RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CYBER BULLYING AND EMOTIONAL DISPOSITIONS OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN IFE CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study investigated the various ways by which in-school adolescents were cyber bullied. It determined the relationship between cyber bullying and the emotion and emotional dispositions of the adolescents and the strategies that were used by those who were cyber bullied to reduce its effects on their emotions. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The sample size comprised 238 adolescents who were victims of cyber bullying and were selected purposively from senior secondary classes. These were the adolescents who indicated that that they had been involved in cyber bullied. They were selected purposively from five randomly selected secondary schools in Ife Central Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria. An instrument titled Questionnaire on Adolescent Cyber Bullying and Emotions (QACE) was used to collect information from the adolescents. The results of data analysis showed that receiving pornographic pictures via e-mail, face book and other social media (20.6%) was the commonest way by which cyber bullying was carried out by the adolescents. The popular emotion displayed by the adolescents was aggression (33.6%). The results also showed that there was a significant relationship between cyber bullying and emotions of the adolescents (r = .215, p < 0.05). The coping strategies used by the adolescents included telling their friends about it (63.4%), telling their parents about it (52.1%) and telling their teachers about it (45.0%).

Keywords: *Relationship, cyber bullying and emotional dispositions*

Background to the Study
In Nigeria, as in many other countries of the world, cyber bullying has become an issue that demands urgent attention. It is a phenomenon that occurs among pre-adolescents and adolescents and it is neglected or given little attention. This is not because of negative impacts it exerts on the bullied but because of lack cyber ethic education and cyber laws in Nigeria. All these give free access to the cyber bullies and make them to graduate from one form of cyber bullying to another. Likewise emotional trauma often experienced as a

result of cyber bullying could adversely affect the cyber bullied, due to irrational behaviours that may be displayed by the latter.

To date, cyber bullying has been difficult to define and compose because the methods involved are varied. However, cyber bullying has generally been defined as bullying using electronic medium. Bullying is usually defined as aggression intentionally carried out by one or more individuals and repeatedly targeted towards a person who cannot easily defend himself or herself (Olweus, 1993). Bullying encompasses repeated acts and bully victim relationships are characterized by an imbalance of power that is one is better positioned than the other. Adolescents have been bullying each other from time immemorial. In recent times however, they have been able to utilize technology to expand the reach and harm associated with bullying. This phenomenon is called cyber bullying.

The term cyber bullying was first coined and defined by a Canadian educator and an anti-bullying activist Bill Belsey (Belsey, 1999). Belsey defined cyber bullying as the use of information and communication technology to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviours by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell & Tippett) 2008) conceived cyber bullying 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 himself or herself Hinduja & Patchin, (2009) defined it as willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic media.

In 2011 CNN news gave an account of an incident of cyber bullying that took place in the United States of America (USA) which began with a series of hostile text messages at a school in the morning. By the afternoon, a fight had broken out between friends of the bully and those of the bullied. The harsh words used were forwarded over and over until the whole school was involved. There was no time for individuals to cool off and think about how to behave ethically because the bullying spread through viral texting. In Nigeria also, there have been reports on the radio and television and in the newspapers of how the youths use e-mails and text messages to bully one another.

Although reports of research on cyber bullying can be found in the literature, many of the results are difficult to generalize due to methodological and definitional differences (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008). Nevertheless, Kraft (2006) reviewed the prevalence studies that had been conducted on cyber bullying so far, and reported that in the USA, prevalence rates varied from 6% to 42% depending on the study. Kowalski et al (2008) located 14 studies worldwide since 2000. The students who reported victimization ranged between 3% and 53%. Means of cyber bullying identified in these studies included instant messaging, text messaging, chat rooms, emails, websites and video messages.

There is evidence that cyber bullying reaches its peak in middle school and declines somewhat in high schools (Williams & Guerra, 2007). There is a focus on adolescents because, like conventional bullying, it is likely to be widespread during this developmental period (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999); Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000; and Espelage, Bosworth &Simon, 2001). There are two ways of going about cyber bullying namely through direct attacks (messages sent directly by the perpetrator to the victim) and cyber bullying by proxy (using others to help cyber bully the victim, either with or without the accomplice's knowledge. Cyber bullying often gets adult involved as a result, it is much more dangerous than direct bullying.

There are many types of cyber bullying. Webster (2004) identified seven types of cyber bullying. These are cyber stalking, flaming, exclusion, outing, masquerading, pseudonym and harassment. Cyber stalking occurs on daily basis all over the world and it involves someone individually sending messages through text messages, e-mails or social media. These messages could be threatening, rude, or just plain trying to hurt the person's feelings, and this may also turn to physical bullying. According to Webster flaming is a

common form that can be very harmful to the victim. This is a sort of public type of bullying where one is publicly bullied online such as in chat rooms, in instant messages and even through e-mails. It involves arguments which are supplemented with certain images to drive annoyance and harsh language toward someone

Exclusion as conceived by Webster is the type of bullying that occurs whenever someone is singled out and then excluded from online group. This group will then do whatever they can to taunt the excluded person through rude text messages and e-mails. Outing involves the individual sharing unique yet private information using mobile phones or online communication methods. The person will be "outed" once his/her private information has been shared publicly through the Internet. Masquerading is also a very common type of cyber bullying. It is a sophisticated type of cyber bullying where the individual creates fake identities to harass another person unanimously while at the same time hiding their identities. It includes attempt to steal log-in information.

According to Webster, a pseudonym is like alias or nickname; bullies may call themselves different names when they are online to when they are offline. They do this to keep their real identities a secret from people. When instant messaging services like MSN Messenger or Yahoo Messenger are used, people are known to other by the nicknames they have chosen. Bullies can use the same feature to change their names to things one would not expect or something offensive Harassment involves bullies sending offensive messages targeted at an individual or group. Bullies often send repeated messages which they can send at odd times of the day and night. Some bullies even post their messages to a public forum where everyone can see their threats.

According to the Centre for Disease Control (2007) cyber bullying acts are sometimes so damaging that victims have committed suicide. There are at least four examples in the USA where cyber bullying has been linked to the suicide of adolescents. There have several high profile cases involving adolescents taking their own lives in part because of being harassed and mistreated over the internet, a phenomenon that has been termed "cyberbullicide"

The news media have provided several disturbing examples of the consequences of cyber bullying including suicides, homicides, and psychological disturbances (Williams, 2006; Brady & Coon, 2006; Gray, 2006; Armario, 2007; and Leichuk, 2007). Yharra & Mitchell (2004) detected greater involvement in drinking and smoking, and higher incidence of depression, among youth involved in cyber bullying as either perpetrators or victims. Yharra, Mitchell & Espelage (2009) observed that participants who had been bullied online were more likely to be absent from school and eight times more likely than other students to have carried a weapon to school in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. High levels of social anxiety and lower self-esteem were also found in those engaged in cyber bullying (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Cyber bully victims are also likely to report emotional difficulties, concentration and behaviour problems. They are also likely to be hyperactive, have conduct problems, abuse alcohol and smoke cigarettes. They may be fearful and feel insecure.

Statement of the Problem
Emotions among adolescents can be either pleasant or unpleasant depending on what an individual is going through. The unpleasant emotions may be triggered in the adolescents by the messages they receive via electronic media. In recent times, bullying has taken a new form. It is now done electronically, with the use of GSM phones, and Internet. As a result many in-school adolescents are cyber bullied through these means. It is therefore important to investigate the relationship between cyber bullying and the emotional dispositions of the in-school adolescents.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Investigate the various ways by which in-school adolescents cyber bully in Ife central Local Government Area, Osun State;
2. Examine the forms of emotion displayed by those who are cyber bullied;
3. Determine the relationship between cyber bullying and the emotional dispositions of the adolescents; and
4. Investigate the strategies that are used by those who were cyber bullied to reduce its effects on their emotions.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprised the in-school adolescents in secondary school in Ife Central Local Government Area (LGA). The sample size was 238 adolescents who were victims of cyber bullying and were selected purposively from five randomly selected secondary schools in the LGA. These were the adolescents who indicated that they had been cyber bullied. An instrument titled Questionnaire on Adolescent Cyber Bullying and Emotions (QACE) was used to collect information from the adolescents. The questionnaire was made up of four sections. Section A contained items on personal characteristics of the adolescents which included their sex, age, religion, school ownership and location of school. Section comprised the various ways by which the adolescents had been cyber bullied. It was a 10 item scale with three response formats which are "Yes" which was scored three; "No" which was scored two and "Not Sure" which was scored one.

Section C was the Adolescents' Emotional Disposition Scale (AEDS) which consisted of 10 items. The scale had three responses which are "Yes" which was scored three, "No" which was scored two and "Not Sure" which was scored one. Section D contained items on strategies used by the cyber bullied to cope with the effects of cyber bullying with two response format, "Yes" which was scored two and "No" which was scored one. The instrument was validated. Its test re-test reliability Coefficient (r) was 0.78 which is significant at 0.05 levels.

Results

Various Ways by which In-Schools Adolescents were Cyber Bullied

The responses of the adolescents on the various ways by which they were cyber bullied were categorized into five of the major groups of the types of cyber bullying. These are stalking, flaming, exclusion, masquerading and pseudonym.

Table 1: Various Ways by which In-Schools Adolescents were Cyber Bullied

S/N	CYBER BULLYING	YES		NO		NOT SURE				
	STALKING	F	%	F	%	F	%	$\overline{X}$	Sd	Rank
1.	Receiving pornographic pictures via text phones, e-mails, face book and other social media.	49	20.6	183	76.9	6	2.5	1.437	.813	1st
2.	Receiving malicious codes such as viruses via phones, e-mails, face book and other social media.	42	17.7	180	75,6	16	6.7	1.369	.767	3rd
3.	Receiving threatening and abusive messages phones, e-mails, face book and other social media.	32	13.4	194	81.5	12	5.1	1.282	.689	5th
	FLAMING									
4.	People have made embarrassing comments about me in the chat rooms.	43	18.0	185	77.7	10	4.2	1.378	.774	2nd
5.	People have created website to hurt or tease me.	24	10.1	205	86.1	9	3.8	1.227	.615	9th
6.	Being sexually abused by others on face book twitter and other social media.	32	13.4	198	83.2	8	3.4	1.277	.688	7th
	MASQUERADING									
7.	Theft of phone, computer and Internet my passwords and were used by others.	15	6.3	220	92.4	3	1.3	1.139	.497	10th
	EXCLUSION									
8.	Being singled out and excluded from other members of the online group.	34	14.3	193	81.1	11	4.6	1.282	.700	5th
	PSEUDONYM									
9.	People have pretended to be other people in order to harass me in the chat rooms.	39	16.4	190	79.8	9	3.8	1.252	.720	8th
10.	People have changed their names to other names to bully me online.	40	16.8	193	81.1	5	2/1	1.332	.748	4th

Table 1shows various ways by which the in-school adolescents were cyber bullied. These included receiving pornographic pictures via e-mails, face book and other social media which were identified as a way and topped the lists of the ways by which most of the in-school adolescents were cyber bullied. In addition, 20.6% of the adolescents indicated that they had been bullied in such a way, while 76.9% of the adolescent indicated that they had not and 2. 5% were not sure. This item among others has the highest mean rating of 1.437; it was ranked first and falls under cyber stalking. Next in ranking was the act of people making embarrassing comments about the adolescents in chat rooms. As it can be observed, this item has the second highest mean value of 1.378 and 18.0% of the adolescents indicated that they had been cyber bullied in this way, 77.7% had not, while 4.2% of them were not sure. This act is a form of cyber flaming. Another way by which the in-school adolescents were cyber bullied was through receiving malicious code e.g. viruses via e-mail, face book and You Tube. This item was ranked third with mean value of 1.369 and 17.7% of the adolescents indicated their being cyber bullied like this, and 75.6% of them were not. Also, 6.7% were not sure. This act is a form of cyber stalking.

Changing names to bully the adolescents on phone and Internet was ranked fourth with mean value of 1.332 and in addition, 16.8% of the adolescents indicated that they had been cyber bullied in this way. This act falls under cyber masquerading As it can be observed in the Table, receiving threatening and abusive messages via yahoo mail, face book and You Tube and being singled out and excluded from other members of the online group had the same mean value of 1.282 and were subsequently ranked fifth. These acts are cyber stalking and cyber exclusion respectively.   Other ways by which the in-school adolescents were cyber bullied and their respective mean and rank values included being sexually abused by others through social networks such as face book, Twitter, e-mail and other social media to sexually harass others (1.277, 7); people pretending to be other people in order harass these adolescents (1.252, 8); People had created websites to hurt or tease the adolescents (1.227, 9) while stealing of other people's phone, computer, internet passwords was considered as the least form of bullying by the adolescents. This item has the least mean value of 1.139 and was ranked tenth.

Emotional Dispositions of the Cyber Bullied Adolescents
The responses of the in-school adolescents on the forms of emotions displayed by the cyber bullied adolescents were also grouped into five. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Forms of Emotion Exhibited by the Adolescents

Forms of Emotion	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)	Rank
Distress	53	22.3	2nd
Aggression	80	33.6	1st
Depression	29	12.2	5th
Apprehension/Anxiety	38	16.0	3rd
Fear	38	16.0	3rd
Total	238	100.0	

Table 2 shows various forms of emotion exhibited by the students. It is indicated in the Table that 33.6% of the adolescents exhibited aggressive form of emotion and was ranked first, and 22.3% of them exhibited distress form of emotion. Furthermore, 12.2% exhibited depression while 16.0% each exhibited apprehension/anxiety and fear.

Relationship between Cyber Bullying and Emotional Dispositions of the Adolescents.
In order to find the relationship between cyber bullying and emotional dispositions of the adolescents, the items on cyber bullying and emotional dispositions of the adolescents

were subjected to Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis. The result are presented in Table 3

Table 3: Relationship between Cyber Bullying and Emotional Dispositions of the Adolescents

Variables	N	r	P
Cyber bullying	238		.001
Emotional Dispositions	238	0.215	P < 0.05

As shown in Table 3 the correlation coefficient (r) between cyber bullying and emotional dispositions of the students is 0.215. This value is significant at 0.05 probability level. This also suggests that there is a direct and significant relationship between cyber bullying and emotional dispositions of the adolescents (N = 238, r = 0.215, p <.05). This result concludes that there is significant relationship between cyber bullying and emotional dispositions of the students.

Strategies Adopted by the In-School Adolescents to Cope with Cyber Bullying.
To investigate the strategies used by the in-school adolescents to cope with being cyber bullied, the responses of the adolescents on the strategies for coping with cyber bullying were subjected to descriptive analysis using percentages, mean, standard deviation and ranking. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Strategies Adopted by the In-School Adolescents to Cope with Cyber Bullying

S/N	COPING STRATEGIES	YES		NO		$\overline{X}$	sd	Rank
		F	%	F	%			
1.	Stop using phones and social networks such twitter, face book and Skype for some time.	100	42.0	138	58.0	1.373	.485	4th
2.	Reporting to law enforcement agents.	94	39.5	144	60.5	1.354	.479	5th
3.	Telling friends about the act/	151	63.4	87	36.6	1.618	.487	1st
4.	Telling teachers about the act.	109	45.0	131	55.0	1.425	.496	3rd
5..	Telling parents about the act.	124	52.1	114	47.9	1.491	.501	2nd

The coping strategies used by the in-school adolescents are shown in Table 4. The Table indicates that more than half (63.4%) of the adolescents adopted telling their friends as the coping strategy they used. This item has the largest mean value of 1.618 and was ranked first. This was followed by telling their parents with mean and rank values of 1.491 and second respectively. The percentage of the adolescents who indicated this was 52.1%. Telling their teachers was ranked third as 45.0% of the adolescents adopted it, while 42.0% of the adolescents stopped using their phones and social networks for some time which was ranked fourth. Those who indicated they reported to the law enforcement agents were 39.5%, this coping strategy was ranked fifth and last.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that the in-school adolescents who participated in this study had been cyber bullied in various ways. The various ways by which they had been cyber bullied were stalking, flaming, exclusion, masquerading and pseudonym. It is however not surprising that the adolescents had been cyber bullied in these ways, cyber bullying is now a global phenomenon. These are some of ways by which adolescents cyber bully all over the world. This finding supports the findings of Bersey (2010) who came up with seven ways by which people cyber bully. The in-school adolescents who participated in this study had been cyber bullied in five different ways. The other ways are outing and harassment which were not indicated by these adolescents.

The findings of this study also showed the emotional dispositions of the cyber bullied in-school adolescents. Their emotional dispositions were categorized into five. The first one was distress; on this, the in-school adolescents indicated that when they were cyber bullied, they were upset and could not sleep, some just crying, some of them were just crying and some other cyber bullied the bullies back. Some of them became distressed, they felt lonely, isolated and like killing themselves. Others became apprehensive, anxious and fear. These are some of the experiences of the negative effects of cyber bullying on its victims. These findings are congruent with those of Yharra & Mitchell (2004); Williams (2006); Armario (2007); and Yharra, Mitchell &Espelage (2009).

Yharra & Mitchell (2004) found that both the perpetrators and victims of cyber bullying became involved in drinking, smoking and higher incidence of depression. Williams (2006) and Armario (2007) in their studies reported that the consequences included suicide, homicide and psychological disturbances. Yharra, Mitchell & Espelage (2009) observed that those who had been cyber bullied were likely to be isolated and absent themselves from school.

Furthermore, the findings of this study also suggested a significant relationship between cyber bullying and emotional dispositions of the in-school adolescents. This result is also expected because bullying including cyber bullying is very damaging and its significant relationship with emotional disposition cannot be disputed.

The findings of this study also revealed the strategies adopted by the cyber bullied in-school adolescents to cope with the negative effects of cyber bullying. Many of these cyber bullied in-school adolescents adopted telling friends about the acts of cyber bullying. This finding is also expected because adolescence is a period when the adolescents take friendship as an important part of their lives. They prefer to talk to their peers more than any other person. This is why they have their own peer groups and they freely discuss with the members of their groups. The use of the Internet, phones and social networks is common among than any other group. These means may also help them to freely discuss with their friends that may be hundreds of kilometers away from them.

About half of these adolescents also said they would tell their parents about being cyber bullied. It is common knowledge that children will always go back home when there are problems outside, so this finding is also expected. This has implications for the parents that they should always be there for their children so that any time they come back home with problems they should be accepted back in love. It is very surprising to find out that just few of these adolescents indicated that would report to the laws enforcement agents. The law enforcement agents are there to help these adolescents but not reporting to them may be borne out of lack of trust that people have in law enforcement agencies in Nigeria. It is possible that people continue to perpetrate the evil act of cyber bullying because there are no serious laws on the act or they have found out that the government is not really serious about punishing the offenders.

Conclusion

This study concluded that the effects of cyber bullying can be devastative and it has many

negative consequences. Cyber bullying also has relationship with emotional dispositions of the bullied in-schools adolescents. The strategies mentioned in this study can also be useful in reducing the negative effects of cyber bullying on the emotional dispositions of these in - school adolescents.

Recommendations
In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are therefore made.

1.   The in-school adolescents should be aware and educated on how to deal with cyber bullying. Awareness and education are the keys to the prevention of cyber bullying. They should be reminded regularly to never give out or share personal information numbers (PIN), etc. Personal information includes their names, the names of friends or family, their address, phone number, school name (or team name if they play sports). Personal info also includes pictures of themselves and their e-mail addresses. They should ask permission before sharing any information with a website, with a chat friend and even when registering a product purchased for their computer (like a game). Passwords are secret. They should never tell anyone their passwords except their teachers, or perhaps their parents or guardians.

2.   The adolescents should not believe everything they read. Just because someone online tells young people something doesn't mean he or she is telling the truth. They should be reminded to be polite to others online just as they would offline. If someone treats them rudely or mean, they should not respond. Online bullies are just like offline ones - they want others to answer. If the adolescents are responding, they should not type in capital letters because using capital letters online is considered as yelling on the Internet. This may encourage others to "flame" them. In-school adolescents should never send a message to others when they are angry, they should wait until you have had time to calm down and think.

3.   The in-school adolescents should never open a message from someone they don't know and if in doubt about it, they should ask their teachers, parents, guardians or another adult. If they encounter something online that doesn't look right, they need to learn to trust their instincts. While surfing the Internet, if they find something that they don't like, makes them feel uncomfortable or scares them, they should turn off the computer and tell an adult. Internet filters

4.   Also, young people don't have to be "always on". They should be encouraged to turn off, disconnect, and unplug, at least for a while. Teachers and parents should encourage these adolescents to give themselves a break. They should encourage them not to stay online or connected too long.

5.   The cyber bullied adolescents should be encouraged not to keep the acts of being bullied to themselves because they are not alone in it. They should tell an adult they know and trust because it is very hard to solve such problems alone. Internet, Instant Messaging or mobile phone service providers can be informed the local police can also be informed.

6.   Messages from cyber bullies should not be replied even though one may really want to; this is exactly what cyber bullies want. They want to know that they've got the person worried and upset. They are trying to mess with the person's mind and control him or her. They should not be given that pleasure.
        The messages sent by cyber bullies should not be erased or deleted. But they should be kept as evidence.

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