

**Cyberbullying: Does Implementing a Cyberbullying Prevention Program in Schools Help
to Reduce Cyberbullying Incidents?**

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**Cyberbullying: Does Implementing a Cyberbullying Prevention Program in Schools Help
to Reduce Cyberbullying Incidents?**

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Abstract

In today's society cyberbullying, also called cyber harassment, electronic bullying, and cyberaggression, has become a global epidemic affecting millions of Americans daily. This distinct cybercrime most impacts children and teenagers between 12 and 15. Moreover, cyberbullying has become a frequent occurrence not only at the grade school level but also at college and university levels. Cyberbullying is a constantly emerging occurrence resulting in adverse outcomes affecting the victims' mental health and academics, often leading to substance abuse and suicide. Existing bodies of research stress the importance of prevention and intervention programs and strategies to help combat the issue of cyberbullying. While literature concerning intervention tactics and prevention strategies has emerged to assist schools and students in combating cyberbullying, research is limited regarding this topic. This paper aims to provide an in-depth examination of cyberbullying, its origins, and its impact.

Additionally, this paper will address cyberbullies' distinctive characteristics and demographics and their victims, and current laws and legislation implemented to prosecute cyberbullying crimes. Finally, this paper will provide a high-level overview of existing programs and recommendations for a comprehensive cyberbullying prevention strategy. The existing research referenced in this paper indicates issues regarding identifying cyberbullies and those they victimize due to the unique characteristics (e.g., anonymity) of this type of cybercrime. In addition, researchers suggest that some adverse effects are associated with being both a victim of cyberbullying and an offender. Future research is essential to define cyberbullying more extensively. In addition, implementing future programs and strategies should spread awareness and effectively reduce cyberbullying in the United States and across the globe.

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Introduction

Overview of Cyberbullying

Cybercrimes are a growing problem that poses a significant threat to American society. There are diverse types of cybercrimes, and cyberbullying amongst grade school children has become an increasing issue throughout the years. Cyberbullying stems from traditional bullying, defined as an individual directing hostile behavior toward another individual (Affairs (ASPA), 2019). Additionally, it must include three key aspects: an actual or perceived power imbalance, repetition of the behavior, and intent to cause harm. Some researchers view Cyberbullying as a contemporary form of traditional bullying. While commonalities exist between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, there are several distinctive features. For instance, cyberbullying involves a one-sided display of power between an offender and a less powerful victim, repeated over time, and has the intention to damage a virtual environment (Myers & Cowie, 2019; Williford et al., 2013).

Further, cyberbullying could potentially involve more significant levels of anonymity than traditional bullying. In many cases, victims do not know the identity of their bully (Williford et al., 2013). Some examples of traditional bullying are spreading rumors, physically or verbally attacking an individual, and making threats.

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying that occurs using electronic devices such as computers, tablets, and cell phones. There are multiple definitions of cyberbullying, including UNICEF, which defines it as using digital technologies with repeated behavior to scare, anger, or shame another individual. Their definition includes spreading lies or posting embarrassing images and videos, sending hurtful, abusive, or threatening messages, and impersonating someone to send mean messages to others on their behalf or through fake accounts (UNICEF,

n.d.). According to Myers & Cowie (2019), cyberbullying and traditional bullying have distinctive differences, considering that cyberbullying invades the victim's privacy 24 hours a day, both at school and in the privacy of their homes. Additionally, the perpetrator can hide their identity, enhancing the cyber victim's insecurity about their relationships with their peers, as they may not know the individuals involved in cyberbullying (Myers & Cowie, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

In a virtually enhanced world, technology is ever-changing how children and adults communicate. One significant concern regarding the limitless use of technology is the increasing cyberbullying incidents and the impact and effects it has on our student population (Diamanduros et al., 2008 & Redmond et al., 2019). Cyberbullying typically occurs over social media apps, online forums, gaming communities, and text messages or messaging apps (Affairs (ASPA, 20019). It can also include divulging someone's personal or confidential information to cause humiliation or shame. Often, the released information "goes viral" through the actions of witnesses/bystanders who disseminate the information to a host of viewers within their social networks.

According to Howlett-Brandon (2014), cyberbullying extends outside of school hours. It happens 24 hours per day, seven days a week, inside and outside school, repeatedly impacting kids' social interactions. It often requires educators (e.g., teachers, principals, counselors, and administrators) to intervene by implementing effective management strategies and using antibullying programs to address and prevent cyberbullying incidents. Further, various studies have found that cyber violence is widespread among school-age children and can negatively impact ones emotional, physical, and social well-being of both victims and perpetrators (Pergolizzi et al., 2009). Research also suggests that cyberbullying involvement is associated

with behavioral problems, a decline in academic performance, increased social anxiety, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicidal tendencies, to name a few (Arslan et al., 2012; Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Marciano et al., 2020; Schneider, 2012; Gamez-Guadix et al., 2013; Hemphill et al., 2015; and Landoll et al., 2015; as cited in Polanin et al., 2021).

Purpose of the Study

The present study examines the characteristics and demographics of cyberbullies and victims, laws, and legislation. Further, this study will review the existing literature on cyberbullying intervention and prevention programs and provide a high-level overview of individuals' roles (e.g., educators, parents, witnesses, and school psychologists) in combating cyberbullying.

Literature Review

Defining Cyberbullying

According to Belsey (2004), "cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group whose intent is to harm others." Additionally, as previously mentioned, behavior is only considered cyberbullying if it is repetitive, intended to cause harm, and includes a real or perceived power imbalance (Affairs (ASPA), 2019). Cyberbullying also tends to occur in several settings, including on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Tik Tok, through text messaging and messenger apps, online forums, gaming communities, etc. (Affairs (ASPA), 2019). Although cyberbullying stems from traditional bullying, its unique characteristics distinguish it from conventional bullying (Slonje et al., 2013). These characteristics identify the fact that cyberbullying can occur in any place at any time. In addition, cyberbullying is difficult to detect, it is permanent, it provides anonymity for the offender, it

requires knowledge of technology, the audience it is shared with is increased, it is difficult to escape from, and several other distinguishable characteristics. In addition to these distinct characteristics, there are several types of cyberbullying. These include online harassment, outings, flaming, cyberstalking, exclusion, denigration of fake profiles, and catfishing.

Studies have identified several reasons why individuals may engage in cyberbullying. These reasons include seeking revenge, boredom, jealousy, the desire for power, or because the individual is non-confrontational (Slonje et al., 2013). Furthermore, cyberbullying has not always been identified as bullying, as it has only been recognized within the last 35 years. Instead, it stems from traditional bullying dating back to the 18th century (Allanson et al., 2015).

Origin of Cyberbullying

Traditional bullying dates back to the 18th century when society considered it innocent misbehavior, a normal rite of passage (Allanson et al., 2015). Even though there were reports of deaths resulting from bullying incidents, it was not taken seriously until the 1970s, when Norwegian psychologist Dan Olweus and other Scandinavian researchers began their studies on the topic. Their findings shed light on the dire consequences of bullying, leading to others changing their views and recognizing bullying as a significant issue. Along with his research, Olweus also created a prevention program known as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) to combat bullying in schools. This program started more awareness surrounding the matter and served as an example for future program development (Allanson et al., 2015).

Traditional bullying emerged on the World Wide Web in the 1990s and soon became what is now known today as cyberbullying (Donegan, 2012). During this time, personal computers were becoming increasingly affordable, which created many opportunities for predators to target and victimize others online. Unfortunately, like many countries, the United

States lacked knowledge and concern for the significant adverse outcomes of cyberbullying (Allanson et al., 2015). Therefore, lawmakers, educators, and psychologists failed to prioritize creating preventative measures to address this ever-growing concern. This led to violence, mental illness, and in extreme cases, the victims' deaths. However, it was not until 1999 that awareness in the United States began to rise, and people began taking bullying more seriously (Allanson et al., 2015), due partly to high-profile cases.

In 1999, two noteworthy events were the turning points in recognizing the significance of bullying prevention in the U.S. (Cornell & Limber, 2016). The first event was the shooting at Columbine high school on April 20, 1999. During this event, two teenage boys planted explosives inside and outside the school in an attempt to kill a substantial number of people (Springhall, 1999). However, they did not succeed, as the explosives failed to detonate, which led to the shooting of 35 students and teachers just before committing suicide. Of the 35, 24 were injured, and 13 were killed (Springhall, 1999).

Researchers found that both shooters were severely bullied throughout high school; therefore, they sought revenge by attempting murder. Another significant event that changed American perspectives on the severity of bullying was the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education* case (Cornell & Limber, 2016). This case involved the sexual harassment of a fifth-grade girl by a male classmate for several months, which led to the girl experiencing distress, struggling with maintaining her grades, and eventually drafting a suicide note. Due to the school's failure to take appropriate action, the parents decided to press charges, ultimately leading to the supreme court's decision to hold schools accountable for student-on-student harassment under Title IX (Cornell & Limber, 2016). This was a massive step towards prioritizing child safety and preventing bullying. However, this legal action was only an

initial step of many necessary steps to prevent bullying.

Although the 1990s marked the widespread use of computers to commit cyberbullying, one of the earliest cases occurred in 2003 and involved a young named Ryan Halligan, who was bullied due to a rumor claiming he was gay (Allanson et al., 2015). Additionally, Halligan was manipulated into sending other personal information about himself on American Online (AOL) instant messenger (AIM) to a girl who pretended to like him. The girl then used this information to make fun of Halligan with her friends, which resulted in him committing suicide (Allanson et al., 2015).

Another major cyberbullying incident occurred in 2006 when 13-year-old Megan Meier hung herself after being bullied on MySpace's social network (Moreno, 2011, p.70). A former friend of Megan's and their mother created a fake online profile using the name "Josh Evans" and began messaging Megan via the site. Initially, the messages were friendly, but over a few weeks, "Josh" told Megan that he no longer wanted to be friends and began sending her very unkind messages. This, coupled with other classmates sending her negative messages and bulletins, led to her committing suicide (Moreno, 2011, p.70).

These cases are just two of many where individuals have taken their own lives after being bullied online. From this, it can be seen that despite those initial attempts to reduce cyberbullying in America, more action needed to be taken to make a meaningful change. This is especially true with the rise in accessibility to personal computers and, thus, the unfolding of cyberbullying. Additionally, it can also be seen from these cases that cyberbullying can, and most often does, have severe psychological and sometimes physical effects on the victim (Nixon, 2014).

Impact and Consequences of Cyberbullying

Many psychological and physical effects can result from cyberbullying (Nixon, 2014). Studies have found that cyberbullying victims experience increased feelings of hopelessness and sadness, which can lead to depression. Studies have also found that 93% of the victims reported having a depressive effect due to cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is a significant stressor and leads to extreme distress and anxiety (i.e., fear for their safety) (Nixon, 2014). It has been proposed that it is more stressful than traditional bullying. This is partially due to cyberbullying being unique from conventional bullying in providing the perpetrator anonymity. As a result, the victim is less likely to know their bully; therefore, the unknown contributes to increased fear and sometimes leads to substance abuse. Furthermore, cyberbullying can significantly impact the victim's social relationships. This impact led to feelings of loneliness or isolation.

Like the cases of Ryan Halligan and Megan Meier, studies have found a positive relationship between cyberbullying and suicidal behaviors, such as suicidal ideation and suicide. While suicide is one of the more extreme impacts of cyberbullying, individuals have also experienced physical effects, including insomnia, headaches, chest pains, eating disorders, and skin issues (e.g., acne) (Nixon, 2014).

Cyberbullying/cybervictimization is associated with several adverse physical and psychological effects. Studies have found that adolescents struggle extensively with the harmful effects of bullying and cyberbullying (Nixon, 2014). These effects include isolation, inability to focus, lack of self-confidence, increased levels of depression, social angst, and academic difficulties (Williford et al., 2013). According to Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007, as noted in Williford et al. (2013), cyberbullying victims experience hopelessness and feel powerless because the bully's anonymity presents challenges for the victim to end the harassment.

Adolescence is a transitional period in an individual's life where they experience increased biological and psychological development (Branje, 2018). This includes developments in the individual's identity or personality. Adolescents' character traits are related to how likely they are to become cyberbullying targets or cyberbullies themselves (Escortell et al., 2020).

Characteristics and Demographics of Cyberbullies and Victims

Studies have indicated that specific character or personality traits play a significant role in helping identify an individual as a potential cyberbully or victim of cyberbullying (Escortell et al., 2020). Evidence has shown that individuals who are cyberbullies tend to lack sociability, enthusiasm, or self-confidence. They are not overly sensitive to others and can often dehumanize the individuals they bully, making it easier to do so. They also tend not to be open to new experiences, lack conscientiousness, and struggle with feelings of anxiety, fear, depression, etc. However, unlike those who may be involved in traditional bullying, they do not possess increased levels of aggression.

Research shows cyberbullies can have issues maintaining relationships, especially with their caregivers (Escortell et al., 2020). They are also likely to have been targets of traditional bullying, engage in risky behaviors, and frequently use substances such as alcohol or drugs. Finally, cyberbullies are also expected to be highly fixated on the internet and use it daily to target and harass others anonymously.

In terms of individuals who are targets of cyberbullying, investigated reports have found that victims can be very friendly, enthusiastic, and self-confident (Escortell et al., 2020). They can also be susceptible to others and are open to new experiences. They tend to experience less anxiety, fear, and depression and are not verbally aggressive. Individuals with these traits tend to care more about connecting with their peers. One way they do this is through social media and

other electronic means of communication; therefore, these individuals become more susceptible to victimization by cyberbullies (Escortell et al., 2020). Contrastingly, researchers have discovered that individuals who are most likely to become targets of cyberbullying are those who are targets of traditional bullying (Feinberg & Robey, 2009). They are deemed "unpopular" by their peers and generally have feelings of anxiety, fear, isolation, and depression.

Consistent with studies conducted by other researchers, Feinberg & Robey (2009) found that victims of cyberbullying are also seeking acceptance and connection with their peers using the internet, which makes them more susceptible to victimization. They tend to ignore safety messages regarding the internet, do not cope well with demanding situations, and do not report negative online experiences to authority figures. Additionally, studies have found that adolescents who are most at risk for cyberbullying possess the following characteristics: they are socially naïve, have overprotective parents, have a temporary rift between them and their parents or peers, or they face continuous difficulties in their life that impact their mental health and relationships (Feinberg & Robey, 2009).

According to a study by Branje (2018), individuals experience psychological developments during adolescence that include the development of their identity/personality. Branje's investigation revealed that an individual's personality and character traits determine whether or not they are more or less likely to become a cyberbully or a victim of cyberbullying. However, their personality is not the only factor that can be used to identify this. According to Hinduja & Patchin (2021), demographic characteristics such as age, gender, sexual orientation, and Race can also be used to identify a potential victim of cyberbullying or a cyberbullying offender.

Demographics of Cyberbullies and Victims

Several factors contribute to identifying individuals as cyberbullies or targets of cyberbullying. These factors include but are not limited to age, gender, sexual orientation, and Race (Hinduja & Patchin). Historically, studies have focused on age or adolescence concerning cyberbullying. This is likely because research has shown that 95% of adolescents have an online presence for social and academic activities (Nixon, 2014 & Ruiz-Esteban et al., 2022).

Age

Studies suggest that individuals will become victims or offenders of cyberbullying between ages 12 and 15; however, victimization will likely decrease into adulthood (Tokunaga, 2010; Hinduja & Patchin, 2021). Additionally, several studies have found that the perpetration of cyberbullying tends to increase as an individual progresses through adolescence (Hinduja & Patchin, 2021). For example, Pichel et al.'s (2021) study revealed that cyberbullying perpetration occurred more frequently among 16–17-year-olds. At the same time, other studies have found that becoming an offender of cyberbullying can begin as early as 13 years of age (Hinduja & Patchin, 2021).

Gender

Gender is another critical factor in determining whether an individual will become a cyberbully or a victim of cyberbullying. However, mixed findings exist on the relationship between cyberbullying and gender (Nixon, 2014). Some studies have shown that when it comes to cyberbullying and victimization, gender is not a factor. In contrast, other studies have found that females are more likely to be victims of cyberbullying than males; however, a few studies showed higher prevalence rates among males than females (Nixon, 2014). Additionally, one Hinduja & Patchin (2021) study found that transgender adolescents had a higher victimization prevalence than males and females.

Some studies suggest that in addition to being more likely to be victimized, females are also more likely to be perpetrators than their male counterparts (Sun et al., 2016). This can be partially explained by males being more likely to be physical aggressors than females and, therefore, more likely to be involved in traditional bullying versus cyberbullying. However, many research results have found that males are more likely to be cyberbullied than females (Sun et al., 2016).

Sexual Orientation

Another factor that can increase the likelihood of an individual becoming a victim of cyberbullying or becoming an offender themselves is sexual orientation. Research has consistently found that individuals who belong to the sexual minority are more likely to become victims of cyberbullying than heterosexual individuals (Hinduja & Patchin, 2021). For example, a study by Hinduja & Patchin (2021) showed that victimization was 50% higher among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) adolescents than among heterosexual adolescents. Similarly, when it comes to being an offender of cyberbullying, LGBTQ adolescents are also more likely to cyberbully others than non-LGBTQ adolescents. The potential reasoning behind this is that since sexual minorities are more likely to be targets of cyberbullying, they may begin to cyberbully others as a form of retaliation (Hinduja & Patchin, 2021).

Race/Ethnicity

The final factor associated with cyberbullying outcomes is race/ethnicity. Edwards et al. (2016) reviewed 15 studies that focused on race/ethnicity and cyberbullying. The results revealed that the racial group with the highest rate of victimization is White (30%), followed by Black (17%) and Hispanic (13%). Concerning offending, the Race with the highest possible rate is

White (42%), followed by Hispanic (18%), and then Black (11%). In contrast, results from a Hinduja & Patchin (2021) study found that White and Multiracial individuals were most likely to be victims of cyberbullying, and Multiracial individuals, as well as those who classify themselves as "Other," were the most likely to cyberbully others (Hinduja & Patchin, 2021).

Demographic characteristics and personality significantly determine whether someone is more or less likely to be a cyberbullying victim or a cyberbully. Therefore, bringing awareness to these issues shows the importance of having programs and strategies to combat cyberbullying. Additionally, knowing what to look for can support the efforts to prevent future individuals from becoming cyberbullies or victims of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying Laws and Legislation

Legislation that criminalizes cyberbullying has proven challenging to enact. This is because cyberbullying can be considered a form of speech protected by the First Amendment (Sumrall, 2016). As a result, any legislation that criminalizes cyberbullying must also be careful not to violate one's First Amendment right to freedom of speech. A notable case includes *People v Marquan M.* This was one of the first cases in which the New York Court of Appeals considered the constitutionality of criminalizing cyberbullying (Wikimedia Foundation, 2021). In *People v Marquan M.*, laws criminalizing cyberbullying were overturned because they were deemed overbroad and facially invalid as written under the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment. "Basing its decision on the breadth and vagueness doctrines, the court concluded that the law is of "alarming breadth" as it criminalized a broad spectrum of protected communicators, far beyond the cyberbullying of children" (Wikimedia Foundation, 2021). According to Sumrall (2016), rules are more likely to be permissible if they involve cyberbullying behaviors aimed at children and do not prohibit "annoying speech." Therefore,

cyberbullying laws that adhere to these guidelines are less likely to be overturned (Sumrall, 2016).

Local Law

Legislation has criminalized cyberbullying behaviors at the local and state levels but failed to do so at the Federal level. For example, at the local level, Albany County in New York created a "Local Law F" statute that imposes a \$1,000 fine and up to a year in jail if an individual is found guilty of cyberbullying (Sumrall, 2016). Another example is Vernon County, Wisconsin, which passed an ordinance in 2012 making it illegal to send electronic information "to annoy, offend, demean, ridicule, degrade, belittle, disparage, or humiliate any person, which serves no legitimate purpose." If found violating the ordinance, individuals can face a \$50-\$500 fine or 30 days in jail if they cannot pay the fine (Sumrall, 2016).

State Law

In terms of the state level, 48 states have antibullying legislation; however, only 24 include cyberbullying in that legislation, and only 7 criminalize it (Sumrall, 2016). Those states criminalizing cyberbullying include Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington. Penalties for violating cyberbullying statutes vary amongst states, and approaches to criminalizing cyberbullying differ. For example, the penalty for violating Louisiana's regulation is a fine of up to \$500, imprisonment for no more than six months, or both. Additionally, their statute states that the victim must be under 18, but the offender can be any age. This statute is most likely permissible because it does not include adults or "annoying speech."

Another example is Arkansas' statute, which makes cyberbullying a Class B misdemeanor. However, this statute states that victims can be adults. As a result of this statute, including adults, it may be overturned for being overbroad (Sumrall, 2016).

Federal Law

Finally, in terms of cyberbullying legislation on the federal level, there is currently no federal law that applies specifically to bullying, let alone cyberbullying (Sumrall, 2016). However, there have been attempts in the past to pass cyberbullying legislation at the federal level. In 2009, a legislature known as the Megan Meier Cyberbullying Prevention Act proposed to make cyberbullying a federal crime. This act was created in response to the Megan Meier case, involving a young girl's experience with cyberbullying, ultimately leading to her suicide. It proposed that individuals guilty of cyberbullying could be imprisoned for up to two years, but it was never enacted into law (Sumrall, 2016).

In the United States, each state has laws and policies that address bullying/cyberbullying; however, they are enforced differently for each state (Affairs (ASPA), 2019). Since adolescents have been the primary focus of bullying and cyberbullying research, many policies and programs surrounding cyberbullying involve schools. Most states require schools to have an antibullying policy or program that complies with the state model policy. For example, the Maryland State Department of Education requires its schools to have an antibullying policy that includes statements that prohibit not only bullying and cyberbullying but intimidation and harassment as well. In addition, they must also include accounts that ban retaliation against those who report bullying incidents. Finally, there are consequences for those who violate the policy, procedural information on how to report bullying, how to investigate it, and the diverse types of support services available to individuals who are bullies, victims of bullying, bystanders, etc. Maryland's

policy is just one example of several states with specific guidelines for how they would like their schools to combat bullying/cyberbullying. However, other states do not provide these guidelines and have a more basic bullying/cyberbullying prevention standard. For example, Wisconsin requires schools to have a policy to prevent bullying, but unlike Maryland, the law does not specify what schools should include. Wisconsin allows schools to use the Department of Education's model bullying policy and requires them to dispense copies of their policy to all enrolled individuals and their parents annually (Affairs (ASPA), 2019).

While most states require schools to adopt an antibullying policy, it is apparent that the specific content of these policies varies tremendously, and many schools have failed to implement intervention and prevention programs. As a result, it is worth considering if states that do not provide intervention and prevention programs or even more specific guidelines for school policies regarding bullying/cyberbullying are effectively preventing it.

Cyberbullying Intervention and Prevention Programs

While perpetrator/cyber-victim incidents have increasingly been officially placed on the school agenda in several countries across the globe, various program recommendations regarding the proper management and prevention of bullying have been proposed (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Some recommendations appear poorly thought-out, while others have been consequential and potentially helpful. However, many of the programs implemented have either failed to document positive results or have never undergone a thorough research evaluation.

Although practical and successful antibullying prevention programs exist within the academic community, few studies have evaluated the effectiveness/efficiency of cyberbullying and cybervictimation prevention programs (Mishna et al., 2009, as cited in Sorrentino et al., 2018).

Currently, each state requires, at minimum, implementing antibullying policies. Additionally, several school programs have become available to help curb bullying among the student population (Strawhun, Fluke, and Peterson, 2014). Some well-established programs include the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, KiVa Antibullying, Tabby Improved Prevention and Intervention Program, and the Cyberprogram 2.0 and Cooperative Cybereduca 2.0 Videogame. Such programs focus on intervention and prevention strategies and provide schools with lesson plans designed to improve knowledge and increase awareness. These programs also assist with identifying bullies, victims, the bully-victim cycle, the distinct types of bullying, how to avoid bullying behaviors, etc. Other programs have focused on positive reinforcement to increase prosocial behaviors and reward students who engage in these behaviors instead of bullying. These programs are also intended to be used at various school levels, depending on which program is selected. Studies propose that cyberbullying intervention and prevention programs effectively reduce bullying behaviors and victimization (Strawhun et al., 2014). However, while many programs may include cyberbullying as bullying, few programs focus on cyberbullying and how to prevent it. As a result, several institutional-based programs have been established and implemented to reduce traditional bullying and cyberbullying perpetration and victimization.

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

The Olweus Bullying and Prevention Program (OBPP) was developed in 1983 following the suicide deaths of three Norwegian children. The ultimate objectives of the OBPP are to decrease bullying incidents among school-age children, counteract the implementation of different bullying incidents, and achieve improved companionship among students at school (Olwus & Limber, 2010).

The program's overall objective is to restructure adolescents' social environments by decreasing opportunities and rewards for participating in bullying incidents. Further, the restructuring is intended to develop a sense of unity among students and educators (e.g., teachers, administrators, and school counselors) within the school setting (Olweus & Limber, 2010).

There are four fundamental principles that the OBPP is based upon. School educators should: (a) display interest and positive involvement in students' lives; (b) establish substantial limitations to intolerable behavior; (c) when rules are broken, educators should consistently respond in a nonhostile and nonphysical manner when implementing consequences for negative behavior; and (d) serve as respectable role models and be authoritative (Olweus & Limber, 2010). These principles have been explained into four core components, used at the "school, classroom, individual, and community levels" (Olweus & Limber, 2010).

Program Evaluation

As part of the initial Bergen Project against bullying, the OBPP was first implemented and assessed between 1983 and 1984, using approximately 2500 Norwegian students (grades five-eight) evaluated thrice within 2.5 years. A corresponding study was conducted between 1983 and 1985, using approximately 1200 students in grades seven and eight. The participants were students affiliated with 28 elementary schools and 14 middle schools in Bergen, Norway. The student compared students of the same age groups in grades five through eight (Olweus & Limber, 2010). The study revealed a substantial decline in self-reported bullying encounters, antisocial behavior, vandalism, theft, truancy, and victim problems. In the 1983-1984 study, bullying victimization reduced from 10% to 3.8%, and perpetration reduced from 7.6% to 5.1% (Olweus, 1991, 1993a, 1997; Olweus & Alsaker, 1991 as cited in Olweus & Limber, 2010). In the corresponding study, victimization reduced from 10% to 3.6%, and perpetration reduced

from 7.6% to 3.6% (Olweus, 1991, 1993a, 1997; Olweus & Alsaker, 1991 as cited in Olweus & Limber, 2010). Furthermore, a vast improvement was noted in students' contentment with their academic life, better order and discipline, a positive boost in camaraderie, and a brighter outlook regarding classwork and school overall.

KiVa Antibullying Program

Historically, empirical evidence does not exist as to whether or not existing school antibullying programs effectively address the distinctive characteristics of cyberbullying. Williford et al. (2013) address this critical gap by evaluating the effectiveness of the KiVa Antibullying Program. Williford et al.'s study revealed that KiVa is an intervention program option for schools interested in decreasing and deterring cyberbullying incidents.

KiVa suggests that progressive changes in peers' behavior decrease the incentives gained by perpetrators and, therefore, their reasons to bully (Salmivalli, Karna, & Poskiparta, 2010; P.K. Smith et al., 2012 as cited in Williford et al., 2013). The KiVa program focuses on the bystander/witness aspects of cyberbullying. The program targets explicitly enhancing bystanders' attitudes, empathy, and self-efficacy toward antibullying. It has been noted that these specific characteristics relate to protecting and supporting victimized peers (Caravita, Di Blasio, & Salmivalli, 2009; Poyhonen, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2010; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004, as cited in Williford et al., 2013).

The KiVa program involves two primary components: "universal actions (including classroom-based lessons) and indicated actions (targeting incidents of traditional bullying and cyberbullying) (Williford et al., 2013)." The classroom-based lessons involve bringing attention to a group of individuals' role in keeping bullying active, providing greater empathy towards victims, and encouraging adolescent strategies to support the victim and their confidence to do

so. Each lesson also includes many activities that tackle cyberbullying. The activities define behaviors that occur through ICTs, address respectable and suitable actions in cyber communication, and provide different avenues to take when responding to cyberbullying incidents. In a virtual environment, the KiVa program allows students to play a computerized game that reinforces classroom activities and teaches new defending skills to combat cyberbullying.

Program Evaluation

To evaluate the program's effectiveness, it underwent a meticulously controlled research study between 2007 and 2009, involving approximately 30,000 pupils in Finland between grades 1-9. The study revealed that the KiVa Antibullying Program effectively decreases multiple forms of bullying and cyberbullying incidents.

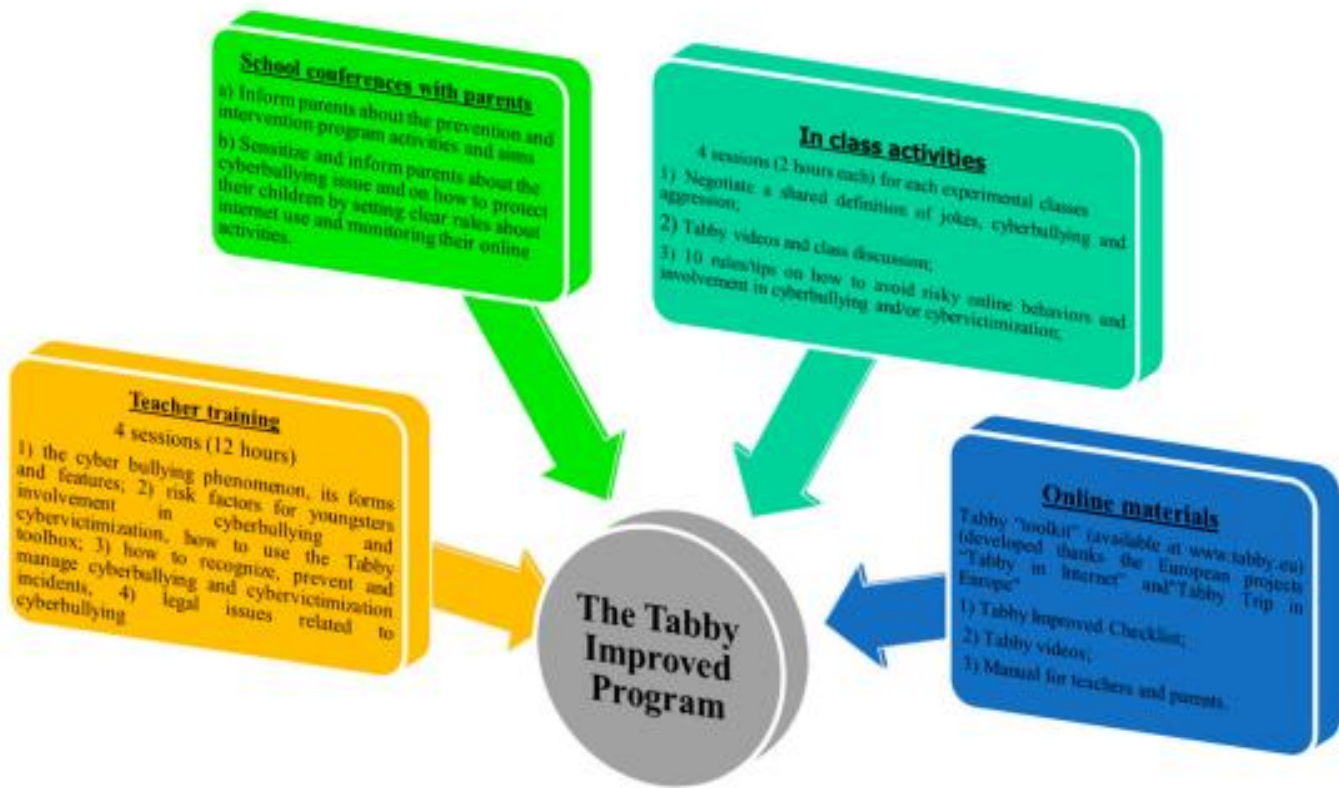
Tabby Improved Prevention and Intervention Program

The Tabby Improved Prevention and Intervention (TIPIP) is the first program of its kind to assess and address cyberbullying and cyber victimization using Ecological System Theory and the Threat Assessment Approach (Sorrentino et al., 2018). The program reviews different risk factors of cyberbullying and cyber victimization and the environmental stages for which those factors function and interrelate in guiding and assessing potentially threatening and dangerous circumstances.

TIPIP is composed of four practical components: (1) teacher-involved training activities; (2) parent participation in school conferences; (3) literature/material found at (www.tabby.eu) available to teachers, students, and parents; and (4) interactive activities with students in a classroom setting (Sorrentino et al., 2018).

Figure 1.

Components of the Tabby Improved Prevention and Intervention Program



Note. Taken from the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (Sorrentino et al., 2018)

Program Evaluation

Using a randomized experimental design to evaluate the TIPIP's effectiveness, approximately 750 students from Italy between the ages of 10-17 were included in the study (Sorrentino et al., 2018). The study showed TIPIP to be highly effective at significantly reducing cyberbullying and cybervictimization among students subject to the intervention and a six-month follow-up.

The Cyberprogram 2.0 and Cooperative Cybereduca 2.0 Videogame

Constructed as a program and a videogame, Cyberprogram 2.0 and Cybereduca 2.0 is an intervention proposal designed to combat and decrease cyberbullying during one's youth which has been proven effective in experimental studies (Garaigordobil & Martinez-Valderrey, 2018). The proposal consists of four key objects: (1) to reflect on those involved in bullying and cyberbullying situations, (2) to perceive the level of damage and grievous consequences brought about by harmful acts of digital violence, (3) to obtain knowledge regarding the guidelines established to stop and deter these incidents from occurring; knowing how to respond when an individual is subject to digital violence or when taking note that some else is hurting, and (4) to promote the advancement of communal and expressive factors that inhibit aggressive behavior (e.g., empathy, verbal interaction, collaboration, and ethical-morality). The proposal was designed with 25 activities in mind, ultimately ending with the Cybereduca 2.0 videogame. In a classroom environment, the activities are completed, with the last activity being an online video, which concludes the intervention program. The videogame portion of the program is organized around an imaginary storyline that involves a trivial cybernetic pursuit consisting of 120 questions on various topics (e.g., cyberphenomena, cybersexuality, computer technology and safety, consequences of cyberbullying, coping techniques) and answers about cyberbullying (Garaigordobil & Martinez-Valderrey, 2018).

Program Evaluation

Using a quasi-experimental design, with pretest-posttest measures and control groups repeatedly, the Cyberprogram 2.0 and the Cooperative Cybereduca 2.0 Videogame were evaluated to determine their effectiveness at cyberbullying/bullying intervention. The researchers used eight instruments to assess the pretest-posttest stages of the evaluation (Garaigordobil & Martinez-Valderrey, 2018). The intervention proposal was randomly issued to the experimental

group, consisting of a one-hour session once per week throughout the school year. The results revealed that the intervention proposal drastically advanced the following aspects in the experimental group: first, it reduced the number of person-to-person and cyberbullying behaviors in various violent situations in school, deliberate and impulsive aggressiveness, and finally, individuals experience a boost in their self-esteem, social interactions, ability to be empathic, and they develop strategies to resolve conflict effectively.

Recommendations for an All-Inclusive Cyberbullying Prevention Strategy

Cyberbullying is a significantly increasing community problem, especially among our youth (Redmond et al., 2019). As a result, schools, educators, parents, witnesses/bystanders, and school psychologists need to be more knowledgeable and possess the skills necessary to identify bullying/cyberbullying incidents. They must understand the effects bullying/cyberbullying has on students' ability to thrive in society and the academic environment and its impact on one's social and emotional health. They must be able to approach and apply effective management strategies and become involved in promoting wellness within the school/classroom, all while successfully implementing prevention measures to combat the bullying/cyberbullying epidemic (Redmond et al., 2019).

Cyberbullying prevention and reduction is possible with the assistance of schools, educators, parents, students/bystanders, and school psychologists. Researchers have provided the academic community with potential strategies to prevent adolescent cyberbullying. Below we examine the critical roles of the stakeholders most involved in combating bullying/cyberbullying.

Role of the School in Combating Bullying/Cyberbullying

Edmond et al. (2019) suggest that these strategies are most effective for schools to prevent bullying/cyberbullying incidents.

- Developing and reviewing existing policies and procedures
- Providing ongoing resources and training materials to educate students about the dangers of bullying/cyberbullying
- Maintaining open lines of communication with parents and caregivers to ensure a reduction in bullying/cyberbullying incidents
- Creating an environment and culture where students are comfortable reporting bullying/cyberbullying incidents
- Maintaining consistent communication and exchange of information with key stakeholders (e.g., school officials and community leaders) to combat bullying/cyberbullying

Educator's Role in Combating Bullying/Cyberbullying

Edmond et al. (2019) suggest that these strategies are most effective for educators to prevent bullying/cyberbullying incidents.

- Developing a clear and concise understanding of school policies and practices to confront and address bullying/cyberbullying incidents effectively
- Reporting bullying/cyberbullying behaviors immediately
- Implementing tactics to manage incidents effectively
- Employing strategies to support victims and perpetrators
- Help raise awareness and promote continual professional development as it relates to preventing bullying/cyberbullying
- Enterprise and put into action a curriculum and design explicit classroom activities to address bullying/cyberbullying

Parental Role in Combating Bullying/Cyberbullying

A study by Cassidy et al. (2018) aimed to find the strategies most effective for parents to use to prevent cyberbullying and encourage cyber-kindness from multiple perspectives.

- Supervise their adolescent's computer usage and activities
- Foster a caring and safe environment where children feel comfortable keeping parents informed if they have been victimized or have become a cyberbully
- Staying educated about the dangers and consequences associated with cyberbullying

Cassidy and colleagues also included students' perspectives on how to prevent cyberbullying. Their perspectives included educating students, teachers, and parents on cyberbullying, online privacy, and negative cyber behaviors' long-term impact. Students also suggested providing role modeling for good online behavior, building healthy relationships between the caregiver and the adolescent, monitoring and creating rules for technology usage, and creating consequences for engaging in negative (cyberbullying) behaviors online. Educator perspectives on strategies parents can use to prevent cyberbullying were also included in the Cassidy et al. (2018) study. These techniques mimicked the student's suggestions while also providing a few additional. Educators find that many parents lack awareness about cyberbullying and their children's online activities. Educators also proposed building a solid parent-child relationship to foster healthy and responsible children who will be less likely to be susceptible to cyberbullying.

Additionally, educators suggested that schools and parents work collectively to prevent cyberbullying. It is believed that if parents implement rules against cyberbullying at home, it will be easier to implement and enforce school policies regarding cyberbullying. Finally, educators suggest that parents only allow children to use computers and other electronic devices in their presence versus in private or at night so they can be monitored (Cassidy et al., 2018).

Role of Students and Bystanders/Witness in Combating Bullying/Cyberbullying

Students' knowledge of, participation in, and response to cyberbullying varies because the individual's role may include the victim (target), perpetrator (offender), or bystander (witness). Willard (2005), as cited in Redmond et al. (2019), identified two types of bystanders. Bystanders who are either part of the problem are bystanders who are part of the solution. They either cheer on and support the bully or provide support/assistance to the victim by protesting and attempting to stop the incident from occurring. According to Redmond et al. (2019), students can take numerous positive actions and responses to help decrease or stop cyberbullying.

- Students should report every incident of cyberbullying (experienced/observed) immediately
- Bystanders should support and encourage victims to report incidents
- Perpetrators or contributors should seek help

Role of School Psychologists in Combating Bullying/Cyberbullying

Bullying/Cyberbullying can place significant strain and stress on students in today's society, leaving them feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, upset, and battling depression. Similar to the effects felt as a result of traditional bullying, cyberbullying has the same negative psychological and emotional impact on its victims (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007a, as noted in Diamanduros et al., 2008). As such, school psychologists are in a unique position because they have an essential role in tackling the challenges that cyberbullying presents within the student community (Diamanduros et al., 2008).

For many years school psychologists' key roles have been assessing, consulting, and implementing intervention strategies to address school violence, promoting school safety, and providing mental health services to students (Diamanduros et al., 2008). However, with the

uptick in cyberbullying incidents across the globe, school psychologists must engage in additional activities that involve evaluation, intervention, prevention research, planning, and development of anti-cyberbullying programs.

According to Diamanduros and her colleagues, responding to and finding solutions to cyberbullying fall within the purview of school psychologists. Additionally, they can assist in the following ways:

- Be influential leaders in promoting cyberbullying awareness
- Implement strategies to manage the psychological impact on students and adolescents
- Assess for prevalence and severity of cyberbullying
- Develop prevention programs to combat the challenges of cyberbullying
- Design intervention and planning strategies that educational institutions can use if cyberbullying becomes a critical concern
- Partner and collaborate with school officials, technology instructors, and media specialists to initiate policies and effectively design lesson plans to manage cyberbullying within the academic community.

Summary and Conclusion

Cyberbullying has become a growing problem over the last decade, as it can occur anywhere, anytime, and present multiple challenges for school officials. The increased affordability of personal computers in the 1990s was the rise of the increased presence of bullying online. In today's society, there are multiple ways in which individuals participate in cyberbullying. Individuals utilize various electronic platforms and have several reasons why they choose to bully others online. This and all the unique characteristics of cyberbullying make it challenging to identify cyberbullies and those they victimize. However, identifying cyberbullies

and their victims is hugely concerning because cyberbullying hurts both the offender and the victim. Researchers have found that personality/character traits and demographics can help identify a potential cyberbully or victim. However, in addition to being able to identify these individuals, the implementation of effective programs and policies is required to prevent cyberbullying. With the consistent rise in media attention, schools and educators need to be able to identify, manage and prevent cyberbullying from occurring within their academic communities.

Furthermore, parents, students/bystanders, and school psychologists are equally responsible for the fight against cyberbullying. Today, many states require that schools have policies and procedures to prevent bullying, and many programs and recommended strategies have been proven to reduce traditional bullying and cyberbullying. However, only a few policies and programs are specific to cyberbullying and may not fully address the issue. While a limited number of programs specifically focus on cyberbullying, researchers have compiled strategies that schools, educators, parents, students/bystanders, and school psychologists can use to help prevent cyberbullying behaviors and victimization.

Studies have shown that while several laws may address traditional bullying, many do not specifically reference cyberbullying or provide criminal charges for those who cyberbully. As a result, future programs, policies, and laws must begin to include more specific references to cyberbullying and impose consequences for cyberbullying behaviors to help reduce the number of individuals impacted by it.

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