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Cyberbullying And How It Impacts Schools

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Vida Zoe Choucalas

EDUCATION

2013	Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana Ph.D. in Educational Leadership
2009	Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana Ed.S. in Educational Leadership
2009	Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana Director of Special Education and Building Administration K-12
1997	Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana M.A. in Special Education
1987	Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio B.A. in Special Education and Elementary Education

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2006 to present	Porter County Education Services, Valparaiso, Indiana District Director of Special Education
1988 – 2006	Porter County Education Services, Valparaiso, Indiana Special Education Teacher
1987 – 1988	Youngstown City Schools, Youngstown, Ohio Special Education Teacher

CYBERBULLYING AND HOW IT IMPACTS SCHOOLS

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Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Vida Zoe Choucalas

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee Chair: Terry McDaniel, Ph.D.

    Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership

    Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana

Committee Member: Steve Gruenert, Ph.D.

    Associate Professor and Chairperson of Educational Leadership

    Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana

Committee Member: Dawn McGrath, Ph.D.

    Director of Special Education, Special Programs, and Leadership

    Kokomo Center Township Consolidated School Corporation, Kokomo, Indiana

ABSTRACT

With all of its many benefits to humanity, one of the consequences of the Internet age is a far more pervasive and potentially damaging version of bullying called cyberbullying, which can also be referred to as ebullying, electronic bullying, cyberviolence, digital bullying, electronic harassment, and online harassment. Cyberbullying is being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social cruelty using digital technologies. Because most children and young adults are computer literate and have access to a range of digital communication tools, cyberbullying has the potential to have more severe consequences than traditional bullying. This potential means that schools must find comprehensive approaches to combat the effects of cyberbullying, as it also undermines school climate and the safe and supportive environment that fosters student learning. The purpose of this research study was to gain a better understanding of the differing perceptions of cyberbullying based on the views of students, parents, educators, and school administrators. An Internet survey was used to gather information from groups of students, parents, and school staff of varying age groups, backgrounds, and locations. It was adapted from previously conducted surveys with several questions added for this specific project (Hinduja et al., 2009; Rogers, 2010; Trolley & Hanel, 2010; Willard, 2007b). The results of the study indicated that the perceptions of students, parents, educators, and administrators varied significantly in many issues. The most significant variations between subgroups occurred when looking at students' willingness to talk to any adult when they or others are being cyberbullied. Another significant variation was seen between

administrators and the other subgroups when looking at training of all stakeholders pertaining to cyberbullying and a school staff's ability to identify and appropriately address cyberbullying. Results indicated that even school staff seemed to be in the dark about what, if any, policy or process their school district had in place to handle cyberbullying.

As authority figures who are in the trenches with the students day after day, educators might have a better handle even than parents on students' school personae, social hierarchies, and the ever-changing affiliations that bloom and wilt before their eyes in classrooms and hallways. This makes it imperative that they know what is in place to help them take care of their students and help keep the school environment safe.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work and its achievements to my family. First, to my parents, Donald and Mary Barker, who are the most incredible people I know, and their unselfish sacrifices and unwavering strength and support have led me to this point. To my husband, Paul Choucalas, who gave me the courage and strength to reach for my dreams. To my children, George and Mary, who have their whole lives ahead of them and to strive to be the best you can be. Finally, to my sisters, Calliope, Themelina, and Georgia, who have families and careers of their own and have always inspired me to be the best version of myself.

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A special thank you goes to my parents, Donald and Mary Barker, who instilled in me the drive to become the best that I can be and the self-confidence to pursue my dreams. Your love, faith, guidance, and belief in me challenged me to be better and work harder.

I am also grateful to my husband, Paul Choucalas, and children, George and Mary, for their encouragement and support. They made sacrifices over the years and still managed to love me through all the trials and tribulations.

I must also thank my sisters, Calliope, Themelina, and Georgia, who have always been there for me and would walk through fire to help me. I am also grateful to my cousin Colleen who has always been like a sister to me, for her tireless help, patience, and support. Each of you has been there with encouragement and advice when I needed it most.

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CHAPTER 1

CYBERBULLYING

In the past, when a student was being bullied, he or she only had to worry when he or she were in or near the school since bullying required a physical presence to threaten, insult, or hurt the victim. The Internet, however, has helped add a far more pervasive and potentially damaging version: cyberbullying—also known as ebullying, electronic bullying, cyberviolence, digital bullying, electronic harassment, and online harassment (Swearer, Espelage, & Napolitano, 2009). "Cyberbullying is being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social cruelty using digital technologies" (Willard, 2007a, p. 1). Ybarra and Mitchell defined cyberbullying as an intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person online (2004b). The technologies used include email, cell phones, text messaging, personal websites, and chat rooms, among others (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a). This definition also includes "direct harassment or indirect activities meant to damage the reputation of the student targeted" (Willard, 2007a, p. 1).

Cyberbullying, which can be student to student, teacher to student, student to teacher, or adult to child (Mason, 2010), is a growing problem that researchers are still trying to fully define. Some maintain that cyberbullying is simply another version of bullying while others have described it as more harmful based on the fatal effect it has had on some of its victims (Drogin & Young, 2008).

Although most researchers in this field have found it difficult to agree on a clear definition for traditional bullying (Sanders & Phye, 2004), many use Olweus's (1993) definition: "a student is being bullied or victimized when he is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other students" (p. 9). Based on this definition, cyberbullying is a new and innovative form of traditional bullying.

Fauman (2008) noted that cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying in several ways. First, cyberbullies are not always more physically powerful than their victims, and they are often able to have anonymity on the Internet. Second, cyberbullies' aggressive behaviors do not need to be repetitive to gain the desired effect. A single derogatory posting is sufficient because it can be widely disseminated. Third, in cyberbullying the usual mode of communication is in written form and transmitted through technology instead of face to face.

Cyberbullying has the potential to have more severe consequences than traditional bullying, both emotional and physical (Lightburn, 2009). According to the National Institutes of Health (2010), children who are targets of cyberbullying at school are at a greater risk for depression. The report also states that cyber victims may not know the identity of the harassers, which may make them feel more helpless, isolated, and dehumanized.

In the last several years, many cases of adolescent suicides all over the world have been linked to cyberbullying. It has been difficult for school administrations to see cyberbullying as a school responsibility because the harassment usually takes place on home computers and personal cell phones (Shariff, 2008). However, school officials have reported a spike in suicides related to cyberbullying (Wolfe, 2010). Because cyberbullying can no longer be ignored, federal legislators are introducing legislation to require the Office of Safe Schools within the Department of Education to develop and distribute a policy related to bullying, including

cyberbullying (U.S. Federal News Service, 2008). This same report noted that cyberbullying will plague at least 13 million youth during the school year. According to the Cyberbullying Research Center, only five states currently have cyberbullying laws and policies (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b).

Purpose of the Study

Teachers and administrators feel that violence or gross acts of misconduct in the schools have been escalating for the last several years. School violence includes a range of inappropriate acts: assaults, gang violence, bullying, threatening, and destruction of property (Orcutt, 2007). Skiba, Boone, Fontanini, Wu, Strassell, and Peterson (2000) found the behaviors that were being reported as escalating by schools were not drug use, gang-related, or weapons offenses but students using peer pressure to force others to commit violence, verbal intimidation and threats, pushing and shoving, and sexual harassment—all forms of bullying.

Recent school shootings give the impression that there is a dramatic increase in school-related violence, but national surveys have consistently found that school violence has been stable or even decreased slightly (Skiba et al., 2000). Since 1992, the number of school-associated deaths (homicides and suicides at school or school-related events) has decreased by more than 50% (Larson, Smith, & Furlong, 2001). Statistics show a decrease in school-related deaths; however, school staffs are reporting an increase in school violence.

School violence was also defined by Olsen, Larson, and Busse (2000) as verbal taunting, bullying, harassment, gun possession, and physical assault. Previous studies indicate that traditional bullying is the most common form of school violence and 10% to 30% of students are involved in bullying regularly (Cho, 2007). Sanders and Phye (2004) reported that bullying in the current decade is more volatile and occurs more often, estimating that 49% to 50% of all

students are expected to experience some form of bullying during their education. And, as technology advances, so too will bullies' methods.

Youth spend a significant amount of time online, as indicated by 90% of preteens and teens having Internet access (Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2006). Patchin and Hinduja (2006) found that 10% to 33% of children between the ages of 11 and 19 have been targeted with cyberbullying and more than 15% of these children reported being the perpetrators of the harassing behavior.

Internet aggression causes a great deal of concern among students, parents, and teachers because of the long-term harmful effects to a child's social and emotional well-being that could continue into adulthood (Cho, 2007). Part of the purpose of this study was to examine how cyberbullying was having an impact on special needs students. These students are often more mentally challenged and/or emotionally fragile than the average student population.

A great deal of attention has been focused on this issue in recent years due to several tragic suicides and homicides as a result of cyberbullying. Youths who are bullied, or bully others, are at an elevated risk for suicidal thoughts, attempts, and completed suicides (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b). This research also found that peer harassment contributes to depression, decreased self-worth, feeling of hopelessness, and loneliness, which are all precursors to suicidal thoughts.

These tragic deaths have pointed to the fact that schools need to be more aware of the seriousness of cyberbullying and the tragic consequences that could continue to occur if cyberbullying is ignored. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property may still be impacting students' abilities to engage and participate to the best of their ability while at school. School staff and administration need to be more aware and prepared to deal with the seriousness of

cyberbullying both on and off school property in order to address the impact that it has on the students under their care.

Statement of the Problem

According to statistics analyzed by the Department of Education, student crime has decreased by a third in recent years and schools are safer today (Orcutt, 2007). And yet, bullying still occurs at rates higher than many educators or parents deem appropriate (Hoover & Oliver, 2008). In a study conducted by Hoover and Oliver (2008), 75% to 90% of students reported they had been harassed by fellow students and 15% reported severe distress by bullying. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project report (as cited in Swearer et al., 2009), one-third of students reported being targets of postings of personal communications for public viewing, rumors online, or threatening communication directed toward them. Data gathered in a 2007 report by the National Crime Prevention Council (as cited in Richmond, 2010) showed that 43% of students surveyed said they had experienced some form of cyberbullying in the prior 12 months.

Hostile exchanges that begin online have been linked to verbal and physical confrontations at school. High depression rates in recent research suggest that victimization at school is associated with victimization and perpetration online (Swearer et al., 2009). A school's learning environment and climate are inhibited not only by school violence but also by students' perceptions of school safety (Small & Tetrick, 2001). Some students report being so emotionally harmed by cyberbullying that they avoid school, are forced to change schools, or simply fail school (Willard, 2007b).

Most school-based aggression is face-to-face and the identities of the bully and victims are known, but this is not the case in cyberspace, where a perpetrator can easily remain

anonymous. However, some victims do seek revenge at school when they are able to identify their perpetrators (Willard, 2007b); this can be violent and has resulted in shootings or suicides both on and off school property. Carney and Merrell (2001) stated that victims are more likely than non-bullied children to bring weapons to school in order to protect themselves. Victims have shared that they had felt so tormented by their aggressors that they planned and sometimes even carried out acts of retribution. This retribution sometimes occurred when the children were still in school but had also been documented years after the bullying had occurred.

In the United States, suicide is the third leading cause of death in 15- to 24-year-olds (Sullivan, Cleary, & Sullivan, 2004). Feeling depressed, feeling out of control, or having a poor self-concept can cause some children to commit suicide. Cyberbullying can cause these feelings and has been known to push many children towards suicide and homicide. Cyberbullying victims are almost twice as likely to have attempted suicide compared to youth who have not experienced cyberbullying (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Two-thirds of school shooters reported that they were victims of chronic bullying throughout their school years (Swearer et al., 2009).

As cyberbullying becomes more prevalent in U.S. society, educators need to be aware of how this is impacting their school environments and the safety of their staffs and students. School officials must find a way to respect the right to freedom of expression while creating and protecting a positive learning environment within their schools (Broster & Brien, 2010). It is not yet clear whether educators and lawmakers have found a clear and appropriate role for schools to take when it pertains to cyberbullying. More than 40 states have bullying statutes; however, only five of those states include provisions for when schools should get involved in cyberbullying (Richmond, 2010).

Incidents of violence are traumatizing and can be life-changing not only for the victims but for the perpetrators as well. Violence in schools not only affects those directly involved but the bystanders, the school climate, and surrounding community as well. Peer aggression and harassment must be taken seriously both at school and at home.

Research Question

The purpose of this research study was to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of cyberbullying that have an impact on the school environment. This study explored the following research question: Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of cyberbullying among students, parents, educators, and school administrators?

Definitions

The following terms were identified for clarification in understanding this study:

Blogs or *online journals* are an electronic source where individuals post updates on their lives, experiences, and interests. Blogs can be used for any number of positive functions, but can also be used to post comments that are hurtful or damage another person's reputation (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008).

Bullying is when a student is being victimized and exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other students (Olweus, 1993).

Chat rooms are online environments where students with common interests join together to discuss topics in real time (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Rogers, 2010).

Cyberbullying is "being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social cruelty using digital technologies" (Willard, 2007a, p. 1). Ybarra and Mitchell (2004b) defined cyberbullying as an intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person online. Cyberbullying has also been called ebullying, electronic bullying,

cyber-violence, digital bullying, electronic harassment, and online harassment (Swearer et al., 2009). The technologies that can be used include but are not limited to email, cell phones, text messaging, personal websites, and chat rooms.

Cyberstalking is the use of electronic communications to stalk a victim through repetitive harassing and threatening messages (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Kowalski et al., 2008; Rogers, 2010; Shariff & Churchill, 2010). Messages may include threats of harm, intimidating or extremely offensive comments, or threats of extortion (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Willard, 2007b). Cyberstalking involves more threats than harassment (Kowalski et al., 2008), but when a target begins to fear for his or her safety and well-being, it is cyberstalking (Trolley & Hanel, 2010; Willard, 2007b).

Cyberthreats are direct statements of intent to hurt someone or commit suicide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Jacobs, 2010; Willard, 2007b). The threat generally contains information about an actual plan and can include material indicating that a person is considering hurting someone or themself (Willard, 2007b).

Denigration is information about another person that is derogatory and untrue (Kowalski et al., 2008; Shore, 2005). Willard (2007b) described denigration as "speech about a target that is harmful, untrue, or cruel" (p. 7). The information may be posted on a Web page or sent to others via e-mail or instant messaging.

Exclusion is a form of cyberbullying that is related to the in-group and the outcasts (Willard, 2007b). It is intentionally excluding someone from an online group and not allowing that person to participate in electronic communications (Rogers, 2010; Shore, 2005; Trolley & Hanel, 2010). Exclusion is also referred to as cyber-ostracism (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Flaming is a short argument using angry, abusive, and vulgar language (Rogers, 2010). Willard (2007b) stated that flaming typically occurs in chat rooms and discussion boards, as opposed to private emails. If a series of insulting exchanges occur, then it is referred to as a flame war. Flaming can be very heated and include veiled threats of violence.

Happy slapping occurs when physical assaults to an unsuspecting person are recorded on cell phones or other devices and posted on the Internet (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Jacobs, 2010).

Harassment was defined by Willard (2007b) as repeatedly sending offensive and insulting messages. Harassment often occurs via personal communications such as email, instant messaging, or text messaging, but can be sent in more public forums like chat rooms (Kowalski et al., 2008; Willard, 2007b). Sometimes harassment can occur by proxy by getting online contacts involved with tormenting the target (Willard, 2007b).

Impersonation is described as a perpetrator posing as the victim, most often by using the victim's password to gain access to the victim's account, then communicating negative, cruel, or misleading information in the victim's guise (Kowalski et al., 2008). It is pretending to be someone else (Rogers, 2010), also referred to as masquerading (Shore, 2005) or identity theft (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Indirect or relational *aggression* is often done through a third party and is done with the intention of damaging someone's peer relationships. It can be described as spreading rumors, social exclusion, shunning, or manipulation of friendships (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Outing is described as publicly posting, sending, or forwarding personal communications or images that contain personal information and can be embarrassing (Willard, 2007b). Outing is disclosing someone else's secrets without the person's consent (Rogers, 2010).

Physical aggression can include behaviors such as hitting, punching, strangling, or hitting with a weapon or object. It usually involves open attacks on a victim, which can be more aggressive if others are watching (Olweus, 1993).

School violence was defined by Olsen et al. (2000) as verbal taunting, bullying, harassment, gun possession, and/or physical assault.

Social networking sites are Web sites that encourage people to post profiles of themselves with pictures, interests and journals. The most popular social networking sites are Facebook, MySpace, LiveJournal, Friendster, Nexopia, Xuga, Xanga, Imbee, and Bebo (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Trickery can occur as part of outing (Willard, 2007b) and refers to tricking someone into revealing personal information about themself and then forwarding that information out to others (Kowalski et al., 2008; Rogers, 2010). It is also described as deceiving a person to gain personal information that is then placed online for public viewing (Shore, 2005).

Verbal aggression may be described as verbal assaults, teasing, ridicule, sarcasm, and browbeating (Campbell, 2005; Shariff, 2009).

Web sites are locations on the World Wide Web where people create their own personal home pages (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Limitations of the Study

Information was gathered from various sources and the participants were willing to share truthful information and were aware of the problem in question, thus the following were acknowledged as possible limitations of this research:

1. Students may not be honest in their responses for fear of retaliation or punishment if the student was found to be a perpetrator.

2. It may be difficult for school personnel to perceive the depths of cyberbullying in their school environments since much of it occurs off-campus. Unless parents or students have shared situations that are occurring, staff may be unaware that a problem even exists.

3. Parents may not be informed about cyberbullying or aware that a problem even exists.

4. Parents may not be aware of a cyberbullying situation if their children are not sharing what is going on in their lives. This may be due to the students' fears of exposure or the possible loss of access to their Internet connections.

Additional limitations of this research study were the weaknesses that are built into the research methodology (Creswell, 1994):

1. Indirect information is filtered through the views of the interviewed population. Through the surveys, participants will share information based on their perceptions and ideas of logic, morality, and culture.

2. Information is shared specifically based on a specific action rather than a setting. Cyberbullying is occurring in various settings, both on and off of school property. It will be difficult for some participants to recognize that the location of the cyberbullying is not the primary issue.

3. Participants may provide data based on what they think the researcher wants to hear (Bean, 2005).

4. Not all of the surveyed populations are equally articulate and perceptive. Many participants may not be able to clearly understand the survey questions being asked or interpret their thoughts, feelings, or perceptions of what occurred or resulted from cyberbullying (Bean, 2005).

Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations are aspects of the research study that may impact results but are taken into consideration as part of the research. The following were delimitations of this research:

1. The school districts that were asked to participate were chosen based on geographical location offering a mixture of urban, suburban, and rural populations. Districts were selected based on differences in economic status allowing for participation from low, middle, and high incomes. Districts also include students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds.

2. There were nine superintendents invited to participate in the research study, three each from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana school districts. One superintendent in Ohio directed a consolidated area covering several school districts and cities in that locale.

3. Some school districts encouraged participation in the research study, which might have caused the final results to be more so based on one location than an equal combination of several locations.

Summary

Although cyberbullying occurs in the virtual world, its effects are very real and may be having a tremendous impact on school environments, including student attendance and achievement. This first chapter was an introduction to cyberbullying and how it differs from traditional bullying. Chapter 2 reviews the progression of traditional bullying to cyberbullying and its effects on students, including the latest statistics and data. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of this study. Chapter 4 summarizes the study's findings and address the research

questions presented therein. The final chapter is a discussion of the findings and the researcher's

interpretation of those findings, along with recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cyberbullying—a new form of the very old practice of bullying—has become more

prevalent and insidious with technological advancements. Unlike cyber-harassment or cyber-

stalking, which are behaviors of an adult perpetrator (Kowalski et al., 2008), cyberbullying

occurs among minors. To fully understand the phenomenon, one should look at traditional forms

of bullying and then look at what the technological age has wrought.

Traditional Bullying

Although the first instance of bullying could probably be attributed to Cain against Abel,

the first research done on peer harassment or victimization/bullying was conducted only as

recently as the late 1960s and early 1970s in Sweden (Olweus, 2010). Olweus defined bullying

in 1972 as "behavior intended to inflict injury or discomfort upon another individual" (Olweus,

2010, p. 11). Bullying was not recognized as problematic in schools in Britain and the United

States until the 1980s (Shariff, 2009).

Roland (1989) stated that bullying is "longstanding violence, physical or psychological,

conducted by an individual or a group directed against an individual who is unable to defend

himself" (p. 21). Johnson, Munn, and Edwards (1991) described bullying as a willful, conscious

wish to hurt, frighten, or threaten someone. In 1993, Olweus modified his definition of bullying

as an aggressive, intentional act or behavior that is carried out repeatedly and over time against a

victim who is viewed as unable to defend him or herself (Campbell, 2005; Olweus, 2001,

Shariff, 2009).

Different researchers have defined bullying in mostly similar ways, with three main

characteristics:

1. It is deliberate or intentional (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Olweus, 2001; Shariff, 2009).
   It is often driven by a need for power and recognition. This need for power is not just
   a physical strength but a desire for social power or peer status (Kowalski et al., 2008).

2. It is a repeated action (James, 2010; Olweus, 2001; Shariff, 2009). The repetitive
   nature of bullying creates a situation where the victim is consumed with worrying
   about what the bully will do next (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

3. A noticeable imbalance of power exists between the bully and the victim (Hinduja &
   Patchin, 2009; James, 2010; Shariff, 2009; Shore, 2005). This imbalance of power is
   often described as a systematic abuse of power (Smith & Sharp, 1994).

Bullying is considered to be one-sided and typically takes place when a stronger or more

powerful child intentionally hurts, threatens, or torments a more vulnerable child (Shore, 2005).

Shariff (2009) noted, "Bullying tends to become more insidious as it continues over time and

may be better equated to violence rather than harassment" (p. 11).

The most common types of bullying are physical, verbal, indirect, or relational

aggression (James, 2010; Smith & Slonje, 2010). Smith and Slonje (2010) further explained that

physical and verbal aggressions are usually done face-to-face. Physical aggression can include

behaviors such as hitting, punching, strangling, or hitting with a weapon or object. It usually

involves open attacks on a victim, which can be more aggressive if others are watching (Olweus,

1993).

Verbal aggression may be described as verbal assaults, teasing, ridicule, sarcasm, and browbeating (Campbell, 2005; Shariff, 2009). Verbal abuse is the most commonly reported type of bullying (James, 2010). Indirect or relational aggression is often done through a third party and is done with the intention of damaging someone's peer relationships. Indirect aggression can be described as spreading rumors, social exclusion, shunning, or manipulation of friendships (Kowalski et al., 2008).

In identifying the characteristics of a bully, research varies. Shore (2005) noted, "Bullies are not born, they are made" (p. 13). Bullies are taught from an early age that they can use force to get what they want. Studies have confirmed that bullies tend to exhibit high levels of leadership and confidence and have dominant personalities (DiGiulio, 2001; Kowalski et al., 2008; Olweus, 1993, 2001, 2010). Bullies tend to have tempers, are impulsive, and are easily frustrated (Kowalski et al., 2008). They also have positive attitudes towards violence as well as difficulty following rules (Kowalski et al., 2008; Olweus, 1993). They often have a history of aggressive behavior (Shore, 2005). Bullies tend to lack empathy or compassion, and to have no sense of remorse at hurting other children (Kowalski et al., 2008; Shore, 2005). They are good at talking themselves out of difficult situations (Kowalski et al., 2008; Olweus, 1993) and are often popular with peers and teachers (DiGiulio, 2001; Olweus, 2001).

Girls and boys display similar levels of bullying, with boys generally engaging in more physical forms of bullying and girls tending to use more indirect and relational aggression (Crick, Grotpeter, & Bigbee, 2002; James; 2010; Shariff, 2009). Victims are generally younger, can be of either sex, and are more often White than Black (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005). They are often singled out based on gender, economic background, academic success, ethnic background, sexuality, and mental capacity (James, 2010; Shariff, 2009). The

majority of victims are described as passive (James, 2010) or insecure (Kowalski et al., 2008), have poor problem-solving abilities (Carney & Merrell, 2001), and are vulnerable in some way (Shore, 2005). They have low self-esteem and poor social or communication skills (Kowalski et al., 2008; Shore, 2005). They struggle with reading social cues of others (Kowalski et al., 2008) and act in ways that go against the norms of the peer group (Griffin & Gross, 2004). These passive victims often react to bullying by crying, withdrawing, or becoming quiet (DeVoe, Kaffenberger, & Chandler, 2005).

Another type of victim is characterized by having poor self-esteem and a greater tendency towards anxiety (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Shore, 2005). These victims have more aggressive reactionary patterns and are more likely to counterattack. They have difficulty relating emotionally (DeVoe, Peter et al., 2005; Shore, 2005). Peers may have difficulty relating to these students, but teachers have also reported that these children are sometimes more difficult to work with (Kowalski et al., 2008).

As noted earlier, bullying used to be seen as a normal part of childhood (Campbell, 2005). Over the last two decades, however, this view has changed and bullying is now seen as a serious problem. It is estimated that 15% to 20% of all students are bullied at some point in their school careers (Shore, 2005). Shore (2005) also noted that according to the National Youth Violence Prevention Center, almost one in three children nationwide is involved in bullying.

The first U.S. study on bullying to use a nationally representative sample was conducted in 2001 with more than 15,000 students in Grades 6 through 10 (Nansel et al., 2001). Researchers found that 17% of children surveyed indicated that they had been bullied, 19% indicated that they had bullied others, and 6% indicated that they had been bullied and had

bullied others. Through this survey, researchers also found that being belittled about one's looks or speech was the most common type of bullying.

In a 2005 study, researchers conducted telephone interviews and found that 22% of children had been physically bullied and 25% had been teased or emotionally bullied during the previous school year (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hambey, 2005). Based on this research study, it is estimated that 13.7 million children are physically bullied and 15.7 million are teased or emotionally bullied each year in the United States. Other studies have indicated that the prevalence of bullying in American elementary schools is between 14% and 19% and the secondary school rate is between 3% and 10% (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003).

In 2004, more than 162,000 children ages 11, 13, and 15 from 35 countries were surveyed about bullying in a comprehensive international study known as the Health Behavior in School-Aged Children Study (Currie et al., 2004). From it, researchers found that overall, 11% of the children surveyed had bullied others in the previous several months and 11% of the children surveyed had been bullied in that same span of time. In the United States, 10% of girls were bullied and 8% of girls bullied others, while 15% of boys were bullied and 16% of boys bullied others.

Being bullied can be one of the most painful experiences for a child and can leave psychological scars that often last a lifetime (Kowalski et al., 2008; Shore, 2005). Research over the past decade has confirmed that bullying can seriously affect the mental and physical health of children and ultimately impacts their academic work (Kowalski et al., 2008). Many victims of bullying have experienced anxiety (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-VanHorick, 2004; Shariff, 2009; Shore, 2005), lower self-esteem (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Shariff, 2009; Shore, 2005),

and depression (Fekkes et al., 2004; Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003; Shariff, 2009; Shore, 2005), and are at a greater risk of drug and alcohol use (James, 2010).

It has also been noted that victims of bullying have higher levels of suicidal thoughts than children who are not bullied (2008; Kim, Koh, & Leventhal, 2005; Kowalski et al., 2008; Shariff, 2009; Shore, 2005). Rigby (1996) found that children who were bullied at least once a week were twice as likely as other children to wish they were dead or to admit to having thoughts of suicide. Further research has found that being a victim of bullying increases suicidal thoughts by 10% in boys and more than 20% in girls (van der Wal, de Wit, & Hirasing, 2003). Bullying victims tend to attempt suicide more often than non-victims (Cleary, 2000; Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, & Story, 2003; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b).

The stress and anxiety of being bullied can cause children to experience more physical ailments as well (Shore, 2005). Bullied children are three times as likely to experience headaches, feel listless, and wet their beds. They are also twice as likely to have trouble sleeping, stomachaches, tension, a sense of tiredness, and a poor appetite (Fekkes et al., 2004).

Not surprisingly, being bullied can affect children's schoolwork. Bullied children receive lower grades than peers who are not bullied (Arsenault et al., 2006; DeVoe, Kaffenberger, & Chandler, 2005). A study by the National Association of School Psychologists estimated that 160,000 children miss school daily due to fears of being bullied (Shore, 2005), a result shown by an earlier study that bullied children have higher absenteeism rates than other students (Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor, & Chauhan, 2004). Students who are bullied not only are at a higher risk for truancy but also have higher dropout rates (Carney & Merrell, 2001). According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention fact sheet on bullying, victims often feel alone, humiliated, insecure, and fearful of going to school (Ericson, 2001). They experience

poor relationships and have difficulty making friends (Ericson, 2001). They view school as unsafe and many are afraid to attend (DeVoe, Kaffenberger, & Chandler, 2005).

Researchers indicated that more definitive research is needed to better understand the effects of bullying on children's attitudes towards school, their attendance, and their educational outcomes (Kowalski et al., 2008); however, obvious reason for concern remains that the stress and distractions caused by bullying can put children at risk academically. "Young people mistreated by peers may not want to be in school and may thereby miss out on the benefits of school connectedness as well as educational advancement" (Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, & Perry, 2003, p. 315).

Despite children's victimization and fears of school, children are not reporting incidences of bullying to adults at school or at home. Children often hide the fact that they are being bullied and are reluctant to report bullying that they experience or witness (Kowalski et al., 2008; Shore, 2005). This may be due to fear, lack of confidence, feelings of blame, or worry that telling an adult may make things worse (Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003). Research indicates that as many as 50% to 75% of children who are bullied do not tell a staff member at school (Fonzi et al., 1999). Children seem to be most comfortable reporting bullying experiences to their friends (Rigby, 2002).

In the 1990s, the United States experienced several school shootings, the most famous being at Columbine High School in Colorado. The boys involved in this school shooting were reported to have been ostracized and bullied by their classmates (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Additional research of 37 school shootings involving 41 assailants showed that 71% of those assailants "felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack" (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002, p. 21). Although the specific motivations for these school

shootings may never be understood, research literature points to bullying as a contributing factor in these crimes (Fein et al., 2002; Limber, 2006). These young perpetrators may have been victims of bullying at some point in their lives (Dedman, 2000).

In a study of violent acts at school (Anderson et al., 2001), it was noted that many of the violent youth in the study had themselves been bullied. Bullied youth are more prone to carry out acts of retribution and bring weapons to school in order to protect themselves (Carney & Merrill, 2001). Research also shows that male students are more likely than female students to carry a weapon onto school property and that approximately 83% of all victims of school-related homicides and suicides are male (Shariff, 2009).

Bullying also affects the witnesses to bullying incidences by negatively impacting the school climate and distracting or impeding students' ability to learn (Shore, 2005). Hawkins, Pepler, and Craig (2001) reported that peers were present in approximately 88% of bullying incidences. This would indicate that bullying is not always an isolated event between two individuals (DeVoe, Peter et al., 2005). Not only do witnesses fear that they will be the next victims if they interfere (Kowalski et al., 2008; Shariff, 2009) but they also suffer from feelings of guilt that they did nothing to intervene or help a classmate (Kowalski et al., 2008; Shore, 2005), and they feel powerless to change the situation (Kowalski et al., 2008). Researchers agree that the most detrimental aspect of bullying is the group effect, which tends to perpetuate and sustain the abuse of the victims (Crick et al., 2002; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Salmivalli, 2001; Schuster, 2001; Shariff, 2009). This passivity by witnesses only serves to empower the bully and can further isolate the victim (Shore, 2005).

Although bullying has been a problem for many years, it seems that bullying has become even more serious and more pervasive in recent years. Research indicates that traditional

bullying has not increased, but recent media attention has presented an inaccurate picture of its

frequency or seriousness by reporting only extreme bullying cases (Shariff, 2009). In 1998, prior

to the Columbine shootings, school bullying was in the headlines of American media 145 times.

After the Columbine shootings, the number of articles on school bullying doubled, and by 2001,

there were more than 750 headlines about bullying (Kowalski et al., 2008). Based on the

National Crime Victimization Survey (DeVoe, Peter et al., 2005), there was a 3% increase in

rates of bullying between 1999 and 2001; however, there was no change between 2001 and 2003.

This seems to indicate that recent attention in the United States is likely to be a reflection of

increased interest in bullying (Kowalski et al., 2008). This added interest in bullying may also

be attributed to President Obama's anti-bullying campaign.

Numerous studies conducted since the early 1970s have confirmed that bullying affects

millions of children every year. Victims of bullying have suffered physically and mentally,

which has resulted in a negative impact on the school environment and students' academic

successes. As a result, many schools have begun comprehensive programs to combat it, which,

when implemented properly and monitored carefully, have been effective in reducing its

occurrence (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Traditional bullying still occurs today but seems to be overshadowed by cyberbullying.

Research suggests that a strong connection exists between the two (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009),

though it is difficult to determine which might be causing the other.

Cyberbullying

In 2009, the world celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Internet, which has transformed

society by enabling people almost anywhere in the world to instantly access information and

communicate by simply pressing a key. With this technology, new and infinite worlds have been

created for people to explore; although most young people use this new technology responsibly, some use it to denigrate, insult, and harass others (Shariff, 2009).

Cyberbullying is the most commonly used term, but the activity has also been referred to as electronic bullying, digital bullying, or ebullying (Smith & Slojne, 2010). Smith and Slonje (2010) defined cyberbullying as "an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself" (p. 249). Nancy Willard (2003), director for the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use, has described cyberbullying as "speech that is defamatory, constitutes bullying, harassment, or discrimination, discloses personal information, or contains offensive, vulgar or derogatory comments" (p. 66). Still another definition of cyberbullying by Belsey (2005) is the use of information and communication technologies to support a deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior that is intended to harm others. A similar definition was offered by Hinduja and Patchin (2009) as a "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and electronic devices" (p. 5).

There are two forms of cyberbullying:

1. Peer against peer, where school peers are singled out for ridicule or harassment (Shariff & Churchill, 2010)

2. Anti-authority, where students use social networking sites to demean and degrade teachers and school officials (Shariff, 2008).

Cyberbullying has characteristics in common with traditional bullying, with one distinguishing trait: technology is used (Belsey, 2005; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Smith & Slonje, 2010). Just as in traditional bullying, the behavior is deliberate; it is a repeated action; and perceived harm is inflicted (Belsey, 2005; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Also like traditional bullying, it can be either direct or indirect (Kowalski et al., 2008). Direct cyberbullying is when messages are sent directly to the victim; indirect involves using others to help cyberbully the victim. Indirect cyberbullying can also be when someone illegally gets access to a victim's account and sends out harassing or threatening messages to the victim's friends and family (Aftab, 2006; Trolley & Hanel, 2010).

The most common venues of cyberbullying are mobile phones (calling, texting, or sending a picture or video) and the Internet, which would include email, chat rooms, instant messaging, and Web sites (Smith et al., 2008) which socially speaking are the very lifeline for most children (Shore, 2005).

In its dawn, cyberbullying consisted of sending insulting or harassing e-mails to individuals (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Now email is used to distribute personal or erroneous information about a student to any number of people instantly all over the world (Kowalski et al., 2008). The ability to have multiple e-mail accounts and use a pseudonym make it easy to send bullying e-mails with little fear of getting caught (Rogers, 2010). Cyberbullies have even registered their victims on pornographic sites so the victim becomes inundated with offensive e-mails (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Social networking sites are Web sites that encourage people to post profiles of themselves with their pictures, interests, and journals. Wikipedia (2011) currently lists more than 200 social networking sites, with millions of registered users and hundreds of thousands of new people registering daily. The most popular sites in 2008 were Facebook, MySpace, LiveJournal, Friendster, Nexopia, Xuga, Xanga, Imbee, and Bebo (Kowalski et al., 2008), although now, most of these are no longer "hot."

Chat rooms are online environments where students with common interests join together to discuss topics in real time (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Rogers, 2010). Members of a chat room may stay anonymous so individuals can comment heedless of any repercussions (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Kowalski et al., 2008). It is common for regular members in a chat room to gang up on new members (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Although chat rooms are locations for cyberbullying, most adolescents prefer other public and private ways of communicating with friends online. Web sites are locations on the World Wide Web where people create their own personal home pages (Kowalski et al., 2008); however, in a cyberbully's hands, they become *bash boards*, where pictures of or offensive information about the victim can be uploaded so viewers can rate—with the intent to humiliate—that person on various aspects of his or her physical appearance (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Rogers, 2010), such as voice, body shape, style, movement, or talent (Kowalski et al., 2008). Ratings are publicly expressed for all viewers to see and hear. Pictures may also be taken and altered in a way that portrays the victim in a negative manner (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Many adolescents have blogs or online journals on Web sites where they post updates on their lives, experiences, and interests (Kowalski et al., 2008). Blogs can be used for any number of positive functions, but can also be used to post comments that are hurtful or damage another person's reputation (Kowalski et al., 2008). If a cyberbully discovers a victim's password, he or she can reset it so the victim is blocked from that account and unable to stop any hurtful or inappropriate postings (Kowalski et al., 2008). Children who cyberbully will sometimes post information that places their victims at risk (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Instant messaging allows people all over the world to chat online in real time with each other using typed text (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). For a cyberbully's victim, it means he or she

can receive angry or threatening messages in a real-time attack by someone hiding behind a pseudonym (Rogers, 2010). Cell phones, especially smartphones, can also be used to send hurtful or threatening texts, as well as take pictures and videos that can be posted online immediately, or altered first to maximize effect, then shown to the world in seconds.

Willard (2007b) defined the various forms or methods of cyberbullying and the severity of online social cruelty. Flaming was defined by Bissonette (2009) and Rogers (2010) as a short argument using angry, abusive, and vulgar language, but Willard (2007b) noted that flaming usually involved equivalent strength aggressors with a mutual exchange of insults, adding that it typically occurred in chat rooms and discussion boards as opposed to private emails and can be very heated and include veiled threats of violence. If a series of insulting exchanges occur, then it is referred to as a flame war. Kowalski et al. (2008) added that an unsuspecting aggressive act by one person may create an imbalance.

Harassment was defined by Willard as repeatedly sending offensive and insulting messages (2007b). Trolley and Hanel (2010) stated that harassment is consistent messaging and repeating the action. Harassment often occurs via personal communications such as email, instant messaging, or texting but can be sent in more public forums like chat rooms (Kowalski et al., 2008; Willard, 2007b). Compared to flaming, harassment occurs over a longer period and is one-sided, with an offender and a target (Kowalski et al., 2008; Willard, 2007b). Sometimes harassment can occur by proxy by getting online contacts involved with tormenting the target (Willard, 2007b).

Denigration is information about another person that is derogatory and untrue (Kowalski et al., 2008; Shore, 2005). Willard (2007b) described denigration as "speech about a target that is harmful, untrue, or cruel" (p. 7). The information may be posted on a Web page or sent to

others via email or instant messaging. The online equivalent to indirect bullying with wider dissemination (Trolley & Hanel, 2010; Willard, 2007b), this form of cyberbullying is a common form of indirect aggression that is also referred to as social sabotage (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). It is used to damage the reputation of another student by spreading gossip and rumors (Bissonette, 2009; Rogers, 2010; Willard, 2007b).

Sub-category activities of denigration include sending digitally altered photos that portray someone in a sexual or harmful manner (Kowalski et al., 2008; Willard, 2007b) and creating slam books, Web sites where students write mean or degrading comments about their targeted peers (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Denigration is a form of cyberbullying that includes speech that under civil law may constitute defamation or invasion of privacy (Willard, 2007a). It specifically raises issues related to freedom of speech protection.

Impersonation is described as a perpetrator posing as the victim, most often by using the victim's password to gain access to the victim's account, then communicating negative, cruel, or misleading information in the victim's guise (Kowalski et al., 2008). It is pretending to be someone else (Rogers, 2010), also referred to as masquerading (Shore, 2005) or identity theft (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Impersonation is used to make a person look bad, get in trouble, damage that person's reputation, or place a person in danger (Bissonette, 2009; Trolley & Hanel, 2010). This may occur in the victim's personal Web page, profile, blog, or any form of electronic communication (Willard, 2007a). With the victim's password, the perpetrator can also send harassing e-mails to others or cyberthreats (Willard, 2007a) as if they were coming from the target and may include name, address, and phone number of the victim, thus endangering his or her life (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Willard (2007b) described outing as publicly posting, sending, or forwarding personal communications or images that contain personal information and can be embarrassing. Outing is disclosing someone else's secrets without their consent (Rogers, 2010). A common form of outing is when a cyberbully receives personal and embarrassing information and/or photos from a target and then forwards them on to others, when the information was never intended to be shared (Kowalski et al., 2008; Shore, 2005; Willard, 2007b). Outing often occurs when one party from a failed relationship distributes sexually suggestive photos that were acquired during the relationship (Willard, 2007b). This form of aggression has the victim creating what will later be used against him or her (Trolley & Hanel, 2010).

Trickery can occur as part of outing (Willard, 2007) and refers to tricking someone into revealing personal information about oneself and then forwarding that information out to others (Bissonette, 2009; Kowalski et al., 2008; Rogers, 2010). It is also described as deceiving a person to gain personal information that is then placed online for public viewing (Shore, 2005). This is pretending to be a friend in order to gather private information that will later be used to mock that individual (Trolley & Hanel, 2010).

Exclusion cyberbullying is related to the in-group and the outcasts (Willard, 2007b). It is intentionally excluding someone from an online group and not allowing that person to participate in electronic communications (Bissonette, 2009; Rogers, 2010; Shore, 2005; Trolley & Hanel, 2010). Exclusion may occur in an online gaming environment, group blogging, or any other password-protected site (Willard, 2007b). Exclusion is also referred to as cyber-ostracism and can have a serious emotional impact (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Cyberstalking is the use of electronic communications to stalk a victim through repetitive threatening and harassing messages (Bissonette, 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Kowalski et al.,

2008; Rogers, 2010; Shariff et al., 2010), often to the point when a target begins to fear for his or her safety and well-being (Trolley & Hanel, 2010; Willard, 2007b). Messages may include threats of harm, intimidating or extremely offensive comments, or threats of extortion (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Willard, 2007b). Cyberstalking involves more threats than harassment (Kowalski et al., 2008) and implies that there is some type of threat of impending harm (Trolley & Hanel, 2010). Direct cyberstalking mostly occurs in personal communication environments and indirect cyberstalking includes communications sent to others with the purpose of degrading the target or placing the target in danger (Willard, 2007b).

Cyberthreats can be direct statements of intent to hurt someone or commit suicide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Jacobs, 2010; Willard, 2007b). They generally contain information about an actual plan and can include material indicating that a person is considering hurting someone or themself (Willard, 2007b).

Oddly enough, the newest method of cyberbullying brings traditional bullying into the high-tech age. Happy-slapping, which began on subway trains in England (Kowalski et al., 2008), occurs when physical assaults to an unsuspecting person are recorded on cell phones or other devices and posted on the Internet (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009: Jacobs, 2010).

As bullying over the Internet becomes more prevalent, educators must become prepared to address this issue in the school environment. Educators need to familiarize themselves with not only the technology driving this phenomenon but also the legal ramifications arising from it.

Legal Aspects of Cyberbullying

Over the past several years, schools have been enacting anti-bullying policies to deter children from harassing, taunting, or harming each other, but the number and variety of digital devices, along with easy access to the Internet, have resulted in situations that lawmakers had not

anticipated. Current case law on freedom of speech, defamation, sexual harassment, and assault

cannot easily be applied to cases of cyberbullying, and, nationwide, court rulings have been

inconsistent (Bissonette, 2009).

"School officials may not judge a student's behavior while he is in his home with his

family nor does it seem . . . they should have jurisdiction over his acts on a public street corner"

(*Sullivan v. Houston Indep. Sch. Dist., 1969* as cited in Shariff, 2009, p. 110*).* Since 1997, when

the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Internet was protected by the First Amendment

(Bissonette, 2009; Jacobs, 2010), courts have been trying to balance students' right to free

speech with schools' responsibility to educate. Four Supreme Court cases provide the

framework:

1. *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969). School

   officials had disciplined students for wearing black armbands to protest the war in

   Vietnam. The Court held that the students had a right to free speech in school

   settings unless the speech disrupted a school's ability to carry out its mission in an

   orderly fashion or unless the speech infringed upon the rights of others to be free

   from harassment (Bissonette, 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Jacobs, 2010; Wheeler,

   2010).

2. *Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser* (1986). The school disciplined a student

   whose speech during a school assembly included sexual references. The Court

   upheld that school officials had the authority "to prohibit the use of vulgar and

   offensive terms in public discourse." (Jacob, 2010, p. 13)

3. *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier* (1988). The principal removed several

   articles from publication in the school newspaper. The Court supported the

principal's actions and found that the school newspaper was not a public forum

because the school did not intend to open the paper to unrestricted use by students.

The Court ruled that it was within the rights of school officials to impose education-

related restrictions on student speech (Bissonette, 2009; Hinduja & Patchins, 2009;

Jacobs, 2010; Wheeler, 2010; Willard, 2007b).

4. *Morse v. Frederick* (2007). A student was suspended for displaying a banner that

promoted illegal drug use while attending an off-campus, school-sanctioned event.

The Court held that schools may safeguard students entrusted to their care from

speech that can be regarded as encouraging illegal drug use (Bissonette, 2009;

Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Jacobs, 2010; Wheeler, 2010).

The Supreme Court has, however, placed limitations on freedom of speech as it pertains

to minors. Student speech is not protected by the Constitution if it constitutes a threat; is lewd,

vulgar, or profane; is sponsored by the school; or materially disrupts the school or invades the

right of others (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Traditionally, the courts have allowed restrictions on expressions by students on campus,

while disallowing constraints on off-campus speech (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Case law

relevant to cyberbullying is scant and still unclear since the majority of student Internet activity

occurs off school campuses (Kowalski et al., 2008; Jacobs, 2010).

A few recent court cases involve school districts responding to the electronic bullying of

other students:

1. *Beussink v. Woodland R-IV School District* (1998). A student created a Web site at

home that denigrated the school's administration using vulgar language. The student

was suspended for 10 days. The district court ruled that the student's First

Amendment rights had been violated. The school had to demonstrate that the behavior or speech resulted in a substantial disruption at school (Bissonette, 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

2. *Emmett v. Kent School District No. 415* (2000). A student created a Web page from home featuring mock obituaries of students and a poll on who should die next. The student was suspended for five days. The court ruled that the school had overstepped its authority because the Web site was not produced at school or using school property. The court also ruled that the school district failed to demonstrate that anyone listed on the site was actually intimidated or felt threatened (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Jacobs, 2010).

3. *J. S. v. Bethlehem Area School District* (2002). A student was expelled from school for creating a Web page that included threatening and derogatory comments about a teacher, as well as a request for money to pay for a hit man. The teacher said she was traumatized by the incident and unable to teach for the rest of that school year. The court upheld the expulsion and the teacher filed a civil suit against the family of the student (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Jacobs, 2010).

4. *Wisniewski v. Board of Education of the Weedsport Central School District* (2007). A student created a graphic image of his teacher's head being shot, along with some explicit text, which he sent to his friends. After the student was suspended, the case went to court, with the district court finding in favor of the Board. The decision was upheld by the U.S. Court of Appeals, stating that the picture represented a threat and caused a disruption to the school environment (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Jacobs, 2010).

5. *Requa v. Kent School District No. 415* (2007). Students who had posted a video link with covertly recorded footage from their classroom were suspended. The court upheld the suspension because the video violated school policy and substantially disrupted the work and discipline of the school (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Jacobs, 2010; Wheeler, 2010).

6. *Layshock v. Hermitage School District* (2007). From his grandmother's personal home computer, a student posted a non-threatening, non-obscene profile that used altered photographs to make fun of the principal. The court noted that the act of creating the profile was protected by the First Amendment; however, it became punishable by the school district when it resulted in a disruption to the operation of the school. In 2007, the U.S. district court judge reversed this ruling stating that the court found that the disruption was not substantial (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Jacobs, 2010; Wheeler, 2010).

Off-campus cyberbullying raises concerns for school officials regarding the extent of their legal authority to impose formal discipline on students as well as the extent of their responsibilities (Baldas, 2007; Trolley & Hanel, 2010). Even if a student posts or electronically communicates inappropriate comments about a classmate, if it occurs on a home computer it may be protected speech, and public schools may be legally challenged if they impose consequences on students' right to free speech (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Although hesitant to get involved in cases of cyberbullying that occur off-campus, school officials have a duty to protect their students and to ensure that there is no interference with their rights to an education (Willard, 2007a). School officials do have the authority to respond when a student poses a threat to himself or herself or others, and a true threat is not protected speech

under the First Amendment (Kowalski et al., 2008; Trolley & Hanel, 2010; Willard, 2007a).

Schools also have a duty to exercise precautions against student cyberbullying if it is threatening

student safety. Therefore, school districts can be held liable for failing to stop bullying,

including cyberbullying, if personnel are found to have acted negligently or violated federal or

state statues (Kowalski et al., 2008).

State legislators have tried to address the issue by requiring public schools to draft and

enforce anti-bullying policies. If clear and comprehensive, such policies will help protect

students and school districts from legal liability (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009) and may provide

needed support when disciplinary action is taken against off-campus cyberbullies (Bissonette,

2009).

Characteristics of a Cyberbully

It has been assumed that children who cyberbully share many of the characteristics of

children who use traditional forms of bullying, but there are some important differences.

Research suggests that boys are more likely to be physically bullied by their peers (Finkelhor et

al., 2005; Rigby, 2002) and engage in direct physical or verbal aggression as in traditional

bullying (Willard, 2005a, 2005b), but girls are more likely to be bullied through indirect forms of

psychological and emotional bullying as with cyberbullying (Crick et al., 2002; Nansel et al.,

2001; Willard, 2005a, 2005b). Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, and Tippett (2006) also found that

girls were more likely to be cyberbullied victims than boys. This was also supported by

Kowalski et al.'s (2005) study that revealed 13% of girls and 9% of boys reported to have been

electronically bullied by someone.

Girls tend to be socially more cruel and manipulative by ostracizing targets, spreading

rumors, or destroying reputations (Willard, 2005a, 2005b) and engaging in "social sabotage"

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, p. 52). Girls seem to be less confrontational when face-to-face with another as in traditional bullying (Andreou, 2001); however, with cyberbullying, communicating online allows them to remain safe and anonymous. The two online victimization behaviors reported most frequently by girls were being ignored (45.8%) and disrespected (42.9%). It was also noted that 11.2% of girls reported they were threatened and 6.2% reported they feared for their safety (Burgess-Proctor, Patchin, & Hinduja, 2009).

Girls are more actively engaged in cyberbullying and tend to be more verbal, but boys are more physical and likely to engage in threats of violence (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Willard, 2005a, 2005b). Research has indicated that males are more likely to carry a weapon onto school property and have constituted 83% of all victims in school-related homicides or suicides (DiGiulio, 2001). This same research revealed that after extended periods of relentless bullying, victims of either sex are more likely than other students to bring weapons to school for protection.

Studies have also examined cyberbullying across different racial groups. A study conducted by Ybarra, Diener-West, and Leaf (2007) of 1,515 youths aged 10 to 15 years found that there were no significant differences related to race and cyberbullying. In a later study by Hinduja and Patchin (2009), White students were only slightly more likely to experience cyberbullying as victim and aggressors (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). An earlier study did note that there had been differences based on race, but these were based on a lack of access to technology (Norris, 2001). Race may be less relevant in an environment where interpersonal communication occurs through electronic or technological means (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Whereas traditional bullying tends to decrease as a student progresses through middle and high school (Seals & Young, 2003), cyberbullying tends to peak later in middle school

(Kowalski et al., 2008; Williams & Guerra, 2007; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007) and high school (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a, 2007). Hinduja and Patchin's (2005) study supported this by noting older youth spend more time online and tend to be more proficient on the computer, which would indicate that offenders tend to use the Internet more frequently and with more proficiency than victims (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004b).

In 2006, Ybarra et al. noted that victims of Internet harassment were more likely than individuals who were not victims of cyberbullying to harass others online, to have social problems, and to be victims in other situations. A study by Kowalski and Limber (2007) found a relationship between social anxiety, self-esteem, and cyberbullying. Victims of cyberbullying had higher social anxiety and lower self-esteem scores than children not involved with cyberbullying. It was not possible to differentiate whether anxiety and low self-esteem led to cyberbullying victimization or whether they were an outcome of being cyberbullied.

Other characteristics may be linked to being a victim or a perpetrator of cyberbullying. Li (2006) found that whereas half of the victims of cyberbullying had above-average grades, less than a third of cyberbullies had above-average grades. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004b) found that cyberbullies and their victims experience a higher frequency of problem behaviors and poor psychosocial functioning. Cyberbullies are more likely to exhibit behaviors such as vandalism, assault, theft, and, consequently, to have more run-ins with the police. Online aggressors were also found to have low school commitment and to engage in alcohol and cigarette use (Willard, 2007b; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004b). In a more recent study by Ybarra and Mitchell (2007), it was also found that with the increase of online harassment, there has been an increase in aggressive and rule-breaking behaviors as well as substance abuse among youth.

In the study by Hinduja and Patchin (2009), the most common reasons children gave for cyberbullying someone were *revenge* (23%) or *the victim deserved it* (19%). Some individuals cyberbully in order to hurt or humiliate their victims (Kowalski et al., 2008; Olweus et al., 2007), but others do it to display the superior technological power or dominance they have over their peers (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Olweus et al., 2007). Still others cyberbully because they are bored and think that sending inappropriate, demeaning messages may be fun (Kowalski et al., 2008). Some adolescents cyberbully for attention and receive a reward of peer admiration (Olweus et al., 2007). Cyberbullies often share feelings of enjoyment, power, and/or revenge as motivations (Kowalski & Witte, 2006). Hinduja and Patchin (2009) reported that 11% of cyberbullies did it because it was fun and did not see any harm in their behavior. Still others engage in cyberbullying inadvertently or as a response to negative comments that were sent to them (Kowalski et al., 2008).

The *cockpit effect* is described by Shariff and Churchill (2010) when explaining the lack of empathy involved in cyberbullying. The lack of face-to-face contact can lead to merciless online bullying because the perpetrator cannot see any suffering from the victim. Many perpetrators are unconvinced that they are actually doing any severe harm to anyone.

Many distressed teens are forming online social communities that support and encourage self-destructive behavior such as self-injury, anorexia, bulimia, drug use, and suicide (Willard, 2007b) as a way to deal with emotional difficulties, some of which are caused by cyberbullying. These dangerous communities follow a *pro-choice* approach to self-destructive behaviors by exchanging stories of techniques in self-injury and hiding the evidence from others.

Gruber and Yurgelun-Todd (2006) noted that the brains of many adolescents may not have matured to the point where they can make sensible decisions or use self-control and

restraint. "When presented with the opportunity to harass someone online, impulsive adolescents may be unable to hold back" (Gruber & Yurgelun-Todd, 2006, p. 72). Adolescents are oriented to the present and are concerned with what is right in front of them at that moment and rarely consider any long-term implications (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). It is still important to remember that one instance of misconduct cannot be classified as bullying because it is not of a repetitive nature (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Many developmental theories have been cited by Hinduja and Patchin (2009) as possible means to help better understand cyberbullying behaviors. Cyberbullying behaviors may be learned from and reinforced by others (Akers, 1985; Bandura, 1977), or they could be passed down through culture and tradition and viewed as acceptable behaviors (Brown, Ebsensen Finn, & Geis, 2001). Bullying may also be a behavior that is part of some underlying personality trait, such as low self-control (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). A child may use cyberbullying others as a way to cope with stressful life experiences (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007), or cyberbullying may be a result of children not feeling a sense of responsibility for their actions (Diener, 1980).

Cyberbullying Verses Traditional Bullying

Hinduja and Patchin (2009) suggested that a strong correlation exists between cyberbullying and traditional bullying. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004b) also supported this theory and found that 56% individuals who were cyberbullies or victims were also targets of traditional bullying. In a study in 2007 by Ybarra et al., it was reported that 12.6% of all harassed youth indicated that the same aggressor harmed them offline and online, and 10.4% of victims reported that different individuals mistreated them offline and online. It was also noted, "For some youth who are bullied, the Internet may simply be an extension of the schoolyard, with victimization continuing after the bell and on into the night" (Ybarra et al., 2004b, p. 1,313). For others who

have been victims of traditional bullying, the Internet may provide them with the manner in which to bully others.

In a Ybarra and Mitchell (2004b) survey study of 1,498 Internet users between the ages of 10 and 17, 19% of the respondents were either on the giving or receiving end of cyberbullying in the previous year. Specifically, 4% were victims, 12% were aggressors, and 3% were both aggressors and victims. The study also showed that 84% of the aggressors knew their victims, but only 31% of the victims knew who was cyberbullying them. This study would suggest that cyberbullying is not typically a random event among strangers and in most cases the cyberbullies know who they are targeting. In a 2007 study, 43% of cyberbully victims revealed that they knew their aggressors, and 57% suffered at the hands of online-only contacts and were unaware of the identity of their tormentors (Wolak et al., 2007). A study by Kowalski and Limber (2007) also found that 48% of cyberbully victims did not know the identity of their aggressors. Interestingly, even though online bullying provides bullies with perceived anonymity, in many instances the targets are eventually able to figure out who is harassing them (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

The Social and Emotional Impact of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying has started to attract some attention in the media, but there is still very little research on why children choose to cyberbully and its social and emotional impact. Hinduja and Patchin's (2009) study revealed that a large percentage of individuals have experienced or will experience cyberbullying as victims, bullies, or bully–victims. Electronic threats are as real as or even more frightening than those made face-to-face because such online behavior assaults the psychological and emotional well-being of an individual and in effect is a form of violence (Herring, 2002).

Victims of cyberbullying respond similarly to traditional bully victims in terms of feeling sad, feeling anxious, and having a feeling of lower self-esteem (Berson, Berson, & Ferron, 2002; Cowie & Berdondini, 2002; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2007). In Hinduja and Patchin's (2009) study, they found that many cyberbullying victims felt angry, frustrated, sad, embarrassed, or scared. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004b) and Willard (2006) believed that the long-term effects of cyberbullying are just as bad if not worse than those of traditional bullying.

Research has also indicated that delinquency and interpersonal violence can result when negative emotions as mentioned are not dealt with in a proper manner (Aseltine, Gore, & Gordon, 2000; Mazerolle, Burton, Cullen, Evans, & Payne, 2000). Victims may feel so sad or depressed about an incident that they may hurt themselves. In a study conducted in 2009, online victims were eight times as likely as non-victims to report carrying a weapon at school (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Even with all the cyberbullying that researchers are aware of, Hinduja and Patchin (2009) said that much is still not being reported, so the true magnitude of the situation is still unknown. Specifically, fewer than 10% of victims told a parent, and fewer than 5% told a teacher about their experiences with cyberbullying. Both boys and girls were unlikely to confide in others about cyberbullying, but girls were more likely to tell a friend (57% compared to 50%) and boys are more likely to tell a teacher (39% compared to 21%). What may be causing the most concern is that as high as 60% of victims of cyberbullying do not tell an adult about any of their experiences.

Victims say they hide their cyberbullying experiences because they fear they will be blamed for the behavior, will lose access to their technology (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009), or will suffer further bullying for having reported it (McQuade, Colt, & Meyer, 2009). Victims are also

concerned that adults are unable or unwilling to intervene on their behalf. Many parents do not

know what to do when confronted with a cyberbullying problem and teachers are reluctant to

respond to behaviors that occurred off of school grounds (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Cyberbully Suicide or Cyberbullicide

This brings us to another distressing outcome of cyberbullying in recent years: murders

and suicides (Kowalski et al., 2008). With victims being tormented daily and feeling isolated

because they have no one to turn to, their thoughts of hopelessness can cause them to consider

suicide. Some adolescents have even formed online pacts where they webcast their own deaths

(Willard, 2007b),

Suicide is the number three killer of 15- to 19-year-olds (Josel, 2010). U.S. research

reveals that being a victim of traditional bullying increases the likelihood of experiencing

suicidal thoughts by 10% in boys and as high as 20% in girls (van der Wal et al., 2003).

Although cyberbullying has only recently begun to be explored, Hinduja and Patchin (2009)

believed that the consequences of cyberbullying are proving to be quite similar to traditional

bullying. There are several cases in the United States and many others abroad where youth who

were repeatedly harassed online took their own lives (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Ryan Halligan was 13 years old when he took his own life in 2003 after two years of

being bullied at school and months of being bullied online (Jacobs, 2010). He was teased,

taunted, and referred to as *gay* online and offline by his classmates. Ryan's father suspected that

the cruel tormenting at school carried over to the Internet and was amplified due to Ryan's

perception that everyone at school knew what was occurring. It was hard enough for him to be

humiliated in front of a few classmates, but to be the source of ridicule for the whole school on a

daily basis may have been too much for him to handle (Jacobs, 2010).

Jeff Johnston was a 15-year-old honor student. He was reportedly bullied online for three years (Jacobs, 2010). Classmates posted cruel statements through email and Web site postings. Another cyberbully hacked into a Web game that Jeff designed and replaced it with a hate page, and other children joined in. Jeff wrote a suicide note on his computer, and in June 2005, six weeks after his note, he committed suicide (Jacobs, 2010).

In October 2006, Rachael Neblett, 17, committed suicide after being bullied at school and online through her MySpace profile (Jacobs, 2010). Although the threatening messages she received were anonymous, she felt the bully was from her school and alerted school personnel, who monitored Rachael while at school. However, her fears and concerns were not alleviated and she took her own life. Six months after Rachel's death, her close friend, Kristen Settles, 16, committed suicide because she was devastated by Rachel's death. Kristen asked to be buried next to Rachel (Jacobs, 2010).

Megan Meier, 13, made friends with someone online and corresponded with him for almost a month (Jacobs, 2010). In October 2006, she received a message that he no longer wanted to be friends. This was followed by bulletins being posted through MySpace calling Megan *fat* and a *slut*. Soon after that, Megan was found hanging in her bedroom closet. Six weeks after Megan's death, the Meier family discovered that the boy with whom Megan had been corresponding did not exist—the online profile was created by the mother of a classmate so she could monitor what Megan was saying about her daughter. The mother was blamed for sending the cruel and harassing messages, but the district attorney refused to file charges, claiming no criminal law had been broken. A federal prosecutor from Los Angeles indicted the mother in what was the nation's first criminal cyberbully trial; she was found guilty on three

misdemeanors based on the Computer Fraud and the Abuse Act, but was later acquitted of all charges (Jacobs, 2010).

In November 2008, a college student named Abraham Biggs, 19, decided to end his life by taking a combination of drugs while in front of a live webcam over a 12-hour period (Jacobs, 2010). Many bloggers were noted to have encouraged him to continue while approximately 1,500 viewers watched. When the police were finally called, it was too late (Jacobs, 2010). In this case, the viewers were similar to a crowd watching a man on a ledge. Instead of getting involved to help prevent a suicide, they exacerbated the situation and urged on the suicidal act.

Police investigated the death of Alexis Pilkington, 17, who took her own life in March 2010 following vicious taunts on social networking sites (Glor, 2010). The cruel messages persisted after her death, which worsened the grief of her family and friends (Glor, 2010).

In September 2010, a Rutger's University student committed suicide by jumping off a New York bridge (Sawyer, 2010). He was Tyler Clementi, 18, who reportedly was video recorded having a sexual encounter with another man. The video was broadcast live on the web by his roommate. Two students were charged with two counts of invasion of privacy, which is a third-degree crime with a punishment of up to five years in prison (Sawyer, 2010).

More recently, Jamey Rodemeyer, 14, took his own life in September 2011 (Today Show). Friends and family reported that he had been bullied since fifth grade over his sexuality. There were web postings before and even after his death that called him names such as gay, fat, and retarded, and some postings even stated that he should just die and everyone would be happier with him gone. (Today Show, 2011).

Children have also been killed or committed suicide as a result of being happy-slapped, which is the most recent addition to cyberbullying. In one instance in April 2005, Shaun

Noonan, 14, hanged himself after being physically bullied and happy-slapped ("Bullycide

memorial page," 2011). Triston Christmas, 18, died when he was hit so hard from being happy-

slapped that he fell backward and hit his head on a concrete floor. Cell phone images showed

him bleeding as he tried to speak (Watt, 2006).

These stories are only a small number of publicized cases of cyberbullying that have

resulted in death, but they point to the tragic consequences of ignoring cyberbullying.

Cyberbullies may be placing their victims' lives at risk (Kowalski et al., 2008). Hinduja and

Patchin (2009) have noted a link between suicidal thoughts and online victimization. Middle

school children who are cyberbullied scored higher on the suicidal ideation scale than those who

did not experience cyberbullying. It is important to note that the research does not necessarily

mean that cyberbullying causes suicidal thoughts, just that there appears to be a connection that

needs further research. Based on their research, cyberbullying by itself does not necessarily lead

to suicide, but daily struggles, stresses, and feelings of hopelessness are exacerbated by it.

Cyberbullying Impacts on Education

Cyberbullying can have a significant impact on the school community. School culture is

defined as the "sum of the values, cultures, safety practices, and organizational structures within

a school that cause it to function and react in particular ways" (McBrien & Brandt, 1997, p. 89).

Students who experienced cyberbullying perceived a poorer climate and culture at their school

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Although Hinduja and Patchin's (2009) study was unable to

distinguish whether a poor school climate caused cyberbullying behaviors, the research indicates

that the variables are related.

Texting is one method of cyberbullying while at school (Kowalski et al., 2008). When

students were asked if texts were sent during the school day despite the school district's policy,

many students laughed and responded, "Yes, all day, every day" (Kowalski et al., 2008, p. 126).

Half of those children who had been cyberbullied while in school noted that they had been

targeted by another schoolmate (Kowalski et al., 2008).

The Ontario College of Teachers (2007) study reported that 33% of teachers are aware of

cyberbullying directed at their own students and 16% are aware it happens to students in their

schools. It was also reported that 24% of teachers believed that cyberbullying affected student

dropout rates.

Individual and focus group interviews revealed that some victims avoid school,

experience a drop in academic performance, and suffer damaged relationships (Kowalski et al.,

2008; Willard, 2007b). Fearing for their safety can impact their ability to learn because they are

so overwhelmed with the cyberbullying that they cannot focus on their coursework (Bissonette,

2009). Victims who feel they are not receiving support from school staff may be tempted to

bring a weapon to school for protection (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Some students avoid

attending school to avoid being further victimized (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009), and those who

experience bullying at school and cyberbullying at home may feel that they have no safe place.

According to the Ericson (2001), victims of bullying often felt lonely, humiliated,

insecure, and fearful going to school. They experience poor relationships, have difficulty

making friends, and struggle with emotional and social adjustments (Ericson, 2001). Depression

has been linked to bullying and has been noted to continue in victims into adulthood,

demonstrating its long-term implications (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Willard, 2007b). Tardiness,

truancy, eating disorders, chronic illness, self-esteem problems, aggression, depression,

interpersonal violence, substance abuse, delinquency, suicidal ideation, and suicide, among other

problems, have been shown to result from cyberbullying, according to Hinduja and Patchin's 2009 study.

The most common complaint from victims of cyberbullying is that schools defend their non-action by putting the sole responsibility on parents as the buyers and controllers of the devices being used off school grounds (Shariff, 2009). As previously noted, court rulings have been mixed on the extent of school responsibilities to interfere when students engage in cyberbullying from personal computers.

Summary

Most children and young adults are computer literate and have access to a range of digital communication tools, one unfortunate, and at times tragic, product of which is cyberbullying. In this chapter, I reviewed how technology is being used to threaten, harass, humiliate, and/or embarrass young people, leading to widespread concerns about children's physical and emotional development and well-being.

Just as schools have had to find comprehensive approaches to combat the effects of traditional bullying (Kowalski et al., 2008), so, too, must they find an approach to combat cyberbullying, which researchers indicate also undermines school climate and the safe and supportive environment that fosters student growth (Smith et al., 2008).

However, most attempts to punish students for cyberbullying have come under legal scrutiny, and although state and federal governments are working to strengthen the First Amendment while protecting adolescents in this new digital age (Jacobs, 2010), lower-level court cases have left school administrations with conflicting decisions and no clear guidance on the matter. The U.S. Supreme Court has yet to rule on a case that would provide much-needed direction.

Because the law seems to be one step behind technology, school officials need to be informed about how students are impacted by cyberbullying on and off school property and how cyberbullying is affecting their student populations, cultures, and climates. Chapter 3 contains a review of recent findings on student, parent, teacher, and school administrators' perceptions of cyberbullying, along with the design of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

School officials need to be aware of how students are affected by cyberbullying on and off school property and how cyberbullying may be a negative influence on their student populations, cultures, and climates. This research study was originally approached as an examination of the impact that cyberbullying was having on special needs students. Upon further investigation, the issue of cyberbullying went beyond special education into a global issue involving all students regardless of a diagnosed disability. This research study, therefore, sought to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of cyberbullying and how it impacts all students in the school environment.

Research Question

This study explored the following research question: Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of cyberbullying among students, parents, educators, and school administrators?

Type of Study

The research design incorporated quantitative data from online surveys that identified perceptions of cyberbullying through the eyes of various participants who were students, parents, educators, or school administrators. Data collected from the participants helped to clarify their perceptions of cyberbullying in relation to how often it occurs and its impact on students. Data

were analyzed and compared to evaluate if perceptions were the same or different across the different subgroups.

The data were used to ascertain participants' impressions of school and staff preparedness in dealing with cyberbullying and if there were clearly established plans or procedures for addressing cyberbullying. Participants had an opportunity to share their impressions of what types of consequences school administration should use in dealing with cyberbullying that may be occurring both on and off school property.

Participants shared information about their perceptions of how cyberbullying is impacting students' attendance and academic performance. They had an opportunity to share their perceptions of the school environment and whether students were comfortable in approaching parents or school staff with cyberbullying concerns.

Population

This research study included male and female students from 12 to 18 years of age. Research by Williams and Guerra (2007) indicated that cyberbullying was more prevalent in middle school and high school because that student population was more computer-proficient.

The research study included educators and school administrators working with students in the age range indicated. The Ontario College of Teachers (2007) study reported that teachers are aware of cyberbullying directed at their students and are aware it happens to students in their schools. It was also reported that teachers believed that cyberbullying affects student dropout rates.

Additional participants were parents of students in the age group indicated. Victims of cyberbullying have indicated that they hide their cyberbullying experiences because they fear they will be blamed for the behavior or will lose access to their technology (Hinduja & Patchin,

2009). Many parents may not know what to do when confronted with a cyberbullying problem

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

In order for the research to detect a genuine effect of cyberbullying on students' ability to

attend and make academic progress, Cohen (as cited in Field, 2009) recommended a level of

power of .8 or an 80% chance of detecting if an effect should exist. Using the standard α-level

of .05 and the power of .8, this research study required a minimum of 28 participants and a

maximum of 783 participants. This research study used at least 100 participants with a

combination of students, parents, educators, and school administrators. Each sub-group

contained a minimum of 20 participants.

Data Collection

Data gathering procedures entailed Internet surveys which were utilized in order to gather

information from a wide variety of students, parents, and school staff from various age groups,

backgrounds, and locations. The surveys were adapted from a combination of various surveys

already utilized in cyberbullying research as well as several questions I added for this specific

research project (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Rogers, 2010; Trolley & Hanel, 2010; Willard,

2007b). To begin the process, school districts from various locations in Indiana, Ohio, and

Pennsylvania were selected based on a variety of factors including socioeconomic background,

ethnic variance, racial variance, geographical locations, and student enrollment.

The school districts selected had different socioeconomic populations from a high

economic population and parent income base to a school district with high rates of a free and

reduced lunch population. The districts also had different levels of ethnic and racial variance.

Districts selected varied from urban, suburban, to rural geographical locations. Districts were

also selected based on student enrollment numbers from school districts with more than 6,000

students to schools with fewers than 1,000 enrolled students. Because the research was

conducted via an Internet website, there was limited information pertaining to which

superintendents and school districts chose to participate in this research study.

The superintendents were mailed a packet that included an introductory letter explaining

the purpose of the study and the importance of the cyberbullying surveys (Appendix A). If

emails addresses were available, then an email containing the superintendent letter was sent to

the superintendent with the building administrator/staff letter and parent letter attached. The

letters clearly specified that the cyberbullying survey was voluntary, completely confidential,

and for informational purposes only. The letters included an Internet website link that could be

put on the school district home page, weekly/monthly parent newsletters, or bulletin boards in

office or guidance areas in the school building. This allowed for easy parent or staff access.

A letter for building administrators and school staff (Appendix B) describing this

cyberbullying research study was shared with superintendents. When the superintendent decided

to allow his or her district to participate, he or she distributed the building administrator and staff

letter in whatever manner he or she chose, such as at a monthly administrative meeting. Building

administrators then shared the letter with building staff during weekly staff meetings. Staff was

instructed to allow any student with a signed parent permission form access to a computer only

during non-instructional time, such as study lab or when daily work is completed, to complete

the survey.

Upon superintendent approval, parents were given access to the parent letter (Appendix

C) via the district website under parent communications. Parents also received a copy of the

letter through any district parent communications like weekly/monthly newsletters. A copy of

the parent letter was posted on community school bulletin boards or included in office handouts

that were available to parents. Parent letters were made available during any open house events or parent–teacher conferences.

The parent letter also specified that the cyberbullying survey was voluntary, completely confidential, and for informational purposes only. The letter included an Internet website link that parents and students could use to access the survey from their home computers or other technological devices.

If a parent wanted his or her child to take the cyberbullying survey at school, the parent needed to sign the parental permission form at the end of the parent letter. The student could present this permission form during a study hall period or when work was concluded. The student was permitted to access a computer within the class or granted permission to go to a classroom that had Internet access. Teachers were not responsible for gaining child assent because that was answered within the research survey. Teachers did not know if the child declined to participate or completed the survey.

After accessing the website, the Cyberbullying Survey began with an explanation of the purpose of this survey and stressed that it was voluntary. Before the survey began, each participant started with a question about participating on a voluntary basis. Any responses that were negative and indicated the participant was not completing the survey voluntarily were not included in the research study.

The participant link then asked if the respondent was a student, parent, educator, or school administrator. The participant then completed the remainder of the survey (Appendix D). The survey included an explanation that all data gathered were analyzed and reviewed within this research document and would be completely confidential.   The survey also included contact

information for a 24-hour Cyberbullying Help Hotline or email for any participants who had a need to talk with a trained professional about their cyberbullying experiences.

Data Analysis

Data gathered from the survey questions were formulated into an analysis using SPSS version 20.0 computer software. Tests for normality such as histograms, skew, and kurtosis were conducted to determine if the sampling was from a normal distribution. Homogeneity was determined through a Levene's test or F-Max. Histograms and bar graphs were used to determine variation.

Post hoc tests were used to compare different combinations of the participant groups. A Tukey's test controls the Type I error rate and is considered a conservative test. It is more powerful when testing large numbers of means. However, if group sizes are different, a Tukey may not be appropriate, and a Gabriel's procedure for slightly different sample sizes or a Hochberg's GT2 can be used with sample sizes that are very different.

In order to summarize the data collected in terms of a straight line, a linear model of data analysis was used, such as an analysis of variance (ANOVA). Participants' responses were analyzed in order to compare with each subgroup. The data gathered from the subgroups of students, parents, educators, and school administrators were analyzed quantitatively and presented via graphs and tables.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the perceptions of cyberbullying among students, parents, educators, or school administrators.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

In this new digital age, people are able to communicate instantaneously with others from around the world with very few restrictions. One of the consequences of this relatively new freedom is bullying's treacherous twin, cyberbullying. As cyberbullying becomes more prevalent in our society, educators need to be aware of how it is impacting their school environments.

The purpose of this research study was to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of cyberbullying that may have an impact on the school environment. This study explored the following research question: Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of cyberbullying among students, parents, educators, and school administrators?

In order to answer this question, a Web-based survey was created through Qualtrics, an online survey and data collection system. This allowed participants to respond with complete anonymity. The survey was sent to nine superintendents from different school districts in Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Each superintendent received a letter inviting his or her district to participate as well as information describing the research study. A total of 127 anonymous responses to the Web-based survey were received. To analyze research questions, responses were collected and data were downloaded in a format usable in the Statistical Package for the

Social Sciences (SPSS, 20.0) software. The findings from the research survey are reported here

and organized by research question.

Of the 127 surveys received from random participants, 123 were used in this research

study. Three surveys were excluded where the answer to the preliminary question, "Are you

taking this survey voluntarily?" was *no*. Another survey was eliminated due to blank responses

throughout.

Question 1 asked participants to categorize themselves as student, parent, educator, or

administrator. A summary of the participants is presented in Table 1. The largest subgroup was

educators (40%), followed by parents (22%), and students (21%). The smallest was school

administrators (18%). Three surveys showed no response for this question. Unequal sample

sizes were taken into consideration for all analyses and compensated for the imbalance of group

sizes.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Demographic	n	%
Students	25	20.8
Parents	26	21.7
Educators	48	40.0
Administrators	21	17.5
Total	120	100.0

Based on the 123 surveys, subgroups ranged from 21 to 48, $M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.01$. The

distribution of responses did not differ significantly from normal, *skew* $= -.18$, $t(122) = -.81$, $p >$

.01; *kurtosis* = -1.06, *t*(122) = -2.45, *p* > .01. All significant tests for normality were conducted

at alpha = .01, two-tailed. When sample scores are normally distributed, 99% of scores should

fall between ± 2.58.

Further investigation for a normal distribution was interpreted in conjunction with a

graph. In Figure 1, a histogram depicts the sample distribution.

Histogram

Mean = 2.52
Std. Dev. = 1.011
N = 123
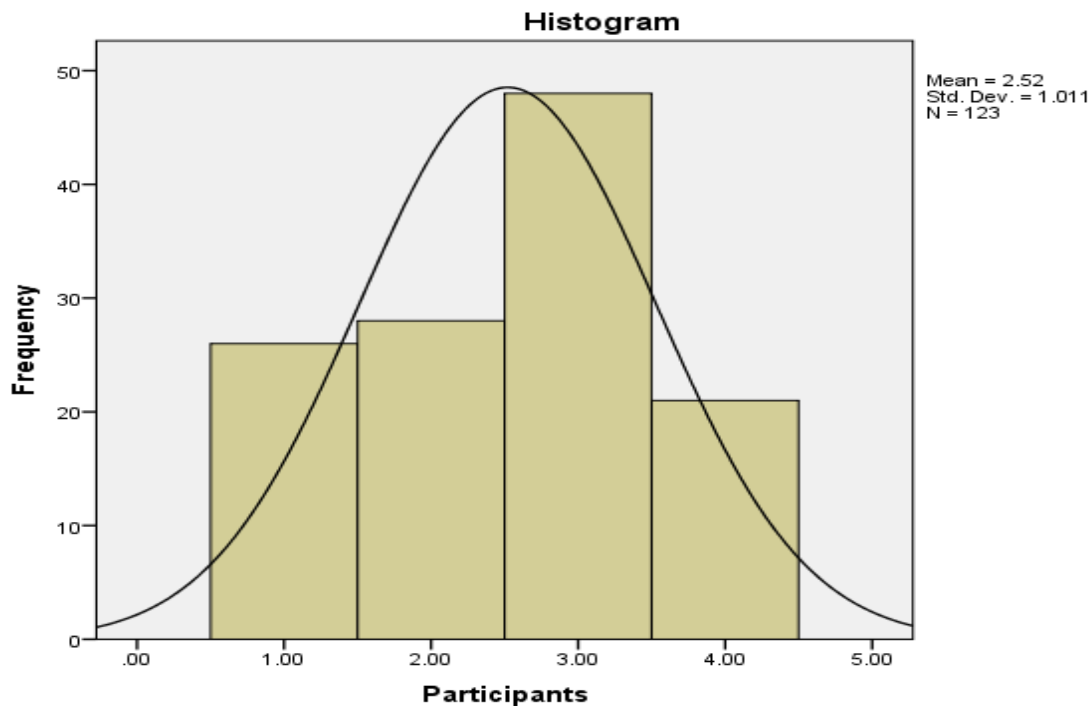
Figure 1. Sample distribution.

In Figure 1, student participants are represented by 1.00, parents are 2.00, educators are

3.00, and administrators are 4.00. The three subcategories of students, parents, and

administrators are fairly equal; however, significantly more educators participated in the survey.

This histogram indicated that the sample population had a slight negative skew but still within a

normal range. Kurtosis scores had indicated a flat platykurtic distribution, which was not

exhibited within the histogram.

Question 2 asked how many times the participant had been cyberbullied. The majority of the responses (75%) indicated they had never been cyberbullied. The results by subgroups (Figure 2) showed that adults did not have as many experiences of being personally cyberbullied; with 18% of parents, 20% of teachers, and 17% of administrators when compared to 54% of the students who had personal experiences with cyberbullying.
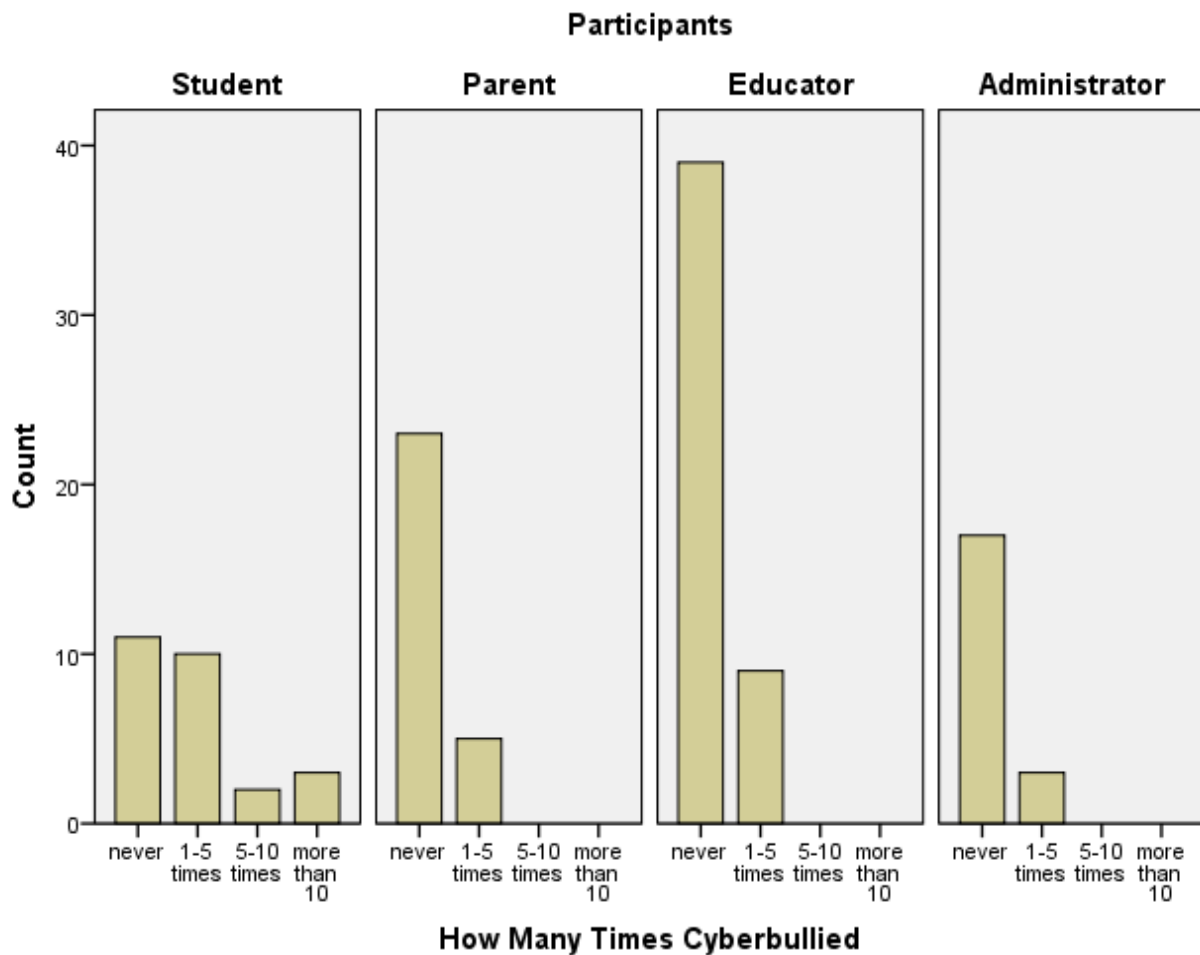
Figure 2. Frequency of cyberbullying.

All four subgroups had respondents who said they had been cyberbullied between one and five times, but this was most often cited in the student and educator subgroups. Of the four subgroups, only student respondents said they had been cyberbullied more than five times.

Levene's test was utilized to look at the variances in different groups to verify that they were equal. The variances were significantly different, $F(3, 118) = 10.69$, $p < .001$, and the assumption was that the homogeneity of variance has been violated.

When sample sizes are large, small differences in group variance can produce a Levene's test that is significant. Therefore, a Hartley's F_{Max}, also known as a variance ratio, was calculated. The largest variance was divided by the smallest variance. The variance ratio was $.986/.134 = 7.36$. The group sizes had a minimum of 20 participants and compared four groups. Critical value was approximately 3.29 for $\alpha = .05$ and 4.3 for $\alpha = .01$. Using the critical value of approximately 4.3, F_{Max} ratio of 7.36 was significantly higher and concurred with Levene's test that the variance was significantly different.

Post-hoc tests were used to compare all different combinations of the subgroups. A Tukey test was used to control for Type I error and is more powerful when testing for large numbers of means. A Hochberg GT2 and Gabriel test were used because they were both designed to cope with different sample sizes. A Games-Howell was also included since it, too, is designed to deal with varied populations. All four tests revealed a significant effect of how many times a participant was cyberbullied based on the subgroup. A significant difference post-hoc comparison revealed student ($M = 26$) was significantly different from parent ($M = 28$), educator ($M = 48$), and administrator ($M = 20$), which Tukey, Hochberg, and Gabriel tests were all statistically significant, $p < .001$. Games-Howell was also statistically significant ($p = .010$, $p = .009$, and $p = .007$). All tests were two-tailed.

Based on an ANOVA, there was a large and significant effect of how many times a participant was cyberbullied when looking within subgroups, $F(3, 118) = 10.45$, $p < .001$, two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .19$. Student scores were significantly higher than parent, educator, and administrator on number of incidents involving cyberbullying. Table 2 includes a complete list of post-hoc test significance scores.

Table 2

Post-hoc: Frequency of Cyberbullying

Group Comparison	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	.000**	.000**	.000**	.010*
Student – Educator	.000**	.000**	.000**	.009*
Student – Administrator	.000**	.000**	.000**	.007*
Parent – Educator	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Parent – Administrator	.998	1.000	1.000	.994
Educator – Administrator	.995	1.000	1.000	.982
Harmonic Means – 27.58	.995	1.000	1.000	

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p \leq .000$. All tests were two-tailed.

Question 3 asked if the participants felt that cyberbullying was on the rise and an increasing problem. Overall, respondents replied resoundingly in the affirmative at 91%. A review of all subgroups indicated similar responses within each subgroup.

In Question 3, participants were also asked who most often reports incidences of cyberbullying, and to rate them 1 (*most often*) to 5 (*least often*). In reviewing the data, parent

was ranked first (41). Peer was the most popular second choice (31) and third choice (42) with

victim (43) and bully (94) as least common choices. These findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Incidents of Cyberbullying Reported

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Victim	21	22	10	43	4	100
Friend of victim	26	26	28	14	3	97
Peer	8	31	42	22	2	105
Parent	41	26	21	14	6	108
Bully	15	1	0	4	94	114
Total	111	106	101	97	109	

To determine equality of variances, Levene's test was used. When looking at the

question of who most often reported incidents of cyberbullying, the variances were equal for

students, parents, educators, and administrators when reported by a friend, $F(3, 74) = 1.51$, $p =$

.22, reported by student, $F(3, 74) = 1.90$, $p = .14$, and reported by parent, $F(3, 74) = 0.89$, $p =$

.45. However, for reported by victim, $F(3, 74) = 4.29$, $p = .008$, and reported by bully, $F(3, 74) =$

5.00, $p = .003$, they were significant at $< .05$, so the assumption of equal variances may have

been violated in those two areas.

Small differences in group variances can occur with large sample sizes when using a

Levene's test. A double check was done using F_{Max} or the variance ratio. The variance ratios in

each section (3.00, 2.07, 2.23, 2.05, and 3.56) were all less than 4.3 for $\alpha = .01$. Variances were

not significantly different in each section so the assumption of equal variances was not violated in any areas.

Post-hoc tests were used to compare all different combinations of the subgroups. All four tests revealed a significant effect of how often cyberbullying was reported by the victim based on participant perceptions and responses. Comparisons revealed neither student ($M = 21$) nor educator ($M = 42$) was significantly different from parent ($M = 23$, $p = .333$ and $p = .078$, respectively) and administrator ($M = 16$, $p = .085$ and $p = .106$, respectively) nor student to educator ($p = .970$). However, scores from parent and administrator were statistically significant, $p = .001$ (Tukey, Hochberg, and Gabriel) and $p < .001$ (Games-Howell). All tests were two-tailed. Table 4 includes all post-hoc scores.

Table 4

Post-hoc: Cyberbullying Reported by Victim

Group Comparison	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	.333	.441	.440	.289
Student – Educator	.970	.998	.998	.979
Student – Administrator	.085	.106	.104	.104
Parent – Educator	.078	.097	.091	.028
Parent – Administrator	.001*	.001*	.001*	.000*
Educator – Administrator	.106	.133	.114	.104
Harmonic Means – 22.55	.113	.052	.052	

Note: * $p \leq .001$. All tests were two-tailed.

Based on an ANOVA, there was a significant effect of how often cyberbullying was reported by the victim, $F(3, 98) = 5.44$, $p = .002$, two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .12$. Scores were significantly different between subgroups of parents and administrators on how often cyberbullying was reported by the victim.

Three of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect of how often cyberbullying was reported by the bully based on participant perceptions and responses. Comparison revealed neither parent ($M = 26$) nor administrator ($M = 19$) was significantly different from student ($M = 25$, $p = .050$ and $p = .382$, respectively) and educator ($M = 47$, $p = .998$ and $p = .878$, respectively), nor parent to administrator ($p = .851$). However, scores from student and educator were statistically significant ($p = .031$, Tukey; $p = .036$, Hochberg; and $p = .033$, Gabriel), but was not statistically significant for Games-Howell. All tests were two-tailed. Table 5 includes all post-hoc scores.

Table 5

Post-hoc: Cyberbullying Reported by Bully

Group Comparison	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	.050*	.060	.060	.108
Student – Educator	.031*	.036*	.033*	.107
Student – Administrator	.382	.504	.502	.565
Parent – Educator	.998	1.000	1.000	.997
Parent – Administrator	.851	.963	.960	.854
Educator – Administrator	.878	.973	.970	.890
Harmonic Means – 26.25	.045*	.054	.054	

Note: * $p \leq .05$. All tests were two-tailed.

An ANOVA indicated there was a moderately significant effect of how often cyberbullying was reported by the bully, $F(3, 113) = 3.10$, $p = .030$, two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .05$. Scores were moderately different between subgroups of students and educators on how often cyberbullying was reported by the bully.

Participants also used a ranking system to rank order where cyberbullying most often occurs. Scores were very similar in each category with *home* (60), *at a friend's house* (48), *school* (34), and *out in the community* (8), ranked last. When looking at the individual subgroups, they all ranked home as the location where cyberbullying most often occurs, with school as the second most often with very little differentiation.

Participants were then asked to rank the electronic tool used most often in cyberbullying. *Cellphones* scored the highest responses (103) followed closely by *computers* (97). A *personal digital device* (PDA) was least common (84). Individual subgroups responded similarly to this question.

Participants were also asked to rank their perceptions of the most common way that cyberbullying was occurring. The most common response was through *personal profile pages* (63), followed by *instant messaging* (45), *blogs* (42), and *e-mails* (38). Each subgroups' responses were reviewed and were similar.

In Question 4, participants were asked if they felt cyberbullying was a problem at their schools. The majority (55%) said they felt it was, although 26% said they were unsure. Figure 3 shows how each subgroup responded .
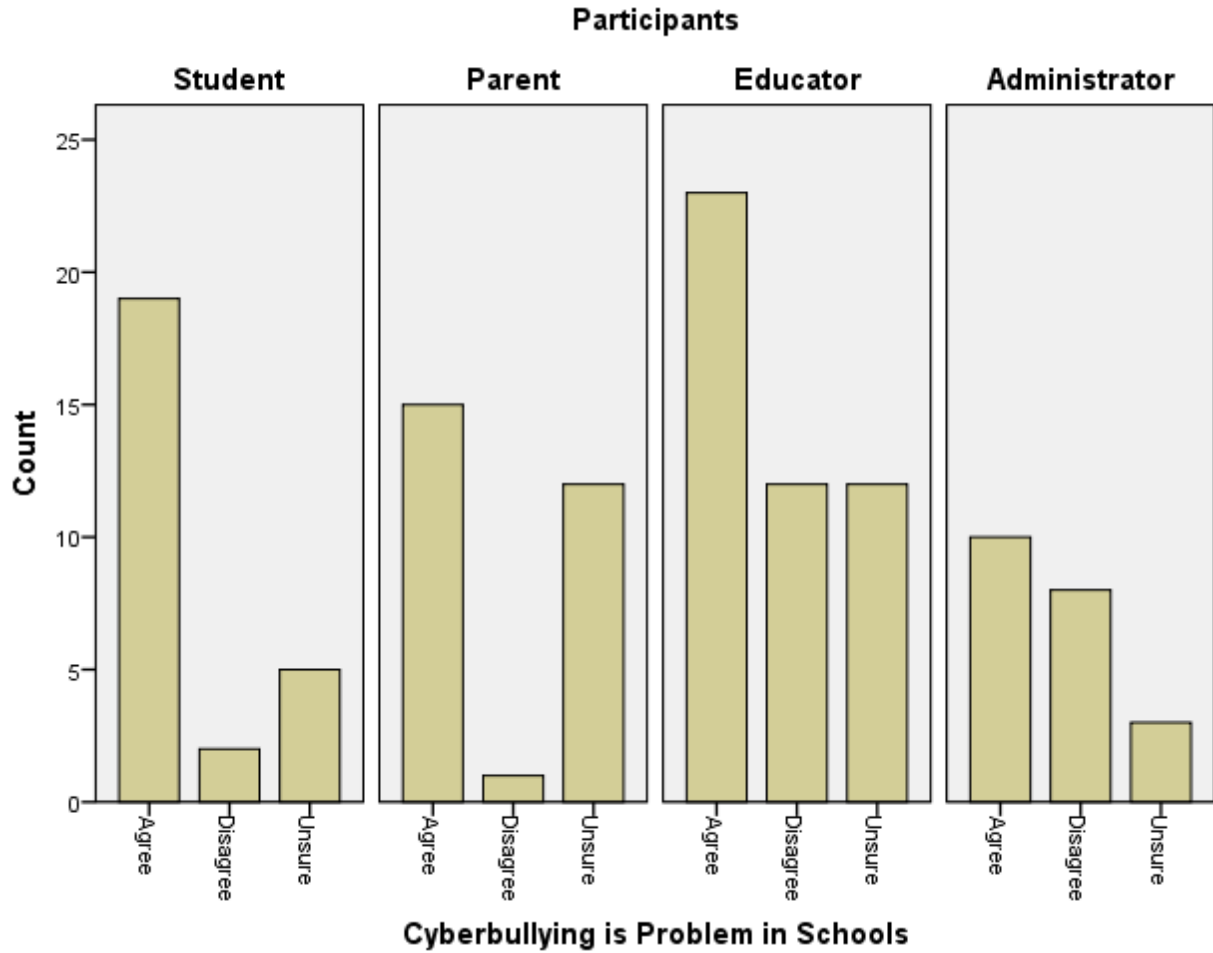
Figure 3. Cyberbullying – Is it a problem at your school?

All subgroups scored highest in the agreement category. Administrators scored higher in the agree response, but their responses were more evenly distributed in comparison to the students, parents, and educators who had higher percentages in the agree column. It also was noted that parents and educators had a high number of responses in the unsure column.

In Question 5, participants were asked what they thought were the typical personal characteristics of a cyberbully. Respondents were allowed to mark as many of the 26 characteristics given as they wanted.

Eighty-one percent of the respondents said that a cyberbully is typically a *female*; 76% said they felt that a cyberbully was *manipulative and controlling*. Most respondents felt that a cyberbully *had friends* (61%), was predominantly *Caucasian* (57%), was *average academically* (51%), has *low self-esteem* (51%), and has some *anger* (50%).

Responses did not indicate that participants perceived cyberbullies as being typical *special needs students* (11%) or *loners* (15%) or that they *resembled traditional bullies* (13%) or *victims* (18%). The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Characteristics of a Cyberbully

Characteristics	Responses	%
Male	47	39
Female	96	81
Upper class	54	45
Middle class	60	50
Lower class	40	34
Caucasian/white	68	57
Minority culture	35	29
Above average academics	30	25
Average academics	61	51
Below average academics	45	38
Special needs	13	11
Loners	18	15
Have friends	72	61

Table 6 (continued)

Characteristics	Responses	%
Leaders	45	38
Followers	42	35
Angry	59	50
Depressed	35	29
Outgoing	31	26
Manipulative/controlling	90	76
Low self-esteem	61	51
Poor impulse control	54	45
Resemble traditional bully	48	40
Resemble traditional victim	15	13
Respond to being bullied	22	18
Provoked by victim	35	29
No typical characteristics	26	22

Questions 6, 7, and 8 referred to students' rights. Question 6 asked if students should have the right to say or do whatever they like on-line; 87% of the respondents said *no*. When asked if students should be able to surf the web without restrictions or censorship, 83% said *no*. Question 8 asked if someone who had taken a photo of someone else needed to get that person's permission before posting it online, to which 75% of respondents said *yes*. In reviewing the data based on each subgroup, all responses were similar.

In Question 9, participants were provided a list of 13 cyberbullying examples and asked if any such incidences had been reported to their school in the past year. Respondents could mark any number of incidences. Almost all respondents (91%) indicated that someone they were familiar with had been upset, made uncomfortable, or was afraid based on someone posting something negative about them on Facebook or a profile page. Being put down or bullied online through postings of cruel gossip or rumors (89%) was the second highest reported on the cyberbullying survey. Having something posted that damaged someone's reputation was reported at 70% and posting material that damaged a friendship was at 63%. Engaging in an online fight or argument was reported at 67% and sending mean or hurtful e-mails was at 58%. A complete list of findings is presented in Table 7.

Question 10 asked respondents to share information about an incident of cyberbullying. It included several parts to the question. To the first part of the question—if the victim knew the identity of his or her bully—87% said *yes*; 86% said they had been cyberbullied at school. The data was examined by subgroup and all responses were similar.

When asked if threats made online were carried out at school, 56% said *no*, 15% said *yes,* and 29% said they *did not know*. Each subgroup was examined and all responses were similar.

The next part of the question asked if the person being cyberbullied shared the incident with parents, to which 53% said *yes,* 16% said *no*, and 31% *did not know*. Figure 4 shows the responses based on each subgroup.

In Figure 4, *yes* indicates a parent was informed, *no* indicates a parent was not contacted, and an *unsure* response indicates the respondent did not know the outcome. Although the majority of total responses indicated that a parent was informed of a cyberbullying incident, this number was calculated solely from parent, educator, and administrator input. Students had a

high number of responses for *no* and *unsure*; administrators had very few responses in those

categories. Due to inconsistent responses, further analysis is necessary.

Table 7

Reported Incidences of Cyberbullying

Answer	Responses	%
Made fun of in chat room	40	44
Put down/bullied online by postings of cruel gossip, rumors, or hurtful material	80	89
Received mean/hurtful e-mail	52	58
Something posted on Facebook/profile page that made student upset, uncomfortable, or afraid	82	91
Something posted on Web page that made a student upset, uncomfortable, or afraid	45	50
Someone pretended to be another student	23	26
Posted material damaged a student's reputation	63	70
Posted material damaged a student's friendship	57	63
Someone shared personal secrets or images online without permission	49	54
Someone posted information that a student did not want others to see	55	61
Excluded from an online group	23	26
Afraid to log onto computer	9	10
Engaged in online agreement/fight	60	67
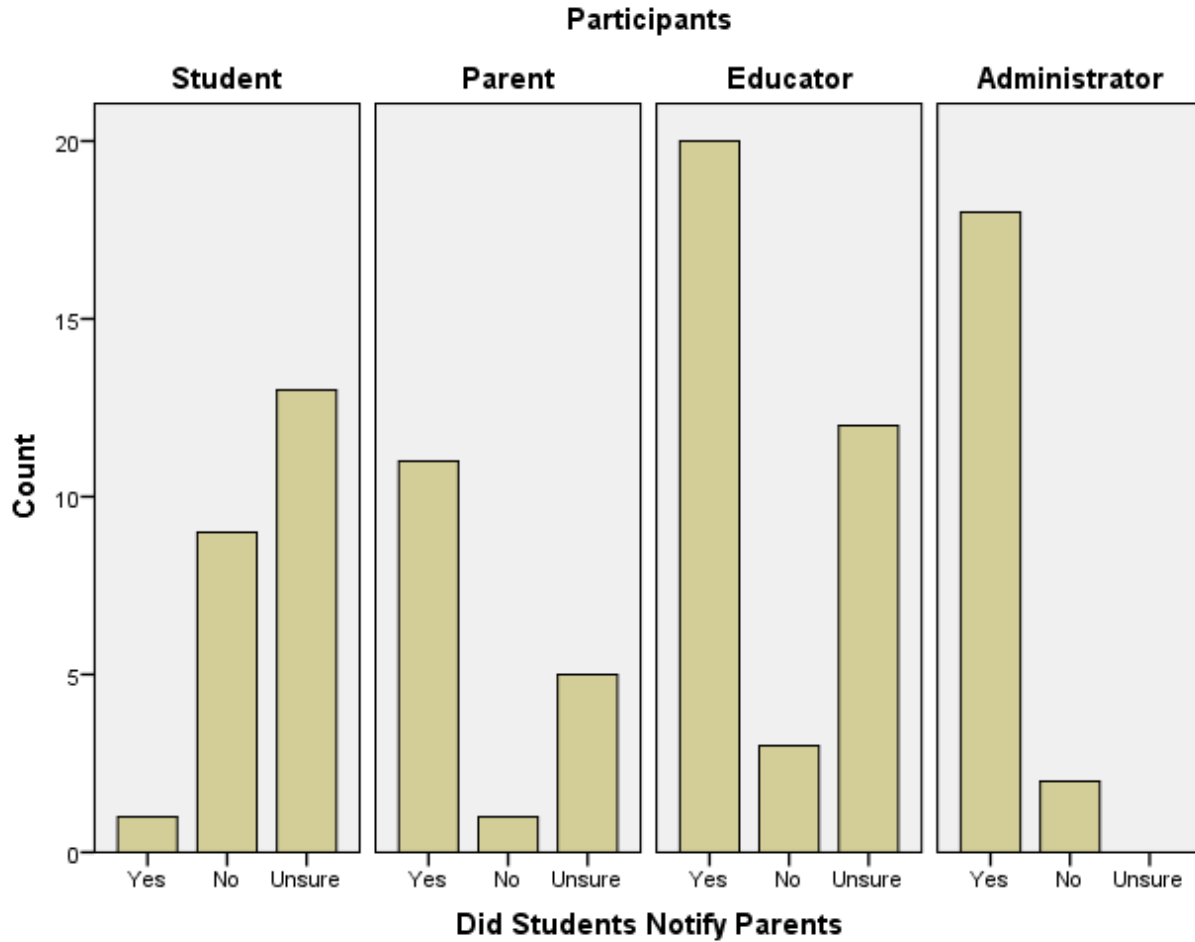
Figure 4. Breakdown of responses for "Did student notify parent."

To determine equality of variances, Levene's test was examined. The variance was $F(3, 91) = 30.62$, $p < .001$, which was $< .05$ and significant, so the assumption of equal variances may have been violated. Due to the large sample size, an F_{Max} was calculated. Critical value was 4.3 for $\alpha = .01$. The variance ratio was 9.34, which was greater than 4.3, so F_{Max} ratio concurred with Levene's and variances were significantly different in each section, so the assumption of equal variances has been violated.

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect of how often parents were notified by students about cyberbullying. Comparisons revealed neither educator ($M = 35$) or administrator ($M = 21$) was significantly different than parent ($M = 17$, $p = .947$ and $p = .142$, respectively). However, comparison scores from students ($M = 23$) were statistically different from parents, $p = .003$ (Tukey's, Hochberg, Gabriel) and $p = .011$ (Games-Howell). Comparison scores from students were statistically different from educators, $p = .002$ (Tukey's) and $p = .003$ (Hochberg, Gabriel, and Games-Howell). Comparison scores from students were statistically different than administrators, $p < .001$ for all four post-hoc tests. All tests were two-tailed. A complete list of post-hoc scores appears in Table 8.

Table 8

Post-hoc: Were Parents Notified About Cyberbullying?

Group Comparisons	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	.003*	.003*	.003*	.011*
Student – Educator	.002*	.003*	.003*	.003*
Student – Administrator	.000**	.000**	.000**	.000**
Parent – Educator	.947	.995	.994	.969
Parent – Administrator	.142	.182	.181	.129
Educator – Administrator	.013*	.014*	.013*	.002*
Harmonic Means = 22.12	.023*	.027*	.027*	

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$. All tests were two-tailed.

Based on an ANOVA, there was a large and significant effect of how often parents are notified about cyberbullying, $F(3, 91) = 12.56$, $p < .001$, two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .27$. Scores were

significantly different between students and other subgroups based on how often parents are notified by students about cyberbullying.

When asked if the student had told a school staff member about the cyberbullying, 56% said *yes*, 27% said *no*, and 17% said *did not know*. Figure 5 reflects the data based on subgroups.
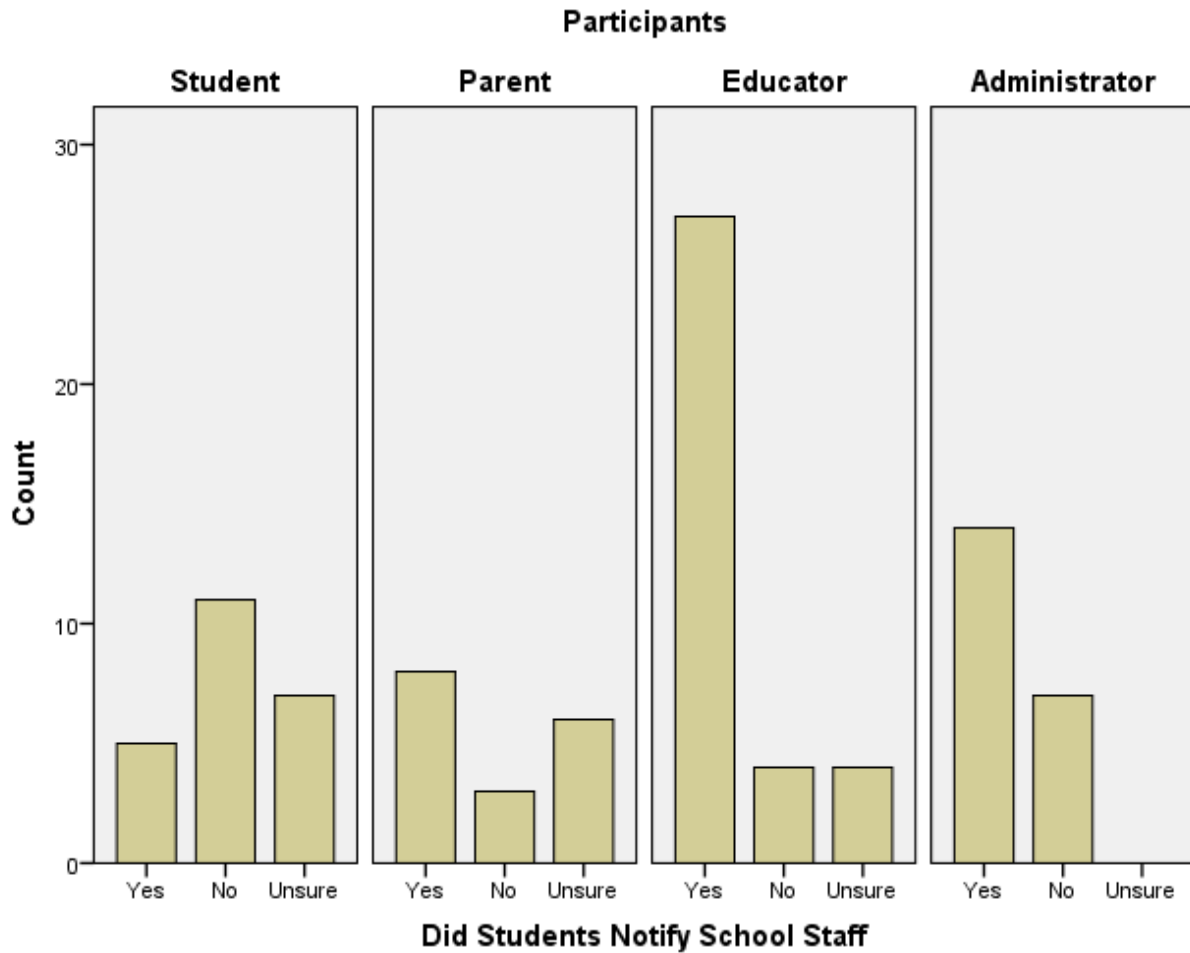

Figure 5. Did student notify school staff?

In Figure 5, *yes* indicated that school staff was notified, *no* indicated school staff was not notified, and an *unsure* response indicated the respondents were not sure of outcome. Data collected from parents, educators, and administrators indicated that the majority of times, school

staff were contacted about incidences of cyberbullying. Student responses were predominantly

negative when asked about contacting school staff. Varied responses required further analysis.

Equality of variances using Levene's test was examined again. The variances was $F(3,$

$91) = 3.74$, $p < .014$, which was $< .05$ and significant, so the assumption of equal variances may

have been violated. Due to the large sample size, an F_{Max} was calculated. Critical value was 4.3

for $\alpha = .01$. The variance ratio was 3.89 which was less than 4.3 for $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not

significantly different in each section so the assumption of equal variances has not been violated.

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect of how often school staff was

notified about cyberbullying based on participant perceptions and responses. Comparisons

revealed neither educator ($M = 35$) nor administrator ($M = 21$) was significantly different from

parent ($M = 17$, $p = .055$ and $p = .089$, respectively). Educator and administrator comparison

were not significant, $p = 1.00$, nor was student ($M = 23$) to parent, $p = .803$, significant.

However, comparison scores from students were statistically different from educators, $p = .001$

(Tukey's, Hochberg, and Gabriel) and $p = .002$ (Games-Howell). Comparison scores from

students were statistically different from administrators, $p = .004$ (Tukeys, Hochberg, and

Gabriel) and $p = .001$ (Games-Howell). All tests were two-tailed. Table 9 contains all post-hoc

scores of significance.

An ANOVA indicated there was a large and significant effect between students and other

subgroups of how often school staff were notified about cyberbullying, $F(3, 92) = 7.04$, $p < .001$,

two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .16$.

Table 9

Post-hoc: School Staff Notified of Cyberbullying

Group Comparisons	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student - Parent	.803	.934	.933	.875
Student - Educator	.001**	.001**	.001**	.002*
Student -Administrator	.004*	.004*	.004*	.001**
Parent - Educator	.055	.067	.060	.171
Parent - Administrator	.089	.111	.110	.150
Educator - Administrator	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Harmonic Means = 22.41	.053	.064	.064	

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p \leq .001$. All tests were two-tailed.

When asked whether the victim told a friend, 81% said *yes*, 4% said *no*, and 15% *did not know*. When reviewing the data by subgroups, all responses were similar. The variance ratio was 3.83, which was less than 4.3 for $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different in each section, so the assumption of equal variances has not been violated.

The survey included a list of choices and asked the participant how the victim reacted. Responses included *logged off computer* (12%), *blocked access* (31%), *changed screen name* (9%), *left website* (23%), *did nothing* (26%), and *did something else* (49%).

In Question 11, participants were asked how they thought the student being cyberbullied felt and the participants were again able to mark as many responses as applicable without restrictions. The majority of responses indicated the students felt *angry* (67%), *frustrated or helpless* (64%), *embarrassed* (56%), *sad* (55%), and *scared or frightened* (42%).

Questions 12 to 14 pertained to how cyberbullying was perceived to be impacting students at school. The first question (Question 12) asked how students who are cyberbullied feel about school when they are being cyberbullied and whether the students avoid or make excuses not to go to school. Of the responses, 43% were *yes*, 44% said *sometimes*, and 13% were *no*. Figure 6 broke the responses down into subgroups for further review.
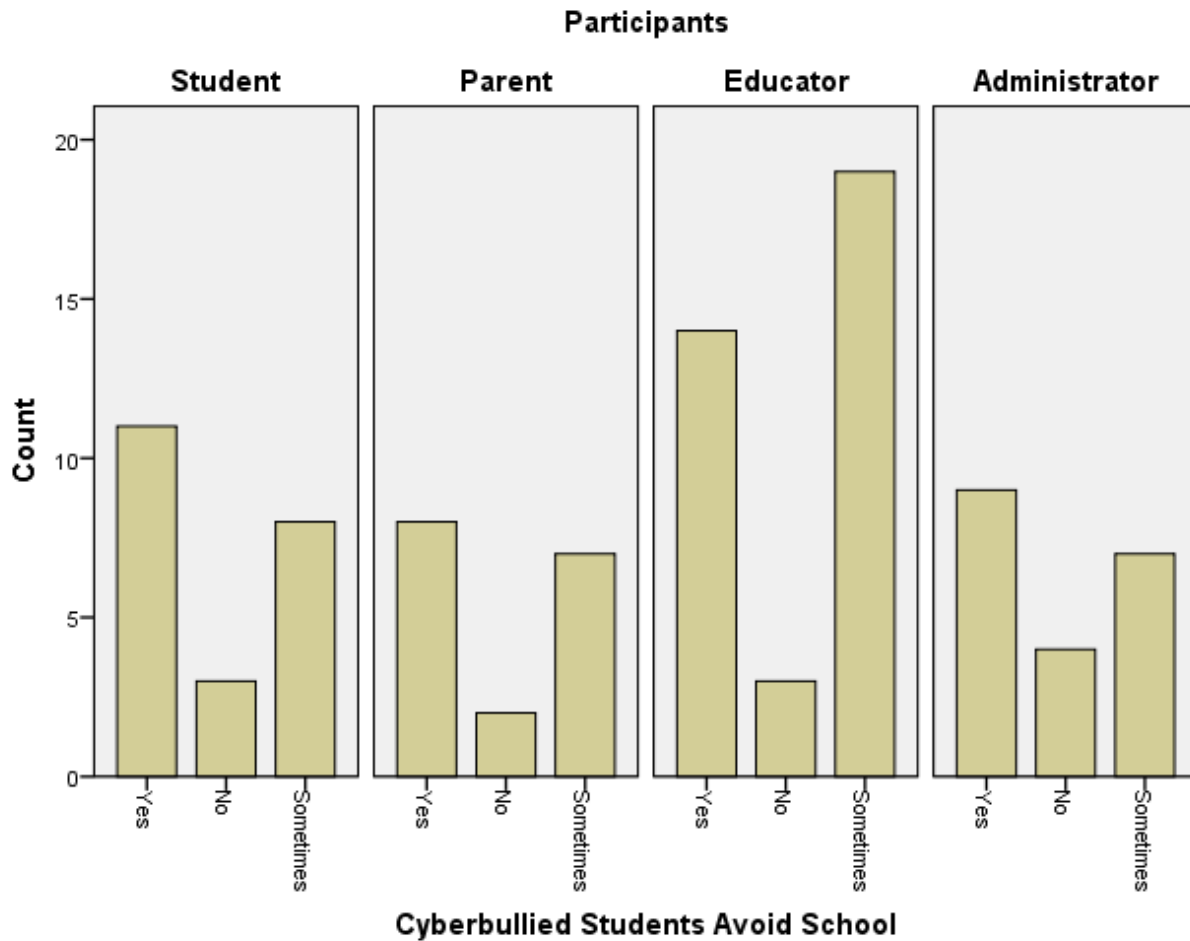

Figure 6. Cyberbullied students avoid school.

The *yes* responses were highest in the student (11), parent (8), and administrator (9) subgroups. All four subgroups had the *no* response as the lowest.

Levene's test was used to determine equality of variances, $F(3, 91) = 0.44$, $p = .73$. Due to large sample size, an F_{Max} was also calculated. Critical value was approximately 4.3 for $\alpha = .01$. The variance ratio was 1.12, which was less than 4.3 for $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different, so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

No significant difference in comparison of scores between subgroups was found when looking at students avoiding school due to cyberbullying. A Tukey's revealed no significant differences among subgroups ($p = .994$, $p = .706$, $p = .999$, $p = .893$, $p = .999$, and $p = .803$), $F(3, 91) = 0.50$, $p = .682$, two-tailed $\omega^2 = .02$. Only a small effect was noted when comparing perceptions of school avoidance based on cyberbullying.

The next question (Question 13) asked if cyberbullied students found it harder to concentrate on their school work. The majority (65%) responded *yes*, 34% said *sometimes,* and 1% said *no*. Levene's test was used to determine equality of variances, $F(3, 91) = 1.64$, $p = .19$. F_{Max} was calculated at 1.30, which was less than 4.3, for $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different in each section so the assumption of equal variances has not been violated.

There was no significant difference in comparison of scores between subgroups when looking at students unable to concentrate in school due to cyberbullying. A Tukey's revealed no significant differences among subgroups ($p = .167$, $p = .225$, $p = .135$, $p = .955$, $p = .952$, and $p = 1.0$), $F(3, 93) = 2.17$, $p = .097$, two-tailed $\omega^2 = .03$. There was only a small difference in perceptions and responses from the subgroups.

The last question in this grouping (Question 14) asked if students' grades suffered due to cyberbullying, to which 47% said *yes,* 48% said *sometimes*, and 4% said *no*. When looking at each subgroup for these questions, participants all responded in a similar manner. Levene's test was used to determine equality of variances, $F(3, 91) = 1.96$, $p = .13$. F_{Max} was calculated at

1.19, which was less than 4.3, for $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different in each section so the assumption of equal variances has not been violated.

There was no significant difference in comparison of scores between subgroups when looking at students whose grades suffered due to cyberbullying. A Tukey's revealed no significant differences among subgroups ($p = .388$, $p = .997$, $p = .968$, $p = .231$, $p = .899$, and $p = .666$), $F(3, 93) = 1.32$, $p = .274$, two-tailed $\omega^2 = .01$. There were no significant differences in perceptions and responses from the subgroups.

Question 15 asked participants for their perceptions of the most common reasons for cyberbullying. This question used a ranking system of 1 (*most often*) to 7 (*least often*). *Power* (33) and *doing it for fun and laughs* (26) were ranked the highest. Ranked second highest was because *others were doing it* (21) and ranked third was because *I can and no one knows it is me* (23). The least popular reasons ranked last were because *they deserved it* (27) and because of *hate* (21). Table 10 shows all responses and rankings.

Table 10

Reasons for Cyberbullying

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Revenge	16	15	6	21	18	23	11	110
They deserved it.	8	11	14	15	11	21	27	107
Others were doing it/joining in.	7	21	17	13	25	15	6	104
Fun/for laughs.	26	18	17	13	15	11	12	112
Because I can/no one knows it is me.	11	16	23	14	10	11	19	104
Power	33	17	15	16	14	9	9	113
Hate	12	13	17	18	12	17	21	110

In Question 16, participants were asked how often they thought school computers were used to cyberbully. The most common response was *occasionally* (55%) followed by an *unsure* (21%) response. *Frequently* (11%) and *never* (13%) scored the lowest. Review of participants' responses showed consistency across subgroups.

The next question asked participants how often a student was able to bypass the school district's Internet security filter to get to sites that have been blocked. The most common response was *occasionally* (36%) and *unsure* (36%) followed by *frequently* (26%). Figure 7 shows a breakdown of the responses by subgroups.
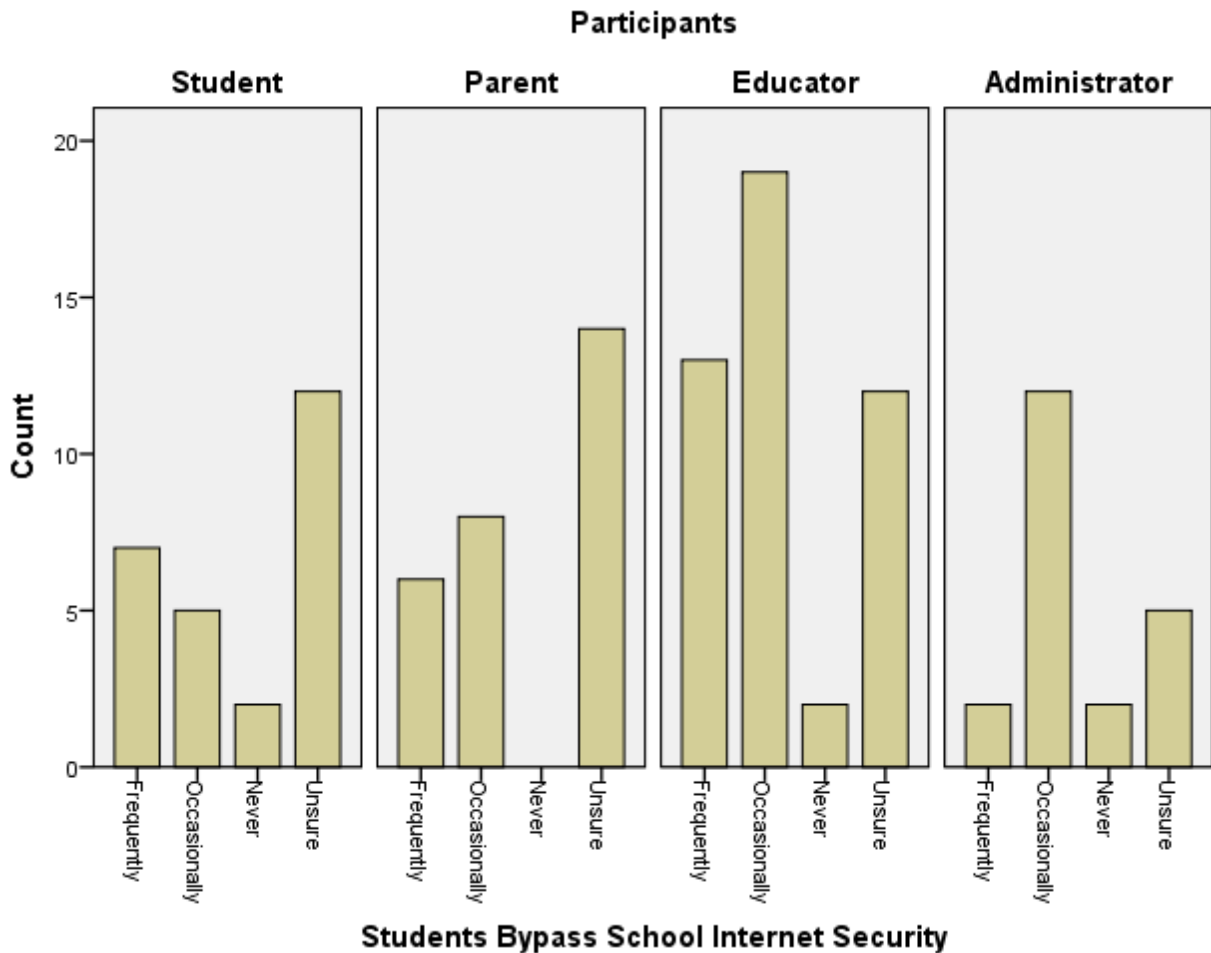

Figure 7. Students able to bypass district's security filters.

Figure 7 allows an examination of how the subgroups responded to students bypassing the school districts Internet security filter. The most common response for educators (18) and administrators (13) was that the Internet security system was bypassed *occasionally*. Students (13) and parents (14) were *unsure*. Second most often response for students (7) and educators (13) was *frequently*. Due to inconsistent responses, further analysis is necessary.

Levene's test was utilized to determine equality of variances, $F(3, 117) = 3.72, p = .013$. F_{Max} was calculated at 1.79, which was less than 4.3, for $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

There was no significant difference in comparison of scores between subgroups when looking at students' being able to bypass the school Internet security. A Tukey's revealed no significant differences among subgroups ($p = .508, p = 1.000, p = .251, p = .382, p = .987,$ and $p = .124$), $F(3, 117) = 1.35, p = .262$, two-tailed $\omega^2 = .01$. There were no significant differences in perceptions and responses from the subgroups.

There was also no significant difference in comparison of scores between subgroups when looking at cyberbullying with school computers. A Tukey's revealed no significant differences among subgroups ($p = .489, p = 1.00, p = 3.95, p = .350, p = .279,$ and $p = .994$), $F(3, 117) = 1.79, p = .153$, two-tailed $\omega^2 = .02$. There was only a small difference in perceptions and responses from the subgroups.

Question 18 asked how often cyberbullying occurred through cell phone usage during school hours. In this question, *occasionally* (42%) was the most common response followed by *frequently* (36%). Figure 8 shows how each subgroup responded to cyberbullying via cell phone during school hours.
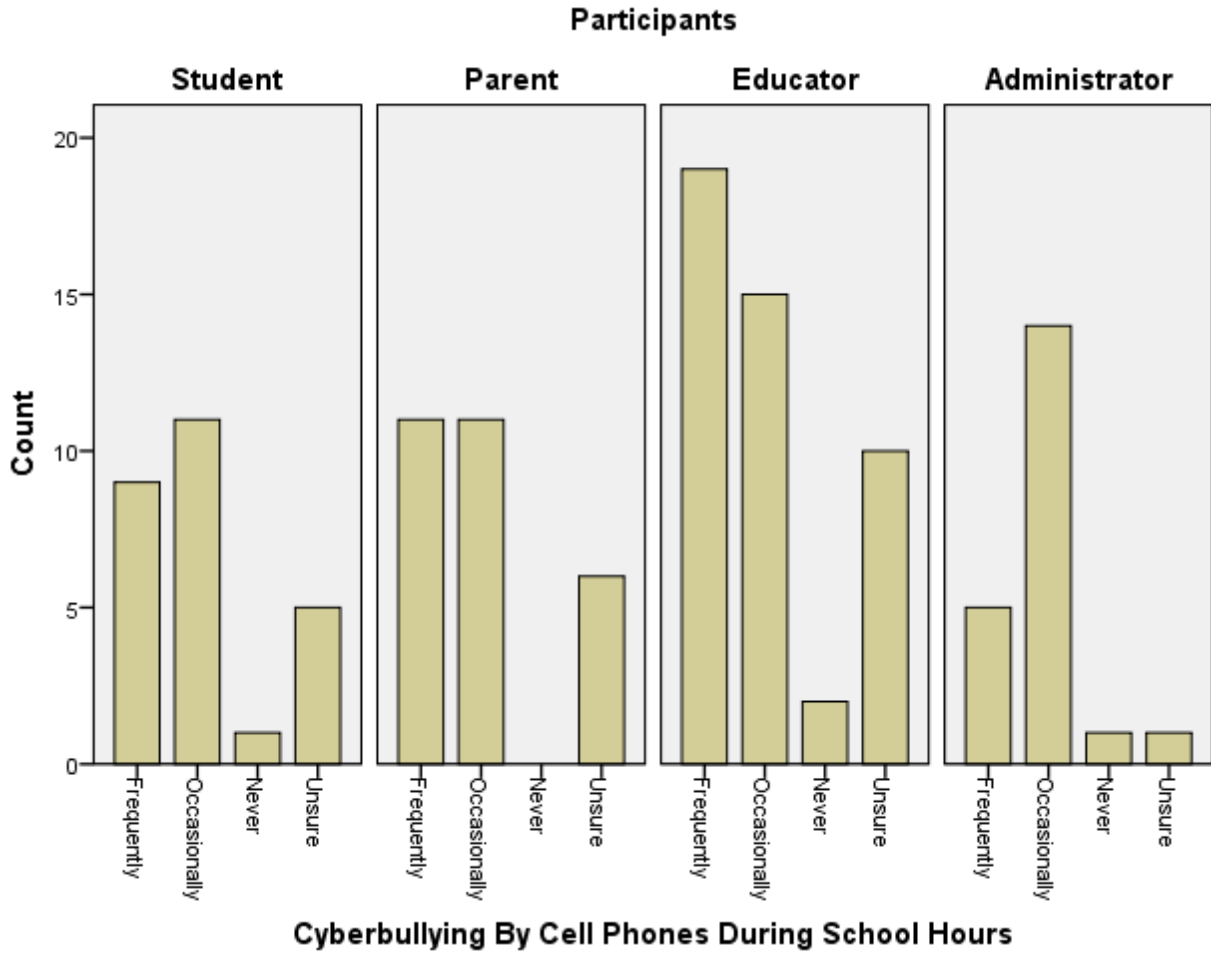
Figure 8. Cyberbullying during school hours using cell phones.

Educators had a strong response of *frequently* (18) followed by *occasionally* (15). Parents had equal number of responses for *frequently and occasionally* (11). Students also responded high in *frequently* (9) and *occasionally* (11). Although administrators scored high in *occasionally* (13), they were the only subgroup that was low in *frequently* (5).

The next two questions pertained to students feeling comfortable to seek help from trusted adults if they were being cyberbullied. The first question asked if students were

empowered or comfortable seeking help from a trusted adult if they were being cyberbullied; 44% said *yes* and 26% said *no*; 31% said they were *unsure*.

Equality of variances using Levene's test was examined. The variance was $F(3, 116) =$ 1.84, $p = .144$. An F_{Max} was also calculated at 1.53, with a critical value of 4.3, at α = .01. Variances were not significantly different so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect pertaining to the victim notifying an adult about cyberbullying that occurred towards them. Comparisons revealed neither educator ($M = 46$) nor administrator ($M = 21$) was significantly different ($p = .847$). Nor was parent ($M = 28$) and student ($M = 25$) significantly different, $p = 1.0$. However, comparison scores from students were statistically different from educators, $p = .040$ (Tukey's), $p = .048$ (Hochberg), $p = .045$ (Gabriel), and $p = .025$ (Games-Howell). Comparison scores from students were statistically different from administrators, $p = .018$ (Tukey's), $p = .021$ (Hochberg), $p = .020$ (Gabriel,) and $p = .014$ (Games-Howell). All tests were two-tailed. Table 11 shows all post-hoc scores.

Based on an ANOVA, there was a significant effect of how often an adult was notified by the victim about cyberbullying that was occurring to them, $F(3, 117) = 5.70$, $p = .001$, two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .10$. Scores were significantly different between students, educators, and administrators based on how often the victims notified adults about cyberbullying that was occurring to them.

Participants were then asked if they were comfortable or felt empowered to seek help from a trusted adult to help others that were being cyberbullied; 64% said *yes*, 17% said *no*, and 19% were *unsure*. Equality of variances using Levene's test was examined. The variances was $F(3, 116) = 3.50$, $p = .018$. An F_{Max} was also calculated at 1.80, with a critical value of 4.3, at α =

.01. Variances were not significantly different, so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

Table 11

Post-hoc: Victim Notifying Adult About Cyberbullying

Group Comparisons	Tukey's Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Student – Educator	.040*	.048*	.045*	.025*
Student – Administrator	.018*	.021*	.020*	.014*
Parent – Educator	.025*	.029*	.027*	.043*
Parent – Administrator	.012*	.013*	.013*	.020*
Educator – Administrator	.847	.959	.955	.849
Harmonic Means = 27.87	.056	.067	.067	

Note: * $p < .05$. All tests were two-tailed.

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect pertaining to notifying an adult about cyberbullying that was occurring toward someone else. Using Tukey's, comparisons revealed neither educator ($M = 46$) nor administrator ($M = 21$) was significantly different from parent ($M = 28$, $p = 1.0$ and $p = .554$, respectively). Comparisons also revealed neither student ($M = 25$) nor parent ($p = .494$) was significantly different, nor was student to educator ($p = .453$). However, comparison scores from students were statistically different from administrators, $p =$. 023, using Games-Howell test. Comparison scores from students were not statistically different from administrators with other post hoc test, $p = .051$ (Tukey's), $p = .062$ (Hochberg), and $p = .061$ (Gabriel). All tests were two-tailed. Table 12 has all post-hoc scores of significance.

Table 12

Post-hoc: Student Notifying Adult About Cyberbullying That Occurs to Peer

Group Comparisons	Tukey's Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	.494	.645	.644	.506
Student – Educator	.453	.595	.581	.449
Student – Administrator	.051	.062	.061	.023*
Parent – Educator	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Parent – Administrator	.554	.713	.711	.491
Educator – Administrator	.421	.555	.533	.320
Harmonic Means = 27.66	.026*	.030*	.030*	

Note: * $p < .05$. All tests were two-tailed.

An ANOVA indicated a small effect of how often an adult was notified about cyberbullying toward someone else, $F(3, 117) = 2.26$, $p = .086$, two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .03$. Scores were not significantly different between subgroups based on how often an adult was notified about cyberbullying toward someone else. Figures 9 and 10 show the results by subgroups to clarify who made the responses.
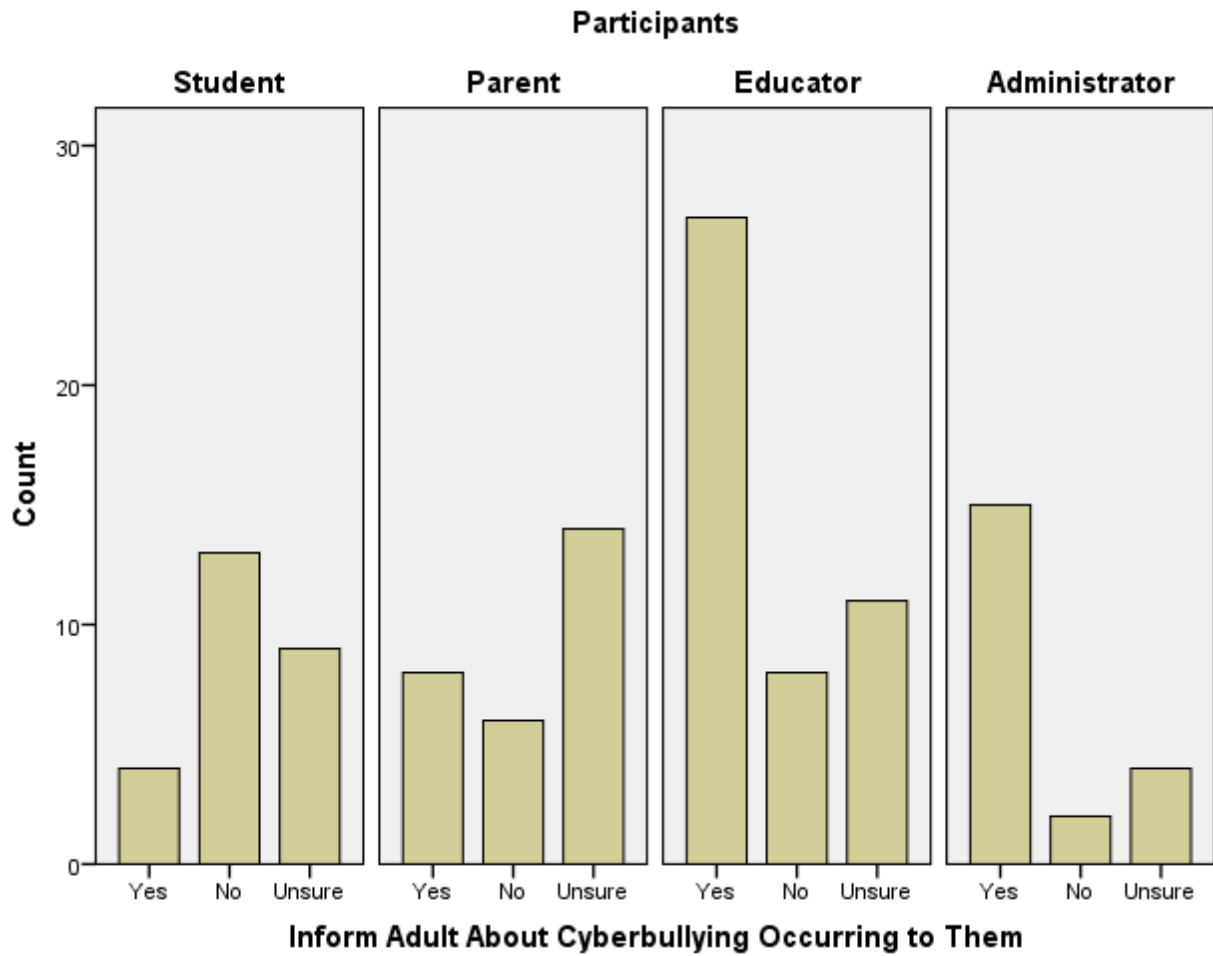
Figure 9. Comfortable approaching an adult about cyberbullying towards them.

Figure 9 shows that students only responded with a *yes* four times about contacting adults if they were being cyberbullied. This is in comparison to educators (26) and administrators (15) who indicated strongly that students were informing adults. Students responded most often to *no* (13) and do not seek help from adults when cyberbullied.
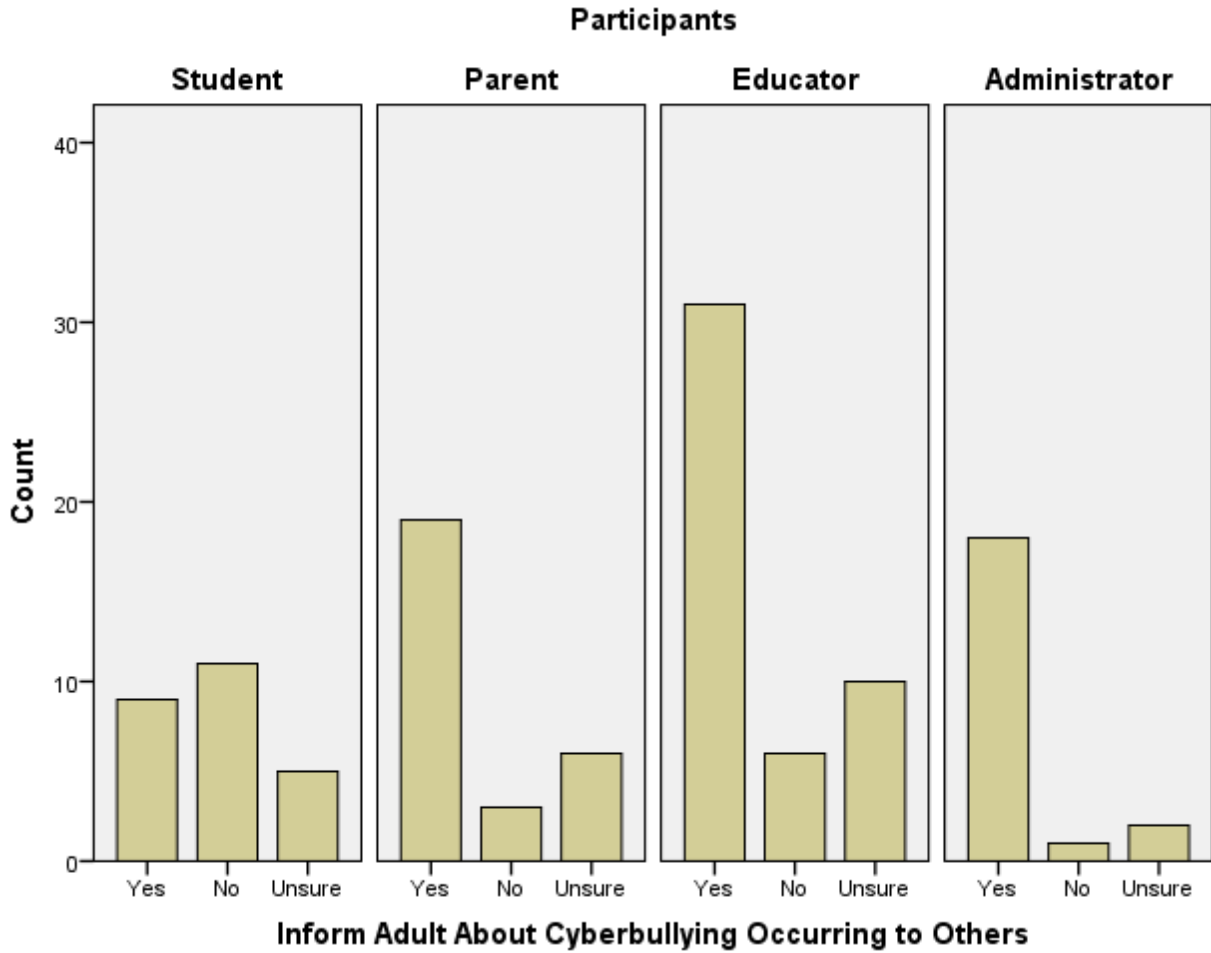
Figure 10. Comfortable approaching an adult about cyberbullying towards others.

Figure 10 shows that the most common response for students was *no* (11); however, the

no response had the lowest scores for parents (3), educators (5), and administrators (1). The *yes*

response was highest for parents (19), educators (30), and administrators (19) but lower for

students (9).

Question 21 asked if students were taught acceptable computer and Internet usage at

school. The responses were 75% said *yes*, 16% said *no*, and 9% were *unsure*. The equality of

variances was examined using Levene's test. The variances were $F(2, 94) = 6.15$, $p = .003$. An

F_{Max} was also calculated at 2.10 with a critical value of 4.3 at α = .01. Variances were not significantly different, so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect pertaining to students receiving proper training in computer usage. Comparisons revealed neither student (*M* = 26) nor parent (*M* = 28) was significantly different from educator (*M* = 45, *p* = .561 and *p* = .398, respectively) and educator to administrator (*M* = 21, *p* = .282). However, comparison scores of students with administrators were statistically different, *p* = .040 (Tukey's), *p* = .048 (Hochberg), *p* = .047 (Gabriel), and *p* = .003 (Games-Howell). Comparison scores of parents with administrators were statistically different, *p* = .021 (Tukey's), *p* = .024 (Hochberg), *p* = .023 (Gabriel,) and *p* = .011 (Games-Howell). All tests were two-tailed. Table 13 further reviews post-hoc scores of significance.

Table 13

Post-hoc: Student Taught Proper Computer Usage

Group Comparisons	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	.997	1.000	1.000	.998
Student – Educator	.561	.721	.711	.571
Student – Administrator	.040*	.048*	.047*	.003*
Parent – Educator	.398	.525	.515	.566
Parent – Administrator	.021*	.024*	.023*	.011*
Educator – Administrator	.282	.372	.350	.010*
Harmonic Means = 27.96	.011*	.012*	.012*	

Note: * *p* < .05. All tests were two-tailed.

Based on an ANOVA, there was a significant effect as to students receiving proper training in computer usage, $F(3, 118) = 3.53$, $p = .017$, two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .06$. Scores were moderately different between students, parents, and educators in comparison with administrators.

The next question asked if students were taught in school about cyberbullying and how to recognize if they were being cyberbullied. There were 58% of the responses indicated *yes*, 14% of the responses indicated *no*, and 28% of the responses indicated *unsure*. The equality of variances was examined using Levene's test. The variances were $F(3, 114) = 15.96$, $p < .001$. An F_{Max} was also calculated at 3.81, with a critical value of 4.3, at $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different, so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect pertaining to schools providing education on cyberbullying and recognizing when they are being cyberbullied. Comparisons revealed student ($M = 26$) was not significantly different from parent ($M = 28$, $p = .944$), educator ($M = 45$, $p = .838$), or administrator ($M = 21$, $p = .127$). Parent and educator were also not significantly different ($p = .996$). However, comparison scores of educators with administrators were statistically different, $p = .009$ (Tukey's), $p = .010$ (Hochberg), $p = .008$ (Gabriel), and $p < .001$ (Games-Howell). Comparison scores of parents with administrators were also statistically different, $p = .032$ (Tukey's), $p = .038$ (Hochberg), $p = .037$ (Gabriel), and $p = .011$ (Games-Howell). All tests were two-tailed. Table 14 has all post-hoc scores.

Table 14

Post-hoc: Students Provided Education on Cyberbullying

Group Comparisons	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	.944	.994	.994	.951
Student – Educator	.838	.954	.952	.847
Student – Administrator	.127	.161	.160	.035
Parent – Educator	.996	1.000	1.000	.997
Parent – Administrator	.032*	.038*	.037*	.011*
Educator – Administrator	.009*	.010*	.008*	.000**
Harmonic Means = 27.77	.010*	.011*	.011*	

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p = .000$. All tests were two-tailed.

An ANOVA revealed a moderate effect pertaining to students being taught about cyberbullying, $F(3, 116) = 3.79$, $p = .012$ two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .07$. Scores were moderately different between parents and educators compared to administrators.

Participants were then asked if students were taught how to respond to cyberbullying in an appropriate manner. The majority responded *yes* (53%), followed by *unsure* (26%), and then *no* (21%). Levene's test measured the equality of variances, $F(3, 114) = 6.07$, $p = .001$. An F_{Max} was also calculated at 2.17 with a critical value of 4.3 at $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different, so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect pertaining to students taught by school to deal with cyberbullying. Comparisons revealed neither student ($M = 26$) nor educator ($M = 46$) was significantly different from administrator ($M = 21$, $p = .187$ and $p = .053$,

respectively), nor student to educator, $p = .984$. There was also no significant difference

between parent and educator, $p = .766$. However, comparison scores of parents with

administrators were statistically different, $p = .011$ (Tukey's), $p = .012$ (Hochberg and Gabriel),

and $p = .007$ (Games-Howell). All tests were two-tailed. Table 15 has a list of all post-hoc

scores of significance.

Table 15

Post-hoc: Students Provided Education on Dealing With Cyberbullying

Group Comparisons	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	.641	.804	.804	.659
Student – Educator	.984	.999	.999	.983
Student – Administrator	.187	.242	.241	.090
Parent – Educator	.766	.910	.906	.810
Parent – Administrator	.011*	.012*	.012*	.007*
Educator – Administrator	.053	.063	.056	.021*
Harmonic Means = 27.61	.060	.073	.073	

Note: * $p < .05$. All tests were two-tailed.

Based on an ANOVA, there was a significant effect as to students receiving proper

training in schools to deal with cyberbullying, $F(3, 116) = 3.52$, $p = .017$ two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .06$.

Scores were moderately different between parents and administrators when looking at schools

training students to deal with cyberbullying.

When asked if teachers knew how to recognize cyberbullying issues, 45% said *yes*, 35%

were *unsure*, and 20% said *no*. Figure 11 shows the results based on each subgroup.
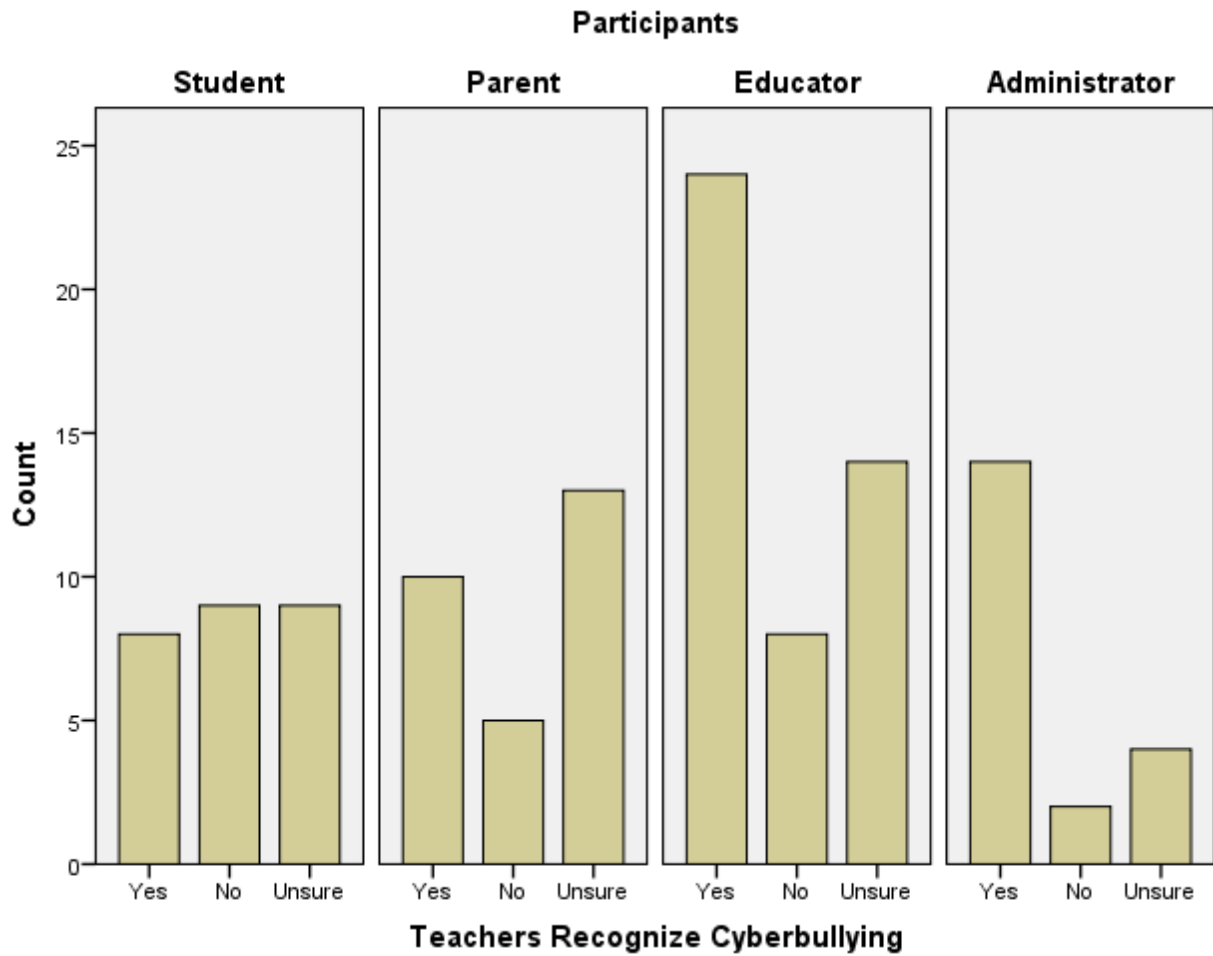
Figure 11. Teachers recognize cyberbullying issues.

In Figure 11, educators (24) and administrators (14) marked *yes* as most common choice. Students marked *no* (9) and *unsure* (9) as most common. Parents' most common choice was *unsure* (13). Due to inconsistent responses, further analysis is necessary.

Levene's test measured the equality of variances, $F(3, 113) = 1.07$, $p = .366$. An F_{Max} was also calculated at 1.24, with a critical value of 4.3, at $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different, so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed no significant effect when comparing responses that teachers are able to recognize cyberbullying. A Tukey's revealed no significant differences among subgroups ($p = .992$, $p = .632$, $p = .168$, $p = .411$, $p = .088$, and $p = .623$), $F(3, 116) = 2.36$, $p = .075$ two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .03$. There was only a small difference in responses from subgroups when asked if teachers are able to recognize cyberbullying.

The next question asked if teachers know how to appropriately intervene and help in a cyberbullying situation. The most common overall response was *unsure* (43%), followed by *yes* (37%), and *no* (20%). When reviewing the subgroup data, administrators chose *yes* 63% of the time, but educators only responded *yes* 37% of the time and scored *unsure* higher at 40%. Figure 12 shows a further clarification of data collected.

Figure 12 shows students evenly splitting their responses, with parents (15) and educators (18), reflecting staunch uncertainty. Administrators had a strong positive response (12).

The variance ratio for an F_{Max} was 1.14, which was less than 4.3, for $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different in each section, so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

In what may be the most telling and perhaps actionable section of the study, the next four questions addressed school policies and procedures used regarding cyberbullying. In the first question, participants were asked if their school district had any formal procedure or policy for investigating cyberbullying. Overall, the majority of responses was *unsure* (50%), followed by *yes* (36%), and *no* (14%). Figure 13 identifies where the majority of responses occurred within each subgroup.
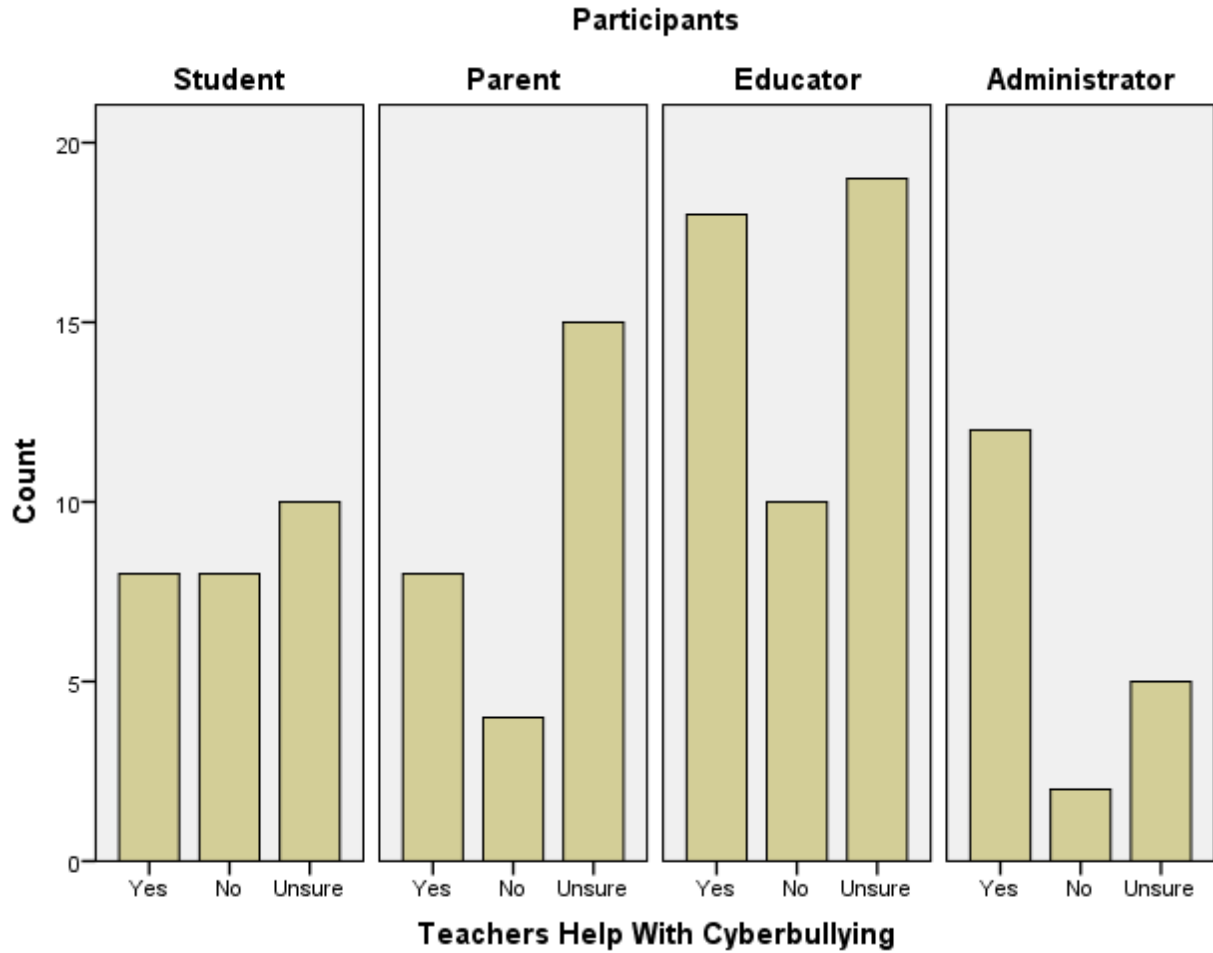
Figure 12. Teachers know how to help in cyberbullying situation.

Figure 13 shows, rather dismayingly, that educators (40%), parents (56%), and students (38%) had the greatest number of *unsure* responses. Administrators' predominate response was *yes* (63%) with only 26% of unsure responses.

Levene's test measured the equality of variances, $F(3, 113) = 8.29, p < .001$. An F_{Max} was also calculated at 2.98, with a critical value of 4.3, at $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different, so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.
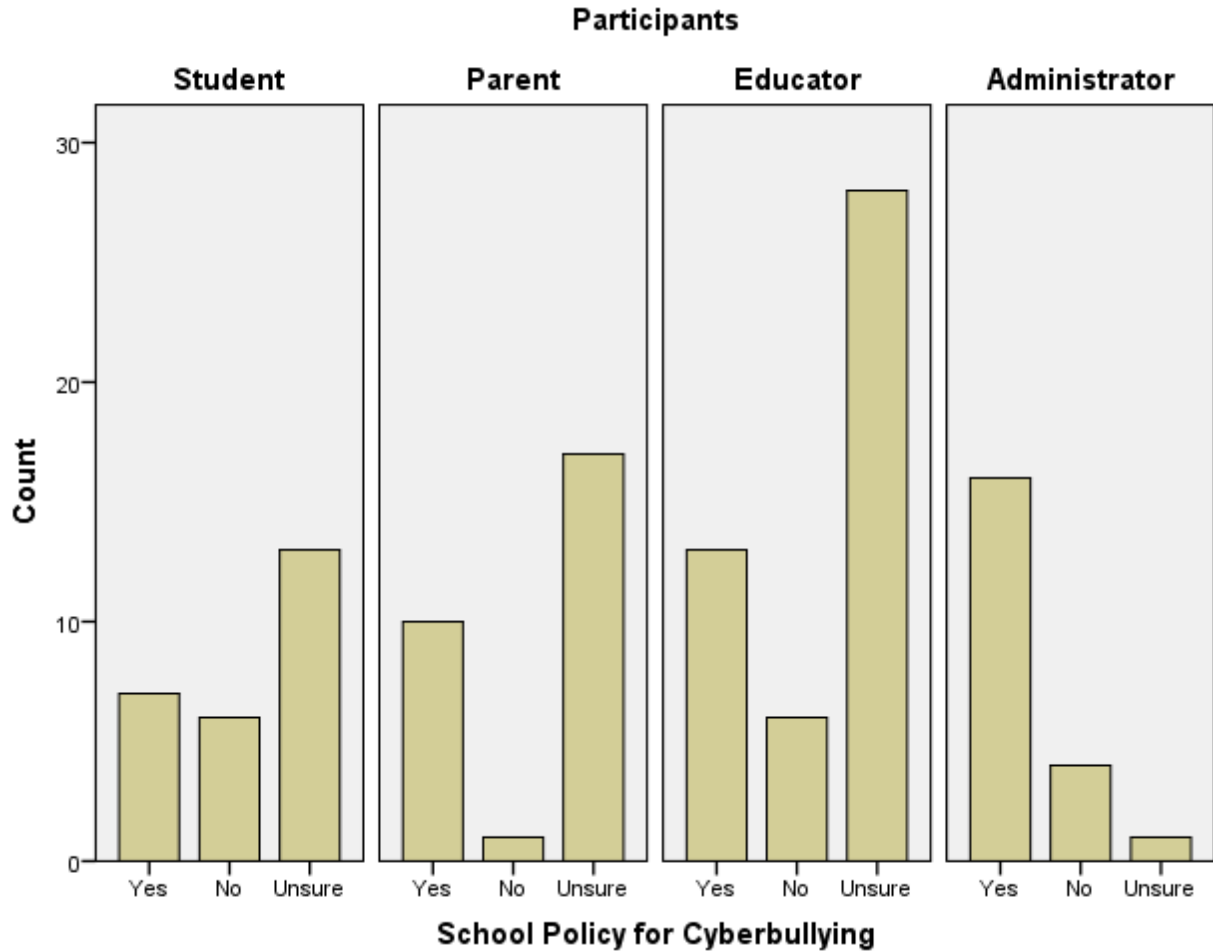
Figure 13. School districts have formal procedures to investigate cyberbullying

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect when comparing participants' knowledge of a school policy for cyberbullying. Comparisons revealed neither student ($M = 26$) nor educator ($M = 47$) was significantly different from parent ($M = 28$, $p = 1.0$ and $p = .987$, respectively) nor student to educator, $p = .975$. However, comparison scores of administrators ($M = 21$) with students ($p = .001$, Tukey's; $p = .002$, Hochberg, and Gabriel; $p < .001$, Games-Howell), parents ($p = .001$, Tukey's, Hochberg, and Gabriel; $p < .001$, Games-Howell) and educators ($p < .001$, Tukey's, Hochberg, Gabriel, and Games-Howell) were all statistically different. All tests were two-tailed. Table 16 has all post-hoc significant scores.

Table 16

Post-hoc: School Has Policy for Cyberbullying

Group Comparisons	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Student – Educator	.975	.999	.999	.976
Student – Administrator	.001**	.002*	.002*	.000**
Parent – Educator	.987	1.000	1.000	.990
Parent – Administrator	.001**	.001**	.001**	.000**
Educator – Administrator	.000**	.000**	.000**	.000**
Harmonic Means = 27.96	.980	.999	.999	

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p \leq .001$. All tests were two-tailed.

An ANOVA revealed there was a large and significant effect based on knowledge of a school policy pertaining to cyberbullying, $F(3, 118) = 7.86$, $p < .001$, two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .14$. Scores were significantly different between perceptions of students, parents, and educators in comparison with administrators when looking at school policy and cyberbullying.

The next question asked if their school district had a procedure or policy with a range of consequences to address cyberbullying. Again educators were the most *unsure* of the groups (26), followed by parents (19) and students (16), while administrators led with *yes* (16). Overall the percentages were *unsure* 52%, *yes* 35%, and *no* 13%. This again prompted a look at individual subgroup responses in Figure 14.
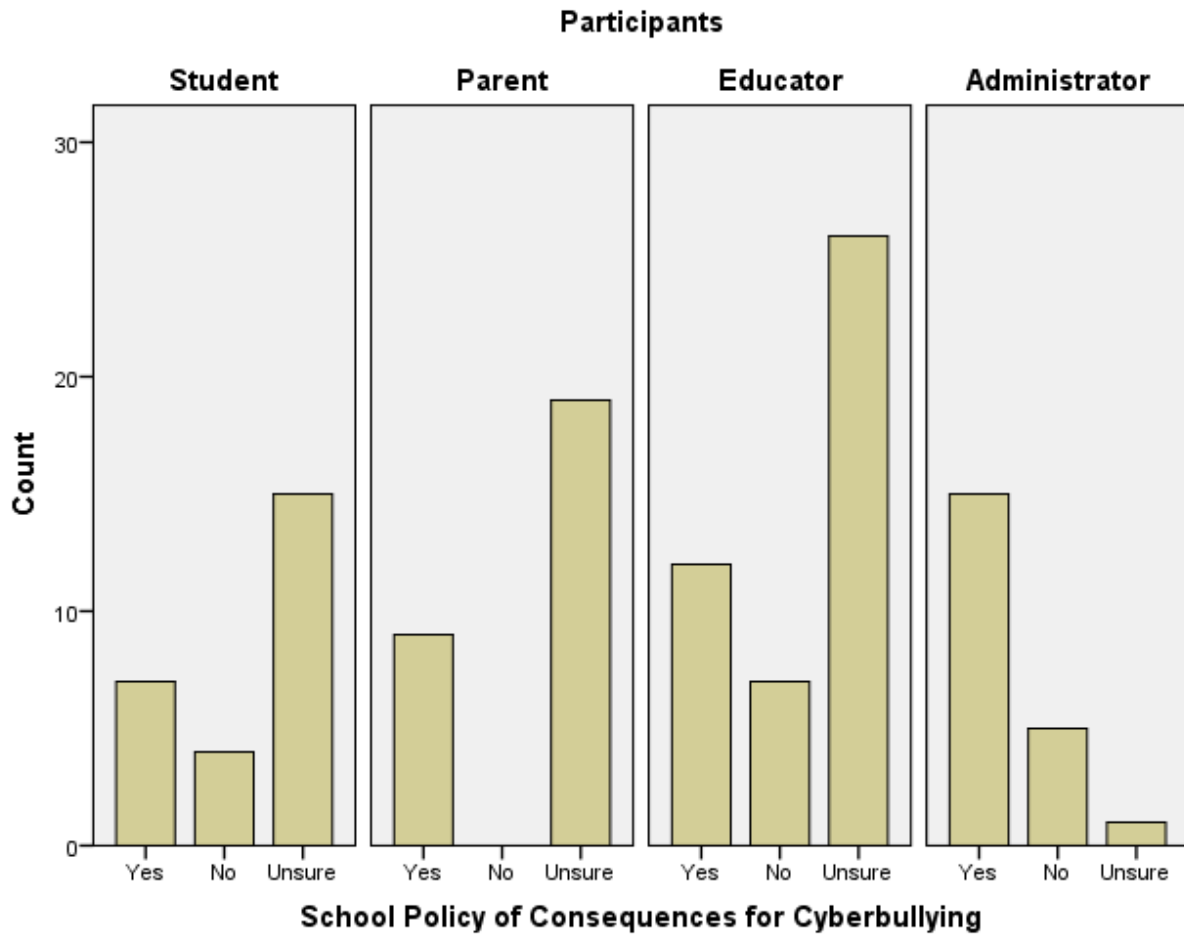
Figure 14. School district has formal procedures with range of consequences.

Figure 14 illustrates that administrators may be aware of school policies and consequences because they had a higher response of *yes* (16). Students (16), parents (19), and educators (26) responded the most with *unsure*.

Levene's test measured the equality of variances, $F(3, 113) = 5.98, p = .001$. An F_{Max} was also calculated at 2.72 with a critical value of 4.3 at $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect when comparing participants'

knowledge of a school policy including consequences for cyberbullying. Comparisons revealed

neither student ($M = 26$) nor educator ($M = 45$) was significantly different from parent ($M = 28$,

$p = .997$ and $p = .996$) nor student to educator, $p = 1.0$. However, comparison scores of

administrators ($M = 21$) with students ($p = .001$, Tukey's, Hochberg, Gabriel; $p < .001$, Games-

Howell), parents ($p < .001$, Tukey's, Hochberg, Gabriel, and Games-Howell) and educators ($p <$

$.001$, Tukey's, Hochberg, Gabriel, and Games-Howell) were all statistically different. All tests

were two-tailed. All post-hoc results are reviewed in Table 17.

Table 17

Post-hoc: School Policy Has Consequences for Cyberbullying

Group Comparisons	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	.997	1.000	1.000	.997
Student – Educator	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Student – Administrator	.001*	.001*	.001*	.000*
Parent – Educator	.996	1.000	1.000	.997
Parent – Administrator	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
Educator – Administrator	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
Harmonic Means = 27.77	.996	1.000	1.000	

Note: * $p \leq .001$. All tests were two-tailed.

Based on an ANOVA, there was a large and significant effect based on knowledge of a

school policy pertaining to consequences for cyberbullying, $F(3, 116) = 7.81$, $p < .001$, two-

tailed, $\omega^2 = .15$. Scores were significantly different between perceptions of students, parents,

and educators in comparison with administrators when looking at school policy including

consequences for cyberbullying.

Question 28 asked if teachers were trained in policy or procedures pertaining to

cyberbullying. Once again, the most common response was *unsure* (50%), followed by *no*

(32%) and *yes* (18%). At least this time, educators seemed sure that their districts did not train

staff in any cyberbullying policy and procedures, with 25 *no* responses. These results prompted

a more intensive look at data based on subgroups which is provided in Figure 15.
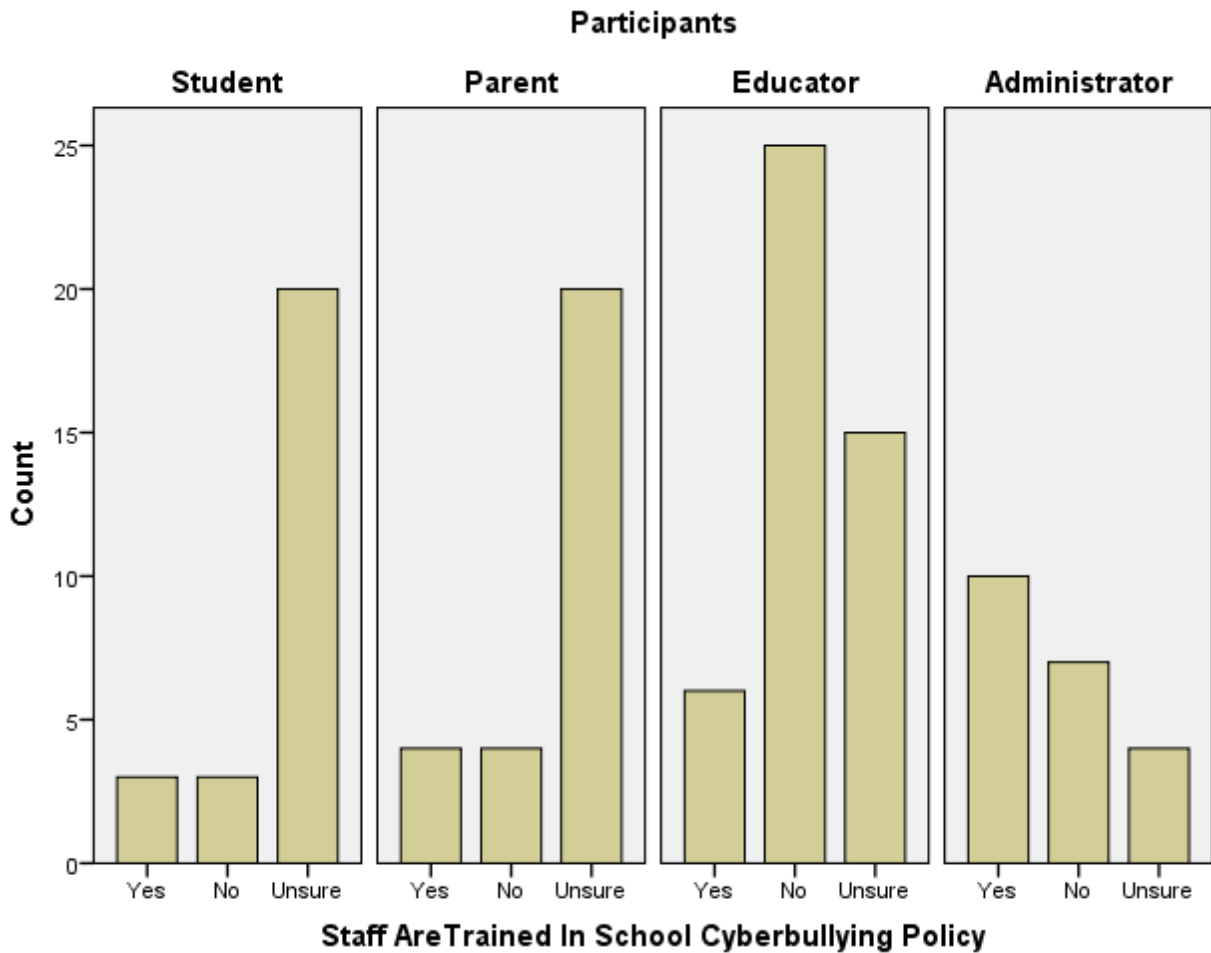
Figure 15. School district trains staff in cyberbullying policy and procedures.

Figure 15 shows that students (20) and parents (20) were *unsure* of any training available for teachers pertaining to cyberbullying. Educators responded predominantly with *no* (25); however, administrators responded mostly with *yes* (10).

Levene's test measured the equality of variances, $F(3, 113) = 0.97$, $p = .411$. An F_{Max} was also calculated at 1.41, with a critical value of 4.3, at $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect when comparing participants' perceptions of school training on school policy including cyberbullying. Comparisons revealed neither student ($M = 26$) nor educator ($M = 46$) was significantly different from parent ($M = 28$, $p = .973$ and $p = .123$, respectively). However, comparison scores of administrators ($M = 21$) with students ($p < .001$, Tukey's, Hochberg, and Gabriel; $p = .001$, Games-Howell) and parents ($p < .001$, Tukey's, Hochberg, and Gabriel; $p = .002$, Games-Howell) were statistically different. There was also a statistical difference between students and educators ($p = .045$, Tukey's; $p = .039$, Games-Howell). All tests were two-tailed. Table 18 has all post-hoc scores of significance.

An ANOVA revealed there was a significant effect based on training provided to staff on school policy that included cyberbullying, $F(3, 117) = 8.72$, $p < .001$, two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .16$. There was a large effect between perceptions of participants within the subgroups when looking at staff training in school policy that included cyberbullying.

Table 18

Post-hoc: Staff Are Trained in School Policy For Cyberbullying

Group Comparisons	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	.973	.999	.999	.974
Student – Educator	.045*	.054	.050*	.039*
Student – Administrator	.000**	.000**	.000**	.001**
Parent – Educator	.123	.156	.151	.134
Parent – Administrator	.000**	.000**	.000**	.002*
Educator – Administrator	.052	.063	.055	.087
Harmonic Means = 27.87	.058	.070	.070	

Note: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .001$. All tests were two-tailed.

The last question concerning school policy asked if school districts had any language in their school policies that addressed off-campus cyberbullying behaviors. Once again, educators led the *unsure* responses, which were at 59% overall, followed by *yes* (26%) and *no* (15%). Due to the number of *unsure* responses, this again prompted further investigation. Responses are shown in Figure 16.
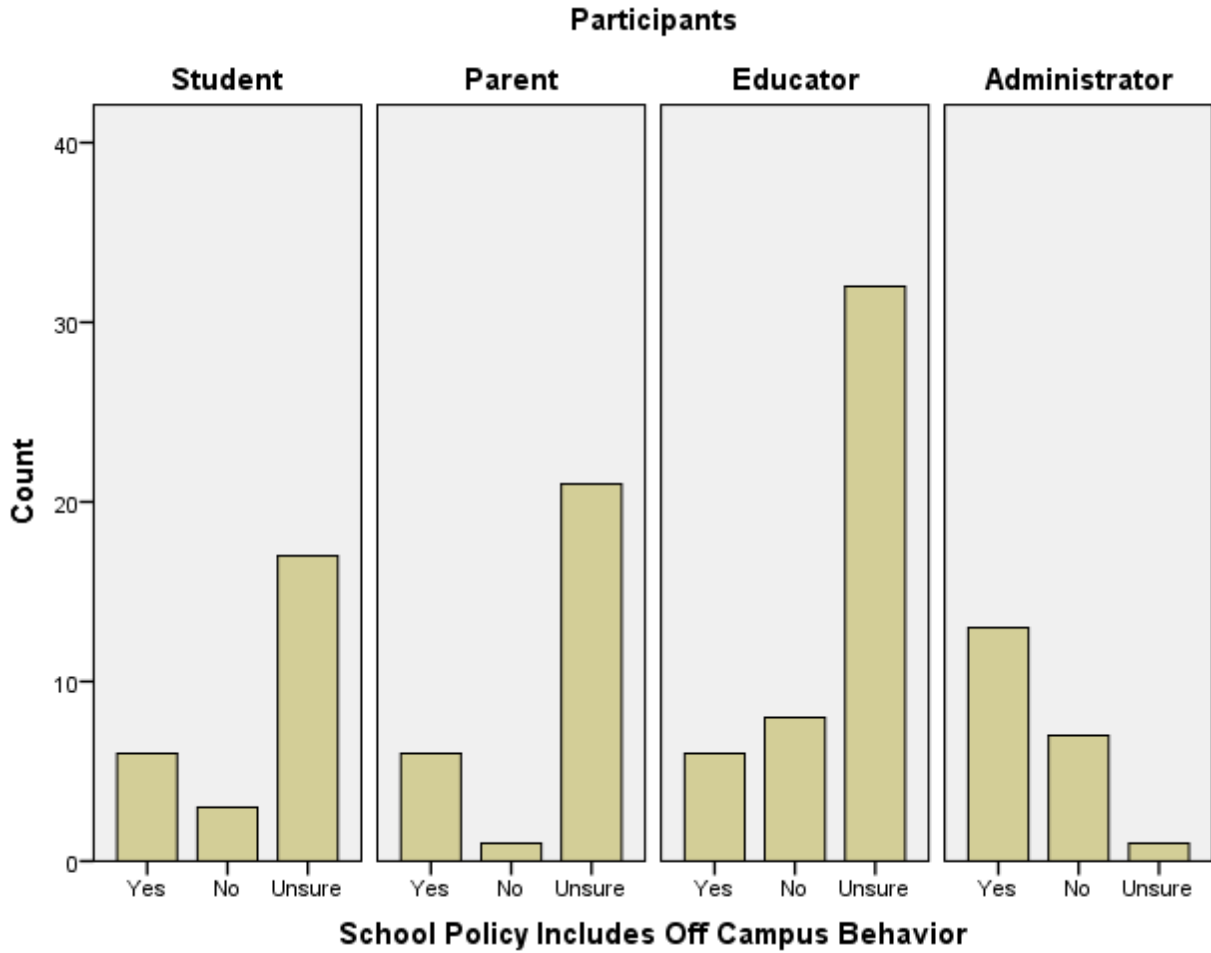
Figure 16. District policy includes off-campus cyberbullying.

Figure 16 shows the responses for administrators as mostly *yes* (13); however, *unsure* was the most common response for students (18), parents (21), and educators (32).

Levene's test measured the equality of variances, $F(3, 113) = 2.51$, $p = .063$. An F_{Max} was also calculated at 2.06, with a critical value of 4.3, at $\alpha = .01$. Variances were not significantly different so the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

Four of the post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect when comparing participants' knowledge of a school policy for cyberbullying that occurred off campus. Comparisons revealed

neither student ($M = 26$) nor educator ($M = 47$) was significantly different from parent ($M = 28$,

$p = .948$ and $p = .998$, respectively) nor student to educator, $p = .872$. However, comparison

scores of administrators ($M = 21$) with students (p .001, Tukey's, Hochberg, Gabriel, and

Games-Howell), parents ($p < .001$, Tukey's, Hochberg, Gabriel, and Games-Howell) and

educators ($p < .001$, Tukey's, Hochberg, Gabriel, and Games-Howell) were all statistically

different. All tests were two-tailed. Table 19 has all post-hoc scores of significance.

Table 19

Post-hoc: School Policy Includes Off-campus Behaviors

Group Comparisons	Tukey Sig.	Hochberg Sig.	Gabriel Sig.	Games-Howell Sig.
Student – Parent	.948	.995	.995	.961
Student – Educator	.872	.970	.969	.890
Student – Administrator	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
Parent – Educator	.998	1.000	1.000	.999
Parent – Administrator	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
Educator – Administrator	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*

Harmonic Means
Note: * $p = .000$. All tests were two-tailed.

Based on an ANOVA, there was a significant effect based on knowledge of a school

policy pertaining to off-campus cyberbullying, $F(3, 117) = 12.10$, $p < .001$, two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .22$.

There was a large and significant difference between perceptions of students, parents, and

educators in comparison with administrators when looking at school policy including

cyberbullying occurring off school campus.

The last two questions in the cyberbullying survey asked how cyberbullying should be addressed when it occurs on and off campus. When it occurs on campus, the majority of participants chose school disciplinary actions such as *detentions, suspensions, and expulsions* (69%). Levene's test was utilized to determine equality of variances, $F(3, 113) = 2.23$, $p = .088$, and an F_{Max} was also calculated at 1.88. Critical value was approximately 4.3, for $\alpha = .01$; therefore, variances were not significantly different and the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

There was no significant difference in comparison of scores between subgroups when looking at consequences for cyberbullying that occurs on school campus. A Tukey's revealed no significant differences among subgroups ($p = .974$, $p = .599$, $p = .990$, $p = .299$, $p = .441$, and $p = 1.0$), $F(3, 118) = 1.4$, $p = .246$, two-tailed, $\omega^2 = .01$. Table 20 has the list responses.

Table 20

Addressing Cyberbullying on School Campus

Answer	Responses	%
School Disciplinary Action: Detention, Suspension, Expulsion	84	69
School Counseling Sessions	11	9
Private/Outside Counseling	2	2
School Conflict Resolution	16	13
Legal Action	9	7
No Action	0	0

When it occurs off campus, the majority of responses were for *legal action* to be taken (47%), followed by *private counseling* (17%). Levene's test was utilized to determine equality of variances, $F(3, 113) = 0.38$, $p = .770$, and an F_{Max} was also calculated at 1.16. Critical value was approximately 4.3 for $\alpha = .01$; therefore, variances were not significantly different and the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

There was no significant difference in comparison of scores between subgroups when looking at consequences for cyberbullying off school campus. A Tukey's revealed no significant differences among subgroups ($p = .993$, $p = .999$, $p = .994$, $p = .968$, $p = .954$, and $p = .999$), $F(3, 117) = 0.11$, $p = .955$, two-tailed $,\omega^2 = .02$. A complete list of responses is presented in Table 21.

Table 21

Addressing Cyberbullying Off School Campus

Answer	Responses	%
School Disciplinary Action: Detention, Suspension, Expulsion	19	16
School Counseling Sessions	7	6
Private/Outside Counseling	21	17
School Conflict Resolution	10	8
Legal Action	57	47
No Action	7	6

Complete reviews of all the findings from this research study are discussed in Chapter 5, as well as recommendations for future research and next steps for all stakeholders.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Already the cause of the deaths of so many students and on the rise, cyberbullying has

become an issue schools cannot ignore. In fact, under state or federal law, schools may be held

accountable for failing to address it.

The purpose of this research study was to gain a better understanding of the issue by all

stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, and administrators) in order to help school

administrators prepare appropriate policies and processes to educate and protect students. This

study explored the following research question: Is there a significant difference in the

perceptions of cyberbullying among students, parents, educators, and school administration?

This chapter summarizes and discusses the findings of the current research study and its

implications for school staff and administration. The significance of the study is discussed,

recommendations for school policy and technological education are made, and suggestions for

future research are shared.

Interpretation of the Findings

Quantitative data analyses were used to interpret the data collected from an Internet-

based survey (Appendix D). After receiving consent from the doctoral committee and IRB, the

survey was launched and letters were sent to nine superintendents, three each from Ohio,

Pennsylvania, and Indiana. Each superintendent was invited to have his or her school district

participate in the anonymous cyberbullying survey and asked to post the survey's link on the school district website.

The survey remained open for 73 days and garnered 123 usable participants—students, parents, educators, and school administrators—who were asked about their perceptions of cyberbullying. Each group's responses were compared to see where their perceptions matched or differed. All surveys were used as a random sampling of the population. Any survey that indicated it was not voluntarily taken was deleted and its data excluded from this study.

The analysis of Question 1 involved reviewing the groups of participants who voluntarily contributed to the cyberbullying survey. A summary of the participants was presented in Table 1 in Chapter 4. Educators had the largest number of participants (48), followed by parents (26), students (25), and administrators (21). These unequal group sizes may be due to educators having daily access to the district website offering them daily reminders and opportunities to access the survey link. Parents and students may have had access to the link, but may have only seen it on the occasions that they accessed the school district's website. School administrators would have had daily opportunities to access the link but they were fewer in number in any school district when compared to students, parents, and educators.

Question 2 asked how many times the participant had been cyberbullied. A number of responses (75%) said *never*, but most of those were adults. When looking at responses from each subgroup, only 17% of the administrators, 18% of parents, and 20% of educators have ever been cyberbullied, in comparison with 54% of the student respondents.

It is important to note that Fauman (2008) indicated that cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying in several ways, one of which was that cyberbullies' aggressive behaviors do not need to be repetitive to gain the desired effect. This would indicate that just one incident can

have a negative impact on a student because it can be widely disseminated and produce the desired negative effect. When looking at 54% of the students within the research study having been cyberbullied, just one of those incidences could make a lasting negative effect on a student.

Question 3 asked if the participants felt that cyberbullying was on the rise and an increasing problem. The majority in each subgroup responded *yes* (91%) to this statement. A review of all subgroups revealed similar responses indicating that all participants' perceptions were that cyberbullying is an increasing problem.

In Question 3, participants were also asked who most often reported incidences of cyberbullying, with *parent* garnering the most responses. Post-hoc tests were used to compare all different combinations of the subgroups and a significant effect of how often cyberbullying was reported by the victim based on participant perceptions and responses was revealed. Scores from parents and administrators were statistically significant with an Omega-squared effect size that indicated 12% of the variance of participants' perceptions were based on responses of how often cyberbullying is reported by the victim. This would indicate that parents' and administrators' perceptions of how often students report personal cases of cyberbullying were not the same and varied significantly.

There was also a significant effect of how often cyberbullying was reported by the bully when comparing student and educator responses. Omega-squared effect size indicated that 5% of the variance between students and educators perceptions existed when looking at cyberbullying being reported by the bully. Although this is just a moderate effect size, it does indicate that perceptions of students and educators vary.

Perceptions across subgroups seemed similar when respondents were asked to rank order where cyberbullying most often occurs. *Home* ranked first (60), followed by a *friend's house*

(48) and *school* (34); in the *community* (8) ranked last. It must also be noted that 77% of the

participants felt cyberbullying was occurring in locations outside of school.

The next question ranked the electronic tool used most often in cyberbullying.

Cellphones scored the highest responses (103) as most often used in cyberbullying, followed

closely by *computers* (97). *A personal digital device* (PDA) was least common (84). Individual

subgroups responded similarly to this question indicating that perceptions of the participants

were alike.

This supports prior research that indicated that the most common venues of cyberbullying

were mobile phones (calling, texting, sending a picture or video) and the Internet, which would

include email, chat rooms, instant messaging, and web sites (Smith et al., 2008), all of which are

described as the social lifeline for most children (Shore, 2005).

Participants were then asked to rank their perceptions of the most common way that

cyberbullying is occurring. The most common response was through *personal profile pages*

(63), followed by *instant messaging* (45), *blogs* (42), and *emails* (38). Each subgroup's

responses were reviewed and found to be similar; perceptions did not vary among participants.

In Question 4, participants were asked if they felt cyberbullying was a problem at their

schools. The majority (55%) said it was. A number of responses (26%) said they were unsure.

It is interesting to note that when looking at subgroups, 72% of the students felt cyberbullying

was a problem at their schools with parents (54%), educators (49%), and administrators (48%)

all with more similar perceptions. These high percentages should be a concern in any school

district.

The participants were then asked their perceptions of what types of personal

characteristics a cyberbully may have. This question allowed the respondents to mark as many

of the 26 characteristics as needed without limitation. Of the participants, 81% of them

responded that a cyberbully was typically *female*. Prior research agrees with the perceptions of

the survey participants as it was suggested that girls tended to be socially more cruel and

manipulative by ostracizing targets, spreading rumors, or destroying reputations (Willard, 2005a,

2005b) and engaging in "social sabotage" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, p. 52).

Current perceptions of the survey participants indicated that only 18% of cyberbullies

were victims themselves; however, Ybarra et al. (2006) noted that victims of Internet harassment

were more likely than individuals who were not victims of cyberbullying to harass others online,

to have social problems, and to be victims in other situations. Survey results also indicated that

some participants felt that cyberbullies had above-average academic abilities (25%), which were

similar to Li (2006), who found that less than a third of cyberbullies had above-average grades.

The survey also showed that cyberbullies were perceived to be mainly *Caucasian* (57%), but

research by Hinduja and Patchin (2009) indicated that White students were only slightly more

likely to experience cyberbullying as a victim and aggressor, and race was less relevant in an

environment where interpersonal communication occurs through electronic or technological

means.

The next questions referred to students' rights. Participants were asked if students should

have the right to say or do whatever they like online. The prevailing response was *no* (87%).

Participants were also asked if students should be able to surf the web without restrictions or

censorship. Again, the prevailing response was *no* (83%). When asked if a student takes a photo

of someone, whether they need that person's permission to post it on the internet, 75% of the

participants agreed. In reviewing the data based on each subgroup, all responses were similar

indicating that perceptions of all participants were alike. This data supports the concept that

participants may understand legal issues that arise from technology and cyberbullying; however there remains a breakdown somewhere between understanding and compliance with these laws.

Participants were then asked if any incidences of cyberbullying had been reported to their schools in the past year. A large number of responses (91%) indicated that someone they were familiar with had been upset, made uncomfortable, or was afraid based on someone posting something negative about him or her on Facebook or a profile page which had been reported to the school. Based on the data, an alarming percentage of 73% of the respondents had known someone who had been cyberbullied and this had been reported to school personnel. Even more alarming is that respondents indicated 638 incidents of cyberbullying that had been reported.

The next group of questions asked the participants to share information about an incident of cyberbullying. Of the participants, 87% said the person being cyberbullied knew the identity of his or her bully; 86% said it was by someone at school. They were then asked if threats made online were carried out at school. Most responded *no* (56%), but 15% indicated *yes* and 29% *did not know*. Each subgroup was examined and all responses were similar, indicating that the participants' perceptions were alike.

A Ybarra and Mitchell (2004b) survey showed that only 31% of the victims knew who was cyberbullying them. In a 2007 study, 43% of cyberbully victims revealed that they knew their aggressor, and 57% suffered at the hands of online-only contacts and were unaware of the identity of their tormentor (Wolak et al., 2007). A study by Kowalski and Limber (2007) also found that 48% of cyberbully victims did not know the identity of their aggressors. Interestingly, even though online bullying provides bullies with perceived anonymity, in many instances the target is eventually able to figure out who is harassing him or her (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). This may remain true and explain the high percentage of participants who indicated the victim

was aware of the identity of the cyberbully. It is also important to note that with passing years, research is showing more awareness of the identity of the cyberbully.

The next question asked if the person being cyberbullied shared the incident with parents. Of the responses, 53% said *yes*, 16% said *no,* and 31% *did not know*. Figure 4 showed the responses based on each subgroup. Although the majority of total responses indicated that a parent was informed of a cyberbullying incident (51), this number was calculated mostly from parent, educator, and administrator input. Students only indicated that 4% of the time a parent is made aware of a cyberbullying incident in comparison with educators (57%), parents (65%), and administrators (90%), who were much more confident that students were sharing with parents. This data indicated that perceptions varied across subgroups when asked if parents were made aware of the cyberbullying incident.

The post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect of how often parents are notified by students about a cyberbullying incident. Comparison scores from students were statistically different from parents, educators, and administrators. The Omega-squared effect size indicated 27% of the variances in scores were due to varied perceptions among students and the other subgroups of parents, educators, and administrators. This would indicate that students' responses about notifying a parent is significantly different from what parents, educators, and administrators perceived was happening. Based on the data from the survey, students are highly unlikely to notify a parent about cyberbullying.

The participants were then asked if the student had told a school staff member about the cyberbullying. The overall responses were 56% said *yes*, 27% said *no*, and 17% *did not know*. Figure 5 showed the data based on each subgroup. Data collected from the survey again revealed that parents (47%), educators (76%), and administrators (67%) perceived that school

staff was notified about incidences of cyberbullying; however, student responses (22%) did not support those perceptions. Students had indicated that 48% of the time, they do not contact school staff about cyberbullying.

The post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect of how often school staff was notified about cyberbullying based on participant perceptions and responses. Comparisons revealed that students were statistically different from educators and administrators. The Omega-squared effect size showed a 16% variance. Scores were significantly different when comparing students with educators and administrators based on responses to how often school staff are notified about cyberbullying. These data would indicate that although educators and administrators are under the impression that they are being made aware of such incidences, students are not contacting school staff about cyberbullying.

In an earlier question, respondents were asked if any incidents of cyberbullying had been reported to their schools in the past year. The participants had responded with a large number of incidents (638) reported to school staff. This current question either contradicts the prior question because it indicated that students are not reporting incidents of cyberbullying or these results indicate that there are huge numbers of cyberbullying incidents with only some reported and many more that may go unreported. School staff may be completely unaware of the true extent of the cyberbullying problem.

Current research data were supported by a Hinduja and Patchin (2009) study that indicated less than 10% of victims told a parent, and less than 5% told a teacher about their experiences with cyberbullying. Victims were unlikely to confide in others and as high as 60% of them did not tell any adult about any of these experiences. Cyberbullying was still not being reported, so the true magnitude of the situation is still unknown.

The next question asked if the student being cyberbullied had told a friend. In this question, overall responses were that 81% said *yes,* 4% said *no*, and 15% *did not know*. When reviewing the data by subgroups, all responses were similar, indicating no difference in perceptions among subgroups. Prior research indicated that children seemed to be most comfortable reporting bullying experiences to their friends (Rigby, 2002).

The participants were then asked how the student being cyberbullied reacted. Responses included *logged off computer* (12%), *blocked access* (31%), *changed screen name* (9%), *left website* (23%), *did nothing* (26%), and *did something else* (49%). Each subgroup was examined and all responses within subgroups were similar, indicating that the participants' perceptions were alike.

In the next question, participants were asked how they thought the student being cyberbullied felt. The majority of responses indicated the students felt *angry* (67%), *frustrated or helpless* (64%), *embarrassed* (56%), *sad* (55%), and *scared or frightened* (42%). Responses within each subgroup were examined and all responses were similar, indicating that the participants' perceptions were alike.

These data support prior research that indicated that victims of cyberbullying responded with feelings of sadness, anxiousness, and having a lower self-esteem (Berson et al., 2002; Cowie & Berdondini, 2002; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2007). In Hinduja and Patchin's (2009) study, they found that many cyberbullying victims felt angry, frustrated, sad, embarrassed, or scared.

The next group of questions pertained to how cyberbullying was perceived to be impacting students at school. The participants were first asked if students who were cyberbullied tried to avoid school or make excuses not to go to school. Of the overall responses, 87% indicated that students who are cyberbullied avoided school. There was no significant difference

in comparison of scores between subgroups when looking at students avoiding school due to cyberbullying, with only a small Omega-squared effect size. Even though perceptions across subgroups were the same, more importantly, it should be noted that there was agreement that cyberbullying is impacting school attendance.

These findings are supported by a study by the National Association of School Psychologists, which estimated that 160,000 children miss school daily due to fears of being bullied (Shore, 2005). An earlier study showed that bullied children have higher absenteeism rates than other students (Smith et al., 2004). Students who were bullied not only were at a higher risk for truancy but also had a higher dropout rate (Carney & Merrell, 2001). According to Ericson (2001), victims often feel alone, humiliated, insecure, and fearful of going to school. They experience poor relationships and have difficulty making friends (Ericson, 2001). They view school as unsafe and many are afraid to attend (DeVoe, Peter et al., 2005).

Near unanimous responses to the next two questions showed a unified perception that cyberbullying is having a large impact in schools. Of the respondents, 99% said they agreed cyberbullied students found it harder to concentrate on their school work. Omega-squared effect size revealed only a 3% variance among subgroups, and 95% agreed that students' grades suffered due to cyberbullying (an Omega-squared effect size of only 1%).

Numerous studies conducted since the early 1970s have confirmed that bullying affects millions of children every year. Victims of bullying have suffered physically and mentally, which has resulted in a negative impact on the school environment and students' academic successes. Current research data reinforced Kowalski et al. (2008), who noted that the stress and distractions caused by bullying can put children at risk academically and confirmed that bullying can seriously affect the mental and physical health of children and ultimately impacts their

academic work. "Young people mistreated by peers may not want to be in school and may thereby miss out on the benefits of school connectedness as well as educational advancement" (Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, & Perry, 2003, p. 315). Prior research also showed that bullied children received lower grades than peers who were not bullied (Arsenault et al., 2006; DeVoe, Kaffenberger, & Chandler, 2005).

Participants were then asked for their perceptions of the most common reasons for cyberbullying. *Power* (33) was ranked number one most often followed by *doing it for fun/laughs* (26). The next highest responses were *because others were doing it* (21) and *because I can and no one knows it is me* (23). The least popular reasons for cyberbullying were because *they deserved it* (27), *revenge* (23), and because of *hate* (21).

In the study by Hinduja and Patchin (2009), the most common reasons for cyberbullying someone were *revenge* (23%) or *the victim deserved it* (19%), which was the opposite of current survey results. Hinduja and Patchin (2009) also reported that only 11% of cyberbullies did it because *it was fun* and *did not see any harm in their behavior*. This contradiction in data may be due to perceptions of the various subgroups in this current research study as compared to the previous study which involved just responses from children.

When asked how often they thought school computers were used to cyberbully, 66% of the respondents indicated that this had occurred. Review of participants' responses showed consistency across subgroups, which indicated that the participants' perceptions were similar. However, based on these results, the concern is the high percentage of students who are cyberbullying using school computers.

Participants were asked how often a student was able to bypass the school district's Internet security filter to get to sites that have been blocked. The respondents indicated that 60%

of them were aware of this happening. There was no significant difference in comparison of scores between subgroups, with an Omega-squared effect sized of only a 1% variance among them. Even with perceptions the same across subgroups, it must be noted that the responses should indicate a concern for school districts because students were able to bypass their Internet security.

Then participants were asked how often cyberbullying occurred through cell phone usage during school hours. In this question, 78% of the respondents indicated that this occurs. Even with perceptions the same across subgroups, it must be noted that there is an alarmingly high percentage of students who are using their cell phones to cyberbully others during school hours. This should be a concern for school districts.

Of the participants, 44% of overall responses indicated that students felt empowered or comfortable in seeking help from a trusted adult if they are being cyberbullied; 26% responded *no*, and 31% said they were *unsure*. Figure 9 showed that students only responded with a *yes* 12% of the time when asked if they were comfortable contacting an adult if they were being cyberbullied. This was in comparison to administrators (75%), educators (60%), and parents (30%), who indicated strongly that students informed an adult.

Comparisons revealed students' responses were statistically different from educators and administrators and there was a significant Omega-squared effect size of 10%, which indicated that perceptions comparing students with educators and administrators varied. Data indicated that although educators and administrators were under the impression that students were seeking help when they were cyberbullied, students were not doing so.

Participants were then asked if students were comfortable or felt empowered to seek help from a trusted adult to help others that were being cyberbullied. Of the overall responses, 64%

said *yes*, 17% said *no*, and 19% were *unsure*. Figure 10 showed that students are comfortable seeking help for others only 36% of the time but positive perceptions of administrators (86%), parents (73%), and educators (66%) differed from students.

The reality of the students may well not be the same as that of the adults when it comes to reporting cyberbullying. This means any number of cases goes unreported, victims go without help, bullies go without discipline, and parents go without knowing what their children are going through or what they are up to.

Despite children's victimization and fears of school, children are not reporting incidents of bullying to adults. This reinforced that children often hide the fact that they are being bullied and are reluctant to report bullying that they experience or witness (Kowalski et al., 2008; Shore, 2005). Earlier research indicated that as many as 50% to 75% of children who were bullied do not tell an adult (Fonzi et al., 1999).

In the survey, 75% of respondents said students were taught acceptable computer and Internet usage at school. There were 16% who said *they were not*, and 9% were *unsure*. The post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect pertaining to students receiving proper training in computer usage. Comparisons revealed administrators' responses were statistically different from students and parents with an Omega-squared effect size of 6% variance in responses of administrators in comparison with students and parents. This would indicate there was a moderate difference in perceptions between subgroups, with administrators feeling that acceptable computer usage was taught in schools and students and parents feeling it was not.

Then participants were asked if students were taught in school about cyberbullying and how to recognize if they were being cyberbullied. There were 58% who said *yes*, 14% who said *no*, and 28% were *unsure*. Post-hoc test comparisons revealed scores between administrators

and educators were statistically different and significantly different scores between parents and administrators. Using Omega-squared effect size, a moderate effect of 7% variance was found. Scores were different between parents and educators in comparison with administrators that indicated that administrators perceived there was education pertaining to cyberbullying offered at school; however, educators and parents did not indicate that education about cyberbullying was being provided at school. This is an extreme concern because parents and educators are considered to be primary contacts for students and their perceptions that schools are not teaching students about cyberbullying is valuable information needed to initiate change.

Participants were then asked if students were taught how to respond to cyberbullying in an appropriate manner. The majority responded *yes* (53%), followed by *unsure* (26%) and *no* (21%). The post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect pertaining to students taught in school to deal with cyberbullying. Comparisons revealed scores of parents and administrators were statistically different. There was a moderate effect size of 6% based on Omega-squared, indicating varied responses between parents and administrators when looking at students receiving proper training in schools to respond to cyberbullying. Administrators felt strongly that students were provided with proper training to learn how to respond to cyberbullying but parents did not feel that students were being taught how to respond to cyberbullying.

For the next question, participants were asked if teachers knew how to recognize cyberbullying issues. Of the overall responses, 45% were *yes*, 35% were *unsure*, and 20% were *no*. Figure 11 showed that educators (52%) and administrators (70%) marked *yes* as most common choice. However, students (31%) and parents (36%) marked *yes* less often indicating a difference in perception.

A post-hoc test revealed no significant effect, and the Omega-squared effect size was only 3% variance among responses when analyzing that teachers were able to recognize cyberbullying. However, the data lead to the impression that educators and administrators are much more confident that they are able to address the needs of students that are being cyberbullied in comparison to student and parent responses.

Participants were also asked if teachers knew how to appropriately intervene and help in a cyberbullying situation. The most common overall response was *unsure* (43%), followed by *yes* (37%) and *no* (20%). When the subgroup data were reviewed, administrators chose *yes* 63% of the time, but educators only responded *yes* 37% of the time and scored *unsure* higher 40% of the time. These data also led to the impression that administrators were much more confident that their staff was able to address the needs of students that were being cyberbullied; however, educator responses, along with student and parent responses, did not support those perceptions. There seems to be a disconnect between administrators and educators when looking at teachers properly trained to address cyberbullying situations.

The next series of questions addressed school policies and procedures that may pertain to cyberbullying. Participants were asked if their school districts had any formal procedure or policy for investigating cyberbullying. The majority of overall responses was *unsure* (50%), followed by *yes* (36%) and *no* (14%). Figure 13 identified where the majority of responses occurred within each subgroup. The administrators were much more confident in their school policies and procedures by responding with 76%; however, parents (37%), educators (28%), and students (27%) were less aware of policy for investigating cyberbullying. The post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect when comparing participants' knowledge of a school policy for

cyberbullying. Comparisons revealed significantly different scores between administrators and the other subgroups of students, parents, and educators.

There was a large and significant effect with an Omega-squared effect size of 14% variance based on participants' perceptions of the existence of a school policy pertaining to cyberbullying. This may indicate that if a policy or procedure existed, many participants were not aware of it.

Next, participants were asked if their school districts had a procedure or policy with a range of consequences to address cyberbullying. Again the majority of overall responses were *unsure* (52%), followed by *yes* (35%) and *no* (13%). Figure 14 illustrated that administrators (71%) seemed more aware of school policies and consequences, but students (27%), parents (32%), and educators (33%) were less aware of any district procedures for addressing cyberbullying.

The post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect when comparing participants' knowledge of a school policy including consequences for cyberbullying. Comparisons revealed significantly different scores between administrators and the other subgroups of students, parents, and educators with a large and significant Omega-squared effect size of 15% variance based upon participants' perceptions. Scores were significantly different between students, parents, and educators when compared to administrators, which may be an indication that if a policy or procedure included consequences for cyberbullying, many participants were not aware of it.

The next question in this series asked if teachers were trained in policy or procedures pertaining to cyberbullying. The most common response was *unsure* (50%), followed by *no* (32%) and *yes* (18%). These results prompted a more intensive look at data based on subgroups.

Figure 15 showed that students (12%), parents (14%), and educators (13%) were aware of any

training for teachers pertaining to cyberbullying. However, administrators (48%) indicated that

their districts did offer training to all staff on district policies and procedures. Again, there seems

to be a disconnect between educators and administrators, which is a concern.

The post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect when comparing participants' perceptions

of school staff training on school policy including cyberbullying. Comparisons revealed

significantly different scores between administrators, students, and parents. There was also a

statistical difference between students and educators with an Omega-squared effect size of 16%

variance between perceptions of participants within the subgroups when looking at staff training

in school policy that included cyberbullying. Scores were significantly different between

students, parents, and educators when compared to administrators, which may again be an

indication that if school staff training was provided on school policy or procedures, many

participants, including educators, were not aware of it.

The last question about school policy asked if school districts had any language in their

school policies that addressed off-campus cyberbullying behaviors. The overall responses were

similar to previous questions, with the highest score in *unsure* (59%), followed by *yes* (26%) and

no (15%). Due to the number of *unsure* responses, this again prompted further analysis. Figure

16 showed the responses for administrators to be mostly *yes* (62%); however, students (23%),

parents (21%), and even educators (13%) were less aware of any school policies or procedures

that address off-campus cyberbullying. Administrators and educators have dramatically different

perceptions about their school districts.

The post-hoc tests revealed a significant effect when comparing participants' knowledge

of school policies for cyberbullying that may have occurred off campus. Comparisons revealed

significantly different scores between administrators and the other subgroups of students, parents, and educators. There was a very large and significant effect with an Omega-squared effect size of 22% variance based on participants' perceptions of the existence of a school policy for cyberbullying that may occur off campus. Scores were significantly different between students, parents, and educators when compared to administrators, which may again be an indication that if a policy or procedure existed, many participants were not aware of it.

Survey data gathered indicated that student, parents, and, shockingly, even educators were unaware of any policies or procedures that their school districts have in place to address cyberbullying. Although administrators had strong perceptions that policies or procedures were in place, educators seemed unaware of anything and did not feel properly trained to address it.

Under current law, school officials have a duty to exercise precautions against students' cyberbullying, whether it is on or off school campus, if it is threatening student safety. Therefore, school districts can be held liable for failing to stop bullying, including cyberbullying, if personnel are found to have acted negligently or violated federal or state statutes (Kowalski et al., 2008).

State legislators have tried to address the issue of cyberbullying on and off school campus by requiring public schools to draft and enforce anti-bullying policies. It has been established that clear and comprehensive policies help protect students and school districts from legal liability (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009) and provide needed support when disciplinary action is taken against off-campus cyberbullies (Bissonette, 2009). This would indicate that school officials need cyberbullying policies or procedures, and they need to take time to train all staff to recognize and address cyberbullying in a proper manner that aligns with the approved policy or procedures.

The last two questions in the cyberbullying survey asked how cyberbullying should be addressed. The first question asked how cyberbullying should be addressed if the behavior occurred on school campus. The majority of participants chose school disciplinary actions such as *detentions, suspensions, and expulsions* (69%). When looking at data, there was no significant difference in comparison of scores between subgroups. A Tukey's revealed no significant differences among subgroups and the Omega-squared effect size was only a 1% variance among subgroups. This would indicate that all participants' perceptions were very similar and agreed that use of detentions, suspensions, and expulsions should be the primary consequences for cyberbullying on school campus.

The last question asked how cyberbullying should be addressed if the behavior occurred off school campus. The majority of responses were for *legal action* to be taken (47%), followed by *private counseling* (17%). There was no significant difference in comparison of scores between subgroups. A Tukey's again revealed no significant differences among subgroups with an Omega-squared effect size of only 2% variance among subgroups. This would indicate that all participants' perceptions were very similar and agreed that legal action should be the primary consequences for cyberbullying while off of school campus.

These data support the U.S. Supreme Court that has ruled that the Internet was protected by the First Amendment (Bissonette, 2009; Jacobs, 2010) and "school officials may not judge a student's behavior while he is in his home with his family nor does it seem . . . they should have jurisdiction over his acts on a public street corner" (*Sullivan v. Houston Indep. Sch. Dist., 1969* as cited in Shariff, 2009, p. 110*).* The courts need to continue to look for avenues to balance students' right to free speech with a school's responsibility to educate.

Although the survey participants have indicated that school officials should not get involved in cases of cyberbullying that occur off-campus, school officials still have a duty to protect their students and to ensure that there was no interference with their rights to an education (Willard, 2007a). School officials have the authority to respond when a student poses a threat to himself or herself or others, and a true threat is not protected speech under the First Amendment (Kowalski et al., 2008; Trolley & Hanel, 2010; Willard, 2007a). School officials also have a duty to exercise precautions against student cyberbullying if it is threatening student safety. Therefore, school districts can be held liable for failing to stop bullying, including cyberbullying, if personnel are found to have acted negligently or violated federal or state statues (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Implications of the Findings

The research data collected on cyberbullying were examined with the intent of providing statistical knowledge on the extent of cyberbullying and its impact on student education. With millions of youth interacting on the Internet daily, it is crucial to understand cyberbullying so that school officials can provide a safe and healthy school environment for learning.

Cyberbullying is on the rise and students are not prepared with an understanding of it or its ramifications. Students have not been provided proper training in appropriate Internet usage that includes cyberbullying education. They do not feel comfortable or empowered to speak out on their behalf or on the behalf of others, and do not know how to seek help for cyberbullying. Without the proper education for computer and Internet usage, as well as cyberbullying and technological harassment, it will continue to be an issue that impacts more and more school children and staff.

Although parents are beginning to get a better understanding of cyberbullying, they are not taking an active role in communicating personal safety guidelines to their children. Most parents are not aware of this problem and have not set ground rules or monitored their children's online activity. Parents are not being approached by their children for help with cyberbullying, so they are often left in the dark. All too often, parents are unaware of a problem with cyberbullying until it is too late. Parents should have developmentally appropriate guidelines for various technologies (Kowalski et al., 2008). Parents need to help their children understand the steps they can take if they are being cyberbullied or witness cyberbullying. It is important that they ensure their children that they are there to help and not to take away their children's social communication tools.

Educators must accept the reality that technology is ever-changing and school districts must change to meet those needs. Students are constantly connected to their digital world of communication and educators must be prepared to address this form of social interaction. Students are not comfortable approaching teachers for assistance. Often this is because students are afraid they will be blamed or punished. Without open lines of communication, students will never open up and share what is really going on; educators will remain unaware of students' torments with cyberbullying. Educators need to familiarize themselves with strategies for the prevention and intervention of cyberbullying.

School administrators seem to be under the impression that they have cyberbullying under control and are prepared to deal with it on or off school campus. This survey clearly showed that the administrations' perceptions varied greatly in many areas when compared to students, parents, and even educators. School administrators need to better understand the

ramifications of all types of cyberbullying and how it impacts the school environment, regardless of whether it occurs on or off school campus.

Administrators are required to address the ethical and legal responsibilities surrounding cyberbullying; they must protect students without infringing upon their constitutional rights. This means school administrators must become familiar with current research on the nature and prevalence of cyberbullying, use of technology, and best practice for preventing and addressing it. Students, parents, and educators all felt that they did not have proper training to address the cyberbullying issue even though research has indicated that cyberbullying is best addressed through comprehensive school-wide efforts (Kowalski et al., 2008).

Recommendations

This study examined perceptions of students, parents, educators, and school administrators in order to allow school stakeholders and officials from all levels of government an opportunity to recognize cyberbullying as an epidemic. This study highlighted the fact that 91% of the respondents to this research project believed that cyberbullying is on the rise and 73% of the respondents knew someone who has been cyberbullied. Failure to take action could result in more tragedies both on and off school campuses.

Although more research is needed to better understand the effects of cyberbullying on children's attitudes toward school, their attendance, and their achievement, there is already reason for concern. This study revealed 87% of the respondents acknowledged that students do try to avoid school due to cyberbullying, 99% said that cyberbullied children find it harder to concentrate in school, and 95% said that children who are cyberbullied experience a drop in academic grades. These alarming statistics make cyberbullying more than just an off-campus issue.

Despite efforts to encourage students to avoid engaging in cyberbullying behaviors, it has been discovered that many students did not think of their mean and harassing online behaviors as cyberbullying (Kowalski et al., 2008). The first step to effective strategies and reducing the number of such incidents would be to start with a clear and detailed definition of cyberbullying and instilling in all stakeholders, including students, an understanding of its impact on others. Because cyberbullying appears to occur more often starting in middle school, prevention messages need to begin earlier, with parents and educators providing consistent messages about appropriate online behavior.

The participants in this study indicated that 77% of cyberbullying occurs outside of school hours. This is consistent with prior research data from Chapter 2. A survey by i-SAFE America (2005-2006) found that although 93% of parents felt they had a good idea of what their child was doing on the Internet, 41% of students said they did not share with their parents what they do online.

Although parents are beginning to understand more about cyberbullying, it would seem that they have yet to give ground rules for communicating online. Parents need to talk with their children regarding the rules of technology, including the safety and forbidden uses of that technology. Parents need to take a more active role in supervising their children in the online world and communicate with their children that it is not acceptable to harass, spread gossip, or make mean comments towards others. They need to educate themselves about cyberbullying and the legal ramifications of it.

Although it is challenging to parents in this new technological world, it is a requirement to be a vigilant parent today. Many Web sites exist that provide great learning tools for parents and have excellent guidelines on supervising children on the Internet: Netsmartz.org,

WiredSafety.org, i-SAFE.org, and iKeepSafe.org. Parents need to help their children understand what to do if they are cyberbullied or a witness to cyberbullying.

There are many preventive steps that educators can take to address cyberbullying on or off school campus. First, an effective bullying prevention program is needed to assess the problem in each individual school. Students can complete an anonymous questionnaire about bullying and cyberbullying behavior at school. This will help educators gain insight about what is occurring among their students, how common cyberbullying is, and if it is occurring during the school day.

Many educators already teach some level of proper computer usage, but they need to go beyond that and teach students on more specific issues with cyberbullying. To be more effective, educators need to be trained in cyberbullying and the various popular forms of online communication tools children use. Staff should be familiarized with the issue of cyberbullying and taught how to recognize and respond to concerns about it.

Incorporating cyberbullying training as a regular part of staff training is one way that schools can educate their faculty on this important topic. Training should include prevention as well as how to intervene when it occurs. The training should also include a discussion of the school district's policies regarding cyberbullying and helpful resources.

Parents should be offered the same level of training provided to educators and given any school policies and procedures that were developed to protect all staff and students against cyberbullying. This will put educators and parents on the same helpful page.

Another front in this battle is between school districts and the rights to freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under the First Amendment, as many instances of cyberbullying occur off school campus. Some school districts do address this issue, but they must tread carefully

within the law, which only allows the suppression of speech if there is a substantial disruption to the school environment or an invasion of others' rights.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, more than half of all states in the United States have passed anti-bullying laws that require school districts to develop policies addressing bullying, but school administrators are struggling to figure out how to address it within the school district's policies for acceptable use of technology. School administrators are encouraged to consult with legal counsel in order address this issue while protecting students' rights.

Within the school policies should be clear prohibitions against cyberbullying and clear procedures for monitoring or searching students' Internet records. School policy should clearly prohibit cyberbullying and using school technology resources to perpetrate it. The U.S. Department of Justice (2006) provided a Model Acceptable Use Policy for Information Technology Resources in Schools, which requires the respect and practice of the principles of community: a) communicate in kind and respectful ways; b) report threatening or discomforting materials to a teacher; c) do not intentionally access, transmit, copy, or create material that violates the school's code of conduct or that which is illegal; d) do not use school resources to further criminal acts.

School administrators are advised to establish technology-user policies that notify students about the limits of their privacy and routine monitoring of files. Willard (2006) even recommended that administrators provided reminders on log-in screens pertaining to the expectations of privacy.

School administrators should become familiar with current research on cyberbullying and best practices for preventing and addressing it. In developing and enforcing policies and procedures that focus on the prevention of cyberbullying, school administrators will decrease the

chances that legal action is brought against the school district but, more importantly, decrease the likelihood that children will continue to suffer from being cyberbullied.

Future Research

This study and its findings have highlighted the need for additional research in the area of cyberbullying and the impact that it has on school environment. When perceptions of various stakeholders are similar, we are led to believe that concerns surrounding their strong responses may indicate a problem with cyberbullying. However, when perceptions differ among subgroups in some areas, we might think that stakeholders do not share a common understanding of the problem they face.

To expand on this research study, it may be necessary to conduct a survey that would include more participants in a wider range of school districts. This may offer an opportunity for better validity of findings.

Further expansion upon this research study would be through personal interviews with stakeholders in order to delve deeper and gather more detailed information that may only be obtained in a qualitative research project. Student responses indicated that they were not sharing incidents with adults, so further exploration into why this is happening may help to address the problem. Gathering information from subjects who have experienced cyberbullying and can tell first-hand about their experiences would be invaluable.

It is evident that cyberbullying is having an impact on schools through the students that it effects. Because cyberbullying is in its infancy, it would be beneficial to also research how cyberbullying is impacting other social issues the students must deal with in their daily lives.

Based on this research study, it was also very evident that educators do not feel prepared to address cyberbullying prevention or intervention. Further research on types of cyberbullying

programs and their effectiveness would be useful. A long-term study can be conducted in conjunction with the implementation of an anti-cyberbullying program.

Conclusion

To effectively address cyberbullying, stakeholders must acknowledge its serious ramifications and begin addressing the problem. In order to do this, everyone has to first understand what cyberbullying is, how it occurs, how to prevent it, and what its consequences are. At this time, there seems to be a disconnect between the various subgroups and what they perceive as the problem. They all recognize cyberbullying as an issue that is on the rise, but administrators feel they have it under control, parents seem unaware of what to do, educators know there is a problem but feel ill-prepared to do anything, and, worst of all, students are not talking or sharing.

This study offered an opportunity to share information that will help school districts make necessary changes to better meet student needs. Parents, educators, and school administrators must all work together to educate children on appropriate use of technology and cyberbullying. This study will hopefully provide information to district administrators that will open their eyes to what is really happening in their districts and initiate the positive change needed to make school a safe environment in which students can learn.

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APPENDIX A: SUPERINTENDENT LETTER

"Your School District" is being invited to participate in a research study about

cyberbullying and how this technological evolution on traditional bullying is impacting student

attendance, participation, and academic progress. This research study is being conducted by

Vida Z. Choucalas and Dr. Terry McDaniel, from the Educational Leadership Department at

Indiana State University. This research project is part of a dissertation requirement.

There are no known risks if you decide to allow students and staff to participate in this

research study. There are no costs to the district for participating in the study. The information

students and staff provide will be for informational purposes in helping school districts

understand the impact cyberbullying is having on the student population. The survey will take

about 10 minutes to complete. The information collected may not benefit your school district

directly, but the information learned in this study should provide more general benefits.

This survey is anonymous and will be Web-based. Responses will only require simple

clicks with no typed dialogue. The research study will not collect IP addresses however absolute

anonymity cannot be guaranteed over the Internet. No one will be able to identify participants or

your responses, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. Individuals

from the Institutional Review Board may inspect these records. Should the data be published, no

individual information will be disclosed.

Your district's participation in this study is voluntary. By completing the Web-based survey, participants are voluntarily agreeing to take part in the survey. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason.

In order to distribute this research survey more uniformly, I am requesting that https://indstate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cHd6ts87eTyIeVe   and a parent letter, which is enclosed, be placed on a School District Home Page, weekly/monthly district newsletters to parents, or other parent communication tools that your district utilizes such as school display cases, and principal or guidance office bulletin boards. Copies of parent letters can also be made available during Open Houses or Parent /Teacher Conferences where parents can pick one up if they so choose. This will allow for convenient accessibility for all staff and parents.

Attached is a letter to Building Administrators and School Staff. If you choose to participate in this informational survey, please allow a few minutes to share the letter with your building administrators, possibly during a monthly administrative meeting. Building administrators could then share the survey with staff utilizing the letter or by indicating that the survey information can be found on the district Web-site.

The attached Parent Letter includes a parental consent to allow their child to voluntarily participate in the survey while at school. Upon return of the parental consent, please allow students to access the Cyberbullying Survey during non-instructional time, such as during study hall or upon completion of all work.

To access the Cyberbullying Web-based Survey, please go to: https://indstate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cHd6ts87eTyIeVe

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Vida Z. Choucalas, 519 Windridge Drive, Chesterton, Indiana 46304, 219-508-0256, vidachoucalas@hotmail.com and Dr. Terry McDaniel, 812-237-3862, Terry.McDaniel@indstate.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you feel you've been placed at risk, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Indiana State University, Office of Sponsored Programs, Terre Haute, IN, 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or by e-mail at irb@indstate.edu.

Sincerely,

Vida Z. Choucalas
Primary Investigator
Indiana State University
Educational Leadership

APPENDIX B: BUILDING ADMINISTRATOR AND SCHOOL STAFF LETTER

Dear Building Administrator and School Staff:

You are being invited to participate in a research study about cyberbullying and how this technological evolution on traditional bullying is impacting student attendance, participation, and academic progress. This research study is being conducted by Vida Z. Choucalas and Dr. Terry McDaniel, from the Educational Leadership Department at Indiana State University. This research project is part of a dissertation requirement.

There are no known risks if you decide to allow students and staff to participate in this research study. There are no costs to the district for participating in the study. The information administrators and staff provide will be for informational purposes in helping school districts understand the impact cyberbullying is having on the student population. The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. The information collected may not benefit your school district directly, but the information learned in this study should provide more general benefits.

This survey is anonymous and will be Web-based. Responses will only require simple clicks with no typed dialogue. The research study will not collect IP addresses however absolute anonymity cannot be guaranteed over the Internet. No one will be able to identify participants or your responses, and no one will know whether or not you participated in the study. Individuals from the Institutional Review Board may inspect these records. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. By completing the Web-based survey, participants are voluntarily agreeing to take part in the survey. You are free to decline to answer any particular question you do not wish to answer for any reason or discontinue the survey at any time.

In order to distribute this research survey more uniformly, I have requested that the survey web link be placed on a School District Home Page for convenient accessibility for all students, staff, and parents. I have also provided parent letters that will allow parents to sign permission for their child to participate in the survey during non-instructional parts of their school day. Please honor parent permissions by allowing students access to a computer with Internet capabilities. Thank you for your time and participation in this important educational survey.

To access the Cyberbullying Web-based Survey, go to:

https://indstate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cHd6ts87eTyIeVe

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Vida Z. Choucalas, 519 Windridge Drive, Chesterton, Indiana 46304, 219-508-0256, vidachoucalas@hotmail.com and Dr. Terry McDaniel, 812-237-3862, Terry.McDaniel@indstate.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you feel you've been placed at risk, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Indiana State University, Office of Sponsored Programs, Terre Haute, IN, 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or by e-mail at irb@indstate.edu.

Sincerely,

Vida Z. Choucalas
Primary Investigator
Indiana State University
Educational Leadership

APPENDIX C: PARENT LETTER

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a student in the Educational Leadership Department at Indiana State University. I am conducting a research project on cyberbullying and how this technological evolution on traditional bullying is impacting education. I have created a survey where parents, students and school staff may share their perceptions of cyberbullying. Your participation, as well as your child's, will offer you an opportunity to share your perceptions of cyberbullying.

There are minimal risks if you decide to participate in this research study and all participants may choose to skip questions or discontinue participation at any time during the survey. The information you and your child provide will be for informational purposes in helping school districts understand the impact cyberbullying is having on the student population. The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete.

This research study is anonymous and will be Web-based. Responses will only require simple clicks with no typed dialogue. The survey will utilize words and terms that your child can understand, and your child will participate only if he or she is willing to do so. No one within the research study will be able to identify specific participants. Any students who have parental permission to participate at school will still have responses that are confidential.

Only the researchers for this specific cyberbullying study and individuals from the Institutional Review Board will have access to information from this study. At the conclusion of

the study, children's responses will be reported as group results only. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. By completing the Web-based survey, participants are voluntarily agreeing to take part in the survey. You and your child are free to decline to respond to any particular question you wish for any reason.

Your decision whether or not to participate or allow your child to participate will not affect the services normally provided to your child by your school district. Your child's participation in this study will not lead to the loss of any benefits to which he or she is otherwise entitled. Even if you give your permission for your child to participate, your child is free to refuse to participate. If your child agrees to participate, he or she is free to end participation at any time. You and your child are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your child's participation in this research study.

Should you have any questions or desire further information, please call me or email me at Vida Z. Choucalas, 519 Windridge Drive, Chesterton, Indiana 46304, 219-508-0256, vidachoucalas@hotmail.com or Dr. Terry McDaniel at Indiana State University, 812-237-3862, Terry.McDaniel@indstate.edu.

If you would like to participate, please access the Cyberbullying Web-based Survey: https://indstate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cHd6ts87eTyIeVe

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Indiana State University, Office of Sponsored Programs, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or e-mail the IRB at irb@indstate.edu. You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent

committee composed of members of the University community, as well as lay members of the

community not connected with ISU. The IRB has reviewed and approved this study.

Sincerely,

Vida Z. Choucalas
Primary Investigator
Indiana State University
Educational Leadership

_____

Please indicate below if you wish to allow your child to participate in this research survey

at school by checking one of the statements below, signing your name and returning this portion

of the form with your child.

_____ I grant permission for my child to participate in Cyberbullying and How It Impacts

Schools study on student perceptions of cyberbullying in schools.

_____ I do not grant permission for my child to participate in Cyberbullying and How It Impacts

Schools study on student perceptions of cyberbullying in schools.

_____   _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian   Printed Parent/Guardian Name

_____   _____

Printed Name of Child   Date

APPENDIX D: CYBERBULLYING SURVEY

I am a student in the Educational Leadership Department at Indiana State University. I am doing research on cyberbullying and how it may be affecting education. I have made a survey were parents, students and school staff may share their views of cyberbullying. Your input will offer you an opportunity to share your views of cyberbullying.

There is little risk if you decide to take part in this study and you may choose to skip questions or stop at any time during the survey. The information you share will be used to help school districts understand how cyberbullying affects the students. The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete.

This study is unsigned and anonymous so no one within this study will be able to identify specific participants. Your answers will only require simple clicks with no typing necessary. Only the researchers for this specific cyberbullying study and individuals from the Institutional Review Board will have access to information from this study. At the end of the study, all answers will be reported as group results only. Should the results be published, no individual information will be released.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. Students who are given parent permission to complete the survey can still decide not to take part. By doing the Web-based survey, you are agreeing to take part in the survey. You are free to refuse to answer or skip any questions you wish for any reason. Your decision whether or not to take part in the survey will not affect your services in your school and will not lead to the loss of any benefits. Please remember you are free to stop at any time during the survey. You are not giving up any legal rights because of taking part in this study.

Should you have any questions or need more information, please call me or email me at Vida Z. Choucalas, 519 Windridge Drive, Chesterton, Indiana 46304, 219-508-0256,

vidachoucalas@hotmail.com or Dr. Terry McDaniel at Indiana State University, 812-237-3862,

Terry.McDaniel@indstate.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Indiana

State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by mail at Indiana State University, Office of

Sponsored Programs, Terre Haute, IN 47809, by phone at (812) 237-8217, or e-mail the IRB at

irb@indstate.edu. You will be given the chance to discuss any questions about your rights as a research

subject with a member of the IRB. The IRB is an independent committee made up of members of the

University community, as well as lay members of the community not connected with ISU. The IRB has

reviewed and approved this study.

<div align="center">CYBERBULLYING SURVEY</div>

Created from Cyberbullying Assessment Instrument (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009), Student

Needs Assessment Survey (Willard, 2007b), Online Behavior (Rogers, 2010) and Cyber Youth

Survey (Trolley & Hanel, 2010).

Purpose of the survey:

This survey will be used for gathering information from people involved in keeping a

healthy school environment. The survey items are from research on cyberbullying. The purpose

of the survey is to get your views of cyberbullying. The information that you share is important

because it may help with plans for school improvements. There are no "right" or "wrong"

answers so please just answer as truthfully as possible. Your answers will help me to research

the affect that cyberbullying has on students.

If you want to talk to someone about cyberbullying, you can call Kids Helpline 24 hours

a day, 7 days a week on **1800 55 1800** or use their web or email counseling services:

http://www.kidshelp.com.au

Thank you for participating and sharing your valuable input.

Cyberbullying Survey

Are you voluntarily taking part in this survey? Yes_____   No_____

Cyberbullying is when someone is mean, unkind or makes fun of others by sending or placing hurtful messages and/or pictures on a computer or through a cell phone. The hurtful messages or pictures can be through e-mail, cell phones, text messaging, personal websites like Face Book, and chat rooms.

1. Who are you?

    Student_____   Parent_____ Educator_____   Administrator_____

2. How many times have you been cyberbullied in the past 3 years?

    0_____   1-5_____   5-10_____   More than 10_____

3. Please evaluate the following:

    a. Cyberbullying is on a rise

    Agree_____   Disagree_____   Not Sure_____

    b. Cyberbullying is most often reported by (Rank 1-5 with 1 being most often and 5 least

        often)

    Victim_____ Friend of victim_____ Student/Peer_____ Parent_____ Bully_____

    c. Cyberbullying most often occurs (Rank 1-4 with 1 being most often and 4 least often)

    Home_____ School_____ Friend's house_____ Community location_____

d. Cyberbullying most often occurs with (Rank 1-3 with 1 being most often and 3 least often).

Computers_____ Cell phones_____ PDAs_____

e. Cyberbullying occurs most often via (Rank 1-4 with 1 being most often and 4 being least often).

Instant messaging_____ E-mails_____ Blogs_____ Personal profile pages_____

4. Cyberbullying is a significant/big problem at our school.

Agree_____ Disagree_____ Unsure_____

5. Cyberbullies typically/usually are: (Please mark all that apply)

_____ Male

_____ Female

_____ Upper class

_____ Middles class

_____ Lower class

_____ Caucasian/White

_____ Minority culture

_____ Above average academically

_____ Average academically

_____ Below average academically

_____ Special needs students

_____ Loners

_____ Have friends

_____ Leaders

_____ Followers

_____ Angry

_____ Depressed

_____ Outgoing

_____ Manipulative/controlling

_____ Low self-esteem

_____ Poor impulse control

_____ Resemble/act like traditional bullies

_____ Resemble/act like traditional victims

_____ Respond to being bullied

_____ Are provoked/annoyed by the victim

_____ No typical characteristics

6.   Should students have the right to say or do whatever they like online?

   Yes_____   No_____   Unsure_____

7.   Should students be able to surf the web without censorship/restrictions?

   Yes_____   No_____   Unsure_____

8.   If students take a photo of someone, do they need that person's permission to post it?

   Yes_____   No_____   Unsure_____

9.   In the last year, have any of the following been reported to your school that you are aware

   of: A student has…….(Please check all that apply). If you are unaware of any incidences

   listed below, skip to question number 15.

   _____ Been made fun of in a chat room?

_____ Been put down or bullied online by someone who has sent or posted cruel gossip, rumors, or other harmful material?

_____ Received a mean or hurtful e-mail?

_____ Had someone post something on a FaceBook or profile page that made that student upset, uncomfortable or afraid?

_____ Had someone post something on another Web page that made that student upset, uncomfortable or afraid?

_____ Had someone pretend to be a student?

_____ Send or post material that damaged another student's reputation?

_____ Send or post material that damaged another student's friendship?

_____ Had someone share personal secrets or images online without a student's permission?

_____ Had someone post anything about a student online that they did not want others to see?

_____ Been excluded from an online group by people who are being mean to them?

_____ Been afraid to go on a computer?

_____ Engaged in an online argument or fight?

10. Please share information about cyberbullying you are aware of:

a. Did the student know who was cyberbullying them?

Yes_____ No_____ Don't know_____

b. Were they being cyberbullied by someone at your school?

Yes_____ No_____ Don't know_____

c. Were threats made online carried out at school?

Yes_____ No_____ Don't know_____

d. Did they tell their parents about the cyberbullying?

Yes_____ No_____ Don't know_____

e. Did they tell a school staff member about the cyberbullying?

Yes_____ No_____ Don't know_____

f. Did they tell a friend about the cyberbullying?

Yes_____ No_____ Don't know_____

g. How did the student react to the cyberbullying (Check all that apply)?

_____ logged off computer

_____ blocked bully

_____ changed screen name or e-mail

_____ left site

_____ called police

_____ did nothing

_____ did something else

11. How do you feel the student felt about being cyberbullied?: (Please check all that apply)

_____ sad

_____ scared or frightened

_____ frustrated/helpless

_____ embarrassed

_____ angry

_____ did not bother me

12. When students experience cyberbullying, do they seem to want to stay away/avoid and make excuses not to go to school?

Yes_____   No_____   Sometimes_____

13. When students experience cyberbullying, do they find it harder to concentrate on school work?

Yes_____   No_____   Sometimes_____

14. When students experience cyberbullying, do their academic grades suffer?

Yes_____   No_____   Some did_____

15. What do you think are the most common reasons for cyberbullying: (Rank 1-7 with 1 being the most common reason and 7 the least common reason).

_____ revenge

_____ they deserved it

_____ others were doing it/joining in

_____ fun/for laughs

_____ because I can/no one knows it's me

_____ power

_____ hate

16. How often do you think cyberbullying occurs with school computer use?

Frequently_____   Occasionally_____   Never_____   Unsure_____

17. How often do students bypass the district's Internet filter to get to sites that have been blocked?

Frequently_____   Occasionally_____   Never_____   Unsure_____

18. How often do you think cyberbullying occurs through cell phone use during school hours?

Frequently_____   Occasionally_____   Never_____   Unsure_____

19. Do you feel that students in your school are comfortable or empowered to step up and inform

a trusted adult about cyberbullying that is occurring to them?

Yes _____   No_____   Unsure_____

20. Do you feel that students in your school are comfortable or empowered to step up and inform

a trusted adult about cyberbullying that is occurring to others?

Yes _____   No_____   Unsure_____

21. Students are taught acceptable computer and Internet use during the school year.

Yes_____   No_____   Unsure_____

22. Students are taught about how to recognize cyberbullying and threats to their online safety.

Yes_____   No_____   Unsure _____

23. Students are taught how to respond to cyberbullying in an appropriate manner.

Yes _____   No_____   Unsure _____

24. Teachers know how to recognize cyberbullying issues.

Yes _____   No _____   Unsure _____

25. Teachers know how to intervene/help in a cyberbullying situation in an appropriate manner.

Yes _____   No _____   Unsure_____

26. Does your school district have a formal procedure or policy for investigating cyberbullying?

Yes _____   No _____   Unsure_____

27. Does your school district have a formal procedure or policy with a continuum/range of

consequences for cyberbullying incidences?

Yes_____   No_____   Unsure_____