls, harassment via text or picture/video messages, in online games, on websites and social networking sites, in chatrooms, using instant messenger or email, twitter, posting abusive comments in blogs, or harassment in virtual environments (e.g., Second Life.) However, as Paul, Smith, and Blumberg (2012) highlight, the nature of technology, and consequently the nature of cyberbullying, is constantly changing, with different methods becoming more popular at different time points.

Research with secondary school pupils indicates that, although it is not as commonly reported as traditional forms of bullying, cyberbullying is experienced by young people (Modecki, Minchin, Harbaugh, Guerra, & Runions, 2014). A meta-analysis of international research found mean prevalence rates of around 15% (Modecki et al., 2014). Whilst researchers have shown that prevalence rates have stabilised over recent years (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014), it remains difficult to make direct comparisons of the levels of cyberbullying reported in different studies due to rapid historical changes in the use and availability of technology as well as methodological differences between studies (Rivers et al., 2011).

Young people are concerned about cyberbullying (Livingstone, Kirwil, Ponte, & Staksrud, 2014). It is perceived by children and adolescents as being as upsetting as traditional (non-cyber) forms of bullying (Monks et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008). Sakellariou, Carroll, and Houghton (2012) found that 45% of boys who had experienced cyberbullying felt that it was just as upsetting as, or more upsetting than, traditional forms of bullying. Young people who were victims of cyberbullying reported feeling sad and wanting to avoid school (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007). Cyber-victimization was related to increased social anxiety, even when controlling for experiences of traditional bullying (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Campbell, Spears, Slee, Butler, and Kift, (2012) found that cyber-victims reported higher levels of anxiety and depression than victims of traditional bullying. A meta-analysis of 131 studies found that stress and suicidal ideation were associated with cyber-victimization (Kowalski et al., 2014). Research has also found that involvement in cyberbullying as a perpetrator was related to higher levels of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts among 10–16 year olds (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).

Little research has examined specific motivations to cyberbully, although some are thought to be similar to those found for traditional bullying, such as increasing the perpetrator's feelings of power (Mishna et al., 2010). Hoff and Mitchell (2009) suggested that the anonymity of the perpetrator was also a motivating factor. Compton, Campbell, and Mergler (2014) found that different participant groups considered different motivations for cyberbullying: parents of adolescents felt that the anonymity was important, adolescents reported the avoidance of consequences; and teachers highlighted the ease with which an individual could cyberbully.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/919141>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/919141>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)