

Chapter 7

Cyber Bullying: Global and Local Practices on Awareness Raising

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ABSTRACT

Cyber bullying is a serious and newly arising problem of today's world due to the negative intentions in using the recent technological improvements. However, despite its being a relatively new area, a significant number of studies conducted on this issue can be found. This chapter provides a general overview of the current literature with exemplary research to present some insight into the global and local practices in relation to any possible solution of prevention/intervention program for the cyber bullying problem. The global scale involves many studies of various scholars from several countries with different focuses while the local scale concentrates on the case of Turkey and the same of Turkish students or teachers.

INTRODUCTION¹

Technological improvements, and new communication tools rising to the surface alongside them have introduced new ways of connection and interaction among individuals. Communication has been mostly moved to a digital, electronic and computer based platform. The recent generations who were born into a period of

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rapid technological advancement and the ubiquitous use of electronic devices and the Internet, adapt to these tools quickly and include them in their daily routines and lives. And as expected, this situation also had positive effects on individuals and societies and life styles. Additionally, as Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk and Solomon (2010) suggests, the exponential growth of electronic and computer-based communication and information sharing during the last decade has radically changed individuals' social interactions, learning strategies, and choice of entertainment. (p. 362)

However, the Internet and computer-based communication and interaction also created an online environment that can be used for negative purposes -and even malcontent- by everyone and more specifically, within the context of this study, mostly adolescents and teenagers. When entering the Web, a teenager moves in a space where usual barriers in physical life seem to disappear, and the connection with peers becomes easier (Mura, Topcu, Erdur-Baker & Diamantini, 2011, p. 3805). This enables the traditional form of bullying being performed at schools by the youth to be moved onto a digital platform and therefore it takes a new shape that is called "cyber bullying". This new form of bullying may have a stronger impact on children, teenagers and adolescents, more so than the traditional one. The reason why is explained clearly by Kowalski, Limber and Agatston (2008):

Because of the nature of cyber space, a child who might wield little power over a victim face-to-face may wield a great deal of power (and fear) in cyber space. More specifically, there is power in being anonymous, in assuming a false identity, in having the ability to spread rumors and lies to a wide audience, and in being able to harass a victim anywhere and anytime. (p.62)

Literacy is known to be a term mainly related to the ability to read and write, an ability that has been acquired by training. That's why most of the educational institutions prioritize media literacy as the main component of their curriculum. However, media literacy also means some kind of accomplishment, a mastership area of acquirement, attainment, a set of skills and specific forms of acquisition. Due to the fact that each society has a different form of literacy understanding, each country seems to be standing on the different point of the same ladder. Whereas some of the countries give more importance to the print data, some others value the visual sources more than the others. There seems to be more contradiction upon the traditional media and new media or social media credibility discussions. Relatively when the concept of bullying is regarded, the following diagram could be useful.

Even if there were bullies around the society mainly known as a cruel and brutal fellow, a hired thug or an aggressive and violent young criminal, the actions of being bossy towards somebody else. These bullies usually discourage or frighten with threats or a domineering manner; intimidate the others. The action of bullying

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