Cyberbullying Redefined: An analysis of intent and repetition

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to provide an operational definition of bullying behaviors mitigated by information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enable educators and administrators to better care for students being cyberbullied. A three-phase study was conducted and data gathered from 695 undergraduate college students. The Social Dominance Theory was utilized to determine the impact of social dominance ordinance (SDO) on the intentional act of cyberbullying. In addition, data were gathered to evaluate the emotional impact of cyberbullying on participants and formulate an understanding of repetition. Frequency, correlation, and independent samples t-tests data analyses were conducted. Findings support the concern expressed by past researchers regarding the definition of cyberbullying and allowed this researcher to present a more inclusive and decisive definition. This new definition will enable educators, researchers, administrators, and parents to better understand and therefore assist children and young adults who are being bullied via ICTs.

Keywords: cyberbullying, bullying, social media, web-based aggression, students, school adminstration, education

1. Introduction

"Technology . . . consists of more than structures and machines alone, more than just 'hardware.' It includes the uses of those structures and machine in the organization, evolution, and sometimes destruction of society" (Segal, 1994, p.2). Historian Howard Segal's suggestion that technology developments are a mixed blessing is profound when one considers the phenomenon of cyberbullying. The plethora of affordable technologies, used by Millennials, enhances the need for exploration into how they are used to bully others.

Bullying behavior became the focus of social and psychological research in the late 1970s, with studies led by Olweus (Olweus, 1993). Although there is disagreement on how bullying should be defined, a generalized understanding of two primary forms does exist. A direct format of bullying consists of physical aggression and physical or verbal threats. Relational, or indirect, bullying refers primarily to covert actions such as teasing, exclusion, social rejection, and spreading rumors (Chapel et al., 2006).

Once viewed as a rite of passage and customary aspect of childhood, the increased connection to violent and aggressive behaviors has brought bullying to the forefront of media headlines both nationally and internationally (Burgess, Garbarino, & Carlson, 2006). Bullying brings much emotional and psychological impact to its victims. Bully victims report increased emotional and academic difficulties, low self-esteem, and increased risk for depression (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Fitzpatrick, Dulin, & Piko, 2007; Kim, Catalano, Haggerty, & Abbott, 2011). Suicide and school shootings portray the severity of impact that bullying brings to today's youth (Burgess, et al., 2006; Cloud, 2010; Twemlow, 2008).

In the 1990s, this problem was clearly illuminated via an FBI report indicating that at least 21 of 27 school shootings investigated where precipitated via bullying (Burgess et al., 2006). The concerns continue to intensify in the 21st Century. In 2007, the Virginia Tech massacre was perpetrated by a young adult who was "immersed in a bullying dorm that exemplified the course of his childhood experiences of bullying and marginalization" (Twemlow, 2008, p. 128). Sadly, a nineteen-year-old Rutgers University student took his life, in September 2010, following harassment and invasion of privacy via a Webcam (Cloud, 2010).

As technology continues to evolve and become more accessible for today's youth, the researcher must be aware of the ability for youth to surreptitiously bully others via technology. The impact of cyberbullying is increased due to the anonymous nature that the bully is allowed. In addition, the inability for the bully to see the victims' emotional response decreases the likelihood of guilt on their behalf (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Klomek, Sourander, & Gould, 2010; Mason, 2008; Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Vandesbosch & Cleemput, 2008).

College undergraduates walk a line between the immature behavior of secondary school and their emerging adulthood. While some research indicated that bullying is most severe in middle school and decreased during secondary school (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007; Wolak Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007; Williams & Guerra, 2007), it is also evident that the college environment is not immune to cyberbullying (Akbulut & Aristi, 2011; Kentworthy, Brant, & Bartrum, 2012; Englander, Mills, & McCoy 2009; Rowe, 2014; Walker, Sockman, & Koehn, 2011).

The same negative emotions experienced with cyberbullying by teenagers were also reported for young adults. Reports of cyberbullying victimization for college-aged individuals ranged widely from eight to fifty-six percent. The range of those who were cyberbullies was from three to 20 percent. The range of percentages reported for cyberbullying may be due to lack of consistency in data gathered due to a non-standardized definition. The goal of this research is to operationalize the event called "cyberbullying."

A comprehensive literature review of cyberbullying research, focused on adolescents and young adults, revealed that there is little agreement regarding the wording and incidents that qualify as a bullying event propagated via technology. Most researchers have merely expanded Olweus' (1993) definition of face-to-face bullying to include technology (Burnham et al., 2011; Leenaars & Rinalid, 2010; Wright, Burnham, Inman, & Ogorchock, 2009). Li (2006) considered cyberbullying to be a "bullying problem occurring in new territory" (p. 166). Slonje and Smith (2008) expanded Olweus' concept of bullying to define cyberbullying as aggression that utilized modern technology, specifically the World Wide Web and cell phones.

Spears, Slee, Owens, and Johnson (2009) expressed concern regarding the definition of cyberbullying via their qualitative research with twenty students (aged 12 – 18) and six school counselors in Australia. The authors acknowledged the repetitive nature of Olweus' definition of bullying as having "common agreement" (p. 153) amongst researchers, yet questioned what the actual concept of repetition, a requirement in Olweus' definition, involved in the new atmosphere of cyberspace.

Other researchers moved away from Olweus and conducted research based on the concepts of harmful or cruel events to provide the different conceptualizations and create a common language (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Willard (2007) considered it to be the transmission of "cruel" text or pictures via technology (p.1). Terms such as aggressive, intentional, repetitive, willful and repeated, defamatory, and hostile are frequently utilized by researchers who evaluate impact of negative communications (Englander, et al., 2009; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Johnson, 2011; Smith, Mahdavi, & Carvalho, 2008).

The proliferation of technological contact Millennials access has changed the face of communication. The ability for any individual to create and publish information via user-generated content providers has led to an environment of "information exposure" in which individuals disseminate vast amounts of personal and confidential information to the world, which often is damaging and incriminating (Englander et al., 2009, p. 216).

The increased negative emotional impact that victims have reported, due to the anonymity that the Internet provides, lends Hoff and Mitchell (2009) to consider cyberbullying to be more than a modern form of an old event but more akin to victimization with an intent to "terrorize and assert dominance" (p. 659). The reported extent of cyberbullying victims varies greatly in percentages, despite similarities in other demographics such as age, location, and gender. These varying results have increased the necessity for an operational definition for cyberbullying that will provide more standardized reporting from victims and enhance the ability for administrators, educators, and counselors to support young adults being harassed via technology (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008).

Current articles focused specifically on defining cyberbullying are limited. Menesini, et al. (2012) conducted research in six European countries and provided 32 scenarios in which students (aged 11 – 17 years) determined whether each were cyberbullying or not. Langos (2012) provided an article that evaluated the definition of cyberbullying from a legal perspective based on criminal law and law of torts, in Australia.

1.1 Social Dominance Theory

Social Dominance Theory explains the impact of the social order of dominant attitudes based on society at large (Creswell, 2009; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). The "theoretical catholicism" of the Social Dominance theory can be utilized to understand the aspects of social actions that range from "acts of mobbing in the playground, to mild forms of prejudice and street gang violence." (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006, p. 57).

Human society provides an inherent group-based structure in which dominant and subordinate hierarchies reside. Through additional research, Pratto and Sidanius (1999) established an understanding of the high level of unspoken agreement that delineates groups that subjugate others from those who are oppressed. The achievement and actions of individuals in the group lends to the "social power, prestige, and privilege" of being a group member and the social status of the group itself (p. 32). The dominant, leader groups possess excessive amounts of *positive social value*, the material and figurative possessions that indicate political authority, wealth, and increased social status. Subordinate groups are those with high *negative social value* and thus have low power and social status (p. 31 – 32).

These hierarchies are established and maintained through *legitimizing myths* that are "attitudes, values, beliefs, stereotypes and ideologies that provide for moral and intellectual justification for the social practices that distribute social value with in the social system" (Pratto et al., 2006, p. 45). Two forms of *legitimizing myths* are discussed: Hierarchy enhancing and Hierarchy attenuating.

In society, hierarchy-enhancing myths (HE myths) are those noted to support the inequality that is inherent to group-based hierarchical system. Individuals who support HE myths believe that position in society was earned and therefore deserved. Contrary to HE myths are the hierarchy-attenuating myths (HA myths) that are noted to support equality (Pratto et al., 2006; Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Pratto et al (1994) utilized the term "trimorphic structure" (p. 33) to delineate the group-based hierarchies that exist in society: age, gender, and arbitrary-set. Age and gender-based hierarchies are historically very stable entities. It is with the arbitrary-set hierarchy that one can see the formation and sustainability of groups that may lead to cyberbullying. Considered part of the social structure, the concepts of arbitrary-set hierarchies may be applied to better understand the thoughts and actions of those who cyberbully and those who are cyberbullied. To determine the extent that each individual accepts or applies HE and HA myths to their daily lives, one must evaluate the concept of Social Dominance Ordinance (SDO).

SDO is the measure of an individual's general willingness towards endorsing legitimizing myths to support or deny group-based hierarchies. SDO may be noted as a broad empirical or conceptual range due to its relationship with any social dogma, attitudes, or beliefs that work to delineate and control the social power of individuals via inferior or superior groups (Pratto et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Research has indicated a relationship between SDO and gender. Studies found a significant difference in the SDO level between genders, with men having a higher SDO than women (Caricati, 2007; Dambrun, Duarte, & Guimond, 2004; Foels & Reid, 2010; Pratto et al., 2006; Pratto, et al., 1994; Zakrisson, 2008). These findings prompt this researcher to hypothesize a higher level of cyberbullying from men than women.

Pratto et al. (1994) provided data to better understand what academic interests individuals had and correlated those findings to SDO levels. Twenty career choices were provided and demarcated as *hierarchy enhancing* (HE) or *hierarchy attenuating* (HA) (p. 747). Professions, such as law, law enforcement, politics, and business were classified as HE careers. Social sciences, humanities, education, and fine arts were noted to be HA options. Results supported the hypothesis that participants who planned HA careers were lower in SDO levels than those interested in HE career paths, even after controlling for gender. Research results have indicated a correlation between college major, gender, and SDO. An analysis of the relationship between college major and cyberbullying is imperative.

2. Method

2.1 Phase 1: Exploratory research

Following IRB approval, a 27-item survey was distributed to students during university classes in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Students were informed that they were not obligated to complete the surveys, and they were instructed to check a box and not complete the packet if they had done so in another class. Data were analyzed from 120 students (70 female) ranging from age 18 to 24.

2.1.1: Data analyses, results, and discussion

Data analyses indicated that the majority (54%) of respondents knew someone who had been cyberbullied. However, only eleven percent had personally experienced cyberbullying. The findings brought to light additional discrepancies. For example, 30% of participants indicated they had experienced incidents of undesirable and obsessive communication. Based on the current operational definition of cyberbullying, these incidents were *forms of cyberbullying,* yet only 11% of participants felt they had been cyberbullied. These discrepancies led to phase two of this article, research to evaluate the operational definition of cyberbullying currently being used in research.

2.2 Phase 2: Analyzing Intent and Repetition to Define Cyberbullying

2.2.1 Sample, Population, and Participants

A random, cross-sectional sample for this research was drawn from the population of college students at a large public university in Western Pennsylvania. Following IRB approval, a 60-item survey (Cronbach's α = .761) was disseminated via Qualtrics™ to a simple random sample of 4,000 students during the spring of 2012 (N = 438). Seventy-one percent of respondents were female and every college major was represented in the study.

2.2.2 Measures

Ellis (2010) indicated that power levels relevant to the detection of small effect sizes in communication research range between .16 and .34 (desired = .80). Therefore, missing small effects between 66 to 84% of the time. To assure that this study was adequately able to detect effect, a priori power analysis was conducted.

Data from Cohen's (1988) tables indicated the necessity for a sample of over 200 to analyze correlation data and 64 participants for each group in the independent samples *t* test to achieve an 80% probability of detecting a real effect (20% probability of Type II error) with a medium effect size (.30). A sample of 370 respondents was determined to generalize findings to the campus population of approximately 11,000 undergraduate students (Patten, 2009).

When two groups differ in terms of sample size, the harmonic mean of the two is used to determine whether the a priori per-group sample size for *t* tests has been met. Each measure exceeded the predetermined participant size with the exception of the cyberbully variable, which was within acceptable limits (M_H = 57.6).

In keeping with the representative research (Akbulut et al., 2010; Akbulut & Eristi, 2011; Englander et al., 2009; Finn, 2004; Johnson, 2011; Schenk, 2011; Walker et al., 2011) a descriptive study was conducted utilizing a 60-item survey instrument (Cronbach's α = .761). Although the term *cyberbullying* was not utilized for the majority of the data gathered to prevent participant self-selection bias (Akbulut & Eristi, 2011; Juvonen & Gross, 2008), it was provided for the final question in the survey when the definition of Walker et al. (2011) defined cyberbullying as:

> The use of interactive technologies such as social networking sites, cell phones (text, video, voice, or picture messaging), instant messaging, or other newly developed technology-based communication tools. These tools are used to deliberately and repeatedly deliver slanderous, harassing, obsessive, or obscene messages that *result* in harm to the recipient (p. 37).

The questionnaire contained 13 relational bullying questions (RBQ) based on the concepts that Willard (2007) established as factors in cyberbullying. They are defined as *flaming* (angry or rude messages), *harassment* (recurring offensive messages), *cyberstalking* (threats of harm or intimidation), *denigration* (harmful, false, or cruel statements), *masquerade* (pretending to be someone else to make that person look bad), *outing* (sharing others' private information), *trickery* (tricks to solicit embarrassing information), and *exclusion* (intentional exclusion for an online group). Participants indicated their emotional response of sad, angry, or scared in a 5-point Likert scale for each item. In addition, the final questions queried participants exposure to "being cyberbullied" and "cyberbullying others."

2.2.3. Evaluating repetition

This study evaluated the extent of emotional impact from **one** episode of relational bullying via social media or hand-held technology. Crosstabulation data were analyzed to indicate the level of emotional response reported by participants who had experienced the fourteen cyberbullying items (13 RBQ and one CBR) *only one time*.

The percentage of individuals reporting feeling moderately to extremely hurt after only *one* incident ranged from 25 to 89 percent.

The percentage of respondents selecting occurrences of one or more times for the thirteen RBQ questions ranged from 1.1 to 29.7%. When provided with the definition of cyberbullying as: "Social media and /or cell phones, used to deliberately and repeatedly deliver slanderous, harassing, obsessive or obscene messages that result in harm to the recipient," only 9.9% of respondents selected occurrences of one or more times.

An analysis of the correlation between the response rates of the thirteen relational bullying questions (RBQ) to the direct question "have you been cyberbullied"(CBR) is also an important aspect of determining the accuracy of the current definition (See Table 1). The survey was designed to allow participants to respond to the RBQ without being provided the definition of cyberbullying to prevent self-selection bias. If respondents answer yes to any of the thirteen questions, they should also answer yes to the "been cyberbullied" question. Only three of 13 measures (Table 1) provide a positive medium or large correlation with respondents who answered yes to being cyberbullied. All but one of 13 is significant at the *p*< .05 level or lower.

Table 1

Phase Two: Correlation Between Being Cyberbullied Response (CBR) With Relational Cyberbullying Scales (RBQ) (N=403)

	Spearman Rho
Received Unwanted, Inappropriate Messages	.224***
Received Unwanted, Pornographic Images	.264***
Replied Unknowingly to Someone Posing as Someone Else	.215***
Facebook Friend "Friended" for Information	.229***
Received Harassing or Threatening Messages	**.429***
Teased or Made Fun of Due to Physical Appearance, Personality or Intelligence	**.311***
Harassed Due to Sexuality	.243***
Target of Untrue Gossip or Humiliating Comments	**.329***
Had Problems Due to Personal Information Shared w/o Consent	.134**
"Outed"	.251***
Blocked by others	.086
Private, Personal Images Shared w/o Consent	.163**
Other People Used Your Identity w/o Consent	.219***

* *p* < .05
**p < .01
***p < .001
Interpretation Guidelines: Small r=.10 to .29; Medium r=.30 to .49;
Large r=.50 to 1.0
(Cohen, 1988. pp 79-81). Medium and High results in bold.

2.2.4. Understanding intent

To evaluate intent, two supporting hypotheses were posed in relation to connection of the Social Dominance Theory and a person's desire to dominate others via social media and other technologies.

H_1: College-aged men will report a higher level of cyberbullying others than will college-aged women.

Research indicated that men are higher in SDO than women. If the current definition of cyberbullying is accurate, there should be a significant difference in the extent of cyberbullying between men and women, with men perpetrating more cyberbullying. An independent samples t test was utilized to compare the means between gender and the question that queried the extent to which respondents engaged in behavior that fit the definition of cyberbullying. To create a dichotomous variable, the responses were regrouped into "never (1)" and "one or more times (2)." When responses were reviewed utilizing a crosstabs analysis 6.9% of female respondents ($n = 20$) had cyberbullied others one or more times compared to male respondents at 9.6% ($n = 11$). An independent samples t test was conducted to compare the cyberbullying occurrences for males and females. There was no significant difference in scores for males (M = 1.10, SD = .3) and females (M = 1.07, SD = .25; t (401) = .925, p = .36. These data results indicate that the concept of SDO in connection with the need to be dominant when using technology-based communication is not supported for gender.

H_2: College students enrolled in HE majors will report a higher level of cyberbullying others than those in HA majors.

A second method for delineating the impact of SDO on cyberbullying is presented via an analysis of SDO correlated with college major. Research indicated that individuals who pursue hierarchy-enhancing majors (HE major) have higher levels of SDO than do those in hierarchy-attenuating programs (HA major). An independent samples t test was analyzed to determine the difference of major and amount of self-reported cyberbullying behaviors.

Demographic data were recoded into two different variables to provide a dichotomous set. Past research guided this process (Pratto et al., 1994). HE Majors were recoded as variable 1 and included business, law, and natural sciences ($n = 197$). HA Majors were recoded as variable 2 and included education, fine arts, humanities and social sciences ($n = 219$).

When responses were reviewed utilizing a crosstabs analysis the percentage of respondents from HE Majors stating they had cyberbullied others one or more times (8%, $n = 14$) was essentially equal to those of HA majors (8.1%, $n = 17$). An independent samples t test was conducted to compare the cyberbullying occurrences for HE and HA Majors. There was no significant difference in scores for HE Majors (M = 1.08, SD = .3) and HA Majors (M = 1.08, SD = .03; t (384) = -.020, p = .98. These data results signified that the concept of SDO correlated with the need to be dominant when using technology to communicate was not supported.

2.2.4. Interpretation

When the author evaluated the extent of emotional impact that one incident of cyberbullying had on the victim, in light of the tragedies that are befalling students in the twenty-first century, it is clear that the criteria of repetition in the definition of cyberbullying must be eliminated. Children and young adults need the support of administration, educators and counselors when cyberbullied – even if the incident only happens once.

In addition, data results do not support the concept of social dominance as an instigator for being a cyberbully. When young adults advocate for themselves and stand up to the cyberbully, it is imperative that perpetrators be held accountable whether they "intended" to inflict pain or not.

Finally, when comparing the frequency and relationship of the participants' answers to the thirteen questions that *are* cyberbullying to the question that presented the currently accepted definition of cyberbullying, it is evident that college-aged individuals are not connecting the two. Therefore, for future research the definition should be standardized and presented in a way that may provide more consistent results when students are queried regarding "being cyberbullied."

The author acknowledges that cyberbullying may be an intentional act, deliberately conducted to hurt or scare the recipient. However, these findings indicate that the current use of the traditional bullying definition (Olweus, 1993) to understand the impact of bullying behaviors in cyberspace is not comprehensive.

This researcher feels that the necessity to redefine cyberbullying is at the forefront of concern to assure that all acts of cyberbullying whether intentional and repeated or a single, random event are recognized. This will allow victims to advocate for themselves and receive the help necessary.

This concern is supported by qualitative research conducted by Baldasare et al. (2012) with most participants stating that the receiver's interpretation of the event should provide the defining factor. Spears et al. (2009) utilized triangulation of qualitative data to evaluate the human dimensions of cyberbullying. Participants reported cyberbullying as looking like "ostracism, exclusion, and intimidation" (p. 192) and sounding "cruel, vicious, obscene, torturous, and powerful" (p. 192). In addition, cyberbullying felt "unnerving, demeaning, inescapable, and unsafe" (p. 193). Vandesbosch and Van Cleemput (2008) also utilized qualitative research with 53 focus groups. When asked to define cyberbullying, the participants noted events such as spreading personal conversations, gossip, manipulating and sending personal pictures, sending messages with sexual comments, or humiliating someone online.

This study garnered expressions of emotions that included embarrassment, creepy, scary, stalkerish, derogatory, racist, anger, hurt, and frustrating. Therefore, the following definition is proffered:

> Cyberbullying is the use of web-based communication media or hand-held technologies by an individual or group to deliver slanderous, harassing, demeaning, obscene, racist or other offensive messages, images, or video either directly or indirectly that result in emotional harm to the target of the communication.

2.3 Phase 3: Validation of New Definition
2.3.1. Participants and measure

The chief researcher for the validation phase was Karleigh J. Bowen advised by the author. Following IRB approval, the survey utilized in phase two was distributed to undergraduate college students in a mid-size university in Northeastern Pennsylvania. When participants were queried, "have you been cyberbullied" (CBR) the new definition developed in phase two was used as the determinant of what constitutes cyberbullying. After obtaining informed consent, all data were collected anonymously via surveygizmo ® and 96 respondents completed the survey (74% female).

2.3.2. Results

The primary focus of this report was to examine participants' response when asked if they had been cyberbullied based on the new definition and their response to the RBQ items that are cyberbullying based in past research. Correlation analyses were conducted with a strong correlation noted between all but one of the RBQ items (Table 2).

An open-ended question allowed participants to indicate the psychological effects of cyberbullying. One participant noted, "When I was bullied over the internet [sic] I attempted suicide at my apartment during school. My doctor had to remove me from the school apartment to commute from home until I graduate."

Table 2

Phase Three: Correlation Between Being Cyberbullied Response (CBR) With Relational Cyberbullying Scales (RBQ) (N=403)

	Spearman Rho
Received Unwanted, Inappropriate Messages	.224*
Received Unwanted, Pornographic Images	**.394****
Replied Unknowingly to Someone Posing as Someone Else	**.455****
Facebook Friend "Friended" for Information	**.337****
Received Harassing or Threatening Messages	**.609****
Teased or Made Fun of Due to Physical Appearance, Personality or Intelligence	**.550****
Harassed Due to Sexuality	**.673***
Target of Untrue Gossip or Humiliating Comments	**.676****
Had Problems Due to Personal Information Shared w/o Consent	**.614****
"Outed"	**.587****
Blocked by others	**.519****
Private, Personal Images Shared w/o Consent	**.536****
Other People Used Your Identity w/o Consent	**.612****

p < .05
***p < .01*
****p < .001*
Interpretation Guidelines: Small r=.10 to .29; Medium r=.30 to .49;
Large r=.50 to 1.0
(Cohen, 1988. pp. 79-81). Medium and High results in bold.

3. Conclusion and discussion

The emotional impact of cyberbullying, that ranges from difficulty with grades to suicide attempts, indicates a strong need for children and young adults to be supported when cyberbullied. In many instances school administration and educators feel they have their hands tied due to the need for intent and repetition in the accepted definition of cyberbullying, spawned from the 20th century understanding of bullying. Based on these research results, the concept of intent and repetition should be removed. Inherent to the function of technology, bullying messages sent via the Internet are clearly more damaging that face-to-face bullying in that one episode can lead to serious emotional harm.

To that end, this researcher proposes that researchers, administrators, educators and counselors utilize the proffered definition when working with individuals whom have received harmful messages or images transmitted via technology. The strong correlation between the RBQ items that are *known to be cyberbullying* events and the new definition in phase three supports this proposal. Cyberbullying should be defined as:

the use of web-based communication media or hand-held technologies by an individual or group to deliver slanderous, harassing, demeaning, obscene, racist or other offensive messages, images, or video either directly or indirectly that result in emotional harm to the target of the communication.

3.1. Limitations and Future Research

When conducting future research it is important to consider the lack of correlation between the question regarding individuals "receiving unwanted messages that include songs, poetry or other exaggerated messages of affection or desire" to either the current or proposed definition of cyberbullying, in both phase two and phase three. While an undesired aspect of social media, this action does not fit the concerns of young adults as being a cyberbullying event and should be removed from surveys.

Future research is needed to continue the quest to understand cyberbullying in an effort to curb or stop the occurrences. To this end, much more data are required regarding aspects of why individuals cyberbully. Qualitative research would enhance this understanding. A nationwide study and analysis of the frequency of cyberbullying in each state correlated to demographics of living conditions, education levels, and socio-economics may provide researchers and counselors with data necessary to better understand the causes of bullying via technology. This increased understanding of the cause would aid in developing programs to educate youth and prevent future harm from bullying.

This research is limited in the age range evaluated; all data where gathered at the college level. In addition, Internet dispersion of the surveys inhibits exact knowledge that the recipient was the respondent.

3.2. Proposed Methods to Educate Millennials about Digital Citizenship

This area of research brings angst to the author. However, it is through research that change can occur and therefore the benefits of gathering and understanding the data far outweigh the costs. As society moves forward, it is through the education of our youth regarding these new communication challenges and how to deal with them that the future will be improved. Cyberbullying is not old wine in a new bottle. It is a new challenge that must be addressed as such with a new definition and education for Millennials.

One method proposed by this author would be through the use of high school and college curriculum to provide a required course to address communicating with technology and doing so with decency. This course would emphasize media and information literacy (UNESCO, 2014) and encompass digital citizenship, interpersonal, intercultural, and social media communication theories to provide a basis for the orientation and integration of social media ethics and etiquette in curriculum, lifestyle, and in business and career.

Research conducted by Kentworthy, Brand, and Bartrum (2102) provided the second consideration. A service-learning platform, utilized to educate undergraduate college students while working with secondary students, to advance their knowledge of how to recognize, avoid, and address cyberbullying should be considered as a vital part of the undergraduate college experience.

In closing, this author sincerely hopes that all who read this study benefit. No more powerful words can be reiterated than those of Ravi following the suicide of Tyler Clementi, "I just wish I had talked to him more . . . " (Sloan, 2012).

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