

Cyberbullying and Its Impacts on Self-Loathing Behavior

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Abstract

This article exposes cyberbullying and its wider impacts on self-loathing behavior. The internet and the advancement of information technology shape the rising of social media to communicate and socialize among young people. However, technology or especially social media brings both negative effects of cyberbullying besides further positive impacts. Cyberbullying can have psychological impacts on victims and abusers of bullying such as health problems, depression, anxiety, loss of self-confidence, and even victims can hate themselves in matter of self-loathing. Then, how may cyberbullying contribute to behavior of self-loathing? Through qualitative method, this paper underlines any hate targeted to the victims may shape such self-hate to them. By putting the focuses on the victims, anticipations could be done by exploring bullying as hate speech that may affect self-esteem of anyone in digital realm. In conclusion, cyberbullying does exist and it shows how any victim of it could get bad impact of being hated that is closely related to idea of self-loathing.

Keywords Cyberbullying, Digital Activism, Self-Loathing

A. Introduction

Talking about the internet and the advancement of information technology that is increasingly advanced, people are familiar with 'social media'. Nowadays, almost all people use social media to communicate and socialize, especially teenagers. The extensive

use of social media has positive and negative sides that have not yet been understood by the public (Parnell, 2020; Taute, 2023). Users access at low cost to upload words or statuses, pictures, music, and videos that can support ingenuity, creativity and joy. But on the other hand, social media also has negative values such as

several cases where online fraud occurs, cyber harassment, social media addiction, and cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is a deliberate act or repeated harassment perpetrated through computers, cell phones or other electronic devices. Some studies say that most cyberbullying occurs due to a lack of self-control. It is someone's ability to regulate behavior (visible, invisible, emotional, physical) and restrain desires. Cyberbullying can have a psychological impact on victims and bullies such as health problems, depression, anxiety, loss of self-confidence, and even victims can hate themselves (Tierney, 2021; Wijaya, et al, 2023). In many cases, that action could also result to self-loathing as a feeling that resembles self-hate, as it constantly pushes the idea that someone is not really good enough to fit to social standards. As a consequence, people might feel like they do not deserve love or that bad things happen to her/him for a reason.

Moreover, this article would like to emphasize the negative impact of social media use on the psychology of its users, such as cyberbullying.

Meanwhile, the research question for this paper is how may cyberbullying contribute to the behavior of self-loathing. If self-loathing goes on for too long, it can lead to more severe conditions, such as depression or substance abuse (Smarandreetha, et al., 2023; Tierney, 2023). Similarly, to a lesser degree, it can lead to violence toward others or feelings of inferiority. That is why, as social media users, people must be wiser in utilizing social media as well as possible in a more positive direction, because social media has an impact according to how someone uses it (Smarandreetha, et al., 2023; Tierney, 2023). If someone cannot create a better online experience, it will bring her/him and surroundings to the dark side of social media.

B. Method

This research uses a qualitative method that is descriptive analysis where data is obtained from literature studies. Qualitative research is research that begins with data collection then continues with analysis. The theoretical basis is used as a guide so that the focus of research

is in accordance with the facts in the field. In addition, this theoretical basis is also useful for providing an overview of the research setting and as a discussion of research results.

The data of this research is the influence of social media on cyberbullying which has an impact on self-loathing. The data collection technique is done with note-taking technique. Data analysis techniques (1) read cases of cyberbullying and self-loathing through news and journals, (2) record cases of self-loathing caused by the impact of cyberbullying, (3) analyze the influence of the impact of cyberbullying on self-loathing, (4) the last is to conclude from the overall results.

C. Findings and discussions

Negative Impact of Using Social Media

The rapid development of information technology (IT) can change the lives of everyone, including young people, who accesses the provided information. Various forms of information can spread quickly and may be difficult to

control. Currently, it cannot be denied that teenagers are happy with the sophistication of technology and the emergence of tools for communication, namely smartphones equipped with various features and internet technology. The average teenager spends about 6.5 hours a day (44.5 hours a week) with media and the average Indonesian teenager uses social media for 3 hours and 15 minutes (Indira, et al., 2023). Besides, the data from the Indonesian Internet Services Association reveals the results of a survey of internet users most widely used by the 13-18 age group with a penetration rate of 99.16% in 2021-2022 (Parnell, 2020).

Most of the teenagers use the internet to play social media. Social media has peaked its existence in 2020, especially among teenagers (Indira, et al., 2023). The presence of social media has an impact and influence in the gap of life including shaping behavior. Unfortunately, although social media has positive impacts such as making it easier for people to connect with others online, it also has a dark side that has a negative impact on its users (Indira, et

al., 2023; Wijaya, et al., 2023). There are four of the most common stressors on social media that may shape such mental health issues.

The first stressor on social media is the highlight reel. It is where everyone puts up a precious event in her/his life (Parnell, 2020; Wijaya, et al., 2023). However, many of them struggle with insecurity because they will compare their behind-the-scenes with everyone else's highlight reels. Everyone is constantly comparing their selves to others. Each other is intertwined in such competitions. The second one is social currency that reflects value to a good or service. In social media, the likes, the comments, and the shares have become this form of social currency as values to something (Indira, et al., 2023; Wijaya, et al., 2023). Someone is no longer defined in her/his true identity, but how each could perform well to get that social currency.

The third stressor is F.O.M.O or the Fear Of Missing Out. This is an actual social anxiety from the fear that we are missing a potential connection, event, or opportunity. Each person does not want to get left by any new

information. Moreover, they should always follow any kind of trend in social media. If they do not follow it, they will feel that they are not in line with social trends (Duggan, 2014; Wijaya, et al., 2023). They will feel outdated or even obsolete. The fourth one is online harassment. There are 40% of online adults have experienced online harassment and 73% have witnessed it (Duggan, 2014). The reasons behind online harassment may be vary but most of them is about weakness of the doer or the victim of it. The doer shapes such harassment to satisfy her/himself. She/he is actually not that brave, but anonymity has made them eager to do such hate speech. The weakness of the victim is also the cause of such harassment. There is nothing wrong with having weakness. However, even natural weakness could trigger someone to bully other people (Duggan, 2014; Sarmi, et al., 2023). Even if there is none, the doer always tries to find any to furth the victim's feelings.

The Influence of Cyberbullying on Self-Loathing

Social media can encourage bullying as verbal and physical behavior carried out by individuals to disturb the victim. Bullying is currently carried out by utilizing social media which is called cyberbullying carried out in the digital world or cyberspace or on social media. This bullying includes insults, threats, and humiliation (Mitsu & Dawood, 2022; Wijaya, et al., 2023). The action is done intentionally and repeatedly to cause worry for the victim. This case may also bring terror to the victim as not everyone has the same strength to accept that bullying.

Bullying somehow is mentioned publicly. It is done by someone to another person in order to make her/him ashamed of her/himself. The idea is that the doer would like to derogate the self of the victim in public (Mitsu & Dawood, 2022). The types may be varied from shaming, saying bad things, including any physical attacks. In a sense, it is driven by revenge from what the victim has done in the past to the doer.

However, the situation in cyber realm is different. Cyberbullying could be really random and somehow is so demeaning than in the real world (Smarandreetha, et al., 2023; Tierney, 2023). While bullying in real life could only be done by several people, cyberbullying could be done by a whole country that shows such hatred rather than any criticism.

In general, cyberbullying involves hurting someone else using information and communication technologies. Cyberbullying is bullying transposed on a technological platform. Unfortunately, cyberbullying behavior has come to be accepted and expected among adolescents (Langos, 2012; Nixon, 2014). Compared to traditional bullying, cyberbullying is unique in that it reaches an unlimited audience with increased exposure across time and space, preserves words and images in a more permanent state, and lacks supervision. Further, perpetrators of cyberbullying do not see the faces of their targets, and subsequently may not understand the full consequences

of their actions (Langos, 2012; Nixon; 2014).

Cyberbullying is a serious issue that can have a significant negative impact on victims. As digital technology becomes more widespread, the risk of cyberbullying also increases, especially among children and adolescents who actively use social media and online platforms (Langos, 2012; Nixon; 2014). Cyberbullying can occur due to several factors, namely individual factors including experience of violence, perception, gender, age, psychological control, and substance use. Family factors include parenting, family support, and parental stress. However, each individual has their own reasons for cyberbullying, still those reasons must not justify any kind of that demeaning action.

In Indonesia, the number of teenagers who are victims of cyberbullying is 80%, and almost every day teenagers are cyberbullied and shapes such impacts in psychological, psychosocial, physical, and academic sides. The psychological aspect includes matter of mental health condition in which it

could be undermined before (Langos, 2012; Sarmi, et al., 2023). The psychosocial side is about being more introvert since cyberbullying shapes such fear in facing other persons. The physical impact is related to uneasiness to move, including various disorder such as dizziness, anxiety, and even bulimia. The academic aspect is that the bullying keeps shadowing the victim to the side of studying everyday including laziness and inability to get more focused (Nixon; 2014; Sarmi, et al., 2023). In short, cyberbullying behavior makes victim feels depressed and afraid to meet the other people, and it shapes such depression and desire to hate her/himself. It is matter of self-loathing.

Self-loathing is a pattern of thoughts or feelings of self-hatred and extreme criticism of oneself. It involves a negative internal narrative that continuously shames, judges, demeans, and finds fault in the self (LoBianco, 2019; Smith, et al., 2023). Those three aspects are really deteriorating matter of self in someone's life. The bullying is done publicly, but the impacts are borne

privately. This is what makes people weaker than before. In normal interactions, it is common to say that the other persons are the judges of someone's action (Annasai, et al., 2023; Sarmi, et al., 2023). However, self-loathing indicates that own self is the main judge to her/himself. it does not evaluate in good ethical senses, but it keeps blaming and saying bad things to own self. It keeps speaking of self which never deserves of anything at all (Akbar, et al., 2023; LoBianco, 2019).

Cyberbullying can have a serious impact on a person's mental well-being, including the potential for self-loathing. Self-loathing is a complex and often distressing emotional state characterized by a deep dislike or hatred towards oneself. It can manifest in various ways and can have significant impacts on a person's mental and emotional well-being (Akbar, et al., 2023; LoBianco, 2019). When a person experiences self-loathing due to negative messages or actions directed at them online, it can damage their self-esteem and confidence. This, in turn, can impact many aspects of life.

In the social aspect, people who hate themselves easily compare themselves with others, they feel unworthy or unloved (LoBianco, 2019; Smith, et al., 2023). In the end, they are always dissatisfied with themselves. In addition, there is a change in emotions to become easily anxious or depressed because they feel they are not as expected, excessive depression can also trigger self-destructive behavior or self-harm (Akbar, et al., 2023; Tee-Melegrito, 2022). Daily performance can also decrease or be disrupted due to a lack of confidence in oneself, a decreased level of confidence is inversely proportional to cyberbullying which continues to increase due to evolving technology.

While self-criticism is a healthy aspect of life, it can start to overshadow other thought patterns when someone is going through a self-loathing phase. Self-loathing is a pattern of thoughts or feelings of self-hatred and extreme criticism of oneself. It involves a negative internal narrative that continuously shames, judges, demeans, and finds fault in the self (Akbar, et al., 2023; Tee-

Melegrito, 2022). People with self-loathing tend to minimize or ignore the positive and recognize only the negative things in their lives. People with self-loathing tend to minimize or ignore the positive and recognize only the negative things in their lives. They will think that any shame is normal for them (LoBianco, 2019; Smith, et al., 2023). Nothing should be fixed as long as they keep involved in their own shells.

All of self-blaming actions done in matter of self-loathing behavior comes from excessive self-criticism. Self keeps saying to itself that it is a failure. It is such a shame that never does anything right (Donald, et al., 2019; Tee-Melegrito, 2022). It always says to keep in that way without any intention to be much better in the future. The condition may even appear after social interactions by saying that self is too aggressive or even too shy. Other common recurring self-loathing behaviors include holding a grudge against self for a past mistake and setting unrealistic expectations. Infinite comparisons will be done from own self to other persons

(Annasai, et al., 2023; Sarmi, et al., 2023). In this case, matter of inferiority complex is also a result of this self-loathing behavior.

Self-loathing has not the exact symptoms. It is not a condition in and of itself. It can take many forms, but it typically involves a lack of trust in oneself, a lack of self-compassion, and a critical voice toward oneself (Ford, 2021; Tee-Melegrito, 2022). There are a few general signs that a person might feel self-loathing and self-hatred like feeling depression, social anxiety, body image issues, and feelings of worthlessness. The main idea of it is matter of self-hate in which its reason is truly from bullying or another hate given by other people.

Ethical Anticipations of Self-Loathing

The matter of cyberbullying explicitly indicates that social media is not neutral, but power-related. There is always power in speaking among virtual interactions. Then, due to those interactions, the idea is never static at all (Annasai, et al., 2023; Sarmi, et al., 2023). it always moves between people regarding any

message being conveyed. In this sense, the interactions in digital realms also correlate with hierarchies among people. It is not about who have power and who does not, but the power will always make people aware of their own surrounding. If someone is bullied, she/he will feel powerless and even depressed. If someone is the bully-doer, then she/he has more power to the others. However, the power is not absolute since the ones who do bully could always feel insecure either in their own real life.

Therefore, it is always better to see digital realms alongside with its social media and online platforms in matter of ethics. It should always be anticipated so that worse outcome will not follow. One main concern is that the ethical side is needed since it brings freedom to surroundings (Akbar, et al., 2023; Wijaya, et al., 2023). The ones who are depressed due to cyberbullying are losing freedom and it must be restored. Even any kind of self-loathing should always be eroded by saying that anyone has internal freedom whatsoever. Even if self is destroyed,

the sense that self is having choices to do more is always coming to surface.

In the case above, ethical side of social media and online platforms could be emphasized. There are some ideas that could be used to enhance freedom in digital realm. First, people should always think positively. By doing so, self could get more power to do what is best for itself (Akbar, et al., 2023; Wijaya, et al., 2023). Online realm should be used to gain more advantages of gaining better faces of self. Indeed, any hate speech or even bullying should not terrorize self. Ones should know about own privacy and how to manage it in digital realms. The second one includes that digital world should not be said as everything. Real world is still the one that needs to be paid attention (Sarmi, et al., 2023; Wijaya, et al., 2023). The real one will never get eroded by the shadow. Therefore, it is better to see digital realm as a totally different world from the real. Shadow self in digital world is not similar to the real one. In that case, what is done in that world should not invade to the real one.

The third aspect is caring more to one self and others. By doing so, people do not focus on finding more social currency, but keep gathering better attributes to own self. The one that plays in virtual world must always stay as the subject who has freedom of choice to choose (Zhu, et al., 2021; Barlett, et al., 2021). She/he should never cease only to be object of the gaze of others. Differences will always exist and bullying will always follow. However, strength of self should always become such shield to repel any kind of attack from outside. The fourth one is focusing to gain more advantages from social media. Some people try to be digital entrepreneurship, while others find more knowledge to enhance their studies. Those situations reflect that digital world is full of possibilities and it should be used only to enhance better future (Zhu, et al., 2021; Barlett, et al., 2021). Someone should never deny her/himself only to be accepted by others. She/he should always be ready to compromise as long as it does not derogate one self.

Browsing online gives access to a wide range of information, including misuse or misbehavior. Even it also includes the dark side of people (Parnell, 2020). Recognizing a problem is the first step to fixing it, and this dark side is needed to be prevented further on. It is always better to keep self to be aware of everything including reading and sharing culture. People should always gain more knowledge in order to filter what is needed and not (Smarandreetha, et al., 2023; Parnell, 2020). That is the strategy of reading. By exploring it, people should not share what they do not really know. Somehow, it will always give impression to other people. Even it later could trigger more cyberbullying. It is experience that should be built further in social media and online platforms. By stating so, people should not be hurtful from any bullying and not be having hatred feeling when they are irritated of something.

D. Conclusion

The idea of digital realm is not neutral, but power-related. By stating

so, any kind of possibility is involved in that world including cyberbullying that may cause self-loathing. Mental depression could be resulted from any hate speech too. The victims must always defend themselves by ignoring any perpetrator. By doing so, the vibe of online world may shape better ambience. People should think positively and say to own self that digital world is not everything. Caring to own self and others while gaining better advantages from online realm could also direct people away from any self-loathing action.

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