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Original Research Article

Forms of Cyberbullying In Relation To Self-Perceptions of Social Acceptance among High School Adolescents in Gilgil Sub-County, Kenya

Racheal N. Wanjohi
Lecturer Kabarak University Nakuru, Kenya

*Corresponding Author
Racheal N. Wanjohi
Email: wanjohiray1@gmail.com

Abstract: Adolescent value friendships and acceptance in the peer groups. To gain acceptance and conformity, the adolescents tend to get involved in a lot of self-disclosure of feelings and other personal information which can increase the potential vulnerability to certain forms of cyberbullying. The goal of this study was to explore forms of cyberbullying in relation to self-perceptions of social acceptance among high School adolescents. In particular, the study examined forms of cyberbullying from four perspectives: (a) What is the extent of using certain forms of cyberbullying? (b) Is there age and gender difference in the various forms of cyberbullying? (c) What is the influence of forms of cyberbullying on self-perceptions of social acceptance? Data was collected from 385 high school students from 6 schools using the Perceived Acceptance Scale (PAS). The study findings indicated that flaming and outing were practiced more everyday than other forms of cyberbullying. Age difference was not statistically significant in the use of online harassment, denigration, exclusion outing and impersonation except on flaming. Gender difference was not statistically significant in the use of the various forms of cyberbullying. Flaming, online harassment, denigration, exclusion, outing and impersonation had a negative influence on the self-perception of social acceptance. The present study sets a stage for future studies to be conducted on cyberbullying and psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: Adolescent, potential vulnerability, cyberbullying, Gender difference

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents highly value peer cliques and rejection from these groups can be extremely upsetting for teenagers (Johnson, 2011). This may be due to the fact that adolescents' perception of social rejection or social exclusion has an increasing effect on their self-esteem (Koppejan, 2011; Hinduja & Patchin, 2006). One of the unique characteristic of cyberbullying is the wide variety of methods used by people to carry out the harassment (Kowalski Limber and Agatston, 2008). Willard (2006) classified cyberbullying behaviours into seven categories; flaming, online harassment, cyber stalking, denigration, impersonation, outing and exclusion. Flaming involves sending rude messages about a person to an online group or to that person via e-mail or text message (Holt, 2010). Kowalski et al., (2008) indicate that flaming mostly occurs in chat rooms or discussion groups, rather than private e-mail exchanges. Online harassment is where bullies repeatedly send offensive messages via electronic means to another individual (Willard, 2006). The harassment normally occurs through e-mail and public forums, such as chat rooms and discussion groups. Cyber stalking includes threats of harm or behaviour

that is excessively intimidating. Denigration involves sending harmful, untrue, or cruel statements about a person to other people or posting altered photos of someone. Kowalski et al., (2008) identified online "slam books", as a form of denigration. Slam books are websites with a list of classmates' names and students write mean and nasty comments about targeted students. Impersonation which Bocij (2004) labels as "masquerade" is where bullies pretend to be someone else and send or post material that makes another person look bad. The sixth category is "outing", and it involves sending or posting material about a person that contains sensitive, private, or embarrassing information, including forwarding private messages or images. The final category is, "exclusion" where perpetrators cruelly exclude someone from an online group (Kowalski *et al.,* 2008). A new category termed as "Happy Slapping" has emerged whereby adolescents walk up and slap someone while another one captures the violence on camera phone, then the video is uploaded online (Kowalski, et al., 2008).

A study done by Su and Holt (2010) that examined the nature and extent of cyberbullying in

Chinese web forums and utilized a sample of 374 threads from 21 schools found that the most popular form of cyberbullying was denigrating followed by outing, flaming, and masquerading. The study reported that approximately 100 instances of denigration focussed on the adolescent's appearance, intelligence or sexual activities may be because these characteristic can be easily scoffed at and exaggerated. Su and Holt (2010) further noted that although most of the time a form of cyberbullying was used alone but there was also a significant overlap between the different forms in that sometimes they were used as a combination. According to the Su and Holt (2010) study, there were no cases of exclusion because the web forums examined were open for anyone to join. The study also was methodologically deficient in that it only used the qualitative approach. These factors may hinder generalizability of the finding to other areas. An online survey by Patchin and Hinduja (2006) involving 384 respondents, under the age 18 years indicated different forms of cyberbullying that included being ignored (60.4%), disrespected (50.0%), called names (29.9%), threatened (21.4%), picked on (19.8%), made fun of (19.3%), and having rumors spread about them (18.8%). Despite the relatively large sample size in Patchin and Hinduja (2006) study there is limitation on the generalizability of the findings because the study used convenient sampling method.

Studies reports that gender difference exists in the forms of cyberbullying (Patchin, 2015; Xiao & Wong, 2013; BoysTown, 2010). A study by Patchin (2015) reported that girls are more likely to post mean comments online while boys are more likely to post hurtful pictures and videos online. Trolley and Hanel (2010) study reported that girls are likely to spread rumours while boys tend to threaten others online. Barlette and Coyne (2014) study suggested that females engage in gossip more than males. However, males are more likely to use provocative and taunting behaviours during cyberbullying. Dehue et al., (2008) observed that females rationalize cyberbullying as aggression threats, name calling, rumour mills and destroying friendships. According to Xiao and Wong (2013) female use the online platform to spread rumours, exclude others and send harassing messages. Xiao and Wong (2013) argue that females use these forms of cyberbullying to perpetrate relational and verbal aggression. A study by BoysTown (2010) among a sample of 548 Australian adolescents also found gender difference in forms of cyberbullying. In this study Chi-square analysis indicated that the following were more common in female respondents as compared to males, abusive comments, spreading rumours and same applied to having their opinions slammed. Although in this study males were under represented, (males = 101 and females = 447).

According to a study by Tustin and Zulu (2012) in South Africa, 53.6% received upsetting messages, 49% had gossip and rumours spread about them and 48% were called names. Other cyberbullying incidents reported in the study include exposure to sexual remarks 24.5%, unflattering and suggestive personal photos spread online 13.3% and 8.7% had experience happy slapping (Tustin & Zulu, 2012). Majority of high school students in Ghana reported having experienced some form of cyberbullying at least once in the last six months (Sam *et al.,* 2016). The study indicated that despite the low accessibility to internet, the extent of cyberbullying in Ghana was much higher as compared to a study in UK (smith, 2013). Sam and pals (2016) study explained that adolescents could have adopted these forms of cyberbullying from the use of derogatory language which is a normal part of everyday communication in the adult's life. According to a study by Kigen, Kisutsa, Muchai, *et al.,* (2014), forms of cyberbullying identified in Kenya include posting of defamatory, hate speech, obscene matter or images on various social media websites.

Does the different forms of cyberbullying cause psychological impact on adolescents? Strom and Strom (2005) suggested that impersonation and posting hurtful messages for the public to view, embarrass the victim and ruin the victim's reputation. Strom and Strom (2005) argued that such actions consequently, create a great deal of anxiety among victims and negatively influence their psychological state. Kowalski et al., (2008) added that exclusion in the online world and other forms cyberbullying can have a serious emotional and psychological impact on adolescents.

A study conducted by Anderson (2012) in the USA suggests that one of the distressing effects of being a cyber victim is the perceived feeling of extreme isolation that makes the victim feel hopeless and have suicidal ideations. Consequently, a sense of non-acceptance and un-belongingness may cause the victim to lack the will to reach out for help from the significant others and this may result to suicidal ideations or committing suicide (Breguet, 2007). According to Maslow's (1943), the need for belonging and love focuses on our desire to be accepted, to fit in, and to feel like we have a place in the world. According to Stern (2008), the adolescent's self-esteem depends on peer group acceptance and conformity.

During adolescence, most social support comes from peers and its absence is associated with psychological distress and low self-esteem (Holt & Spillage, 2007). Having social support from peers gives one a sense of emotional well-being. Acceptance, popularity and involvement in peer groups therefore is considerably critical to the emotional and social development of the adolescent. Since some forms of

cyberbullying involves exclusion from groups, gossiping and slander then cyberbullying can have a major effect on development and the perception of self (Healy, 2013). In support of this, Harrison (2015) indicates that cyberbullying in Africa has negative impact on quality of relationship an adolescent has with peers and family. According to Sheldon and Epstein (2005), social acceptance involves feeling significantly related and connected to others. Furthermore, social acceptance is associated with self-confidence and high self-esteem whereas rejection from peers is related with self-doubts and low self-esteem. Self-esteem, therefore, can be comprehensively described to include how one feels about oneself in different dimensions and the value one perceives to have in the eyes of others.

There has been scarcity in research investigating forms of cyberbullying behaviour in relation to self-perceptions of social acceptance among adolescents in the prior studies, in Kenya. Relevant studies in other parts of the world seem to concentrate on describing the forms of cyberbullying (BoysTown, 2010; Holt, 2010; Su & Holt, 2010). However, the current study addressed these research questions (a) What is the extent of using certain forms of cyberbullying? (b) Is there age and gender difference in the various forms of cyberbullying? (c) What is the influence of forms of cyberbullying on self-perceptions of social acceptance?

Theoretical framework
Erick Erickson developed the psychosocial theory in 1963. This theory outlines the eight stages that individuals go through from childhood to adulthood and the psychosocial crisis in each stage. The psychosocial crisis during the adolescence stage is ego identity vs. role confusion. Erickson describes ego identity as the conscious sense of self that one develops through social interaction with others. The adolescents' self-worth stems largely from peer perceptions, popularity dynamics and current cultural trends (Boyd, 2006). The teenagers perceive the internet as a powerful tool to use to increase the way they connect and provide a way to express themselves. The adolescents expressing themselves online can become a way to explore their beliefs, values and self-perceptions and thereby to help them wrestle with attaining their sense of identity (Stern, 2008). The adolescents begin to focus more on peer group acceptance and conformity. It is not surprising to find the adolescent moulding their profiles to win the friends approval. According to Stern (2008), peer approval becomes increasingly predictive of adolescents' sense of self-worth. Boyd (2006) argues that adolescents are creating the digital world to get a "youth space", (unconstrained public space in which adolescents can "see and be seen" by peers). By so doing help support youth socialization and the assimilation of cultural knowledge. The youth cyber

space is a platform to maintain and reinforce social interactions (David-Feldon & Feldman, 2007; Walrave et al., 2008) or an opportunity to explore the adult world without supervision (Walrave & Heirman, 2009). It is interesting to note that the teenager will post stuff on their profiles so that they can receive audience feedback. Stern (2008) argues that connection and validation impels the young to share so much about their personal life on the cyber space. Pew Internet and American Life Project (2013) reported that as of 2012, the teens were sharing too much of their personal information in their social media profiles. The bullies can misuse the information posted on the cyber space and this can cause challenges that might result to potentially harmful psychological outcomes (Boyd, 2006). Young people who have low self-esteem succumb to peer pressure and manipulation which jeopardize their lives. Fischer (2006) supports this by indicating that the cyber life is intertwined with the real life so whatever is done online affects the person in real life. This theory addresses how online social networking provide social platforms that help adolescents to feel positive about their relations with peers.

Method
This was a mixed method study; the quantitative approach utilized an *ex-post facto*, cross-sectional survey design. The quantitative data was collected from 385 randomly selected from 6 high schools in Gilgil sub-location. To increase the rate of return, the participants in each school were assembled in one location and the questionnaires were collected immediately the exercise was completed. Focus group comprising of seven students discussed items on the related variables to yield qualitative data. There was acquisition of the ethical approval from the national research body, NACOSTI, the County office, the County Education office and the participating schools. The teachers gave consent because most respondents were minors but the respondents were informed that participation was voluntary.

Measure
The friend's subscale items from the Brook, Sarason, & Gurung (1998) Perceived Acceptance Scale (PAS) was used to determine the social acceptance of the adolescents. The Perceived Acceptance Scale is a 5-point Likert scale that asks the respondents to indicate their social acceptance in social setups, with a rating of 1= *Strongly Disagree*, 2= *Disagree*, 3= *Neutral*, 4= *Agree*, 5=*Strongly Agree*. The scale was constructed to directly assess global and relationship-specific elements of acceptance in mother, father and friend's subscales. This study selected only the items from the friend's sub subscale because the adolescents tend to be more concerned about their acceptance from their peer groups than their family members (Stern, 2008). When scoring

the PAS the following items were reversed scored 2, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11. The internal consistent for the friends sub subscale was Cronbach's alpha= 0.80. The quantitative data collecting tool on cyberbullying consisted of statements that were self-report measures with a 5-point Likert scale, with a rating of 1=*Never*, 2= *once or twice*, 3= *a few times*, 4=*many times*, 5= every day. Reframing the items to avoid using the term cyberbullying, on the quantitative data increase accuracy and reduce social desirability responses (Savage, 2012; Kert, Codding, Tryon & Shiyko, 2010). An experimental study by Kert and pals (2010) found that use of the term cyberbullying adversely affected the precision and honesty of the responses and also the frequency and prevalence rates on the findings. Similar discussion guides were used to guide the focus group to ensure consistency across the focus groups. A pilot study was conducted among randomly selected students not included in the final study sample. The pilot study helped to improve the comprehensibility of the items and instructions on the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sample had a balanced gender ratio, an average age of 16 years with a standard deviation of 1.26. Using the Key "*Never*" "*once or twice*", "*a few times*", "*many times*", or "*every day*," the respondents indicated how often they experienced or engaged on various cyberbullying activities. These cyberbullying activities were then grouped into the various forms according to Willard (2006) groups; flaming, online harassment, denigration, exclusion, outing and impersonation. Having posted gossip and altered photos about other people, was considered as denigration while spreading mean stuff about others was considered as flaming. The act of posting other peoples' sensitive and personal materials was grouped as outing while using false identity to make others look bad was considered as impersonation. Online harassment were those repetitive acts of sending threatening and offensive messages and exclusion was intentional excluding someone from an online group. The data collected was then coded such that "once or twice" was considered as rare, "a few times" was coded as occasional and "many times" and everyday were regarded to as common. The findings are indicated on Table 1.

Table-1: Distribution of Respondents According to Forms of Cyberbullying

	Forms of Cyberbullying											
	Flaming		Online Harassment		Denigration		Exclusion		Outing		Impersonation	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Never	246	63.9	191	49.6	175	45.5	210	54.5	214	55.6	217	56.4
Rare	58	15.1	84	21.8	62	16.1	72	18.7	71	18.4	81	21
Occasional	64	16.6	63	16.4	96	24.9	65	16.9	44	11.4	41	10.6
Common	17	4.4	47	12.2	52	13.5	38	9.9	56	14.5	46	11.9
Total	385	100	385	100	385	100	385	100	385	100	385	100

Note. n = is frequency

According to Data on Table 1, among those forms of cyberbullying that were considered common, flaming had the largest number of respondents (14.5%), followed by denigration (13.5%). Regarding the forms of cyberbullying that were considered to be occasional, denigration had the largest number of respondents. This is an indication that denigration was popular among the adolescents. Data on Table 1 indicates that in general all the forms of cyberbullying were frequently used among this age group. When Brack and Caltabiano (2014) used the same rating of *common, occasional* or *rare,* their study found common forms of cyberbullying to be denigration, exclusion, flaming, online harassment and outing. Although their study sample was older than the present study. Therefore, there is a likelihood that these forms of cyberbullying are frequently used among the adolescents and the young adults.

A comparison on engaging or experiencing different forms of cyberbullying at least once in the last six months indicate that both online harassment and denigration had the highest number of respondents (50.4%) and flaming had the least number (36.1%).

Both denigration and online harassment had the least number of respondents that reported having never engaged in this form of cyberbullying. A study by Sam *et al.,* (2016) that used the same rating of "*never*" or "*at least once*" found similar findings. Sam and pals indicated that majority of high school students in Ghana reported having experienced some form of cyberbullying at least once in the last six months. The study indicated that despite the low accessibility to internet, the extent of cyberbullying in Ghana was much higher as compared to a study in UK (Smith, 2013). The adolescents could have adopted these forms of cyberbullying from the use of derogatory language which is a normal part of everyday communication in the adult's life.

In the qualitative approach, when responding to the item; "*What behaviours does your friend engage in that you may consider as cyberbullying*?" The respondents indicated; spreading gossip, sending altered photos and especially naked photos, telling other people's secrets, abusing and harassing others. There was an overlap in that some respondents indicated that

they did not just use one form of cyberbullying but sometimes used a combination of two or more forms of cyberbullying. Most respondents indicated that spreading gossip which in this study is referred to as denigration as the most popular. These qualitative study findings were consistent with the quantitative data.

These findings were consistent with Su and Holt (2010) study among a sample of 374 high school adolescents in China that found the most popular form of cyberbullying in their study to be denigration. Su and pal found other popular forms of cyberbullying to be, outing, flaming, and masquerading. This study did not find exclusion from online groups because the web forums examined were open for anyone to join.

The present study had the same sample size with Patchin and Hinduja (2006) but there were variations in terms of percentages and groupings of the different forms of cyberbullying. Patchin and Hinduja (2006) found that 60.4% were ignored, 50.0% were disrespected, 29.9% were called names, 21.4% were threatened, 19.8% were picked on, 19.3% were made fun of and 18.8% had rumours spread about them. A comparison with other previous studies indicated inconsistent findings with some studies indicating popularity in other forms of cyberbullying apart from denigration. In BoysTown (2010) study, most common form of cyberbullying was name calling (80%), abusive comments (67%) and spreading rumours (66%). Deboelpaep (2005) found that the most common forms of cyberbullying included insults or threats, deception, spreading gossip, and breaking into someone's computer and changing the password. Tustin and Zulu (2012) in South Africa, majority received upsetting messages (53.6%), 49% had gossip and rumours spread about them and 48% were called names. According to Kigen et al., (2014), forms of cyberbullying identified in Kenya included posting of defamatory, hate speech, obscene matter or images on various social media websites. The difference in the conceptualising of the various forms of cyberbullying may lead to pronounced variations on the prevalence rates in the cyberbullying studies.

It was important to find out if gender influenced the choice of forms of cyberbullying. First, descriptive statistics between gender and the frequency of the forms of cyberbullying were examined. The distribution based on gender was presented in Table 2.

Table-2: Cross Tabulation Between Gender and Forms of Cyberbullying

	Flaming		Denigration		Exclusion		Outing		Online Harassment		Impersonation	
Gender	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)	M (%)	F (%)
At Least Once	36.8	35.5	50.3	50.6	50.3	40.7	43	45.9	50.3	50.5	43	44.3
Never	63.2	64.5	49.7	49.4	49.7	59.3	57	54.1	49.7	49.5	57	55.7
Total	193	192	193	192	193	192	193	192	193	192	193	192

Note: F is female and M is male

As shown on Table 2, there seems to exist a gender disparity in the way cyberbullying takes place. More males engaged in flaming and exclusion while more females engaged in outing, online harassment, denigration and impersonation. Amongst the different forms of cyberbullying, denigration had the highest proportion (50.6%) among the female respondents. the current study sought to test if gender difference was significant between the different forms of cyberbullying. The Independent-sample T-test was used to test the difference between the two independent measures (male and female) on the forms of cyberbullying. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Data on Table 3 indicate that the p values between gender and the various forms of cyberbullying (flaming (p=0.86), online harassment (p=0.85), denigration (p=0.75), exclusion (p=0.15), outing (p=0.73) and (p=0.9) for impersonation) are all greater than p= 0.05. Therefore, there was no significant gender difference in the use of the different forms of cyberbullying.

The present findings contradict a previous study by BoysTown (2010) that found gender difference in forms of cyberbullying. Chi square analysis indicated that the following were more common in female respondents as compared to males, abusive comments (flaming), spreading rumours (denigration) and online harassment. Similarly, Patchin (2015) and Xiao and Wong (2013) found gender variation in the forms of cyberbullying. Patchin (2015) findings indicated that girls are more likely to post mean comments online while boys are more likely to post hurtful pictures and videos online. Xiao and Wong (2013) revealed that females use the online platform to spread rumours (denigration) and exclude others. Xiao and Wong (2013) argue that females use these forms of cyberbullying to perpetrate relational and verbal aggression.

Table-3: Independent-samples t-test between Gender and Various Forms of Cyberbullying.

	Levene's Test For Equality Of Variances		T-Test For Equality Of Means					95% Confidence Interval	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Flaming	0.008	0.927	0.177	383	0.86	0.017	0.099	-0.177	0.212
			0.177	381.89	0.86	0.017	0.099	-0.177	0.212
Online Harassment	0.179	0.672	0.19	383	0.85	0.021	0.112	-0.198	0.241
			0.19	382.69	0.85	0.021	0.112	-0.198	0.241
Denigration	6.632	0.01	0.317	383	0.752	0.036	0.114	-0.188	0.26
			0.317	378.44	0.752	0.036	0.114	-0.188	0.26
Exclusion	0.018	0.893	1.433	383	0.153	0.152	0.106	-0.056	0.36
			1.433	382.41	0.153	0.152	0.106	-0.056	0.36
Outing	1.991	0.159	0.315	383	0.753	0.037	0.118	-0.194	0.268
			0.315	379.51	0.753	0.037	0.118	-0.194	0.268
Impersonation	0.025	0.874	-0.086	383	0.932	-0.009	0.109	-0.223	0.204
			-0.086	382.21	0.932	-0.009	0.109	-0.223	0.204

The study sought to find out if there was significant age difference in use of flaming, online harassment, denigration, exclusion, outing and impersonation using a one-way between-groups ANOVA. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table-4: A one-way between-groups ANOVA Between Age and Various Forms of Cyberbullying

		Sum Of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Flaming	Between Groups	6.889	2	3.44	3.71	.025
	Within Groups	354.472	382	.923		
	Total	361.361	384			
Online Harassment	Between Groups	4.217	2	.703	.583	.744
	Within Groups	455.446	382	1.205		
	Total	459.662	384			
Denigration	Between Groups	5.199	2	.867	.694	.655
	Within Groups	472.177	382	1.249		
	Total	477.377	384			
Exclusion	Between Groups	2.483	2	.414	.380	.892
	Within Groups	412.151	382	1.090		
	Total	414.634	384			
Outing	Between Groups	4.017	2	.669	.500	.808
	Within Groups	506.227	382	1.339		
	Total	510.244	384			
Impersonation	Between Groups	5.591	2	.932	.821	.554
	Within Groups	428.944	382	1.135		
	Total	434.535	384			

A one-way between-groups ANOVA recorded a statistically significant difference in the use of flaming across the three age clusters (group 1, n=167: 15 years and below, group 2, n=185:16-17years, group 3, n=33: 18 years and above) at p=0.05. F (6, 378=2-28 p=0.03). The effect size= *Eta* squared= sum of squares between groups/Total sum of squares which was 6.889/361361= 0.02. Despite finding a statistically significance difference, the actual difference in mean score was very small, *Eta* squared=0.02 which according to Pallant (2011) 0.02 is small. Post–hoc comparisons using *Tukey HSD* test indicated that the mean scores for 18 years and above Group (M=1.2, SD=0.5) was significantly different from 15 years and below Group (M=1.63,

SD=0.96) and 16-17 years Group (M=1.7, SD=1.0). The *p* values between the other forms of cyberbullying and age were greater than p=0.05. Therefore, there was not statistically significant age difference in the use of online harassment, denigration, exclusion outing and impersonation.

The researchers further sought to find out if forms of cyberbullying had an influence on the adolescent's perception on social acceptance by computing for the Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings are presented on Table 5.

Table-4: Forms of Cyberbullying and Adolescent's Perception on Social acceptance

	Self-Perception of Social Acceptance
Flaming	-.434**
Denigration	-.455**
Exclusion	-.490**
Outing	-.484**
Impersonation	-.466**
Online harassment	-.455**

Note: n=385
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Forms of cyberbullying indicated a negative moderate influence on the self- perception of social acceptance. According to the psychosocial theory that is guiding this study, exclusion from the online social networks may cause the adolescents to feel socially isolated. The psychosocial theory explains that inclusion in social networking facilitates adolescents' identity formation and provides an opportunity for self-definition and self-reflection (Conway, 2009). However, exclusion in the online world and other forms of cyberbullying have been found to cause serious emotional and psychological influence on adolescents (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Summary

The study findings indicated that flaming and outing were practiced more everyday than other forms of cyberbullying. However, when considering having used the forms of cyberbullying at least once in the last six months flaming had a small percentage. A One-way Between-groups ANOVA recorded a statistically significant difference in the use of flaming across the three age clusters (group 1, n=167: 15 years and below, group 2, n=185:16-17years, group 3, n=33: 18 years and above) at $p=0.05$. F (6, 378=2-28 $p=0.03$). Although the effect size was small (*Eta* squared= 0.02). The p-values between the other forms of cyberbullying and age were greater than $p=0.05$. Therefore, there was no statistically significant age difference in the use of online harassment, denigration, exclusion outing and impersonation. The commonly used forms of cyberbullying were outing 14.5%, denigration 13.5% and online harassment 12.2%. The occasionally used forms of cyberbullying were denigration 24.9%, exclusion 16.9% and flaming 16.6%. More males engaged in online harassment, denigration, outing, and impersonation while more females engaged in flaming and exclusion. However, Independent-sample T-test revealed that gender difference was not statistically significant. A negative relationship was observed between the forms of cyberbullying; flaming, online harassment, denigration, exclusion, outing and impersonation and self-perception of social acceptance.

CONCLUSION

Forms of cyberbullying were related to low levels of self-esteem, may be because adolescents are sensitive to embarrassing stuff that might interfere with how their peers accept and relate with them.

Recommendation and suggestion for further studies

Some forms of cyberbullying involve outing sensitive information, therefore, it is important for adolescents to be cautioned about sharing too much personal information online. This is possible if parents, guardians and significant others get more involved in their teenagers' life. The involvement will aid in detecting changes in their teen's behaviour, for instance, withdrawal signs when excluded, flamed or gossiped about. The current study can be replicated among university students; furthermore, studies indicate that cyberbullies are likely to continue with bullying in the universities.

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