

Prevalence rates of cyberbullying and online victimization

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What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying can be defined as, "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text...cyberbullies are malicious aggressors who seek implicit or explicit pleasure or profit through the mistreatment of other individuals" (Patchin and Hinduja, 2006:152).



Purpose of this research

- Attempted to obtain a comprehensive overview of rates of cyberbullying and victimization by analyzing all known articles concerning cyberbullying
- Looked at differences in the rates of victimization/offending between the sexes
- Looked for trends in cyberbullying over past several years

Studies analyzed

- 55 articles were analyzed, 37 of which had original data
- The dates of publication ranged from 2000-2008
- The data was collected in a time period of anywhere from a couple days to several years
- Vast majority of information collected by surveys administered either by phone, online, or in-class
- The median sample size was slightly more than 1200
- The average number of males and females sampled was 742 and 768, respectively

Type of information collected

- Sample size (broken down by sex)
- Average age of sample
- Dates and time period over which data was collected
- Percent victim and offender (both broken down by sex)
- Percent who had witnessed cyberbullying

Methodological constraints

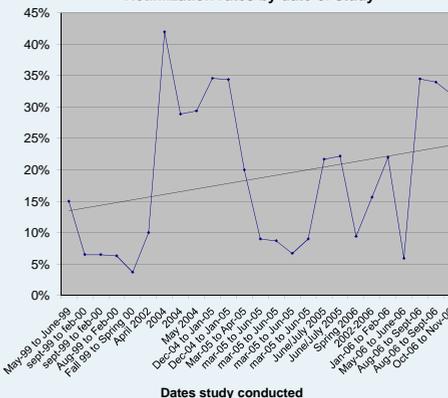
- Wide range of sample sizes (84 to over 14,000)
- Several surveys were administered online
- Many studies had a significantly greater number of female respondents than their male counterparts
- Some studies reported an age range, whereas others reported only grade in school, making it difficult to compare
- There was a small number of studies that included every type of data (for example, only 11 studies included offending rate and the time period over which the study was conducted).
- Though most studies were conducted in Western countries (U.S., U.K., or Canada), some were done in China or Turkey

Victimization rates

- Mean victimization rate = **23.9%**
Female = 27.0%
Male = 21.6%
- There was a very wide range of reported victimization rates: from **3.7% to 57.4%**



Victimization rates by date of study

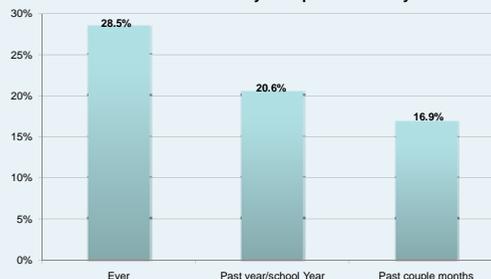


From this graph, an upward trend in the rate of reported cyberbullying victimization can be seen

- Mean victimization rates by time period studied:

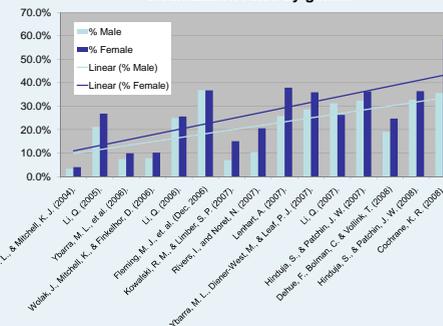
"Ever"	28.5%
"Past year/school year"	20.6%
"Past couple of months"	16.9%

Victimization rates by time period of study



As we would expect, the highest rate of victimization is reported when asked if they've "ever" been a victim, whereas the lowest rate results from asking about the "past couple of months".

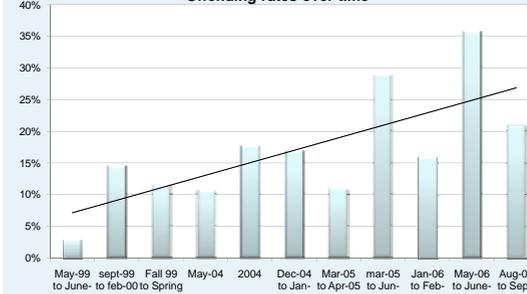
Victimization rates by gender



Offending rates

- Average offending rate = **16.9%**
Female = 14.7%
Male = 17.4%
- The range of offending rates was from **3% to 35.7%**

Offending rates over time



As this graph demonstrates, in this seven-year study period, the average cyberbullying offending rate nearly quadrupled.

Conclusion

- Though cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon with few comprehensive studies done on the topic, this research shows a definite increase over the past decade in both the perpetration of cyberbullying and reported victimization.
- Future research on cyberbullying needs to be more consistent: results were sometimes difficult to interpret, sample sizes varied widely, and the method of data collection was not always trustworthy (i.e. surveys on websites, where anonymity can pose problems).
- With average victimization rates of nearly 25% of the adolescent population, cyberbullying is clearly a prevalent problem that is not going away anytime in the near future.

Acknowledgements

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Image courtesy of: <http://news.research.ohio.edu/perspectives/index.php?item=421>