

**The New Era of Bullying: A Phenomenological Study of University Students' Experience
with Cyberbullying**

Master's Thesis Presented By:

Bowie Chen

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the Master of Arts degree in Communication

Department of Communication

Faculty of Arts

University of Ottawa

Supervisor: Dr. Rocci Luppicini

Abstract

Bullying is a national public health problem that is affecting millions of youth in Canada. With the proliferation of technology, bullying has permeated private spaces and is no longer limited to just school grounds. Due to the ease of accessibility of technology among youth, bullying is able to circumvent traditional safety barriers provided within the homes of youth which compounds concerns for parents. Since cyberbullying is still at an early stage, there is a need for research that explores the past experiences of students who have directly or indirectly encountered cyberbullying. Therefore, this study explores the experiences with cyberbullying of students at the University of Ottawa, who are between the ages of 18-23. The researcher conducted ten interviews guided by the transcendental approach to phenomenological reduction method. The study also sought to understand why cyberbullying happens and how adolescents who have directly or indirectly encountered cyberbullying respond. The findings revealed that online risk behaviour, perceived predictors of victimisation, response to cyber abuse, and justification for avoiding help-seeking behaviour appear to be linked to the severity of a user's cyberbullying experience.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Phenomenology, Social media, Internet and Abuse

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	4
1.1 Problem Context	4
1.2 Overview of the Methodology.....	7
1.3 Organization of the Dissertation	8
1.4 Research Questions	8
Chapter 2: Review of Literature	10
2.1 Definitions and Key Concepts of Bullying.....	11
2.2 Differences between Cyberbullying and Traditional Bullying	12
2.3 Explanations of Cyberbullying	17
2.4 Predicting Victimization and Perpetration	21
2.5 Impact of Cyberbullying	30
2.6 Bullying Victims	32
2.7 Coping Strategies	35
2.8 How Research Findings Inform Legislation, Cyberbullying Prevention and Intervention	40
Chapter 3: Methodology	50
3.1 Phenomenology: Key Approach, Basic Concepts, & Husserlian Origins	50
3.2 Sample & Data Collection	54
3.3 Data Analysis	57
3.4 Trustworthiness of the Study	59
Chapter 4: Findings	63
4.1 Online Risk Behaviour	64
4.2 Perceived Predictors for Victimization	73
4.3 Response to Cyber Abuse	75
4.4 Justification for Avoiding Help-Seeking Behaviour	80
Chapter 5: Discussion	87
5.1 Findings in the Context of the Literature.....	87
Chapter 6: Conclusion	96
6.1 Recommendations for Further Research.....	97
References	99
APPENDIX A	128
APPENDIX B	129
APPENDIX C	132
APPENDIX D	133
APPENDIX E	135
APPENDIX F	136
APPENDIX G	137

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge and express my appreciation for the individuals who helped to make the completion of this thesis a possibility. I would like to thank Dr. Rocci Luppicini, my thesis supervisor at the University of Ottawa, I cannot thank you enough for your wisdom, guidance and understanding. To my loving parents, brother and best friend Louis, thank you for believing in me and supporting all my endeavours.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Context

Bullying is a national public health problem that is affecting millions of youth. According to PREVNet (2014), bullying rates in Canada are higher than 2/3 of OECD countries, where 75% of people say they have been affected by bullying. With the proliferation of technology, bullying has permeated private spaces and is no longer limited to just school grounds. Due to the accessibility of technology by youth, bullies are able to break down the safety barrier that used to be provided within the homes of youth which makes it even more of a concern for parents of current/potential victims (Ang & Goh, 2010; Baldry, Farrington, & Sorrentino, 2015). In short, technology has enabled bullies to bypass the watchful eye of parents/educators and has given a more direct access to their victims.

Cyberbullying can be defined as “a form of bullying that uses electronic means such as email, mobile phone calls, text messages, instant messenger contact, photos, social networking sites, and personal web pages, with the intention of causing harm to another person through repeated hostile conduct” (Ortega, Elipe, Mora-Merchan, Genta, Brighi, Guarini, Smith, Thompson, & Tippet, 2012, p. 342). Essentially, any communication (message, post, text, etc.) that aims to belittle, torment or intimidate another electronic network user is considered an action of cyberbullying.

Although bullying has been an issue within schools for decades (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Greenbaum, Turner, & Stephens, 1988; Lapidot-Lefler & Dolev-Cohen, 2015; Lowenstein, 1978; Moon, Hwang, & McCluskey, 2011; Olweus, 1978, 1991; Rigby & Slee, 1991; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman & Kaukiainen, 1996; Salmon, James, Cassidy, & Javaloyes, 2000), cyberbullying itself raises two new concerns with educators,

parents and researchers. First, cyberbullying is able to break down the metaphorical safety barrier that used to be provided within the homes of youth due to the increasing accessibility of technology. This means that “anyone can practice it without having to confront the victim” (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012, P. 1). Second, youth are less willing to report incidents of harassment online than on school grounds because “they are concerned that their parents might find out and restrict their Internet access” (Juvonen & Gross, 2008, P. 502).

A number of studies have identified significant resemblance between victims of cyberbullying and traditional bullying and; between cyberbullies and traditional bullies (Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012; Olweus, 2012a, 2012b; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Smith, 2012; Smith & Slonje, 2010; Tokunaga, 2010; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009; Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2015). Traditional bullying and cyberbullying also share other similarities such as: causing substantial anguish to the victims; both usually occur as a result from a lack of supervision; they are usually initiated at school and can affect the school day; and the perpetrators are most likely someone that the victims already knows (Agatston et al., 2012; Cassidy et al., 2011; Cassidy, Jackson, & Brown, 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012a, 2012b; Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012; Olweus, 2012; Tokunaga, 2010). The semblance between traditional bullying and cyberbullying would suggest that the fundamental behaviour may be more relevant than the medium in which it takes place (Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009).

Although there are numerous findings from previous research on traditional bullying that are applicable to cyberbullying, it is essential to recognize the features that distinguish cyberbullying: (a) some technological proficiency is required, (b) cyberbullies may be afforded more anonymity than traditional bullies, (c) bullying online usually occurs when there is a physical distance between the perpetrator and victim (Cowie, 2009; Li, Smith, & Cross, 2012),

(d) cyberbullying is usually more indirect, (e) the part that physical strength plays is almost negligible, (f) potential for a wider audience, and (g) cyberbullying is hard to escape due to its pervasiveness (e.g., in one's own home, Heirman & Walrave, 2008; Ševčíková, Šmahel, & Otavová, 2012).

Previous studies have identified many deleterious effects of cyberbullying on the mental health of victims, which include feelings such as sadness, hurt, anger, frustration, confusion, stress, distress, and loneliness (Brewer & Kerslake, 2015; Fahy, Stansfeld, Smuk, Smith, Cummins & Clark, 2016; Larrañaga, Yubero, Ovejero & Navarro, 2016). More severe effects documented in the research literature include: Depression, low self-esteem, helplessness, social anxiety, suicidal ideation, emotional problems, fear, feeling vulnerable and alone, diminished self-worth, serious relationship disruption, increased substance use, emotional and peer problems (Agatston et al., 2012; Gámez-Guadix, Orue, Smith, & Calvete, 2013; Katzer, Fetchenhauer, & Belschak, 2009; Kowalski et al., 2012; Marczak & Coyne, 2010; Menesini & Nocentini, 2012; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012; Smith, 2012; Sourander et al., 2010; Tokunaga, 2010; von Marées & Petermann, 2012; Ybarra, Diener-West, & Leaf, 2007). Several studies have also noted adverse physical effects from cyberbullying such as: headaches, abdominal pains, difficulties with sleeping (Agatston et al., 2012; Marczak & Coyne, 2010; Menesini & Nocentini, 2012; Smith, 2012; Sourander et al., 2010; von Marées & Petermann, 2012).

Despite a recent trend in cyberbullying research that have been carried out in the last decade, cyberbullying research is still at an early stage (Mishna, Khoury-Kassabri, Gadalla, & Daciuk, 2012; Smith et al., 2008; Wang, Nansel, & Iannotti, 2010). Therefore, the purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences and strategies of a group of

university students who have directly or indirectly encountered cyberbullying. Direct exposure to cyberbullying is defined in this thesis as individuals who were victimized while indirect exposure encompasses participants who were bullies, bystanders or friends of bully victims. Although the primary focus of the thesis was on the direct experiences of cyberbullying, some attention to indirect experiences of cyberbullying was explored as well in order to deepen the analysis and overall understanding of the phenomenon. This approach was intended to facilitate the understanding of how cyberbullying happens and how young adults cope with it.

Overview of the Methodology

The research design that was employed was guided by phenomenological research, a method of inquiry that focuses on “the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon described by respondents” (Cresswell, 2013). Phenomenology was pioneered by the philosopher Edmund Husserl, who believed that research should “discover the nature and meaning of things as they appear” instead of explaining a phenomena based on the interpretations of the researcher on how it should be (Moustakas, 1994). Essentially, phenomenology depends on researchers remaining impartial by reserving their personal insights and experiences with the phenomenon in question, through the process termed “epoche” or “bracketing” (Cresswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Data is collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, in order to allow participants the opportunity to describe their experiences in greater detail. The data analysis procedures aim to recognize commonalities in terms of experience between the respondents and “reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 58). Ultimately, the goal is for readers to come away with the sense that “I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that,” or, in the case of this thesis, “I

understand better what adolescents experience emotionally and mentally when dealing with cyberbullies” (Cresswell, 2007).

Organization of the Thesis

This research effort is organized in a five chapter design. Chapter One has developed a foundation for discovery and overviewed key methods and considerations. Chapter Two explores existing literature and establishes a framework from which the dissertation builds upon. Chapter Three describes the methodological tools utilized to navigate the investigation. Chapter Four presents thematic data emerging from the proposed research questions. Chapter Five provides analysis of the findings and discusses theoretical conclusions regarding the lived experiences and influences of a group of university students who have directly or indirectly encountered cyberbullying.

Phenomenological research is an emergent design and serves as an organizational map while also influencing all aspects of my dissertation planning. My commitment to the methodological underpinnings guided the fluid process of data collection and analysis. Although the qualitative approach provided a semi-scripted plan, findings evolved through patterns of discovery where I strove to understand meaning as it was represented through the voice and experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). The methodological process guides analysis and connects sampling to the discovery and demonstration of a phenomenon through data delineation and meaning extraction.

Research Questions

Of specific interest to this research are the lived experiences and perceived influences of a group of university students who have directly or indirectly encountered cyberbullying. Marshall and Rossman (2006) maintain that "qualitative approaches to inquiry are uniquely suited to uncovering the unexpected and exploring new avenues" (p. 38). As suggested by Cresswell

(2003), central research questions are designed within the framework of the selected phenomena to be studied followed by light probing to further align the focus of the study. The terminology used to structure the questions indicates the goal of the research and produces a chart for data collection (Cresswell, 2007). For the purpose of this study, the following questions help establish the research schema and to further the analysis:

- a) What was the student experience during their encounters with cyberbullying?
- b) How did students react to cyberbullying and how did it influence their subsequent online and offline behaviour?
- c) On which online platforms did students encounter cyberbullies and who was involved?
- d) What strategies did students use to address the problem and what was the outcome?

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The growth in cyberbullying literature in the past 10 years has been in response to the rapid proliferation of technological access by youth. This literature review is presented in eight sections: 1) definitions and key concepts of bullying, 2) differences between cyberbullying and traditional bullying, 3) theoretical explanations of cyberbullying, 4) predicting victimisation and perpetration, 5) impact of cyberbullying, 6) bullying victims, 7) coping strategies, and 8) how research findings inform legislation, cyberbullying prevention and intervention.

The purpose of a literature review is to position the study within the realm of existing publication as it relates specifically to the topic while also foreshadowing the determined research approach. The qualitative research must first locate and summarize relative studies or conceptual commentaries and then represent them in an inductive design (Creswell, 2003). As suggested by McNabb (2002), this study conveys several aspects of previous research to vet new ideas and both frame and cross-check data obtained through my interviews. Empirical studies relating to students and leadership guide the literary journey and develop a platform from which to further explore how students experience and understand the university. I purposefully weave the thesis research questions into the fabric of the literature review. This helped establish a balance between existing knowledge and ongoing inquiry to set the stage for qualitative data collection and subsequent analysis.

This chapter illuminates the researchable landscape by highlighting literature relative to university students and cyberbullying. Review of recent bullying and cyberbullying trends frame the first part of the review while a historical perspective on the fight against cyberbullying supports the later. Of particular interest are research based findings that help to define the parameters of this study.

Definitions and Key Concepts

“Bullying is a form of aggression involving intentional and harmful behavior marked by repeated engagement and an asymmetric physical or psychological power relationship” (Williams & Guerra, 2007, P. 14). Essentially, it is a wilful and deliberate act of hostility with the sole intention “to harm, induce fear through the threat of further aggression, and terror” in situations in which there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the victim (Coloroso, 2008, P. 13). This act of gaining authority over victims through intimidation is identified as “coercive power”, and its effectiveness can be determined based on whether the receiver can manage the threat (Ferguson & Terrion, 2014, P. 266).

Cyberbullying can be defined as “a form of bullying that uses electronic means such as email, mobile phone calls, text messages, instant messenger contact, photos, social networking sites, and personal web pages, with the intention of causing harm to another person through repeated hostile conduct” (Ortega et al., 2012, P. 342). Essentially, any action (message, post, text, etc.) that aims to belittle, torment or intimidate another electronic network user is considered an action of cyberbullying. According to Juvonen and Gross (2008), “cyberbullying may appear especially frightening to parents because it involves communication technologies with which they are unfamiliar” (P. 497).

“Subsequently, numerous studies on school bullying were conducted in various countries (i.e., Austria, Canada, China, England, Finland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, and the United States) to understand the prevalence of bullying, factors associated with bullying, negative consequences, and prevention mechanisms” (Moon, Hwang & McCluskey, 2011, P. 851). Essentially, these studies indicate that school bullying is a global phenomenon. Adopting a clear

definition of cyberbullying provides a necessary basis for comparing cyberbullying and traditional bullying that will be address in the next section.

Differences between Cyberbullying and Traditional Bullying

With the introduction of technology, studies have begun to shift from focusing on traditional bullying to understanding cyberbullying. Research shows that children are reluctant to inform parents or educators about bullying incidents on school grounds (Hanish & Guerra, 2000), and that children often don't report cyber abuse either (Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolak, 2000; Magid, 1998; O'Connell, Price, & Barrow, 2004). Despite the fact that some of the reasons for children and adolescents' nondisclosure of their experiences with cyber abuse are equivalent to those behind traditional bullying, for instance fear of retaliation and escalating the abuse or that telling adults will not help change the situation (Antoniadou & Kokkinos, 2015; Clarke & Kiselica, 1997; Mishna & Alaggia, 2005), there are still some reasons that are unique to the cyber world. Current findings indicate that children are even less willing to reveal to their parents that they are dealing with cyberbullying because they are worried that their parents will take away their online privileges as a result (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Mishna, McLuckie, & Saini, 2009). Although the semblance between traditional bullying and cyberbullying would suggest that the fundamental behaviour may be more relevant than the medium in which it takes place, it is important to identify factors that distinguish cyberbullying in order to recognize the new risks it poses to the user population.

Aspect of power differential in bully-victim relationship.

Malecki, Demaray, Coyle, Geosling, Ruegerand & Becker's (2015) study suggests "that the addition of intentionality and power differential in the bullying relationship puts students at an even greater risk for internalizing problems and should also be investigated" (P. 128).

Coloroso (2006) explains it is important to teach children the difference between positive and negative social interactions. In her book, she makes a clear distinction between teasing and taunting. Teasing consists of an equal social exchange that laughs at someone but in a light-hearted and friendly manner, which is meant to make both parties laugh. Taunting, on the other hand, is based on an imbalance of power between the two parties and aims to belittle the weaker member. The "imbalance of power" criterion claims that victims are not readily capable of defending themselves. However, certain criteria that are used to assess power imbalance in traditional bullying may not be directly applicable with respect to circumstances of cyberbullying. For instance, physical strength and verbal articulation proficiency (e.g., when teased) are not factors that have any relevancy when assessing power inequality in cyberspace. Lack of confidence or self-esteem, lack of friends or social support, or low social status are also factors that are not immediately apparent in cyberbullying situations since users can act anonymously. Nevertheless, the imbalance of power can take a different form in cyberspace, such as technological proficiency (Broll & Huey, 2015).

Although some cyberbullying acts, such as sending rude text messages, are relatively easy to do, there are other types of cyber abuse that require some technological expertise, such as impersonating another individual on a website. Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2008) found that students with more advanced Internet knowledge had a higher likelihood of having experience with deviant Internet and cell phone activities. Similarly, Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) observed that cyberbullies tended to give themselves higher ratings in terms of Internet expertise than participants who did not cyberbully others.

Identity as a factor in cyberbullying.

Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2008) also claim that anonymity can play a role in a power imbalance since it is more complicated to effectively address a cyberbully if the user does not know the identity of the perpetrator, which is the case for a considerable amount of cyberbullying scenarios (Smith, 2012; Tokunaga, 2010). On the other hand, if the victim is aware of the perpetrator's identity, this may deter the victim from retaliating against them for fear that the bully may take retribution offline. In this case, the assessment criteria for power imbalance in traditional bullying such as physical strength and social status is brought back into consideration. Several studies confirm that when a victim is aware of the identity of the perpetrator, the bully tends to be a peer from the same school or an individual in close physical proximity (Slonje & Smith, 2007; Smith et al., 2008). Smith et al. (2008) conducted 2 studies that surveyed a total of 625 students in 19 schools in order to investigate the relationships of cyberbullying to general internet use. Their first study showed that the victim knows the perpetrator(s) from school in 57% of the cyberbullying cases, in which, 49% are in their class or age group. Consequently, despite the messages being sent and/or received outside of school property, the problems tend to resurface in school the following day. Though it may seem logical to simply ban cellphone/internet use in schools as a means to resolve the issue, only a small percentage of students (approximately 20%) believe that this maneuver can help stop cyberbullying (Smith et al., 2008).

Dooley, Pyzalski, and Cross (2009) suggested that since it may be difficult to avoid cyberbullying, as a result of the high proliferation of technology and its accessibility, this could lead to the victim feeling powerless in their unsuccessful attempts to avoid the abuse. Another aspect that plays into the pervasiveness of cyberbullying is the Internet's facility for digital

permanence of any information that is put on display. Further, the multiple potential observers of this content can expose victims in a way that makes it difficult for them to defend against it (Smith, Barrio, & Tokunaga, 2013). In this circumstance, the imbalance of power is not in direct correlation with the physical advantage of the perpetrator over the victim, but is fixed in a situation-dependent relationship instead (Bruner, 1990).

Dissemination aspect in cyberbullying.

When considering the factor of repetition, mentioned in the traditional definition of bullying as a factor that differentiates aggression with bullying, complications arise when trying to apply this factor in the context of cyberbullying in comparison with its application in the context of traditional bullying. In cyberspace, a single act of cyberbullying (e.g., sending a text message or posting material on a website) has the potential to escalate beyond the initial control of both the victim and the perpetrator when the content is distributed and viewed repeatedly by other users. Essentially, a single act initiated by the perpetrator may be repeated by others and can lead to the victim experiencing the effects numerous times (Patchin and Hinduja, 2015). A well-known example of this involves the death of a Nova Scotia teen, Rehtaeh Parsons, in 2013. Parsons was taken off of life support on April 7th, 2013 after she had attempted suicide a few days earlier. The problems that drove Parsons to attempt to take her own life started in 2011, when she went with a friend to a small gathering with other teenagers and got intoxicated. While one boy was having sex with her, another took a picture of the act and posted it on the Internet without Parson's knowledge. The photo was then circulated in Parson's school and community, which instigated a series of verbal attacks from her peers that lasted for two years until her death (CBC, 2013, April 9). As demonstrated in this case, the original perpetrator made the single act

of cyber abuse by posting the picture online but was not directly responsible for the subsequent distribution of the compromising photo.

This raises the question: if the repetition is not carried out by the perpetrator, is this still considered cyberbullying? Slonje, Smith, and Frisen (2012) investigated the distribution aspect of cyberbullying by asking participants what “actively targeted bystanders” (peers who received or were shown content intended to cyberbully another individual) did with the shared content. The majority, 72% of the respondents, did not take part in further distributing the material, while 9% of respondents admitted that they had forwarded the material to other friends, and 6% showed or forwarded it to the victim (in order to bully him/her further). On the other hand, 13% of respondents showed/forwarded the material to the original victim with the intention of helping him/her.

Although this aspect of repetition is usually more common with social media technologies (e.g., circulation of text messages, repeated visits to websites) it can also happen in offline settings. For instance, a rumour started by the perpetrator can be distributed by others, or an insulting message written on the wall of a bathroom stall in school can be seen repeatedly by anyone who uses the bathroom. Though this demonstrates that repetitious messages are not exclusive to cyberbullying, it is "arguably more prominent in cyberbullying as the repetition can be very rapid, and the potential audience is much larger online" (Smith et al., 2013, P. 35).

Prior to investigating the manner in which students might interpret cyberbullying, understanding the foundation from which the social constructs are derived must be considered. Emerging themes were also vetted with knowledge of the theoretical foundation surrounding cyberbullying perpetration.

Explanations of Cyberbullying

Scholars have aspired to explain bullying for the decades. Effort over the last ten years has refined and directed this theoretical journey to understanding cyberbullying, more specifically. Research and supposition presents a growing body of knowledge that helps to identify influences relative to cyberbullying. Theoretical affiliation is an important pillar in any research effort and further serves as a contextual foundation for framing my phenomenological approach. Discovering how students experience and understand cyberbullying can be substantively enhanced by qualifying findings through a telecommunications lens. Studies tend to examine how the social and technological contexts are dynamically connected. This can be further assessed with three theories of social psychology: social norms theory, online disinhibition effect and social balance theory. Social norms theory explains the contextual forces that affect students' judgment in managing online interactions (McDonald & Crandall, 2015). For instance, this theory illuminates that certain victims blame themselves for being an easy target of bullying due to their "misperceptions" of the social norms. Online disinhibition effect asserts that due to the lack of immediate emotional feedback that is inherent in face-to-face interactions, people will do or say things online that they would not normally in offline settings (Casale, Fiovaranti, & Caplan, 2015). The lack of face-to-face aspect of online interactions dampens the empathetic response elicited by seeing the pain one causes (Agatston et al., 2012; Davis & Nixon, 2012; Fahy et al., 2016; Patchin & Hinduja, 2011; von Marées & Petermann, 2012). Finally, social balance theory can clarify the motivations that compel the decisions that students make about relationships (Zheng, Zeng & Wang, 2015). These theories provide a relevant theoretical base for research focusing on how students experience and understand cyberbullying.

Social Norms Theory.

Existing efforts to explain bullying as a group phenomenon suggests that the victims and the bully are not the only parties involved in the phenomena. The social norms theory considers that adolescent networks have established peer norms for adolescent behaviour and it is possible that these norms exist on the internet (Espelage, Rao, & Craven, 2013; Festl, 2016; Navarro Yubero, & Larranaga, 2015). One of the central premises of the social norms theory is that “peer influences may actually result from *perceptions* of peer attitudes and behaviors rather than from actual peer behavior” (Perkins & Berkowitz, 1986, P. 962). In line with this view, these “misperceptions” can lead adolescents to participate in deviant behaviors because they mistake them to be the norm among their peers (Perkins& Berkowitz, 1986). Terasähjo and Salmivalli (2003) even found that students generally held the victim of bullying responsible for violating peer norms and regarded the bullies as those who enforced the norms. Participants constructed the victims as “negatively deviant” which separated them from the rest of their peers (Terasähjo & Salmivalli, 2003, P. 147). The victims were described as individuals with abnormal behavior, different appearance, or being a foreigner so they deserve to be bullied as a means to ensure that these individuals conform with peer standards. This could play a role in adolescents perceiving that cyberbullying is a tool to enforce social norms instead of as inappropriate aggression (Blumenfeld, 2005; Doane, Kelley, & Pearson, 2016).

The social norms theory also illuminates the sensitive nature of reporting incidents of cyberbullying since it is difficult for adults to monitor, and so testimonies can often be traced back to the victim of cyberbullying. As a result, this could put “the victim at risk not only for additional bullying and social exclusions, but also increases the chances that the adult will restrict their access to cyberspace in an effort to protect them, thereby denying access to an important

medium to interact with friends and peers” (Espelage et al., 2013, P. 53). As part of i-Safe’s outreach campaign, 1500 students from Grades 4 to 8 across the USA were surveyed on their experiences with cyberbullying in 2004. According to survey statistics, data showed that 58% of the respondents did not reveal their negative online experiences to their parents or an adult. This study shows a trend of children underreporting cyberbullying incidents and thus warrants more research to understand the reasons behind this behaviour. Ultimately, social norms theory aims to illuminate the reasoning used by students to justify their tendency to avoid seeking help and may also yield a better understanding of the environment surrounding adolescents that may foster cyberbullying. A typical research question following this theory might revolve around how students react to cyberbullying and what strategies they use to address the problem.

Online Disinhibition Effect.

Suler (2004) described a phenomenon called the *online disinhibition effect* where “people say and do things in cyberspace they would not ordinarily do in the face-to-face world. They loosen up, feel less restrained and express themselves more openly” (P. 321). This effect can act as a double-edge sword, where it can either encourage more self-disclosure in the form of acts of kindness and confessions (*benign disinhibition*), or it could encourage malicious attacks on others (*toxic disinhibition*). Suler identifies six elements of cyberspace that contribute to this effect: dissociative anonymity, invisibility, asynchronicity, solipsistic introjections, dissociative imagination and; minimization of status and authority. Dissociative anonymity allows a user to mentally divide their online activities from real life by concealing their identity. Invisibility entails the inability of users to physically see or be seen by those that they are interacting with. Since users do not communicate with each other in real time, asynchronicity allows users to avoid knowing the receiver’s immediate reaction to a message. Solipsistic introjections involve a

user assimilating an imagined receiver's personality into their own consciousness. Essentially, "talking with oneself may feel like confronting oneself, which may unleash many powerful psychological issues" (Suler, 2004, P. 323). Regardless of whether it is done consciously or unconsciously, users who believe that the personas they portray on the internet only exist in cyberspace are exhibiting signs of dissociative imagination, which permits them to renounce any responsibility for real-life consequences. Lastly, due to the lack of customary indicators for status in cyberspace, there is a minimization of status and authority. Users can also choose to interact with other individuals anonymously in cyberspace, which allows them to avoid the consequences of disorderly conduct if they were identifiable. Consequently, the perceived lack of accountability might encourage adolescents to commit inappropriate acts in cyberspace that they would not normally carry out in their offline interactions (Barkoukis, Lazuras, Ourda, & Tsorbatzoudis, 2016; Blumenfeld, 2005). Blumenfeld (2005) found that perpetrators of cyberbullying minimized their sense of accountability for the offensive nature of their online messages by rationalizing that they are simply providing information that the receivers deserve to be made aware of, for example, one perpetrator claimed "I was only telling the truth. She is ugly, and I felt she had to know it!" (P. 4). Thus, the online disinhibition effect should illustrate why respondents are faced with cyberbullying and/or why they would participate in cyberbullying themselves.

Social Balance Theory.

Finally, social balance theory proposes that any imbalance of interests in a triadic person-dynamic becomes a strongly "aversive" experience that would require action in order to maintain network stability (Cartwright & Harary, 1956; Davis, 1979; Heider, 1958). Social balance theory was originally introduced by Heider and many more important contributions were made

subsequently by other researchers. In Cartwright and Harary's review (1956), Heider's ideas were represented "in terms of the mathematical theory of linear graphs" (P. 277) which helped prove several fundamental theorems about the structure of balanced networks. With the assistance of a graph, Cartwright and Harary were able to demonstrate that balanced societies are actually very simple in nature: all of the individuals are either mutual friends ("utopia"), or they are divided into two equally opposed groups but that are still friendly with their in-group members ("bipolar" state). In spite of this, randomly balanced states are uncommon in the sense that if one were to spontaneously assign relationships in a social network, the likelihood that this particular society is balanced would diminish exponentially in relation to system size. Imbalanced interpersonal relationships that are influenced by external factors do eventually stabilize when relationships adjust from negative to positive and vice versa (Abell & Ludwig, 2009). Essentially, social balance theory can help explain factors that contribute to why respondents encounter negativity in their online social circles, which in turn, can be used to explain how respondents manage their relationships as a result of these interactions. This theoretical lens helped focus analysis as themes evolved through the repetitive rigor of collecting and comparing data relative to how students experience cyberbullying victimisation and perpetration.

Predicting Victimisation and Perpetration

Researchers have been attempting for several years to assess the impact of the Internet, and its various applications, on the way relationships are formed and maintained (Boase, Horrigan, Wellman, & Rainie, 2006; Hampton, Sessions, Her, & Rainie, 2009; Kraut, Kiesler, Boneva, Cummings, Helgeson, & Crawford, 2002; Wellman, Haase, Witte, & Hampton, 2001). With the growth of social network sites (SNS; boyd, 2006; boyd & Ellison, 2008) that are designed to keep individuals socially connected, the potential for managing social contacts

appears to have become limitless. Though these online interactions are usually neutral or positive (Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolak, 2000), the ease of access and anonymity allowed by communication technology may increase the risk for victimization for children and adolescents (Ybarra, 2004; Kanani & Regehr, 2003). Binder et al. (2011) argue that social networking's design to facilitate connectivity creates a series of additional problems that "can constrain the growth of personal networks and impact negatively on relationship quality" (P. 1280). More specifically, the clear visibility of communication on SNS can counterbalance the beneficial social effects originally intended of Internet technology. Conceptualizing trends in causes of victimization and perpetration helps to construct a framework from which to build understanding as this investigation delves into exploring how students experience cyberbullying victimisation and perpetration.

Connectivity.

A selected number of studies show that the Internet and SNS facilitate the growth and maintenance of larger social networks. For instance, there is evidence that indicate a positive correlation between increased frequency of Internet use and growth in the number of social contacts (Wellman et al., 2001; Kraut et al., 2002; Boase et al., 2006). For example, Ellison, Steinfeld, & Lampe (2007) learned that Facebook was very practical for facilitating the maintenance of existing social ties. In their study, the amount of Facebook use was positively correlated to three types of social capital: bonding, bridging and maintained. Though bonding and bridging capital are already recognized categories (Burt, 1992), where bonding refers to social networks between socially homogeneous groups and bridging as the social networks between socially heterogeneous groups, maintained capital refers to social ties that were important in the past but are now not as available for face-to-face contact due to a change in

physical location. In the same vein, Donath and boyd (2004) have confirmed that SNS has the potential to increase the number of weak ties which allows a user to expand their social network. This could imply that the expansion of one's social network would increase the amount of information and opportunities that are available.

Privacy is the main concern when considering the negative aspects behind SNS use (Acquisti & Gross, 2006; Debatin, Lovejoy, Horn, & Hughes, 2009), for instance, when personal photographs of an individual are visible to an unintended audience (employers or family members). On the other hand, identification of privacy concerns only covers a part of the analysis of the effects of SNS on actual social networking. Binder, Howes, and Smart (2011) assert that it is essential to preserve social harmony in networks, which involves the preservation of independent "social spheres" (P. 1280). A social sphere is defined as a "partial ego-centered network with many internal connections between individuals but few, if any, connections to other parts of the ego's network except through the ego (Binder et al., 2011, P. 1281). Essentially, a group of individuals who are all socially interconnected as seen from the perspective of one individual who is the locus of a particular group. In earlier research, social spheres were called clusters (Grossetti, 2005) or social circles (Kadushin, 1968; Verbeke & Wuyts, 2007). Relationships belonging to different social spheres can be found in unusually close proximity on SNS, which can cause problems with maintaining harmony, since these interactions can carry more potential of unintended negative side-effects. Binder et al. (2011) identified 16 social categories of people known to their respondents on Facebook. However, their study focused on family, work and social contacts as prominent social spheres in which the 16 categories were further grouped. They found that Facebook network size and composition were negatively related with user age, where network size decreased considerably with increasing age. Age was also

another factor that affected the proportion of family and social contacts on Facebook. Older Facebook users were more likely to have smaller networks that contain more family contacts and less emphasis was placed on the number of social contacts (demonstrated in the diagrams on the following page).

Binder et al. (2011) confirmed in their study that online tension, defined as clashing expressions of opinions and attitudes, was positively correlated with a user's Facebook network size. In the follow-up survey that was conducted after the original study, younger and more active student users had reported higher levels of online tension. This study essentially implies that social media requires additional effort from the user to maintain harmony in their network due to the fact that the boundaries between social spheres can become blurred. There is some indication that tension moderates the relationship between the concentration of social media use and network size, which could constrain network growth. Users reported that the ease of broadcasting and access to personal information were the main sources of social tension (Peluchette, Karl, Wood, & Williams, 2015).

Opportunity.

Depending on the circumstance, there are a number of reasons for the more severe impact of cyberbullying on victims such as: a wider audience, anonymity of the perpetrator, the enduring nature of the written word as opposed to spoken, and the easy access that perpetrators are afforded to reach their targets at any time and in any place (Campbell, 2013). In addition, due to the lack of face-to-face aspect and anonymity, cyberbullies may feel more emboldened when they attack. It has also been suggested that anonymity alone may increase the intensity of the attacks and encourage them to be carried out for a longer period of time than in offline settings (Conn, 2004). Though cyberbullying cannot inflict physical damage on victims, research has

shown that the verbal and psychological damage caused by cyberbullying is longer lasting (Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004).

Coloroso (2008) claims that people do not bully out of anger, but out of feelings of contempt towards the victim. Contempt is defined by Coloroso (2008) as a powerful feeling of dislike towards someone or something that is not worthy of any respect or approval. People who bully have a false sense of superiority over their victim, which masks their own emotional insecurities and low sense of self-worth (Coloroso, 2008). Bullies “rationalize that their supposed superiority entitles them to hurt someone they hold in contempt, when in reality it is an excuse to put someone down so they can feel ‘up’” (Coloroso, 2008, P. 21). Rigby’s study shows that students who held positive opinions of victims and whose friends expected them to be more sympathetic towards victims were less likely to participate in bullying others (2005, P. 158). Essentially, the negative attitude of bullies evolves into arrogance, which allows them to target victims without feeling empathy. Some researchers claim that adolescents with low self-control will have a higher tendency to engage in both psychological and physical bullying behaviours as opposed to their peers who have more self-control (Chui & Chan, 2013; Gámez-Guadix, Gini, 2016; Moon & Alarid, 2014). Moon and Alarid studied the effects of low self-control on 300 youths, they found that “the influence of self-control *weakened* when opportunity measures were introduced into the model” which shows that adolescents are more likely to bully when there is less adult/mentor supervision (2014, P. 850). By considering these two factors, opportunity tempts an adolescent with lower self-control into bullying behaviours with the knowledge that they can do so without any consequences.

Certain researchers claim that bullying (especially verbal aggression) can be difficult to detect based on what people perceive as regular social interactions or bullying (Craig et al., 2000;

Pepler, Craig, & Roberts, 1995). As online interactions lack visual cues, certain messages can be misinterpreted either negatively or positively. For example, bullies could tell a cruel joke about their victim but other online viewers could disregard the negative connotation since it lacks context.

Bullying may also be difficult to detect due to high levels of activity online and the frequency of similar interactions among adolescents (Craig et al., 2000; You & Lim, 2016) as more youth become digitally connected. To this point, 98% of Canadian youth access the Internet and communication devices on a daily basis such as social networking sites, text messages and/or instant messages (Cassidy, Jackson, & Brown, 2009; Mishna et al., 2010; Mishna et al., 2012). Similarly, in 2010, 93% of American youth between the ages of 12 to 17 connect online occasionally and two thirds of that group access the internet daily, three out of four American teenagers own a cell phone and 88% of this group interact through text messages (Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, & Solomon, 2010, P. 63). Essentially, "the combination of the brevity of bullying, the difficulty of recognizing bullying, and inconsistent intervention contributes to the prevalence of bullying" (Pepler, 1995, P. 56).

Although cyberbullying does not involve the physical presence of a group, the growing trend of online social networking forums can "place cyberbullying within the domain of group interactions" (Robson & Witenberg, 2013, P. 225). Essentially, as social networking forums such as Facebook are becoming more popular for bullies to target their victims, cyberbullies are no longer depending on the anonymity aspect provided by the Internet to protect their identities. Instead, cyberbullies have become more confident about bullying publicly while bystanders diffuse the responsibility of defending the victim because they fear that they will become victims themselves (Juvonen & Galván, 2008; Slee, 1994; Virpi, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2012). In this

case, cyberbullying is afforded the opportunity to proliferate both because it is virtually undetectable by parents/educators and bystanders will most likely refrain from intervening.

A respondent in Mishna et al.'s study that explores technology, virtual relationships and cyberbullying from the perspectives of students "coined the term 'non-stop bullying' to capture the phenomenon of cyberbullying due to bullying occurring at school and continuing online when the child returns home at the end of the day" (2009b, P. 1224). The same respondents reported that they expect to feel safe when they return to their own homes. However, technology allows cyberbullying to evade the safety barrier traditionally provided by their homes and becomes invasive into their lives outside of school. According to a study conducted by the Pew research center in 2009, 93% of teens use the Internet, 78% are on Facebook and other social network sites, and 72% communicate through text. These findings show that cyberspace and online relationships have become a significant part of an adolescents' social life. An issue that arises with the increased importance of portable communication technology for adolescents is that it makes it easier for perpetrators to target their victims from anywhere and at any time of the day.

Prior Involvement in Bullying.

Prior involvement with bullying was found to be a vital predictor of perpetration (den Hamer & Konjin, 2016; Guo, 2016; Kowalksi and Limber, 2007; Li, 2007; Monks, Mahdavi & Rix, 2016; Patchin and Hinduja, 2008; Slonje and Smith, 2007; Vandebosch, van Cleemput, Mortelman, & Walrave, 2006). Taking into consideration studies conducted on prevalence rates, it appears that cyberbullying is a common issue that implicates a significant number of children and adolescents as both cyberbullies and cybervictims (Cao & Lin, 2015). Unfortunately, prevalence rates are varied, and it is difficult to perform direct comparisons as a result of the

different methods and procedures that are used. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) conducted a large study between 1999 and 2000 which found that 19% of internet users (N=1,501) were engaged either as cyberbullies, cybervictims, or both. In Canada, Beran and Li (2008) observed that 58% of the students they surveyed had experience cybervictimisation while 26% were cyberbullies at some point in their lives. In accordance with Ybarra, Diener-West, and Leaf's (2007) study, Hinduja and Patchin (2008) learned that approximately 35% of the adolescents in their study sample had encountered cybervictimization at least once. Baldry, Farrington & Sorrentino (2016) surveyed 5,058 Italian middle and high school students to see if there is an overlap between the roles of bullies and victims in both traditional and electronic bullying. Their results emphasized an important commonality between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, where 12.1% of the students who bullied others were also occasionally cyberbullies. In the same way, they found that there was a notable commonality between traditional victimisation and cybervictimisation, where 7.4% of the students who were victims at school were also occasionally cybervictimised.

Age.

Prior research findings regarding the association of age with cyber victimization diverges. While a number of studies indicate that age is not a significant factor in cybervictimisation (Didden et al., 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Katzer, Fetchenhauer & Belschak, 2009; Patchin and Hinduja, 2008; Smith et al., 2008; Tsitsika et al., 2015; Ybarra et al., 2007), others suggest that cyberbullying occurs more frequently in lower secondary education. For example, Slonje and Smith (2007) learned that 17.6% of students in lower secondary school were victims of cyberbullying. The number then dropped to 3.3%, and perpetration dropped from 11.9% to 8.0%, in higher secondary education. This confirms the rise in cyberbullying rates that were found in a Belgian study that was carried out by Vandebosch et al. (2006). Slonje and Smith (2007) then

conducted a study with 360 Swedish youth and found that cyber victimization rates were higher for adolescents between the ages of 12-15 in comparison with older adolescents. Meanwhile, Del Rey et al. (2016) performed a study with 564 middle and secondary school students in Spain and Greece to assess invariance of the relationship between empathy and cyberbullying across gender, age and nationality. The results for their study with regards to age differences in self-reported cyberbullying were inconclusive. Williams and Guerra (2007) conducted a study with a sample of elementary, middle and high school students where they observed that online victimization rates were higher in middle school (12.9%) and dropped slightly in high school (9.9%). However, only the younger students in Romania reported victimization compared to their older counterparts. Such age differences could be attributed to the method by which cyberbullying takes place (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014), or on differential social networking sites use patterns. For instance, Smith et al. (2008) learned that bullying through the dissemination of pictures, text and instant messaging were more common in older youth than with their younger counterparts. Alternatively, Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) noticed that older high school students are more frequently cyberbullies than students in middle school and younger high school students. Additional research is required in order to better understand the relationship between age and online victimization.

Parental Involvement.

A number of studies have examined the role parents play and their involvement in cybervictimization, “in particular *parental control of technology*, meaning parents’ habits and aptitude to check and supervise children’s understanding of technology and use of online activities” (Baldry, Farrington & Sorentino, 2015, P. 48). Certain researchers have found that cybervictimization is linked with reported low levels of parental control of technology (Aoyama,

Utsumi, & Hasegawa, 2012; Kowalski et al., 2014; Mesch, 2009). Mesch (2009) surveyed 935 American students between the ages of 12-17 years old and identified that a lack of clear parental guidelines on how one should conduct themselves online is associated with elevated rates of cybervictimization. Low communication with parents has also been found to be a risk factor for cybervictimization. Özdemir (2014) surveyed 337 Turkish students between the ages of 15-18 years and observed that less communication with parents is linked to elevated rates of cybervictimization. Bayraktar, Machackova, Dedkova, Cerna and Sevcíková (2014) reported that poor parental attachment was recognized as another risk factor for cybervictimization. Their study noted the emotional parent-child relationship, more specifically parental anxious concerns, is a risk factor for cybervictimization. On the other hand, Katzer, Fetchenhauer and Belschak (2009) surveyed 1700 students from numerous German secondary schools, they also found that high parental anxious concern is positively associated to higher rates of cybervictimization. Understanding how the connectivity, opportunity, prior involvement in bullying, age and parental involvement served as a platform for then integrating the three theories of social psychology and helped to position my research interest into how students are affected by cyberbullying.

Impact of Cyberbullying

Attention has been afforded to studying the detrimental effects of cyberbullying on bullying victims. Studies indicate that cyberbullying victims show aggression, low self-esteem and increased social anxieties (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010). Although cyberbullying does not occur more often now than traditional bullying, Finkelhor's (2013) study indicates that this could change as they saw a modest but steady increase of 4% in cyberbullying between 2000 and 2010.

Several researchers have indicated that research on cyberbullying is still at an early stage (Mishna et al., 2012; Smith *et al.*, 2008; Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2010). One study claims that there is evidence "showing that similar to traditional victimization, experiences with cyber victimization are associated with psychosocial problems such as emotional distress" (Wang et al., 2009, P. 369). In another study, Wang et al. (2010) concluded that victims of cyberbullying reported higher depression than victims of other forms of bullying. Mishna et al. (2012) maintain that victims of cyberbullying "report feeling sad, anxious, afraid and unable to concentrate on school and may report social difficulties, drug and alcohol use, and eating disorders" (P. 63). In extreme cases, such as the incident involving Amanda Todd, Patchin and Hinduja (2010) found in their study that cyberbullying is correlated with an increase in self-harm and suicidal ideation in young adolescents.

Current empirical research shows that adolescents face more severe psychological effects from being involved in cyberbullying than in cases of traditional bullying (Campbell, Spears, Slee, Butler, & Kift, 2012; Gimenez Gualdo, Hunter, Durkin, Arnaiz, & Maquilon, 2015; Perren, Dooley, Shaw, & Cross, 2010). Perren, Dooley, Shaw, & Cross (2010) found that cybervictimization is more of a significant predictor of depressive symptoms than victimization in traditional bullying circumstances. In another study, victims of cyberbullying had higher anxiety scores and social difficulties than victims who faced traditional forms of bullying (Campbell et al., 2012). These findings are further supported by the subjective views of adolescents, who had never been involved in bullying, that cyberbullying is more detrimental than traditional bullying (Cross et al., 2009).

With the proliferation of technology, adolescents are constantly connected to their social networks through the Internet and their mobile phones. Unfortunately, these tools have also

become a new means for bullying to extend its reach. Even though cyberbullying does not directly cause physical harm to adolescents, it does cause emotional damage through hurtful mobile phone text messages, compromising pictures posted online, rude comments posted on social-networking pages, and/or unkind rumours that are spread through email, instant messaging (IM), or any other similar communication devices. As social-networking sites, IM, and mobile technology continue to increase in popularity, the risks associated with cyberbullying should not be underestimated (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Mitchell & Jones, 2015).

Some researchers suggest that these technologies have been changing the face of bullying; by making cyberbullying "generally indirect" (Huang & Chou, 2010, P. 1582). Due to the lack of physical presence, cyberbullying is carried out through verbal and relational methods. Willard (2006) identifies harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing, exclusion, and cyber-stalking as behaviours that can be classified as cyberbullying. The Pew Research Centre conducted a nationally-representative phone survey of 935 US teenagers in 2007, they found that 32% of teenagers who use the internet report that they have been targets of online harassment. Since communication devices make it easier for perpetrators to access their victims at their convenience, attacks on adolescents during and outside of school hours, without the awareness of parents, are facilitated. This is another reason why the adverse effects of cyberbullying on adolescents should not be underestimated.

Bullying Victims

The perspectives of bully victims and bystanders are of particular interest to this research effort as they play a part in reinforcing victims into their roles. In Gini *et al.*'s study on the perceptions of primary and middle-school children with regards to attitudes towards victims also confirmed that the students' "blame ratings were higher in the direct, overt bullying condition

than they were in the indirect bullying condition" (2008, P. 633). While Courtney, Cohen, Deptula, & Kitzmann (2003) examined the social contextual factors that might moderate primary school children's dislike for aggressors and for victims of aggression. Their study found that students dislike victims of aggression because they do not respond to the bully assertively, a reaction which can be viewed as undesirable by their peers. For example, victims tend to resort to crying and withdrawing when confronted with aggression from the bully. As the victims continuously succumb to the bullies' attacks, the bully continues with harassment, and this forms a vicious cycle of aggression. Eventually, victims report negative changes in their mood and self-opinion, which adds justification for their peers to dislike them. Basically, when victims are targeted directly by bullies and they succumb to their attacks, victims are eventually ostracized for being targeted and for not being assertive against the bully. In short, "victims may be reinforced in the victim role because of the attention, albeit negative, that they receive from their peer group" (Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000, P. 25).

Corresponding to identifying subtypes of aggressors, Schwartz, Proctor and Chien identify subgroups of victims of aggression that surfaced in their study. First there is the victim type that is "characterized by submissive and passive behavioral tendencies" then there is the victim type that is characterized by more aggressive and/or hostile tendencies (2002, P. 147). Although the group of aggressive victims represent only a minority, they tend to be impulsive and emotionally reactive in an ineffective manner compared to their aggressors. Unlike their passive counterparts, they tend not to be submissive or unassertive.

Schwartz et al. (2002) suggest that further research needs to be conducted on aggressive victims since they are more highly rejected than other subgroups of victims or aggressors. They speculate that the poorly-adjusted behaviour of these children could incite more harassment from

their peers. Schwartz et al. (2002) advise that these children may require attention from clinicians and educators due to the “multiple adjustment problems” they experience (P. 169).

Role of Bystanders.

Selected researchers redefine the bullying relationship by incorporating bystanders into the equation instead of following the traditional dyadic (bully-victim) perspective (Gini, Pozzoli, Borghi, & Franzoni, 2008; Pabian, Vandebosch, Poels, Van Cleemput & Bastiaensens, 2016; Twemlow, Fonagy, & Sacco, 2004). Gini *et al.* (2008) conducted two studies with primary and middle school children. They assessed the perceptions of bullying, attitude towards victims, and students' sense of safety at school as a result of bystanders' reactions to different types of bullying. The studies show that the bystanders' perception of a bullying incident can influence the victim's sense of safety at school and their perception of bullying victims. Bystanders can play a large role in explaining the pervasiveness of bullying through social contagion, diffusion of responsibility and friends' expectations (Gower, McMorris & Eisenberg, 2015; Olweus, 2001; Rigby, 2005; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). With regards to social contagion, Olweus suggests the notion of passive bullies who follow the example set by the aggressive bully. Essentially, these are students who would not instigate, but keenly take part in bullying when someone else commences it. Diffusion of responsibility proposes that when there is a large group that takes part in the bullying, the sense of responsibility to stop the commotion dissipates and feelings of guilt are reduced. In line with Azjen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action, that was further developed by Azjen (1988), it is assumed that the influence of others is partly facilitated through beliefs of how peers think one should conduct themselves in a specific situation. With regards to friends' expectations, if they expect that support should be given to the victim in a certain scenario, then bullying would be less likely to occur because there would be more social

or normative pressure to ensure that support is provided. Despite the fact that peers often disapprove of bullying, some of them are still reluctant to intervene or to inform an adult (Dillon & Bushman, 2014). This could also be attributed to the diffusion of responsibility, which is a phenomenon rooted in sociopsychology whereby a person is less likely to take responsibility for action or inaction in the presence of others (similar to the bystander effect in psychology) (Brody & Vangelisti, 2016; Virpi et al., 2012). When bystanders have negative perceptions of the victim, it makes it easier for them to diffuse the responsibility to intervene and to blend in with the other bystanders. In the worst case scenario, the negative perception of the bystander can lead them to join the bullies and abuse the victim without remorse. Another important factor that needs to be considered in cyberbullying research are the coping strategies that are used to mitigate the effects of the phenomenon itself. The following overview of coping strategies helps further guide this research effort.

Coping Strategies

Cyberbullying causes evident adverse effects on the mental and physical health of children and adolescents. Nevertheless, the impact can be alleviated with the utilization of constructive coping strategies (Gámez-Guadix, Gini, & Calvete, 2015; Machmutow, Perren, Sticca, & Alsaker, 2012; Perren et al., 2012). Coping strategies can be defined as the behavioural, emotional and/or cognitive responses against cyberbullying (Perren et al., 2012). These involve prevention of cyberbullying through reduction of risks, combating cyberbullying, and safeguarding from its negative impacts. Lazarus and Folkman (1987) propose that coping serves two main functions: to alter the conditions of the troubled person-environmental relationship (problem-focused coping) and to control emotional distress (emotion-focused or cognitive coping). As outlined in Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress (1987), individuals

that use problem-focused coping strategies are more successful in adapting to stressful situations compared to individuals that use passive emotion-focused coping strategies. With regards to cyberbullying specifically, attempting to solve the problem is probably more beneficial than denying and avoiding the problem.

A number of studies have established that victims who apply problem-focused coping techniques, by changing their behavior to prevent future bullying incidents, experience less health problems than victims who apply emotion-focused coping techniques by ignoring the issue (Burton, Stice, & Seeley, 2004; Cassidy & Taylor, 2005; Hunter, Mora-Merchan, & Ortega, 2004; Smith, Shu, & Madsen, 2001). Lodge and Frydenberg (2007) conducted a study on cyberbullying among adolescent girls between the ages of 11-17 years old. They learned that girls who employ apprehensive (i.e. self-blame and undue concern) or avoidant (i.e. disregarding it and withdrawal from others) coping strategies tend to experience weaker well-being.

Quality of Student and Adult Relationship.

The majority of cyberbullying victims do not notify adults (Agatston et al., 2012; Campbell, 2005; Cassidy et al., 2009, 2011; Dooley, Grading, Strohmeier, Cross, & Spiel, 2010; Smith, 2012; Smith & Slonje, 2010; Yilmaz, 2011). Dooley et al. (2010) studied help-seeking behaviours of cyber victims among adolescents in Austria and Australia. They found that victims would seek help for traditional bullying but would not seek help for cyberbullying. This could be due to the fact that adolescents fear losing access to technology if they report to an adult and/or because they fear the cyberbully will react more maliciously (Jackson, Cassidy & Brown, 2009a). Adolescents may also not report cyberbullying because they believe that adults wouldn't have the ability to stop it. Cross et al. (2009) learned that 46% of cyberbullied students who told an adult reported that the situation either got worse or did not improve.

Certain researchers have observed several other reasons mentioned by students for not telling adults, which include: they are unable to identify the perpetrator, they do not trust the ability of educators to understand or to deal with it properly, the reasoning to report to educators is not immediately evident if it is occurring off of school property, they are concerned that it will not be taken seriously or they will be criticized for their own over-reaction to the cyberbullying, fear of embarrassment and they are afraid to be labelled 'a rat' (Agatston et al., 2012; Campbell, 2005; Jackson et al., 2009a; Smith 2012b; Smith & Slonje, 2010; von Marées & Petermann, 2012).

Meanwhile, victims are more likely to confide in their friends (Cassidy et al., 2009, 2011; Smith, 2012). Perren et al. (2012) articulate that social support may be the most effective coping strategy. It can include emotional and instrumental support, but puts into question the ability of those offering assistance to provide enough support. Programs designed to develop stronger support networks, encourage bystander and peer intervention may deliver the highest probability for success.

In the studies reviewed by Perren et al. (2012), it was found that active approaches such as: confronting the bully, telling them to stop, or threatening to tell on them might actually intensify the problem rather than dissolve it. This is due to the fact that this could lead to an escalation of the bullying rather than deter the cyberbully. In spite of this, a number of researchers offer advice along the same lines: block the perpetrator, ignore the message, reach out to the police to locate the number or ISP, report abuse to site manager, expose the bully on an anonymous website, change contact information, save the evidence and/or confront the bully (Monks, Robinson, & Worlidge, 2012; Smith & Slonje, 2010).

Passive Coping Strategies.

Völlink, Bolman, Dehue and Jacobs (2013) investigated the use of coping strategies to address daily stressors and the use of coping strategies to deal with cyberbullying among 325 adolescents aged 11 and 12 years old in the Netherlands. They observed that victims of cyberbullying were most likely to employ depressive coping, which involves internalizing feelings of helplessness and worthlessness. Dehue, Bolman and Völlink (2008) surveyed 1211 students in the last year of primary school and first year of secondary school, including their parents. Approximately one-third of the cyberbullying victims state that they did not seek social support. This confirms the findings from previous research that the majority of cyberbullying victims exercise passive emotion-focused coping strategies (Lodge & Frydenberg, 2007; Wilton, Craig, & Pepler, 2000) such as denying the seriousness of the issue. Victim tendency to address cyberbullying by pretending to ignore it, actually ignoring it or by countering it, making them bully-victims, is also ascertained by Dehue et al. (2008). Studies that focused on traditional bullying illustrate that the use of passive coping strategies (i.e. withdrawal, denial, avoidance and self-blame) is usually unsuccessful since it may inhibit bullying for a while but does not actually solve the problem (Horner, Asher & Fireman, 2015; Wilton et al., 2000). Intrinsically, victims have a tendency to remain vulnerable to bullying and adverse emotional effects. Essentially, a vicious cycle is created where bullies and victims are repeatedly reinforced into their roles.

Smith et al. (2008) performed two studies that assessed the relationship of cyberbullying to general internet use. The first study consisted of two surveys distributed to 92 students across 14 schools, and then the second study involved 533 students from 5 schools (ranging from 11-16 years of age). Students in the focus groups showed doubt towards the idea that there is a chance to prevent cyberbullying, which also appeared in the findings of the focus group study conducted

by Owens, Shute, and Slee (2000) when exploring the experience of female students with traditional bullying. It is understandable that students are pessimistic since the belief that bullying can be eradicated is too ambitious and most programs implemented in the past to reduce school bullying have only made small improvements (Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004).

Regardless, there are strategies currently available to address traditional bullying such as the pack 'Don't Suffer in Silence' that was published in the UK (DfEE, 2002). The 'telling' tactic seems to be well embedded in UK schools (Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor & Chauhan, 2004). In the second study conducted by Smith et al. (2008), 'telling someone' was the preferred tactic by respondents to address traditional bullying (73%) and the second choice as tactic for cyberbullying (63%). On the other hand, they found that passive coping strategies were the favoured approach to address cyberbullying such as "blocking messages or identities (75%) or changing one's email address or phone number (57%); this was much larger than those advocating avoidance for traditional bullying (34%)" (Smith et al., 2004).

Based on this review of the literature, we can conclude that although cyberbullying may not necessarily be a pressing issue at the moment, it can evolve into one. As research into cyberbullying is still in its primitive stages, there is still ample opportunity for more studies to be conducted from different perspectives. As Mishna et al. indicate in their study, there is a need for research to be conducted that elicits "the students' own experiences and involvement in cyberbullying" (2009b P. 1226). Essentially, this study also aims to contribute to the literature that allows victims the opportunity to share their experiences, in the hopes that educators, experts and/or parents can better understand how to help victims of cyberbullying.

How Research Findings Inform Legislation, Cyberbullying Prevention and Intervention

Cyberbullying has been demonstrated to be an increasing problem in most countries where communication technology is readily available (Cross *et al.*, 2009; Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Smith *et al.*, 2008). Bullying, in all of its forms, has been a long-standing social relationship problem in our societies. Regardless of this, Cross and Walker (2013) indicate that the onus to find a solution has often been considered the educational institution's responsibility since it is where most adolescents spend a lot of their time and build social relationships. Additionally, parents usually turn to the schools to actively prevent and to intervene in bullying cases. Even in cases with cyberbullying, where the bullying occurs outside of school hours and school grounds, there is still a certain level of expectation that exists for schools to step in (Cross *et al.*, 2009; Ong, 2015; Smith, Mahdavi *et al.*, 2008). Unfortunately, it is difficult for schools to address bullying by themselves when the problem is deeply rooted in the society as a whole. Existing research indicates that all forms of bullying is not limited to the dyadic relationship dilemma between the perpetrator and the victim (Salmivalli, 1999), instead it is profoundly rooted in the surrounding social milieu. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theoretical framework on ecological systems theory demonstrates that students who are involved in bullying are influenced by their peers, families, schools, communities, and countries in which they live (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). For that reason, strategies to address bullying should not be limited to only involving individuals and schools. In fact, "governments in the form of legislation, and national and state/provincial stakeholders in the form of policies to prevent and intervene in cyberbullying" should be expected to play a role as well (Campbell, 2013, P. 262).

The idea that the "law" provides a defined rule to regulate/punish "bad" behaviour is a common misperception that also leads many people to believe that the enactment of a law will

provide an immediate solution to solve the cyberbullying issue (such as the Bill C-13 and the Accepting Schools Act). Bill C-13 is an act that was introduced by the Minister of Justice, Peter MacKay, in 2013 to amend the Criminal Code, the Canada Evidence Act, the Competition Act and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act. The act itself is meant to address "the offence of non-consensual distribution of intimate images; offences committed by means of telecommunication; and one aspect of the area of law generally referred to as 'lawful access'" (Nicol, Valiquet, Dominique, author, & Canada, 2013). Essentially, Bill C-13 will ban the sharing of 'intimate' images on an individual without his or her consent and serves to enable courts the authority to seize electronic devices that were used to cyberbully. This perception is probably founded on the misunderstanding that the law is designed only for adversarial and punitive purposes. Several areas or types of law can be directly applied to cyberbullying: criminal, vilification, law of torts, defamation, privacy and discrimination, to name a few (Kift, 1999). However, the circumstances can be more complicated since there are different laws that exist in different countries and states/regions.

An overwhelming amount of the research literature points to the need to address cyberbullying through education on a number of different levels (Azeredo, Rinaldi, Moraes, Levy, & Menezes, 2015; Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2012; Cassidy, Brown, & Jackson, 2011, 2012a, 2012b; Collier, 2012; de Santo & Costabile, 2012; Donlin, 2012; Grigg, 2010; Jackson, Cassidy, & Brown, 2009; Jäger, Amado, Matos, & Pessoa, 2010; Marczak & Coyne, 2010; Patchin & Hinduja, 2011; Perren et al., 2010; Sakellariou, Carroll, & Houghton, 2012; Tangen & Campbell, 2010; Topçu & Erdur-Baker, 2012). Certain researchers have even discussed the need to integrate cyberbullying material into the curriculum since there are currently no tested best practice programs (Donline, 2012).

Meanwhile, in Canada, education is managed under provincial jurisdiction so there is no federal government agency that takes part in forming or analyzing policy pertaining to education. Ontario, Canada has published a series of policy responses in the past fifteen years toward promoting Safe School environments. Education in Ontario is predominantly governed by the Education Act passed in 1990, a derivation of the *Elementary Education Act* that was introduced by Liberal MP William Forster in 1870. The *Education Act* itself has had two significant amendments that aim to directly address bullying in schools: the *Safe Schools Act* and the *Accepting Schools Act*.

Zero Tolerance Policies in Schools.

The *Safe Schools Act* (Bill 81, SSA) was introduced by the minister of education, Janet Ecker, and the bill was subsequently passed on June 23rd, 2000. The Act was intended to establish standards and regulations for punishments that must be issued to students who are not compliant with promoting a safe learning environment. The bill is re-known as a zero tolerance policy, however “the presence of mitigating factors in the Act and school board policies precludes it from being strictly defined as a zero tolerance regime” (Bhattacharjee, 2003). Casella (2003) emphasized that "zero tolerance strengthens the link between schools and prisons that began a century ago with the development of truant officers" (P. 884). In reality, this approach has been found to cause negative effects on the emotional health of students and graduation rates. These policies have also prevented students from obtaining a proper education (Cooper, 2000; Henault, 2001; Hoffman, 2001). Research findings advise that when schools heavily reprimand students for minor infractions are more likely to alienate these students and subject them to feelings of abandonment at a time in their development when they require the most support (McNeely, Nonemaker, & Blum, 2002; “Opportunities Suspended,” 2000, Sughrue, 2003)

Daniel and Bondy conducted a small qualitative study in 2008 that examined the effectiveness of the zero tolerance discipline as set out by the SSA in Ontario's public school system and the perceptions of school personnel. It was noted that the most appealing factor behind the SSA is its provision of well-defined and consistent guidelines for schools in the province. However, the issue that arose with the implementation of this policy was the fact that suspensions and expulsions did not discourage bullying behaviours. In fact, the students that were being affected by the SSA often had "several social, socio-economic, psychological and behavioral issues that precluded them from doing well in school" (Daniel & Bondy, P. 9, 2008). Essentially, these students have distinct conditions that were affecting their behaviour and problem solving abilities which could play a role in preventing them from anticipating the consequences of their actions. A report prepared by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) in 2003 revealed that there has been an increase in the number of students with disabilities being suspended and/or expelled for their behaviour since the implementation of the SSA. Instead of addressing why certain children with emotional or social disabilities misbehave, schools were disregarding them, which shows how educational institutions are not well-equipped to take care of students with special needs (The opportunity to succeed: Achieving barrier-free education for students with disabilities, 2003).

Casella (2003) advises that a policy should be designed to discipline youth instead of criminalizing them, in order to be successful. He recommends that school discipline policies should be composed of two portions: violence prevention initiatives such as offering positive social models, and school discipline program that aims to keep students in school and engages them in the discipline process. Through student involvement with the problem-solving process, students are more likely to learn how their behaviour affected others and how to manage

problems in the future. This could also serve as a means to foster positive relationships between students and educational staff, making them less likely to feel criminalized and to be more involved in the school community.

Gagnon and Leone (2001) made similar recommendations for policies that focused on building a suitable educational setting and support system for each student. They instructed that schools should use preventative measures to prevent a predicament before it can even occur. Dohrn (2001) designed a series of guiding principles that aims to reduce violence in schools. Smaller schools provided better opportunities for educational staff to form personal relationships with students and to foster their trust, which led to safety and learning opportunities. Noguera (2001) suggested building partnerships with external health support services, the use of mentors for students, and establishing a climate of respect by immediately addressing minor infractions. He also advocates for implementing punishment that keeps students in school to work with counsellors and involve parents in the remedial process. Another proposition was to ensure that students are offered copious opportunities to be involved in their school and curricular activities since students are less likely to misbehave if they are more invested in school. Every one of these researchers propose different models for designing a learning environment that foster better relationships between students and educational staff. Additionally, they promote a move from the norm of handling misbehaviours as a criminal act within the realm of education. It was eventually recognized by the Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne Liberal government that the *Education Act* needed further amendments in order to improve how schools address bullying (Office of the Premier, 2009).

Shift from Zero Tolerance to Open Dialogue.

The most recent legislative motion that was introduced by the Minister of Education Laurel C. Broten, Bill 13, the *Accepting Schools Act* (LAO, 2012) amends the Education Act, separating definitions of bullying and cyberbullying and holding schools accountable for dealing with issues surrounding both offenses. This *Act* also requires schools and districts to create and enforce equity and inclusive education policies, and bullying prevention and intervention plans. School leaders must take active measure to ensure a positive school climate. Essentially, the *Act* acknowledges that there is a need to create open and ongoing dialogue between educational staff and students. It also acknowledges that students who have been involved in inappropriate behaviour should be assisted in "developing healthy relationships, making good choices, continuing their learning and achieving success" (LAO, 2012).

Beaudoin and Roberge (2015) examined the impact of school climate and bullying in Ontario, following the adoption of the *Accepting Schools Act*, where they surveyed students from 32 French language elementary schools and 8 secondary schools. They reported that most of the students held positive opinions with regards to the quality of life and welcoming climate at school. Essentially, the perception of a positive school environment has been noted as a possible defense-mechanism against bullying behaviours, which could also aid in reducing stress and improve academic performance (Loukas, Suzuki & Horton, 2006; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2010). Numerous researchers highlight the fact that the quality of the school climate largely influences student academic performance, well-being, and personal and social development (Coloroso, 2008; Loukas, Suzuki & Horton, 2006; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2010). Feeling safe and free from bullying at school is an integral part of the school climate. There is a current lack in research that looks into the perspectives of teachers,

parents and administrators on school climate and bullying following the adoption of the *Accepting Schools Act* so there is still a need for more studies that assess the effectiveness of this Act.

Existing literature has made valid contributions towards the framing of legislation and policy. Researchers previously thought that cyberbullying is a tactic that brought forth a new class of students who bullied their targets from outside the school, and therefore the "school had no moral or legal jurisdiction to prevent or intervene" (Campbell, 2013, P. 269). Conversely, some studies support the notion that when the consequences of cyberbullying are apparent on school grounds, the school staff has a responsibility to respond (Brown, Jackson, & Cassidy, 2006). More recent studies have now confirmed that most incidents of cyberbullying do occur outside of school grounds and hours (Cross et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2008). Additionally, research also demonstrates that the majority of cyberbullying perpetrators are usually peers who are known to the victims rather than strangers (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Moreover, several studies have validated that an overlap of students who engage in both traditional forms of bullying and cyberbullying does exist (Campbell et al., 2011; Cross et al., 2009). Therefore, it can be concluded that more research needs to review the effectiveness of current programs targeting bullying in order to guide the designs for future programs.

A German study conducted by Pfetsch, Steffgen, & Konig (2009) assessed the rate of cyberbullying in schools over a six-month trial, by comparing the rates of cyberbullying in schools that had banned cell phones on school premises with control schools that had not. There was no discernible difference found in the rate of cyberbullying between the two groups of schools throughout the study. Since it is apparent that both parents and adolescents themselves prefer that the students have access to their phones at all times (Campbell, 2005), banning cell

phones from school premises serves no valid purpose except creating tension between the school and parents.

On the other hand, there is a lack of legal research on legislation against bullying in general (Chan, 2009). There is also limited empirical research that examines the impact of anti-bullying legislation (Shariff, 2008), though researchers are initiating studies to cover this scarcity in the literature (Stuart-Cassell, Bell, & Springer, 2010). For instance, when tabling legislation against bullying, there is a general assumption that adolescents would be deterred from participating in cyberbullying if they learned that the behaviors would result in criminal penalties. In spite of this, adolescents are known to be impulsive in nature so criminal penalties may not be as successful as a deterrent as one would expect (Campbell, 2013). The majority of students are aware that under-age drinking is a criminal offense, but this does not appear to deter certain adolescents. Therefore it would seem that any anti-cyberbullying laws may not be effective in stopping most adolescents in targeting one another online. Another complication arises when adolescents bully anonymously: they tend to believe that they are invisible and cannot be traced or punished for their actions (Kanani & Regehr, 2003; Ybarra, 2004).

There is also a gap in research that studies the effectiveness of implementing anti-bullying policies in school. Secondary schools that have consistently applied anti-bullying policies saw a decline in the rates of bullying (Glover, Cartwright, Gough, & Johnson, 1998). On the other hand, Woods & Wolke's study showed that there was no correlation between direct bullying and anti-bullying policies when schools with comprehensive anti-bullying policies were compared to schools with less established policies (2003). The discussion offers multiple explanations for the findings in this study, however, the authors conclude that anti-bullying policies were poorly applied and could be directed at general aggression and anti-social behaviour rather than bullying

(Woods & Wolke, 2003). The findings suggest a disparity between policies and their implementation in schools.

Cyberbullying has become an international problem for adolescents, with emerging research demonstrating that it has more adverse effects than traditional forms of bullying (Wang et al., 2010). Society has often tried to use legislation and school policies to try and reduce the harm of bullying. With the proliferation of technology, bullying has permeated private spaces and is no longer limited to just school grounds. Due to the accessibility of technology by youth, bullies are able to break down the safety barrier that used to be provided within the homes of youth which makes it even more of a concern for parents of current/potential victims (Ang & Goh, 2010). The adverse effects that result from cyberbullying could imply that intervention of criminal and/or civil law is appropriate. In Campbell's (2013) view, there is a need for more informed debate to implement different kinds of legislation. Essentially, Campbell claims that parliamentarians, judges and lawyers should be provided more education with regards to "the complexities of cyberbullying among young adolescents so that more informed decisions can be made on the bases of research" (P. 270, 2013). Though the law can make a significant contribution in reducing the prevalence of cyberbullying, it is not sufficient by itself. There is a gap in research that assesses the effectiveness of anti-bullying policies, both with the design and implementation of the content. A gap in research directed at understanding cyberbullying experiences and outcomes also exists, hence the need for exploratory phenomenological research to get insider perspective of the adverse effects of cyberbullying and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying programs, currently in place, in addressing these incidents (Beran, Mishna, McInroy, & Shariff, 2015).

Therefore, the purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences and strategies of a group of adolescents who have directly or indirectly encountered cyberbullying. This perspective should facilitate the understanding of why cyberbullying happens and how adolescents try to deal with it by exploring their online interactions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Phenomenology: Key Approach, Husserlian Origins, and Basic Concepts

The research design that was employed was guided by phenomenological research, a method of inquiry that focuses on “the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon described by respondents” (Cresswell, 2013). Phenomenology was developed by the philosopher Edmund Husserl, who believed that research should “discover the nature and meaning of things as they appear,” instead of explaining a phenomenon based on the interpretations of the researcher on how it should be (Moustakas, 1994, P. 25). Essentially, phenomenology depends on researchers remaining impartial by reserving their personal insights and experiences with the phenomenon in question, through the process termed “epoche” or “bracketing” (Cresswell, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). The data analysis procedures aim to recognize commonalities in terms of experience between the respondents and “reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence” (Cresswell, 2012, P. 76). Ultimately, the goal is for readers to come away with the sense that “I better understand what it is like for someone to experience that” (Polkinghorne, 1989, P. 46). In the case of this thesis, the goal is for readers to feel that they “better understand what students experience when they encounter cyberbullying directly and indirectly.”

Phenomenology can be defined as a philosophy and method of inquiry (Dowling, 2007; Giorgi, 2005; Moustakas, 1994). The goal behind utilizing this method of inquiry is to explore the essence of an individuals’ lived experiences of a particular phenomenon (Cresswell, 2007; Dowling, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1997). Phenomenologists aim to gain a more in-depth understanding of the parameters that define an experience valued by an individual. Their

research seeks to answer the questions “what is it that makes this lived experience what it is?” and “what meaning does it have in this individual’s life?” (van Manen, 1997, p.4).

Phenomenology has become an effective method of inquiry for qualitative research and it should continue to thrive as there is an abundance of phenomena that have yet to be discovered. Some ideal topics for phenomenological research could include significant changes in life course and transitions, creation and/or disintegration of relationships, emotions or sensations, development and significance of identities, or even mundane and overlooked experiences. Researchers often utilize phenomenology in the social and human sciences fields of study in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of the defining parameters of a profound experience and when traditional, scientific, or behavioural methods of inquiry will not suffice (Creswell, 2007; Giorgi, 2005; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology serves as a method of inquiry that offers insight for an individual’s interpretation of an experience under certain conditions. Phenomenological research is “discovery orientated” and generally does not aim to justify particular theories, hypotheses, or speculation (Creswell, 2007; Dukes, 1984; Finlay, 1999; Giorgi, 2005; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1997).

It is also essential to consider the historical roots of the phenomenological development. More specifically the work of the philosopher Edmund Husserl, who is acknowledged by phenomenological researchers as the founder of this field of research. Husserl believed that one should “discover the nature and meaning of things as they appear” when attempting to understand the meaning of lived experiences (Dowling, 2007; Giorgi, 2005; Moustakas, 1994, p.26). His philosophy is founded on the proverb “to the things themselves” (Dowling, 2007, p.132), which suggests one should “let the phenomena speak for themselves” in order to distinguish the essence of an experience (Moustakas, 1994, p.13), and it should not be influenced

by the researcher's bias. Nevertheless, a trademark of this philosophy is the concept of intentionality, or an acknowledgement that acts of consciousness are always performed as a response to some external object where one “thinks *of* something, feels *for* others and imagines things *about* and *beyond*” (Finlay, 1999, p.302). Intentionality is based on the unalterable link between consciousness and an object, hence neither one can exist without the other (Dowling, 2007; Finlay, 1999; Giorgi, 2005). Individuals are constantly interacting with their environment, and due to the fact that “objects and subjects cannot be separated,” their experiences of the phenomena in question are guaranteed to be meaningful to the individual (Finlay, 1999, p.302). In order to curb researchers' preconceptions or biases from altering the findings of the study, Husserl developed a strategy where the researcher utilizes processes of reduction so that “everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time” (Moustakas, 1994, p.34). Through reduction, the researcher portrays a description of the experience as conveyed by the respondents, while discounting the researchers' previous knowledge of the experience (Dowling, 2007, p.132; Giorgi, 2005; Moustakas, 1994).

van Manen (1997) points to the difficulty of discounting previous knowledge when he concludes that “the problem of phenomenological inquiry is not always that we know too little about the phenomenon we wish to investigate but that we know too much” (p.9). Essentially, for certain researchers, detachment or a new perspective on the phenomenon in question may be difficult to attain if it is too commonplace or has a vast influence (Moustakas, 1994). Due to the fact that one cannot entirely remove previously obtained knowledge about a phenomenon, Husserl developed a technique where a researcher can hold that knowledge “in abeyance,” known as the *epoche* (Creswell, 2007; Dowling, 2007; Moustakas, 1994, p.86; van Manen, 1997). However, the *epoche* is not a technique that aims to have the researcher achieve complete

objectivity of the phenomenon and/or to remove oneself from the study at hand (Creswell, 2007). As an alternative, the epoche dictates that the researcher is required to “refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things” (Moustakas, 1994, p.33). Researchers can implement the epoche technique through various means, such as through the use of a researcher's diary, where the researcher records their own presuppositions that dictate how they believe a phenomenon should be experienced. This allows the respondents' descriptions of their own experiences to emerge in their own right without being affected by the researcher's bias. Prior to conducting the study, the researcher explores his or her own personal knowledge of involvement with the phenomenon to clarify their “understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories” (van Manen, 1997, p.9), in order to “meet the phenomenon as free and as unprejudiced as possible” (Dowling, 2007, p.132). Epoche (also known as bracketing) can discourage the researcher from accidentally adding their own definitions, ones that are not apparent in the respondent's description of their experience, so that they simply “allow a phenomenon or experience to be just what it is” (Moustakas, 1994, p.86).

The researcher can then proceed with imaginative variation once they have successfully transcribed the descriptions of the phenomenon, as directly portrayed by the respondents, and connecting the descriptions with personal experiences. In Husserl's terms, imaginative variation involves identifying the fundamental parameters upon which an experience "hangs together" and renders it meaningful for individuals (Dukes, 1984, p.199). Researchers also employ imaginative variation when they differentiate between a phenomenon's fundamental parameters that remain consistent in every situation and those that are “incidental”, isolated, or unique to an individual (Dowling, 2007, p.133; Moustakas, 1994). Imaginative variation can bring researchers closer to the discovery of the essence that encompasses an experience. Dowling (2007) claims that

imaginative variation involves questioning oneself, "is this phenomenon still the same if we imaginatively change or delete this theme from the phenomenon?" (p.133). A researcher can finally proceed with data collection and analysis once they have acquired an adequate understanding of the ideas posited by those considered to be the original phenomenologists.

Though a general consensus for a universal method of conducting phenomenological research has yet to be determined, there are several notions that appear consistently among the various approaches that currently exist. For instance, phenomenology is founded on studying the lived experiences in the "lifeworld" (Creswell, 2007; Finlay, 1999; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1997). The "lifeworld" is composed of the environment that surrounds an individual, relationships, and an individual's internal psychological processes. Lived experiences then appear from existing in, interacting with and deduction of the "lifeworld".

A study can also be categorized under phenomenological research if it is concluded with a detailed description of the thematic constituents that encompass the essence of the experienced phenomena. The essence can be defined as "the condition or quality without which a thing would not be what it is", and it exposes what it is like to experience a distinct phenomenon, which in turn facilitates others to realize the implications it bears for the individuals who experienced it (Creswell, 2007; Dukes, 1984; Moustakas, 1994, p.100; van Manen, 1997. With regards to this study, the researcher strived to expose "the underlying conditions, precipitating factors, [and] structural determinants" governing how students react when directly and indirectly faced with incidents of cyberbullying (Moustakas, 1994, p.60).

Sample & Data Collection

Though phenomenological research tends to generally lack "a clear recipe for how to do flawless research", phenomenologists are usually inclined to follow a model that involves

selecting a phenomenon to study, bracketing personal insight, experience, and biases, collecting data from respondents, analyzing responses for important themes, and concluding with a detailed description of the thematic constituents that encompass the essence of the experienced phenomena (Dukes, 1984, p.202; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1997). Regardless of the variation in the researcher's approach for his or her study, he or she will always intentionally establish a sample of individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon, a method known as purposeful sampling. To be eligible for this study, respondents had to be enrolled at the University of Ottawa and have been exposed to bullying. Some studies have found that girls are more likely to experience relational bullying than their male counterparts, and due to the fact that certain studies have found that bullies tend to mainly target peers of the same gender, I attempted to present the experiences of both females and males in this study (Juliano, Werner, & Cassidy, 2006; Peets and Kikas, 2006; Von Marées & Petermann, 2010).

In order to obtain my sample, a researcher's account was made with the Integrated System of Participation in Research (ISPR) system, where my study was posted and made available to all students who were attending introductory psychology courses at the University of Ottawa. Students were able to register with the available timeslots that were provided on my study page. Although Cresswell (2007) recommends only interviewing ten respondents in order to "collect extensive detail about each site or individual studied" (P. 126), I arranged interviews with seventeen respondents to ensure that there was an adequate sample size. After the interviews were concluded, only ten were selected for the sample based on whether or not the respondents actually had direct or indirect experience with cyberbullying. The interviews took place over a two-month period during business hours in a study office that was located at the University of Ottawa. The sample included three men and seven women from diverse educational

backgrounds. While all the respondents overlapped in that they were attending psychology courses at the University of Ottawa, all respondents were enrolled in different programs of study.

Since the “researcher must allow the subjects to speak, in their own way and their own time, about those aspects of the experience in question that seem relevant to them,” the primary source of data collection consisted of 10 in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews (Dukes, 1984, p.200). Semi-structured interviews are composed of a number of key questions that help outline the areas to be studied, but also allows the interviewer or the interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. This interview format is used most frequently in healthcare, as it provides participants with some guidance on what to talk about, which many find helpful. The flexibility of this approach, particularly compared to structured interviews, also allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the research team (Gill, Steward, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). An interview protocol including a series of open-ended questions was prepared as a guide. The interviews were also tape-recorded for precision and for later transcription. The interviews varied in duration, with the shortest interview lasting approximately fifteen minutes and the longest lasting an hour and a half.

Once the data collection was complete, the researcher used "horizontalization" (Moustakas, 1994) to perform the data analysis. Through this process, the researcher was able to provide a description of “what” was experienced in textural descriptions and “how” it was experienced in structural descriptions. Textural descriptions are considered and additional meanings are sought from different perspectives, roles, and functions (Moustakas, 1994). This process of imaginative variation leads to the structural textures and then synthesize the descriptions into an all-encompassing account of the essence of the phenomenon.

Data Analysis

The bracketing method that was utilized involved the researcher recording their personal insights and opinions in a researcher's diary prior to, during, and after conducting the data collection and analysis. This technique allowed the researcher to remain self-reflexive throughout the study, when considering her role in the study, relation to the respondents, previous understanding of the phenomenon, and potential impact on the research data. The researcher's diary also consists of the search terms and databases that were consulted to obtain information for the literature review, observations of the respondents' body language, and suggestions for improvement in future studies that might be conducted by this researcher.

Respondents' responses were transcribed verbatim and then analyzed in accordance with Moustakas's (1994) method of horizontalization. This method of data analysis involves a thematic examination directed by the following question. "What statements or phrases seem particularly essential or revealing about the experience being described?" (van Manen, 1997, p.21). Horizontalization entails revising the transcripts, while extracting significant statements pertaining to the "horizons" or "textural qualities" of the phenomenon, in order to describe what was experienced (Moustakas, 1994, p.95). To begin, all of the extracted statements were ascribed equal value. However, upon further revision, some statements were deemed irrelevant and were subsequently eliminated "leaving only the *horizons* (the textural meanings and invariant constituents of the phenomenon)" (Moustakas, 1994, p.97; emphasis in original). The statements, or "horizons," were then grouped into broader categories, known as meaning units or themes. Meaning units can consist of words, phrases, or longer passages (Finlay, 2011). With the aim to define the parameters for a meaning unit, the researcher identified distinct shifts in meaning that were "clearly differentiated from that which preced[ed] and follow[ed]" (Hycner, 1985, p.282).

The researcher followed with dissecting the cluster of meaning units to determine if a “central theme expresse[d] the essence of these clusters” under which they could be grouped together (Hycner, 1985, p.290). Themes that proved to be irrelevant to the phenomenon were eliminated, after careful consideration of whether the experience of being a target of cyberbullying as an adolescent would change if the theme was removed (Hycner, 1985). The interpretive nature of the analytic process grants the researcher flexibility to exercise a certain degree of ““artistic judgment”” or ““creative insight”” (Hycner, 1985, p.288). With the remaining themes, the researcher assembled “a coherent textural description of the phenomenon” pertaining to “what” was experienced (Moustakas, 1994, p.97).

While Moustakas' (1994) method of data analysis concentrates on "what" happened, it also requires establishing “the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced” (p.99). Essentially, the researcher employed imaginative variation to acquire a structural description that illustrates "how" the phenomenon was experienced. When exercising imaginative variation, the researcher must consider imaginable possibilities, contexts, settings or conditions that produced the phenomenon, such as "time, space, materiality [and] causality" (Moustakas, 1994, p.99). At last, the final step of the data analysis included "the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement" describing the common elements of experience for the group and covers the “essence” of the experience (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994, p.100). The aim of this study requires that the readers come away with a sense that "I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that" (Creswell, 2007, p.62). More specifically, the goal of the study is for the readers to better understand the adversity adolescent online users can face when building relationships in cyberspace.

As discussed above, the researcher depended on peer reviews and elucidating researcher bias as methods to validate the reliability of this study (Creswell, 2007). For the peer review, the researcher justified the study methodology and interpretation of the data to a colleague who has a background in communications research but has no connection to the study. The colleague then prepared their own copy of written notes pertaining to the researcher's intended execution of the study, to ensure that the themes occurred in their own right and were not subject to the researcher's bias or predispositions. This colleague also ascertained that the structural and textural descriptions, overall essence, and interpretive discussion were validated.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Qualitative research has standards of trustworthiness like subjectivity, reflexivity, adequacy of data, and adequacy of interpretation (Morrow, 2005). Qualitative research accepts the subjective nature of data and analytic processes, unlike quantitative research (Morrow, 2005). Subjectivity is not controlled or limited but used as data as it enhances the quality of the research (Patton, 2002). The researcher's own experience and understanding of the world affect the research process. Therefore, *researcher's reflexivity* is an important approach for the researcher to understand his or her own effect on the research (Patton, 2002).

Reflexivity is the process of becoming aware of the researcher's assumption, predispositions, and personal experiences about research and making them overt to the self and others by *bracketing* (Fischer, 2009). Our theoretical framework was based on interpretative phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962) with hermeneutics. We used existential bracketing (Gearing, 2004). We set aside our suppositions and delineated our clinical interest as our research praxis for bracketing. By unbracketing during the reintegration stage (Gearing, 2004), we interpreted

the themes by taking into account our clinical and theoretical orientations. The different clinical orientations allowed us to interpret the experiences with cyberbullying better.

I (Bowie) will delineate my academic interest and experience with cyberbullying as research praxis for bracketing. My personal experience consists of being a victim of traditional forms of bullying throughout my childhood and some exposure to being cyberbullied as an adolescent. In this case, I can personally relate to some of the emotional and psychological distress that the participants may have endured when they were dealing with bullies.

My own research into the significance of cyberbullying experiences for students derives from an inherent passion to help adolescents who may not have had the same level of emotional support that I received when I was younger. As an adolescent, I struggled with developing my own identity but I was fortunate enough to have my mother help walk me through the trials of being a teenager. My research was also borne out of a personal interest in my consideration of becoming a secondary school teacher as a future career possibility. As a result, my research interests evolved to incorporate a desire to explore how the experience of adolescents with cyberbullying could serve as a source of inspiration for future educators, such as myself, in designing and implementing more effective educational programs for students.

To be transparent, I, as a 25-year-old woman who was exposed to technology at a young age, felt the same feelings related to cyberbullying perpetration with the respondents in this study. I was also under pressure of expectations related to social norms as a student in Canada. For example, I did not have the ideal physical features that helped me be socially compatible with my peers. Most students like me may feel ashamed of their body shape during their adolescence. That insider perspective may be an opportunity for me to conceptualize and understand shame related to cyberbullying perpetration for these students.

Being aware of our past experiences and clinical orientations, we focused on understanding students' lives and what students experienced from their own perspectives. By inductive emphasis, we tried to be flexible and open to the issues students expressed. For that purpose, I asked open-ended questions and conducted interviews to enable students to freely express themselves.

I also approached the research process reflexively by disclosing my emotions and using these in the analysis of these cases. I took notes about my emotions that were evoked during the interview. The two most prominent emotions that I felt during the interviews were empathy and admiration towards the participants. Throughout the interviews, repressed memories and sentiments from my past experiences with bullies were evoked. I was re-exposed to the self-blame that I was subjected to when I was being bullied, wondering why I couldn't belong to any social groups. I appreciated the reasoning behind why the students experienced certain emotions and why they chose their strategies to cope with bullying. In turn, I admired the strength that the respondents had developed to overcome the trials in their past. I also admired that they were able to speak openly about their experiences to me, as a perfect stranger. I used this interaction to better understand and conceptualize cyberbullying experiences of adolescents. I noted these emotions in the reflexive diary.

Another strategy for reflexivity is to consult a research team or peer debriefers (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999). Our research team included the researcher and a supervisor. The research team checked the transcripts and reflexive diary and discussed the themes. All themes were audited by the research team, which made the research process transparent, and the direct quotations for the themes enhanced credibility. Moreover, a deep understanding of participants'

meaning construction by taking into account culture and context improves the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Morrow, 2005).

Chapter 4: Findings

Data analysis generated 124 significant statements, which the researcher further examined to determine “whether there seem[ed] to be some common theme or essence that unite[d] several discrete units of relevant meaning” (Hycner, 1985, P. 281). The researcher categorized the significant statements into meaning units, from which the following four themes emerged: **online risk behaviour, perceived predictors of victimisation, response to cyber abuse, and justification for avoiding help-seeking behaviour.**

The first theme, **online risk behaviour**, encompasses the perceived effects of placing high significance for online interactions. The essence of this theme relates to students recognizing the Internet’s potential for negative online interactions. Students identify four factors that contribute to the prevalence and severity of cyberbullying incidents in their online interactions: connectivity, validation from bystanders, anonymity and accountability, and emotional development. Most of the respondents indicated that being cyberbullied was a learning experience for safely navigating the Internet and modified their subsequent online interactions as a result.

The second theme, **perceived predictors of victimisation**, demonstrates what students believe to be the characteristics that predict bullying victimisation. The essence of this theme describes what students understand of how cyberbullying perpetration is directed. Respondents see the bullies as enforcers of social norms. Students suggest that bullying is best addressed when the victim can recognize that it is not their own fault that they are being bullied. This is further defined by the students as the victim’s misperception of social norms.

The third theme, **response to cyber abuse**, describes the student impact experienced through the exposure to cyberbullying. Participants depict interactions leaving them with

negative emotions and several coping strategies were recognized. The essence of this theme is developed as a result of students experience with the phenomenon. Although the students expressed regret for the coping methods that they had chosen, such as displacing what they learned, they believe that they conducted themselves to the best of their abilities with the situation at hand.

The last theme, **justification for avoiding help-seeking behaviour**, explains what students believe to be important components to enhance help-seeking behaviour in adolescent victims. The essence of this theme illustrates why students did not seek help as a coping strategy for cyberbullying. Respondents claim that parents and educators need to be more engaged with students in order to build trust. The following discussion is designed to clarify and support the findings of this study. Direct quotes from interview transcriptions are offered to best represent the lived experience of the participants and highlight, through their own voice, how they experience and understand the phenomenon.

Theme 1 – Online Risk Behaviour

All participants agreed that the online environment has a high potential for becoming negative if it is not navigated carefully. Based on participants' responses, four aspects that can affect the Internet environment include: Connectivity, validation from bystanders, anonymity and accountability, and emotional development.

Connectivity.

While technological advances substantially altered how some respondents reported forming and maintaining relationships, for other respondents such developments simply became a tool to stay connected with their friends and family. Certain respondents who placed high importance on their online interactions and relationships tended to add more friends on *Facebook* and posted

more pictures and information on different social media sites. For some of the other respondents, online interactions had a low importance for them because their relationships were based offline, therefore the connectivity that social media offers was not essential.

The respondents who placed high importance on their online interactions and relationships noticed that their social media environment became hostile, on certain platforms, as they increased their connectivity. The respondents tended to encounter tension on social media platforms that had open forums, including: *ask.com*, *boysaskgirls.com*, *MSN* and *Facebook*. For example, Participant 4 depicted how she would “take pictures and throw it up on *Facebook*” without arranging her privacy settings first, which prompted her bullies to criticize her pictures. She had posted pictures of herself drinking with her friends, which she admitted might not have been a side of her that she would have wanted people to see since she actually considers herself as a “deep thinker”. The bullies made derogatory remarks towards her age; by calling her a “slut” and commenting on how she should “be ashamed” that she was drinking at such a young age.

Meanwhile, three other respondents encountered harsh comments pertaining to their body size when they posted pictures of themselves on *Facebook*. Participant 1 expressed regret for having uploaded a lot of “selfies” when he was larger since his pictures appeared to have provided a reason for his classmates to criticize him online. He explained that he used to be much larger back then, “almost 200 pounds”. The respondent also explained, “I don’t know why I would’ve posted those pictures of myself online. I don’t know what I was thinking”.

Another male respondent, participant 10, who had posted pictures of himself on *Facebook* was also taunted by his peers about his weight. Similar to most of the respondents, he found that the negative online experiences drastically changed how he used social media.

Maybe the first day I was a little more closed up but then it really changed how I used social media. You don’t want to post

that many photos, then you're insecure on the internet. I think that would happen to anyone who posts on *Facebook*, when they get comments like that they won't want to post as much.

Upon revising their list of friends on *Facebook*, some of the respondents realized that a lot of the people that they had added on their account were people that they "can't really talk to". The respondents recognized that being connected with a large number of acquaintances on social media and while still being able to maintain an amicable environment was idealistic at best.

Now I'm just a lot more selective with who gets to see who's in my life. Before, I was like "oh yeah let's add all of the people, let's all be friends". That's not even real first of all, they're not people you would have intimate conversations with. I probably only have 100 friends now on *Facebook*, and family. I'm very selective with what I post on *Facebook* now cause I'm worried about what people would think like "oh she's just trying to show off". People are going to take anything they want to spread rumours about you. (Participant 4)

As a result, certain respondents decided to reduce their online connectivity by moderating the amount of information and photos that they would post, and by deleting "friends" from their profiles to regain control over their social media environment. Two of the respondents, participants 5 and 6, who did not directly encounter cyberbullying, explained that their online experiences were mostly positive because they were very restrictive with their connectivity from the start. They took a proactive approach in regulating their own interactions in order to avoid making themselves susceptible to criticism or attacks online.

Even with the little access I had on the internet, I was careful with who I added on social media. I was always cleaning up my friend's list and if there was anyone who would say anything, I would delete the comment or block them. (Participant 5)

Participant 6 claimed that she would avoid posting pictures that would elicit negative comments and that she would keep interactions with strangers to a minimum. The respondent

clarified that she learned it was essential to be careful when interacting online due to the fact that the environment on the internet has the potential to become negative.

It's because I heard this story of a girl who got bullied online where she posted a picture of herself in a bikini online. Everyone would make negative comments but they would keep saying that "it's not that serious". Eventually the girl committed suicide and there were videos from her 'so-called' friends who kept talking about how she's a great person and stuff. It just makes me realize that there's a lot of negativity online.

When the respondents were approached about their beliefs pertaining to why the internet can become a negative environment, all of the respondents asserted that the lack of face-to-face aspect of online interactions was a significant factor that affected their interactions in this environment. When the immediate reaction of the message receiver is removed from the equation of communication, the respondents justified how it affected the limits that defined which messages were considered socially acceptable or not. Some of the respondents even claimed that they were guilty of sending negative messages without remorse since they did not see the receiver's reaction.

It's so easy, you can be a lot more impactful with your words. We could take our time to formulate "come-backs". There was this one incident where we targeted this one girl in our class and she printed the whole conversation out and showed it to the principal, then I was like "I'm done". My friends continued to troll people, but when you get it shown to your face you feel like an ass. I realized that it happened so fast and there was a face to who was on the receiving end. (Participant 4)

Basically, certain respondents placed high importance on their online interactions and relationships while others simply used the Internet as another tool for communication. Those who valued their online interactions were more likely to increase their online connectivity (i.e. adding more friends on Facebook, posting pictures frequently). Respondents soon discovered that increasing online participation also increased the chances that they encountered tension in their

online interactions. Respondents agreed that the lack of face-to-face aspect played a large role in influencing the Internet's volatile nature. They explain that the lack of immediate feedback alters the boundaries of social norms.

Validation from Bystanders.

Another aspect of social media that affected the setting of boundaries for socially-acceptable messages involved bystanders. When the respondents were asked about the importance of a bystander's role in cyberbullying, they concurred that they play a significant role in affecting the outcome of an online interaction. Based on the respondents' testimonies, four hypothetical scenarios were identified that can lead to two different outcomes for a potential cyberbullying situation: the perpetrator will continue with the cyberbullying or they will stop.

First, when the alleged perpetrator posts a message on a *Facebook* profile that is meant to criticize the receiver and gain approval (i.e. comments and/or "likes") from observers it can act as encouragement for the perpetrator to continue because they feel that they are "in the right".

In the second scenario, after a message is posted on a *Facebook* profile that does not warrant any negative or positive reaction from a third party, the perpetrator may interpret the silence as an affirmation that their actions are considered socially acceptable. This false sense of vindication was described by one participant as the feeling that they "had won".

The third scenario, again involves the perpetrator posting a message that does not instigate any negative or positive reaction from a third party. In this instance however, the perpetrator may interpret the situation differently in the sense that the lack of a reaction may discourage the perpetrator from continuing because their action did not activate the desired response.

In the fourth and last scenario, if the negative message inspires negative responses from a third party, the perpetrator will be informed or reminded that their behaviour is not considered socially acceptable and they will desist with any further action.

All respondents concurred that bystanders play a very important role in the nature of online interactions. Regardless of whether the bystanders play an active part in the interactions, their presence can give the cyberbullying an incentive to attack their victims because the bully will have an audience.

Anonymity and Accountability.

Upon further inquiry on the respondents' perspectives pertaining to the contributing factors that affect the online environment, some of the recipients revealed that anonymity also played a role in creating a negative environment on the Internet. Participant 3 depicted that anonymity completely redefines the social norms on the internet.

I was on the site called *girlsaskguys.com* where I posted a picture of myself, wanting to find out what strangers would think of me. I found that most of the comments were good some were really harsh, the filter thing really wasn't there. In real life you know the person and you know their motive but when someone just puts a username and they comment, you don't really know who they are or what they mean. In real life, even if someone doesn't like you, they're not just going to straight up say that they don't like you or list out everything they don't like about you but on social media they will.

Essentially, it was easy for the respondents to generalize the internet as a negative environment that redefines social norms due to factors such as lack of reaction and anonymity. Nevertheless, certain respondents divulged that they would have appreciated operative filter systems for the social media platforms when they were dealing with cyberbullies. Participant 3 described that she found the process was extensive when she tried to report her negative

encounters to *Facebook's* administration and was disappointed that they would not take responsibility for the content on their own website.

If [the post] doesn't fit in with their code of conduct, then they say "why don't you message the person that you think it's wrong?" But sometimes I don't really want to do that, I just want someone higher up to handle it because this is just wrong. Why would you let content like that on your site? I know I report a lot of stuff, then *Facebook* says "why don't you just block this person? Hide it from your timeline". What the hell is that going to do? It's still going to be there for people to see, if someone is being irresponsible they should block their accounts for a little while. Opinions are fine but sometimes people will just go online and troll.

Participant 1 also asserted that he found the reporting process for inappropriate behaviour on *Facebook* was extensive and ineffective. As a result, the respondent had deactivated his *Facebook* account and interacts with his friends on *Instagram* instead. He explained that due to the intricate privacy settings and lack of a comment board on *Instagram*, the site doesn't allow a lot of "room for bullying".

The nature of the Internet allows its users to hide behind screens, which tends to affect their behaviour as a result. Users tend to operate under the belief that they are completely anonymous; therefore there is low accountability for their actions online. Respondents felt that websites should take a more active with intervening when there is inappropriate behaviour on their platforms, in order to teach abusive users that these actions will not be tolerated by both the platforms and the victim.

Emotional Development.

When the respondents were asked what age they were permitted to access social media, some claimed they received access in elementary school while others only gained access in secondary school. To quantify: six of the respondents were allowed to access social media in

elementary school and the other four were only allowed to access it in secondary school. The six participants who were allowed access to social media in elementary school were also the ones who experienced cyberbullying in middle school. Some of the participants even experienced the bullying carry over into high school. Only one of the respondents who received social media access in high school actually experienced cyberbullying directly, while the other three students experienced it indirectly, either as bystanders or through their friends.

Emotional development also played a role as a contributing factor in how some of the respondents reacted to direct cyberbullying. When describing her experience on the forum *boysaskgirls.com*, participant 3 claimed that she received a mix of good and “very harsh” comments directed at the picture that she had posted of herself on the forum. At first, she felt confused about the negative comments from anonymous online users since it differed from the positive support that she was accustomed to by her friends and family. Eventually her confusion turned into self-doubt as the negativity “settled in” and the “insecurities started surfacing.”

I felt very hurt. It's one thing to know who you are, but when it's not who you are, what you've been trying to defend for so long is gone. You definitely start doubting yourself, “is this how people really see me?” The line between reality becomes really blurred, you start transferring those thoughts to real-life and you think that's what everyone thinks of you.

However, when asked how she would interpret the critical messages if she received them at her present age of 18, she explained that her reaction would be very different.

When you're 16, all you need is validation from others. Now I don't really care, we're all individuals for a reason. In my mind, they're wasting their time since they're so focused on me. How can they waste so much of their time focusing on someone else? I don't really like to approach my problems head on but I've been angry before, when you're angry with someone and they don't know, the anger just eats you up inside. In my mind, I'm powerful because they're dying on the inside and I'm living my

life to the fullest. I feel bad for them that they would let their anger consume them.

Participant 10 also claimed that his age did play a role in how he reacted to the bullying that he faced when he was 12 years old. He explained that the jokes about his weight had less of a negative impact on him as he got older since everyone “grew up and people realized that you can’t just say stuff like that to each other.”

When I got to Grade 7, so middle school, that was when it was bad. Also when you're in elementary school, it feels worse when you get these comments. At that age, you really care what people think about you, wanting to fit in is everything. If this happened to me last year, I wouldn't care.

During the interviews, a majority of the respondents revealed that they have younger siblings who were able to gain access to social media at younger ages than the respondents themselves. When the respondents were asked whether the same age standard should have been implemented for their younger siblings, they admitted that the same rules can’t apply because the generation is different. Participant 6 explained that social media devices were not necessary for maintaining her own friendships because they had a "life before the internet." However, the respondent maintains that if her parents had waited until her younger sister turned 16 before giving her a cellphone, then “she would’ve felt left out because all of her friends are using these devices already, she would be all alone”.

True to current statistics of social media users, respondents have also noticed that the age of people connecting to social media is getting younger with every year. Students expressed concern for this growing trend of increased connectivity in the younger generation since children are not emotionally equipped to handle online tension.

The first theme, **online risk behaviour**, encompasses the perceived effects of placing high significance for online interactions. The essence of this theme relates to students recognizing the

Internet's potential for negative online interactions. Students identify four factors that contribute to the prevalence and severity of cyberbullying incidents in their online interactions: connectivity, validation from bystanders, anonymity and accountability, and emotional development. Most of the respondents indicated that being cyberbullied was a learning experience for safely navigating the Internet and modified their subsequent online interactions as a result.

Theme 2 –Perceived Predictors for Victimisation

Popularity.

Analysis revealed frequent and common cyberbullying by both real-life acquaintances and friends, and those with whom relationships had developed online. For example, Participant 1 explained that he discovered one day that all of his classmates in Grade 7 had created a group on *Facebook* that was designed to openly mock him. They had modified his *Facebook* pictures with Photoshop and tagged him with derogatory names. The respondent was especially distraught when he found that some of his friends "liked and joined that group".

Cyberbullying is only one part of the whole bully system that I was enduring. Even one time my locker got glued and my seat and desk started to disappear. That was actually where it started, it then led to cyberbullying.

In the study group, cyberbullying among peers often related to sensitive issues such as physical characteristics, family history and popularity.

Promiscuity.

Cyberbullying related to promiscuity, with insults such as "cunt", "whore" or "slut" directed towards girls exclusively. For instance, Participant 7 described the torment that she endured in Grade 10 from her peers when they learned that she had cheated on a boyfriend. Despite the fact that the respondent told her boyfriend about the incident immediately after it

happened and they were able to keep an amicable relationship, her peers called her “slut” and “cunt” at school and online through platforms such as *Facebook* and *ask.fm* over a period of two years.

It was a mistake, I’m only human, but the way they kept bringing it up, they made me feel so bad about it. Then on top of that, being a girl you get called a whole bunch of bad names. Even if you dress normally, you get called bad names too. It made me feel like, basically what they were calling me, but I wouldn’t act in those ways. I just felt like everyone around me saw me as that, when it clearly wasn’t true.

Some of the female respondents also found that the bullies would use these terms as a fall-back insult against them and/or their friends, regardless of their promiscuity.

Yeah my best friend is really skinny and people kept saying that she has anorexia. They called her slut even though she wasn’t like that at all. They just judged her by seeing her, without trying to get to know her. (Participant 7)

Participant 4 depicted that she faced verbal attacks from a group of older girls who did not like that she was “talking to their guy friends”, so they would call her “slutty” when she was in Grade 7. The respondent explained how she was invited to random chat groups on *MSN* and the girls started attacking her on the chat. The respondent tried to stop the harassment by blocking the girls on *MSN*, but they eventually moved onto leaving negative comments on the pictures she posted on *Facebook*.

Physical Characteristics.

Both male and female respondents in the study were targets of criticisms about weight, which included terms such as “marshmallow”, “chubby” and “fat”. Participant 9 disclosed that she was constantly criticized by her peers about her weight when she was in Grade 7, which lasted until the end of Grade 9. She illustrated how her peers would send her messages on *MSN* and *Facebook* with comments telling her to “walk home, stop taking the bus” and that she

“should go to the gym”. For participant 10, he received negative comments such as "why would you post something like that?" and calling him "marshmallow" after he posted pictures of himself on *Facebook*. He described his size as an “easy way to get at me, it’s an easy thing to target.”

Family History.

Another criterion that instigated bullying for participant 2 was his family history. He claimed that both the online and offline bullying contributed to his “rough upbringing”. The respondent divulged that as a young child, he witnessed his mother get beaten by her boyfriend on multiple occasions. Eventually, he was taken away from his mother by social services and was placed in foster homes until his grandmother legally adopted him. His classmates constantly taunted him about his mother at school and then eventually online through *Facebook* messaging.

The second theme, **perceived predictors of victimisation**, demonstrates what students believe to be the characteristics that predict bullying victimisation. The essence of this theme describes how students understand cyberbullying. Respondents see the bullies as enforcers of social norms. Students suggest that bullying is best addressed when the victim can recognize that it is not their own fault that they are being bullied. This is further defined by the students as the victim’s misperception of social norms.

Theme 3 - Response to Cyber Abuse

The detrimental consequences of cyberbullying in this study were evident: they include feelings of depression, isolation, confusion, guilt, anger, fear and shame, as well as self-harm and withdrawal from peers and family.

The respondents described techniques to cope with cyberbullying, such as denying the seriousness of their experience and avoiding the person who abused them. Only a couple of the respondents actually confronted their bullies, and the respondents rarely mentioned seeking

support from adults such as parents, teachers, counsellors and law enforcement personnel. As a result, the respondents reacted to their experiences in three different ways: by confronting their bullies, by internalizing their emotions, or displacing what they learned (i.e. victims becoming bullies).

Confronting Perpetrators.

Two of the respondents, participants 7 and 9, confronted their bullies directly, each with a varying degree of intensity in their approach. Participant 7 ignored the bullies who targeted her online but confronted the ones who called her names directly to her face by asking them to stop calling her names and to apologize.

After a while you just crack and you tell them how it is. You tell them you don't want to deal with that anymore and you tell them to stop. I took [a boy's] hat, because he loves his hat. I told him to apologize to me or else I won't give him his hat back. It took him a whole day to apologize.

Participant 9 decided to take action after she discovered that she wasn't the only person who was being tormented by her bullies.

One of my friends has a social disorder; they would pick on her because of that. She would be really awkward around people; I got really frustrated, so I confronted them and asked "how would you like it if people messaged stuff about you, to you?"

The respondent depicted how she and her friend told every student in the school about being bullied, by posting the messages that they received from their bullies on their *Facebook* profile pages for everyone to see. The bullies tried to reverse the roles by telling their parents that they were being cyberbullied by the respondent and her friend, which led to their parents contacting the school.

Then the school intervened at that point because the parents went to the school, that's when the school told the bullies' parents that they were bullying us and that we were just trying

to defend ourselves. The school showed the parents the things that they would say to us and tell the parents that what they were saying to us was inappropriate. There was just an overall suspension for everyone that was involved, us and the bullies.

Internalizing Emotions.

Two other respondents internalized their emotions. Specifically, they chose not to confront their bullies or to come to terms with the emotions that they experienced. Participant 10 recounts the six months of harassment that he endured in Grade 7 when his peers mocked him for being overweight and for being new to the school. He explained that his peers left comments on his pictures on *Facebook* where they would call him “fat” and made other derogatory remarks. The respondent was made to “feel bad” that he was large and that his size made him an “easy target” for bullies. He didn’t talk to anyone about the bullying since he was worried about looking “weaker” than he did before. After the incident, the respondent was “a little more closed up” and it changed how he used social media. He wasn’t as comfortable with posting photos of himself online because he felt “insecure on the internet”. The participant internalized his emotions which resulted in self-blame and feelings of shame for posting pictures that could invite negative commentary from his peers.

Participant 3 also received negative commentaries after she decided to post a picture of herself on the public forum *girlsaskguys.com* with a caption that asked for the opinions of strangers of what their first impression of the respondent would be.

I found that most of the comments were good, but some were really harsh. The filter thing really wasn’t there. In real life, you know the person and you know their motive. When someone just puts a username and they comment, you don’t really know who they are or what they mean. In real life, even if someone doesn’t like you, they’re not just going to straight up say that they don’t like you or list out everything they don’t like about you but on social media they will.

The respondent explained that she felt confused, insecure, hurt and “singled out” when she read the harsh comments. Instead of seeking reassurance from her family and friends, the respondent accepted the comments to feed into her insecurities. Participant 3 also demonstrated internalizing behaviours because she experienced feelings of loneliness, self-doubt and vulnerability. Consequently, the respondent drafted a list of things that she wanted to change about herself, appearance-wise.

I just made a list of things that I’d like to change, ex. Eyebrows, face...I wanted makeup, certain earrings, certain clothes. It became an obsession. Every time I would think of something new, I would add to it. It wasn’t occasional, it was happening a lot. To the point where I would spend more time on the internet, and not on social media, looking through websites looking for things I want to make myself look better. When I did get my first job, I purchased a lot of cosmetics, fake nails and stuff.

Throughout elementary and secondary school, the respondent couldn’t “face the reality” of what she was enduring. She struggled to understand her emotions and couldn’t identify what she was going through, so she “wallowed” in her own depression.

Displacing Learned Behaviour.

Three of the respondents displaced what they learned, in the sense that their bullying experiences made their subsequent interactions more negative. Two of the respondents even became bullies themselves.

Participant 1 explained that he was originally bullied because he was overweight and unpopular. After he had lost weight, he became more superficial and wouldn’t talk to certain friends that didn’t meet his standards.

In Grade 11 I was pretty much such a mean, harsh person that I would not talk to anyone that was lower than me. Not lower than me...I was thinking “don’t talk to me if you’re crimping my cool”.

The respondent did eventually become less harsh but he explains that his judgmental attitude will still appear in his subconscious from time to time. He also felt little remorse for other peers who may be dealing with bullies and believes that it is the victim's own fault if they're friendless. Since he was able to "get out of this mess" then they should be capable of accomplishing the same thing by fitting in.

Participant 2, who was traditionally bullied and cyberbullied because of his familial circumstances, became a bully himself. The respondent explained that one of his peers had started a confrontation over *Facebook* messaging which prompted the respondent to threaten the instigator. The respondent started with threatening to harm the instigator through messaging then made several public posts with threats to harm him and his family. The instigator soon stopped answering the respondent and he felt like he "had won". That feeling of triumph quickly changed into regret when he walked into school the next day and there were police officers there to arrest him. The respondent faced six months of probation for his actions and the other student that was involved switched schools out of fear for his own safety. The respondent expressed regret when he admitted that "it was stupid, obviously it leads to consequences. If I were an adult, it would affect me forever".

Participant 4, who was targeted by a group of older girls because she was hanging out with their "guy friends", found that her subsequent offline and online interactions became negative.

There was this phase where I started to be a little more rude with people, my friends and I were like "if they can be assholes, we can be assholes back". It's so easy, you can be a lot more impactful with your words, we could take our time to formulating come-backs.

At one point, the respondent and her friends targeted a girl in their class through *MSN* messenger. The girl reacted by printing the whole conversation and showing it to the principal.

To resolve the issue, the principal gathered the respondent, her friends and the victim in his office for a private discussion. The victim told her side of the story and immediately started crying which led the respondent to feel sympathy and remorse. She realized that the situation affected the victim so much that she could not handle it on her own. The respondent explained that she "wasn't a mean person, it was a lot of peer pressure" that induced her to vent her negative emotions on the victim.

The third theme, **response to cyber abuse**, describes the student impact experienced through the exposure to cyberbullying. Participants depict interactions leaving them with negative emotions and several coping strategies were recognized. The essence of this theme is developed as a result of students experience with the phenomenon. Although the students expressed regret for the coping methods that they had chosen, such as displacing what they learned, they believe that they conducted themselves to the best of their abilities with the situation at hand. As a result, respondents described three different reactions to their experiences: they confronted their bullies, internalized their emotions or displaced what they learned.

Theme 4– Justification for Avoiding Help-Seeking Behaviour

Discussions of the implementation of programs in schools to educate children and adolescents about safe practices online led respondents to articulate their concerns about young internet users. Participant 4 claimed that the internet makes it “easy for kids to say that ‘it’s my space’ but they don’t really know what they’re doing.” Some respondents claimed that intervention from parents and educators is essential since negative online interactions can affect a user’s self-confidence.

I think [education] is important because you have little kids with technology that have access online. I think it’s important for parents too, you wouldn’t be an uncool parent if your kids don’t have Facebook at 11 years old. There’s a lot more vulnerability,

I wouldn't want my kid to grow up to second guess themselves all of the time.

Participant 5 assert that parents should take advantage of the parental controls available on certain websites and that they should keep an open channel of communication with their children to “make it easy for kids to talk to their parents” if they encounter problems online. She explained that her mother is a teacher who may not have been “tech-savvy” but was aware of the potential dangers of cyberbullying. The respondent was educated on how to identify and deal with different types of bullying, and she was also encouraged to be honest with her parents about her experiences. The respondent illustrates that her honesty was rewarding in the sense that her parents were able to eventually trust her with using social media responsibly without supervision.

In the same vein, the majority of respondents expressed gratitude when some were asked how they felt about their parent's high-level of involvement in their internet activities. Participant 9 justified that parental involvement is important because "parents can see things in a different way than kids do", children can often misjudge bullying as normal peer interactions, which can mentally harm them without their realization. Certain respondents agreed that parental involvement was also beneficial in providing emotional support to address cyberbullies, given that the experience can be "intimidating for some people."

However, most of the respondents had not disclosed their experiences of cyberbullying to an adult, even when they were deeply frightened. Upon further enquiry, it was determined that respondents did not want to tell their parents or educational staff about their negative experiences because they believed that they could handle the situation by themselves, they did not think that the adults would understand, they were not aware that resources were available to them and/or they did not trust those resources.

Independence.

Analysis showed that respondents were under the impression that they were capable of handling their situation alone for two reasons: they did not want to be helped out of a sense of pride, or they were in denial. When participant 4 was asked if she had ever thought of speaking with a teacher about her negative interactions, she rationalized that she never felt the need to tell her teachers or even her parents because she thought she would be able to take care of herself. She claimed that by not involving her parents, she could maintain her pride, as the Internet should be her own domain. She admitted that the "internet is kind of your control; you can talk to whoever you want. You walked into it yourself".

Participant 3 explained that she would report bullying incidents to her teachers whenever she witnessed it occurring with any of her other peers; however, she never reported her own incidents because she struggled to understand her own conditions. The respondent illustrated how her denial prevented her from recognizing her online interactions as cyberbullying. Instead of seeking help for the negative comments that she received for the photo she posted of herself on social media, she internalized her feelings of concern and disappointment. From a first-person perspective, she believed that the negative interactions were considered "normal".

I didn't necessarily see what I was going through, but it was reflected in other people. Other people couldn't tell when they were going through it so I tried to help them and make friends with them. Maybe I just didn't want to face the reality of what I was going through. The group of people were just so much more powerful, I knew that if I stood up for myself then I might have a lot more consequences.

She also claimed that she was not comfortable with reporting the incidents because she was scared that it could cause the bullying to worsen. The respondent described herself as a quiet person so she was worried that by reporting the bullies, she would draw a lot of unwanted

attention. This also plays into the general perspective of the respondents that parents/educational staff would not understand the situation or how to address it in the most efficient manner.

Disconnection with Adult Perspectives.

Certain respondents were uncomfortable with the idea of telling their parents, for fear that their parents would not understand the gravity of the situation and would undermine the emotions that the respondents experienced as a result of these encounters. Participant 9 blamed herself for being an easy target of bullying due to her body weight, and was worried her mother would just reaffirm this notion if the respondent were to report the incidents to her.

I felt like if I could improve myself then there wouldn't be a reason for them to bully me, so there wouldn't be a reason to tell my mom. I thought that if I told my mom she might tell me the same thing, I didn't want people to confirm that it was my own fault. So I figured that I would keep it to myself and try to fix myself.

Participant 10, who was also taunted for his body weight, defended his decision to remain silent about the bullying he faced due to the fact that he knew his mother would just advise him to ignore the comments, which he did not think would be very helpful.

The preferred approach by respondents to cope with their negative online interactions was to confide in their friends. Participant 7 maintains that, despite growing up with a very nurturing family, she felt more comfortable in talking to her best friend than to her parents. She illustrated how her best friend recognized that she was exhibiting signs of depression and encouraged her to contact him whenever she felt sad so that he could help make her "feel positive" and "to smile". The respondent clarified that her parents also noticed that she was exhibiting signs of depression, however they never approached her to discuss it because they wanted to give her the space and opportunity to approach them herself. When the respondent was asked if she would have

preferred that her parents reached out to her instead, she admitted that she would have liked it if they had at least inquired about her well-being.

After further analysis, it was apparent that several respondents would rather be approached by parents and/or educational staff than having to reach out for help. Participant 4 affirms that active adult intervention would have been beneficial in helping her realize that she was not the "only one suffering from this ordeal". Participant 10 asserts that he would have appreciated if his teachers were able to recognize that he was being bullied and respond to it. He rationalizes that this would have helped alleviate his worry about being labelled a "snitch", which could subject him to more intense bullying, since he would not have to approach the educational staff himself.

Participant 9 even expressed her frustrations towards her teachers for not being able to identify that she was being bullied.

My elementary school, I was bullied all throughout and my teachers didn't even recognize it, they didn't know the signs. I don't know what it was, but they didn't have an idea on how to see the signs. I feel disappointed because it starts with your parents and teachers, they're the one that are supposed to make a difference when you're young.

Lack of Awareness and/or Trust for Available Resources.

Upon further inquiry of why the respondents did not seek help from counsellors or teachers from their schools, certain respondents claimed they were not aware resources were available to them, while the majority of the respondents stated that they did not trust educational staff. Participant 1 explained that he never sought assistance from a guidance counsellor due to the experience his friend had, which consisted of the guidance counsellor breaching the client confidentiality agreement. He portrayed how his friend sought advice from the guidance counsellor after having sex with his girlfriend without protection in Grade 7 and was assured that the information shared during the session would not be divulged to his or his girlfriend's parents.

The counsellor suggested that he should bring his girlfriend with him to the second session so that she could better provide advice for both parties, at which point the couple discovered that both their parents were invited to the discussion. The respondent expressed frustration towards the counsellor, claiming that "those people are such liars when they say everything is confidential, I mean, that girl just wanted to know what pill she needs to take".

Participant 7 asserted that her friend was bullied for being underweight which involved accusations of being anorexic and peers calling her a "slut". The respondent claimed that her friend was approached by one of the guidance counsellors who asked if she "had anorexia and she told her to have a burger". As a result, the respondent felt betrayed by the guidance counsellor because she re-iterated the comments from the bullies instead of trying to help her friend deal with the bullies.

The school would have presentations about cyberbullying, sexual abuse, anything you could think of to do with bullying. The fact that a staff member were to do that, it's contradictory to what they're trying to teach us so why should we follow?

Participant 9 addressed her bullies by posting the messages she received from them on her *Facebook* profile page, as a means to raise awareness to her situation, since she felt that reporting the bullies to educational staff was not a viable option. The respondent explained that the school originally did not have an anti-bullying program in place but was forced to implement one as a result of the incident that was caused by the respondent. Eventually, the school organized an assembly where a police constable was invited to give a presentation on cyberbullying and group activities were arranged to encourage student participation in learning about bullying. The respondent claimed that she participated in the program but was disappointed with the approach:

I tried to participate in one in grade 10, I felt like it was kind of effective but it didn't give kids a way to protect themselves against bullies. It didn't really teach any strategies, where you

can go if you can go to anybody in the school. Didn't tell kids who they can turn to for help when dealing with cyberbullies, I didn't know so I had to resort to doing what I had to do. Even though what I did wasn't a hundred percent right, but I stopped it nonetheless. They wouldn't teach us how to treat it, only that we should value ourselves. They would say anything that a regular anti-bullying campaign does, not really catered to cyberbullying, they'll just explain what it is. They need to give something like "if you get cyberbullied, this is what you need to do.

The last theme, **justification for avoiding help-seeking behaviour**, explains what students believe to be important components to enhance help-seeking behaviour in adolescent victims. The essence of this theme illustrates why students did not seek help as a coping strategy for cyberbullying. In spite of the fact that most of the respondents were deeply frightened and/or distressed as a result of their negative online experiences, there was a general consensus that disclosing the incidents to a parent or educational staff was not a viable option. It was determined that respondents did not want to tell their parents or educational staff about their negative experiences because they believed that they could handle the situation by themselves, they did not think that the adults would understand, they were not aware that resources were available to them, and/or they did not trust them. Respondents claim that parents and educators need to be more engaged with students in order to build trust.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences and strategies of a group of university students who have directly or indirectly encountered cyberbullying, where half of the respondents had direct experience while the other half experienced cyberbullying indirectly. I was interested in discovering how students describe their interactivity with cyberbullying. This offers relative insight for researchers, academic executives, teachers, parents and students. My research intent was for study findings to augment the body of knowledge surrounding students and cyberbullying. The lived experiences of 10 involved student participations from the University of Ottawa were captured through face to face interviews, categorized into four emergent themes. For the purpose of this study, the following questions helped establish the research schema and to further the analysis: a) What was the student experience during their encounters with cyberbullying? b) How did students react to cyberbullying and how did it influence their subsequent online and offline behaviour? c) On which online platforms did students encounter cyberbullies and who was involved? d) What strategies did students use to address the problem and what was the outcome? This chapter weaves together the literature and findings, discusses practitioner based implications, and makes a case for future research.

Findings in the Context of the Literature

Previously, in Chapter Two, I presented a foundation of literature for positioning the study within a framework of existing publications involving both students and university presidents. Empirical studies spanning student trends, social norms theory, online disinhibition theory, social balance theory, the historical underpinnings of cyberbullying, and the consequences of cyberbullying now serve as the collective lens for vetting my findings. Relative literature is utilized to help develop meaning around the themes that emerged in this study. This study aims

to add to the existing literature that seeks to understand the direct and in-direct experiences of students with cyberbullying.

My first theme represented in the study, **online risk behaviour**, encompasses the perceived effects of placing high significance for online interactions. As suggested, one of the goals of this project is to determine predictors of cyberbullying perpetration. Many participants in my study attributed their encounters with online tension to connectivity, validation from bystanders, anonymity and accountability, and emotional development.

Findings in the first sub-theme, **connectivity**, parallel the research-based assertion that the Internet has a high potential for becoming negative if it is not navigated with care. The Social Balance Theory describes that any imbalance of interests in a triadic person dynamic becomes a strongly aversive experience that would require action in order to maintain network stability (Cartwright & Harary, 1956; Davis, 1979; Heider, 1958). Essentially, randomly balanced states are uncommon in the sense that if one were to spontaneously assign relationships in a social network, the likelihood that this particular society is balanced would diminish exponentially in relation to system size. Similarly, respondents in my study who purported having large networks and actively posting on their social media also described encountering online tension. Binder, Howes, and Smart (2011) assert that maintaining independent social spheres is essential for maintaining social harmony in networks. The respondents tended to encounter tension on social media platforms with open forums which includes; *ask.com*, *boysaskgirls.com*, *MSN* and *Facebook.com*. This evidence suggests corresponding similarities to the research regarding the relationship of user connectivity and potential to encounter online tension.

The second sub-theme, **validation from bystanders**, is centered on the students' perspectives of the role bystanders play in cyberbullying. My findings compared to some of the

cyberbullying pervasiveness principles outlined by Azjen (1988), Olweus (2001) and, Salmivalli & Voeten (2004). Evidence of social contagion, diffusion of responsibility and friends' expectations were noted throughout my data analysis. With regards to social contagion, Olweus (2001) suggests that there are students who would not instigate, but keenly take part in bullying when someone else commences it. Evidence was present in my study confirming that most of the students believed that approval gained from observers (i.e. comments and/or "likes") during cyberbullying incidents can act as encouragement for the perpetrator's behaviour. Looking at diffusion of responsibility, Salmivalli and Voeten (2004) proposes that when there is a large group that takes part in the bullying, the sense of responsibility to stop the commotion dissipates and feelings of guilt are reduced. Students observed that with cyberbullying, it is easy to attain a large audience. In combination with the perception that observers are not physically identifiable, this becomes even simpler for bystanders to absolve themselves of all responsibility to intervene. In terms of friends' expectations, Azjen (1988) implies that it is assumed that the influence of others can be mediated through beliefs about how others think one should behave in particular situations. For instance, if bystanders were expected by their friends to support bully victims, bullying would be less likely to occur. This also applies to the bully in the sense that if the general perspective of their peers is that cyberbullying is bad, then bullies will be less tempted to attack someone, especially on public online platforms.

The third sub-theme emanating from the data, **anonymity and accountability**, examined the students' perspectives of the role anonymity and accountability play in cyberbullying. My findings correspond with the research based assertion that the lack of immediate emotional feedback aspect of online interactions may foster cyberbullying. Suler (2004) described a phenomenon called the Online Disinhibition Effect where people tend to act in ways in

cyberspace that they would not normally do in the face-to-face setting. Participants in my study depict that anonymity completely redefines the social norms on the internet; online users seemed to communicate without the social filters that are present in regular face-to-face interactions. Respondents explain that online user's anonymity allows them to avoid the consequences of disorderly conduct if they were identifiable. Basically, this gives users a perceived lack of accountability that could encourage acts of cyberbullying. To address issues of user anonymity, respondents suggested that they would appreciate the presence of operative filter systems for the social media platforms as a means to teach abusive users that their inappropriate actions have consequences.

The last sub-theme derived from the data, **emotional development**, assessed how students understand the role that age can take part in how cyberbullying is identified and responded to. My findings correspond with the results obtained in previous studies (i.e. Slonje and Smith, 2007) where the majority of the students were more likely to experience bullying in middle school and in the earlier years of secondary school. A certain number of participants even experienced the bullying carry over from elementary school into secondary school.

A number of students also explained that their age was a contributing factor in how they reacted to direct cyberbullying. Respondents explained that they would not be as personally offended if they were to face cyberbullying at their current age than when they were adolescents or children. This may be due to the fact that students had not yet established their self-identities and were not as proficient with navigating social media. Monks, Mahdavi and Rix (2016) noted in their findings that it was possible that some children may be vulnerable to cyberbullying due to their lack of understanding about the Internet's potential, essentially navigating it naively, which was also reflected in my participant data.

Monks, Mahdavi and Rix (2016) also found that having an older sibling acted as an external factor which impacted children's interest in ICT. It also acted as a means to increase a child's access since older siblings pass their devices down to their younger siblings. The majority of the respondents in my study identified themselves as the elder sibling in their family, however, they attributed the increased ICT access of children to the fact that their younger siblings are from a different generation.

The second theme reflected in the data set, **perceived predictors of victimisation**, demonstrates what students believe to be the characteristics that predict bullying victimisation. Findings from the data are equivalent to the logic and framework of the social norms theory which considers that adolescent networks have established peer norms for adolescent behaviour that could also exist on the Internet. One of the principles of social norms theory is that "peer influences may actually result from *perceptions* of peer attitudes and behaviors rather than from actual peer behavior" (Perkins & Berkowitz, 1968, p. 962). In the same vein, participants described cyberbullying among peers often being related to sensitive issues such as physical characteristics, family history and popularity. Meanwhile, cyberbullying related to promiscuity were directed at girls exclusively. Respondents were made to believe that bullies were the enforcers of the social norms since bystanders usually sided with the perpetrators instead of sympathizing with the victims. Peers generally hold the victims of bullying responsible for violating peer norms since they are considered abnormal (Terasähjo & Salmivalli, 2003). My study indicates that students were subjected to feelings of self-blame for not having the ideal body shape, nuclear family structure or relationship status. These findings parallel the premise of how adolescents perceive cyberbullying as a tool to enforce social norms instead of as inappropriate aggression.

The third theme, **response to cyber abuse**, describes the student impact experienced through the exposure to cyberbullying. Data collected from the respondents in this study support the findings from previous research of the negative impact that cyberbullying poses for victims. Participants who directly experienced cyberbullying expressed feelings of depression, isolation, confusion, guilt, anger, fear and shame, as well as self-harm and withdrawal from peers and family. These effects can be mitigated with beneficial coping strategies. Lazarus and Folkman outline in their Transactional Model of Stress (1987) that individuals who use problem-focused coping strategies are more successful in adapting to stressful situations compared to individuals that use passive emotion-focused coping strategies. Respondents in this study conveyed using both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies having responded to cyberbullying in three different ways: by confronting their bullies, internalizing their emotions, or displacing what they learned (i.e. victims becoming bullies).

Only two of the respondents state that they had taken a problem-focused coping strategy by confronting their bullies face-to-face, each with a varying degree of intensity in their approach. Initially, the two students felt that there was a lack of support from their peers when facing cyberbullying. However, after they had faced the perpetrators, they were able to make friends and learned that peers did in fact sympathize with them. The respondents realized that their peers were either just unaware that they needed support and/or that they were too afraid to stand up to the bullies themselves. Similar to the Transactional Model of Stress (1987), students articulated higher levels of satisfaction after using the problem-focused coping strategy.

Another two respondents chose to use passive emotion-focused coping strategies by internalizing their emotions. Students were concerned with seeming "weak" and they did not recognize criticisms towards their appearance as inappropriate aggression. As a result,

respondents were subjected to feelings of self-blame, insecurity, loneliness, self-doubt and vulnerability. These findings are comparable to the results found in Lodge and Frydenberg's (2007) study that confirm the use of apprehensive (i.e. worrying and self-blame) or avoidant (i.e. ignoring or withdrawing from loved ones) coping strategies can lead to a poorer well-being.

The last three respondents, who directly experienced cyberbullying, displaced what they learned. Essentially, the subsequent interactions of these students became negative and two of them even became bullies themselves. This is comparable to the study that was conducted by Dehue, Bolman and Völlink (2008) which verified that victims tend to respond to cyberbullying by pretending to ignore it, actually disregarding it or by retaliating, making them bully-victims. These respondents were subsequently punished for cyberbullying, and they quickly regretted using this coping method. Their punishment, as a result of their actions, became a learning experience that taught them how to identify inappropriate aggression.

The final theme, **justification for avoiding help-seeking behaviour**, explains what students believe to be important components to enhance help-seeking behaviour in adolescent victims. The essence of this theme illustrates why students did not seek help as a coping strategy for cyberbullying. Respondents conveyed that they did not want to tell their parents or educational staff about their negative online experiences because they believed that they could handle the situation by themselves, they did not think that the adults would understand, they were not aware that resources were available to them, and/or they did not trust them.

A student's desire for independence is an important factor that impacts the rate that cyberbullying is reported. Analysis showed that respondents were under the impression that they were capable of handling their situation alone for two reasons: they did not want to be helped out of a sense of pride, or they were in denial. Students rationalized that the Internet is their own

domain and by seeking help from an adult for cyberbullying may signal that they are not ready to use the Internet without supervision. In turn, this could cause students to lose their Internet access. These testimonies are similar to the findings in Jackson, Cassidy and Brown's (2009) study which identified that students do not report cyberbullying for fear of losing access to technology. Respondents also explained that they did not report incidents because their denial prevented them from recognizing the negative online interactions as cyberbullying. For one participant in particular, her fear of retaliation from the bullies fed into her denial which made it even more difficult for her to identify and face cyberbullying. Beran, Mishna, McInroy, and Shariff (2015) explain that online interactions may be a reflection of the complex power-dynamic that already exists in peer relationships at school. Fear of retaliation from bullies is also associated with the following reason for non-report of cyberbullying, disconnection with adult perspectives.

The majority of the respondents justified that reporting cyberbullying incidents to an adult would not help the situation because their parents would not understand the gravity of the situation and would undermine the negative emotions as a result of these encounters. The respondents' testimonies are analogous with findings from previous studies that recognized students do not report bullying for fear of not believed or the situation being trivialized (Agatston et al., 2012; Campbell, 2005; Jackson et al., 2009; Smith, 2012; Smith & Slonje, 2010; von Marées & Petermann, 2012). Instead, students tend to seek help from their friends because they felt that their friends would be more sympathetic to their situation. Further analysis revealed that respondents would have preferred being approached by parents and/or educational staff because it would have helped them recognize that cyberbullying should not be a normal occurrence.

Participant 10 claims that this would have eased his concern of being labelled a “snitch” which also confirms some of the findings attained in previous studies.

Finally, respondents did not seek help from educational staff because they were either not aware that resources were available to them or that they did not trust them. Students in Agatston, Kowalski and Limber’s (2012) study cited that they lacked confidence in educators’ ability to understand or address cyberbullying appropriately which is in line with some of the findings in this study. Two respondents recounted incidents in their past where their friends tried seeking help from educational staff but only had their situations get worse. These experiences, in turn, deterred them from confiding in educational staff when they were dealing with their own cyberbullying incidents because they did not want to encounter the same results. Participant 9, on the other hand, found that the educational staff was not competent enough to address her encounters with cyberbullying since an anti-bullying program does not even exist at her school. This ultimately triggered her drastic reaction to get all of her peers in school involved as she publicly confronted her bullies. Although an anti-bullying campaign was eventually implemented at her school as a direct result of the incident instigated by Participant 9, she still felt that the school is not properly equipped to handle bullying incidents in school. The general consensus among respondents is that schools are not adequately training their educational staff to address bullying appropriately.

Effectively, four themes emerged from the data: online risk behaviour, perceived predictors of victimisation, response to cyber abuse, and justification for avoiding help-seeking behaviour. The majority of the findings from this study confirmed results that were obtained in previous studies.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Ultimately, the purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences and strategies of a group of university students who have directly or indirectly encountered cyberbullying. In addition, this study aimed to gain a better perspective on the experiences with online interactions of young adolescents. My investigation utilized phenomenological methodology to form descriptive themes. I interviewed 10 University of Ottawa students who self-identified as having been directly or indirectly involved with cyberbullying. Direct exposure to cyberbullying was defined in this thesis as individuals who were victimized while indirect exposure encompasses participants who were bullies, bystanders or friends of bully victims.

My findings revealed four themes relating to how students experience and understand cyberbullying: **online risk behaviour, perceived predictors of victimisation, response to cyber abuse, and justification for avoiding help-seeking behaviour**. Students learned valuable lessons from their experiences with cyberbullying. They were eventually taught how to identify online aggression and realized which coping methods were the most effective in addressing cyberbullying. Students also discovered that the Internet has an environment with high potential for becoming negative if it is not navigated carefully and it is easy to forget how to behave properly when communicating with someone behind a screen. Respondents also provided valuable data that pinpoint ways to address the problem of under-reporting of cyberbullying incidents.

This research project has provided insight into how students experience and understand cyberbullying. The purposeful design focused on capturing the voice of the participants. The involved students interviewed each shared valuable perspective into the phenomenon. Their

stories demonstrate that cyberbullying is a very real concern for students, educators, policy makers and parents. This study offers more perspectives about what factors are likely to deter students from using or seeking assistance from some of the resources that are currently in place to address bullying. That is, participants in the current study illuminate some of the lived pasts, current realities, and needs or desires of students who are faced with cyberbullying, which may help parents and educators to revise their approach with educating students about online safe practices.

Recommendations for Further Research

The value of this study can be judged by its attempt to contribute to existing literature pertaining to the need for research that explores the adverse effects of cyberbullying as told by students. Limitations involved with my study include limiting factors specific to phenomenological investigations. From a design standpoint, a potential limitation is the lack of consistency in the sample. That is, the results of the study may have been different had there not been such diversity in the countries where respondents resided when they encountered negative online interactions (i.e., Hong Kong versus Canada). However, this presents opportunities for expanding the research in the future.

In terms of logistical limitations, while recruiting participants with the Integrated System of Participation in Research (ISPR) offered by the University of Ottawa was convenient, there were still some complications with obtaining information from eligible candidates. ISPR is accessible to students who are in first year psychology classes, and due to the fact that students were awarded credits in their courses for their participation in a study that is listed on the program, there was a high volume of students who registered for the study despite not meeting the eligibility criteria. Essentially, there were a large number of candidates who participated in the

study despite never having experienced cyberbullying. Due to the fact that the time period for recruiting participants was limited, it prevented the researcher from recruiting more eligible candidates in order to obtain substantive data.

I recommend future studies use a different recruitment method for study participants, and to focus solely on collecting testimonies from victims of cyberbullying. While my research findings support the negative impact associated with cyberbullying, there is a lack of richness in testimonies from students who have directly experienced cyberbullying.

In essence, most findings of this study seem to correspond with empirical evidence from previous research. According to the respondents' testimonies, most of the students learned valuable lessons such as how to identify online aggression and effective coping methods for cyberbullying. Based on these findings, further in-depth research should explore the development of programs aiming to better prepare students for managing their online interactions and navigating the Internet despite the fact that most of the respondents advised that there needs to be a focus on training educators and creating better programs for educational staff to combat cyberbullying in schools. Since the majority of the respondents claimed that they would not seek help from an educator or a guardian, evidence-based approaches that are intended to proactively reach out to students with tools to prepare themselves may prove to be more effective than shifting the focus solely on educational staff.

References

- (2013, April 9). Rape, bullying led to N. S. teen's death, says mom. *CBC*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/rape-bullying-led-to-n-s-teen-s-death-says-mom-1.1370780>
- Abell, P. & Ludwig, M. (2009). Structural Balance: A Dynamic Perspective. *Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, 33, 129-155.
- Acquisti, A. & Gross, R. (2006). Imagined communities: Awareness, information sharing, and privacy on the Facebook. In *PET2006, LNCS 4285*, eds G. Danezis & P. Golle, Springer, Berlin, 36-58.
- Agatston, P., Kowalski, R., & Limber, S. (2012). Youth views on cyberbullying. In J. W. Patchin, & S. Hinduja (Eds.), *Cyberbullying prevention and response: Expert perspectives* (pp. 57–71). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ang, R. P. & Goh, D. H. (2010). Cyberbullying Among Adolescents: The role of affective and cognitive empathy, and gender. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 41, 387-397.
- Antal, T., Krapivsky, P. L., & Redner, S. (2006). Social Balance of Networks: The Dynamics of Friendship and Enmity. *Physica D*, 224, 130-136.
- Antoniadou, N. & Kokkinos, C. M. (2015). Cyber and school bullying: Same or different phenomena? *Aggression & Violent Behavior*, 25, 363-372.
- Aoyama, I., Utsumi, S., & Hasegawa, M. (2012). Cyberbullying in Japan: Cases, government reports, adolescent relational aggression and parental monitoring roles. In Q. Li, D. Cross, & P. K. Smith (Eds.), *Cyberbullying in the global playground: Research from international perspectives* (pp. 183-201). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Azeredo, C. M., Rinaldi, A. E. M., de Moraes, C. L., Levy, R. B., & Menezes, P. R. 2015. School

- bullying : A systematic review of contextual-level risk factors in observational studies. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 22, 65-76.
- Azjen, I. (1988). *Attitudes, personality, and behavior*. Milton-Keynes, England: Open University Press & Chicago, IL: Dorsey Press.
- Baldry, A. C., Farrington, D. P., & Sorrentino, A. (2015). “Am I at risk of cyberbullying”? A narrative review and conceptual framework for research on risk of cyberbullying and cybervictimization: The risk and needs assessment approach. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 23, 36-51.
- Baldry, A. C., Farrington, D. P., & Sorrentino, A. (2016). Cyberbullying in Youth: A pattern of disruptive behaviour. *Psicología Educativa*, 22, 19-26.
- Bargh, J. A., Mckenna, K. Y. A., and Fitzsimons, G. M. (2002). Can you see the real me? Activation and expression of the ‘true self’ on the internet. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58(1), 33-48.
- Barkoukis, V., Lazuras, L., Ourda, D., & Tsorbatzoudis, H. (2016). Tackling Psychosocial Risk Factors for Adolescent Cyberbullying: Evidence from a School-Based Intervention. *Aggressive Behavior*, 42(2), 114-122.
- Bayraktar, F., Machackova, H., Dedkova, L., Cerna, A., & Sevcikova, A. (2014). Cyberbullying: The discriminant factors among cyberbullies, cybervictims, and cyberbully-victims in a Czech adolescent sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 30(18), 3192-3216.
- Beaudoin, H. & Roberge, G. (2015). Student Perceptions of School Climate and Lived Bullying Behaviours. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 174, 321-330.
- Beran, T., Mishna, F., Mcinroy, L. B., and Shariff, S. (2015). Children's experiences of cyberbullying: A Canadian national study. *Children & Schools*, 37(4), 207-214.

- Beran, T., & Li, Q. (2008). The relationship between cyberbullying and school bullying. *Journal of Student Wellbeing*, 1(2), 16-33.
- Bhattacharjee, K. (2003). The Ontario Safe Schools Act: School Discipline and Discrimination. *Ontario Human Rights Commission*. Retrieved August 1st, 2016.
- Bill 13: *Accepting Schools Act*. (2012). 1st Reading, November 30, 2011, 40th Parliament, 1st Session. Ottawa: Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Retrieved May 21st, 2016 from http://ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2549&detailPage=bills_detail_debates
- Binder, J. F., Howes, A., & Smart, D. (2011) Harmony and tension on social network sites: side-effects of increasing online interconnectivity. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(9), 1279-1297.
- Blumenfeld, W. J. (2005). Cyberbullying: A new variation on an old theme. Paper presented at CHI 2005 Abuse Workshop Portland, OR. Retrieved from <http://www.agentabuse.org/papers.htm>
- Boase, J., Horrigan, J. B., Wellman, B. & Rainie, L. (2006). *The Strength of Internet Ties*, Pew Internet & American Life Project, Washington, DC.
- Bosworth, K., Espelage, D. L., & Simon, T. R. (1999). Factors associated with bullying behavior in middle school students. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 19, 341-362.
- boyd, d. (2006) Friends, Friendsters, and MySpace Top 8: writing community into being on social network sites. *First Monday*, 11. Retrieved from http://www.firstmonday.org/ISSUES/issue11_12/boyd/index.html
- boyd, d. & Ellison, N. B. (2008). Social network sites: definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13, 210-230.

Brewer, M. B. (1991). The social self: On being the same and different at the same time.

Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 17(5), 475-482.

Brewer, G. & Kerslake, J. (2015). Cyberbullying, self-esteem, empathy and loneliness.

Computers in Human Behavior, 48, 255-260.

Brody, N., and Vangelisti, A. L. (2016). Bystander Intervention in Cyberbullying.

Communication Monographs, 83(1), 94-119.

Brofenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Broll, R. & Huey, L. (2015). “Just Being Mean to Somebody Isn’t a Police Matter”: Police perspectives on Policing Cyberbullying. *Journal of School Violence*, 14, 155-176.

Brown, K., Jackson, M., & Cassidy, W. (2006). Cyber-bullying: Developing policy to direct responses that are equitable and effective in addressing this special form of bullying.

Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 57, 1-35.

Bruner, J. S. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Burt, R. S. (1992). *Structural Holes*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Burton, E., Stice, E., & Seeley, J. R. (2004). A prospective test of the stress-buffering model of depression in adolescent girls; no support once again. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical*

Psychology, 72, 689-697.

Callon, M. (1991). Techno-economic networks and irreversibility. *A Sociology of Monsters:*

Essays on Power, Technology and Domination,. 38, 132-161.

Campbell, M. A. (2005). *The impact of the mobile phone on young people's social life*. Paper presented at the Social Change in the 21st Century Conference, Brisbane, Australia.

Campbell, M. A. (2013). How Research Findings Can Inform Legislation and School Policy on

- Cyberbullying. In Bauman, S. (Ed.), *Principles of Cyberbullying Research: Definitions, Measures, and Methodology* (pp. 261-270). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Campbell, M. A., Spears B., Slee, P., Butler, D., & Kift, S. (2011). *The prevalence of cyberbullying in Australia*. Paper presented at the International Observatory of Violence in Schools Conference, Mendoza, Argentina, April 2011.
- Campbell, M. A., Spears, B., Slee, P., Butler, D., & Kift, S. (2012). Victims' perceptions of traditional and cyberbullying, and the psychosocial correlates of their victimisation. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 17, 389-401.
- Cao, B., & Lin, W.-Y. (2015). How do victims react to cyberbullying on social networking sites? The influence of previous cyberbullying victimization experiences. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 52, 458-465.
- Cartwright, D. & Harary, F. (1956). Structural Balance: A Generalization of Heider's Theory. *Psychological Review*, 63, 277-292.
- Casale, S. Fiovaranti, G., & Caplan, S. (2015). Online Disinhibition: Precursors and Outcomes. *Journal of Media Psychology: Theories, Methods, and Applications*, 27(4), 170-177.
- Casella, R. (2003). Zero tolerance policy in schools: Rationale, consequences, and alternatives. *Teachers College Record*, 105(5), 872-892.
- Cassidy, W., Brown, K., & Jackson, M. (2011). Moving from cyber-bullying to cyber-kindness: What do students, educators and parents say? In E. Dunkels, G.-M. Franberg, & C. Hallgren (Eds.), *Youth culture and net culture: Online social practices* (pp. 256-277). Hershey, NY: Information Science Reference.
- Cassidy, W., Brown, K., & Jackson, M. (2012a). 'Making kind cool': Parents' suggestions

- for preventing cyber-bullying and fostering cyber-kindness. *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 46, 415–436, doi:10.2190/EC.46.4.f.
- Cassidy, W., Brown, K., & Jackson, M. (2012b). ‘Under the radar’: Educators and cyberbullying in schools. *School Psychology International*, 33, 520–532, doi:10.1177/0143034312445245.
- Cassidy, W., Jackson, M., & Brown, K. (2009). Sticks and stones can break my bones, but how can pixels hurt me? Students’ experiences with cyber-bullying. *School Psychology International*, 30(4), 86-93.
- Cassidy, T., & Taylor, L. (2005). Coping and psychological distress as a function of the bully victim dichotomy in older children. *Social Psychology of Education*, 8(3), 249-262.
- Chan, P. C. (2009). Psychosocial implications of homophobic bullying in schools. A review and directions for legal research and the legal process. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 13, 143-175.
- Clarke, E. A. & Kiselica, S. (1997). A systematic counselling approach to the problem of bullying. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 31, 310-325.
- Collier, A. (2012). A ‘Living Internet’: Some context for the cyberbullying discussion. In J. W. Patchin, & S. Hinduja (Eds.), *Cyberbullying prevention and response: Expert perspectives* (pp. 1–12). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Coloroso, B. (2008). The bully, the bullied, and the bystander: *From preschool to high school: How parents and teachers can help break the cycle of violence*. New York: Collins living.
- Conn, K. (2004). *Bullying and harassment: A legal guide for educators*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Consultation Report. (2003). The opportunity to succeed: Achieving barrier-free education for students with disabilities. Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

- Cooper, K. (2000, June 15, 2000). Group finds racial disparity in schools 'zero tolerance'. Washington Post.
- Courtney, M. L., Cohen, R., Deptula, D. P. & Kitzmann, K. M. (2003). An experimental analysis of children's dislike of aggressors and victims. *Social Development*, 12(1), 46-66.
- Cowie, H. (2009). Tackling cyberbullying: A cross-cultural comparison. *International Journal of Emotional Education*, 1, 3-13.
- Craig, W. M., Pepler, D., and Atlas, R. (2000). Observations of bullying in the playground and in the classroom. *School Psychology International*, 21(1), 22-36.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Cross, D., Shaw, T., Hearn, L., Epstein, M., Monks, H., Lester, L., & Thomas, L. (2009). *Australian covert bullying prevalence study (ACBPS)*. Western Australia: Report prepared for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).
- Daniel, Y. & Bondy, K. (2008). Safe Schools and Zero Tolerance: Policy, Program and Practice in Ontario. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 70, P. 1-20.
- Davis, J. A. (1979). The Davis/Holland/Leinhardt Studies: An Overview. *Perspectives on Social Network Research*, eds P.W. Holland & S. Leinhardt, Academic Press, New York, 51-62.
- Davis, K. (2011). Tensions of identity in a networked era: Young people's perspectives on the risks and rewards of online self-expression. *Sage publications*, 14(4), 634-651.

- de Santo, E., & Costabile, A. (2012). Media education: A new academic curriculum. In A. Costabile, & B. A. Spears (Eds.), *The impact of technology on relationships in educational settings* (pp. 30–42). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Debatin, B., Lovejoy, J. P., Horn, A. K. & Hughes, B. N. (2009). Facebook and online privacy: attitudes, behaviors, and unintended consequences. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 15, 83-108.
- Dehue, F. Bolman, C. & Völlink, T. (2008). Cyberbullying: Youngsters' Experiences and Parental Perception. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 11(2): 217-223.
- Del Barrio, C., de Dios, M. J., Montero, I. Martin, E., Ochaita, E., Espinosa, M. A., Gutierrez, H., & Barrios, A. (2011). Cyberbullying among Spanish secondary students: A national survey. *Proceedings of the 15th European Conference on Developmental Psychology* (pp. 369-376). Bologna, Italy: Medimond.
- Del Rey, R., Lazuras, L., Casas, J. A., Barkoukis, V., Ortega-Ruiz, R., & Tsorbatzoudis, H. (2016). Does empathy predict (cyber) bullying perpetration, and how do age, gender and nationality affect this relationship? *Learning and Individual Differences*, 46, 275-281.
- den Hamer, A. H. & Konjin, E. A. (2016). Can emotion regulation serve as a tool in combating cyberbullying? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 102, 1-6.
- DfEE (Department for Education & Employment) (2000). *Bullying: Don't suffer in silence. An anti-bullying pack for schools* (2nd ed.). London: HMSO.
- Didden, R., Scholte, R. H. J., Korzilius, H., de Moor, J. M. H., Vermeulen, A., O'Reilly, M., et al. (2009). Cyberbullying among students with intellectual and developmental disability in special education settings. *Developmental Neurorehabilitation*, 12(3), 146-151.
- Dillon, K. P., & Bushman, B. J. (2014). Unresponsive or Un-noticed?: Cyberbystander

- Intervention in an Experimental Cyberbullying Context. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 45, 144-150.
- Doane, A. N., Kelley, M. L., & Pearson, M. R. (2016). Reducing Cyberbullying: A Theory of Reasoned Action-Based Video Prevention Program for College Students. *Aggressive Behavior*, 42(2), 136-146.
- Dohrn, B. (2001). "Look Out Kid/ It's Something You Did": Zero Tolerance for Children. In W. Ayers, Dohrn, B., & Ayers, R. (Ed.), *Zero Tolerance: Resisting the Drive for Punishment in Our Schools*. New York: The New Press.
- Donath, J. & boyd, d. (2004). Public displays of connection. *BT Technology Journal*, 22, 71-82.
- Donlin, M. (2012). You mean we gotta teach that, too? In J. W. Patchin, & S. Hinduja(Eds.), *Cyberbullying prevention and response: Expert perspectives* (pp. 110–127). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dooley, J. J., Pyzalski, J., & Cross, D. (2009). Cyberbullying versus face-to-face bullying: A theoretical and conceptual review. *Zeitschrift für Psychologie/Journal of Psychology*, 217, 182-188.
- Duffy, A. L. & Nesdale, D. (2009). Peer groups, social identity, and children's bullying Behavior. *Social Development*, 18(1), 121-139.
- Dukes, S. (1984). Phenomenological methodology in the human sciences. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 23(3), 197-203.
- Ellison, N. B., Steinfeld, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook 'friends': social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12, 1143-1168.
- Espelage, D. L., Mrinalini, A. R., & Craven, R. G. (2013). Theories of Cyberbullying. In S.

- Bauman, D. Cross, & J. Walker (Ed.), *Principles of Cyberbullying Research: Definitions, Measures, and Methodology* (p. 49-67). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Espelage, D. L. & Swearer, S. M. (2003). Research on school bullying and victimization: What have we learned and where do we go from here? *School Psychology Review*, 32, 365-383.
- Fahy, A. E., Stansfeld, S. A., Smuk, M., Smith, N. R., Cummins, S., & Clark, C. (2016). Longitudinal Associations Between Cyberbullying Involvement and Adolescent Mental Health. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 1-8.
- Ferguson, S. D. & Terrion, J. L. (2014). *Communication in Everyday Life: Personal and Professional Contexts*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Festl, R. (2016). Perpetrators on the internet: Analyzing individual and structural explanation factors of cyberbullying in school context. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 59, 237-248.
- Finkelhor, D. (2013). Trends in Bullying and peer victimization.
<http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/CV280_Bullying%20&%20Peer%20Victimization%20Bulletin_1-23-13_with%20toby%20edits.pdf>.
- Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K., & Wolak, J. (2000). *Online victimization: A report on the nation's youth*. Retrieved January 28, 2016, from <http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/jvq/CV38.pdf>
- Gámez-Guadix, M., & Gini, G. (2016). Individual and class justification of cyberbullying and cyberbullying perpetration : A longitudinal analysis among adolescents. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 44, 81-89.
- Gámez-Guadix, M., Gini, G., & Calvete, E. (2015). Stability of cyberbullying victimization among adolescents: Prevalence and association with bully-victims status and psychosocial adjustment. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 53, 140-148.
- Gámez-Guadix, M., Orue, I., Smith, P. K., & Calvete, E. (2013). Longitudinal and reciprocal

- relations of cyberbullying with depression, substance use, and problematic Internet use among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 53, 446-452.
- Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal*, 204, 291-295.
- Gimenez Gualdo, A. M., Hunter, S. C., Durkin, K., Arnaiz, P., & Maquilon, J. J. (2015) The emotional impact of cyberbullying: Differences in perceptions and experiences as a function of role. *Computers & Education*, 82, 228-235.
- Gini, G., Pozzoli T., Borghi, F., & Franzoni, L. (2008). The role of bystanders in students' perception of bullying and sense of safety. *Journal of School Psychology*, 46, 617-638.
- Glover, D., Cartwright, N., Gough, G., & Johnson, M. (1998). The introduction of anti-bullying policies: Do policies help in the management of change? *School Leadership and Management*, 18, 89-105.
- Gower, A. L., McMorris, B. J., & Eisenberg, M. E. (2015). School-level contextual predictors of bullying and harassment experiences among adolescents. *Social Science & Medicine*, 147, 47-53.
- Greenbaum, S., Turner, B., & Stephens, R. D. (1988). *Set straight on bullies*. Los Angeles: Pepperdine University Press.
- Grigg, D. W. (2010). Cyber-aggression: Definition and concept of cyberbullying. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 20, 143–156, doi:10.1375/ajgc.20.2.143.
- Grossetti, M. (2005). Where do social relations come from? A study of personal networks in the Toulouse area of France. *Social Networks*, 27, 289-300.
- Guo, S. (2016). A meta-analysis of the predictors of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. *Psychology in the Schools*, 53(4), 432-453.

- Hampton, K. N., Sessions, L. F., Her, E. J. & Rainie, L. (2009). *Social Isolation and New Technology : How the Internet and Mobile Phones Impact Americans' Social Networks*, Pew Internet & American Life Project, Washington, DC.
- Hanish, L. D. & Guerra, N. G. (2000). Children who get victimized at school: What is known? What can be done? *Professional School Counseling*, 4, 113-119.
- Hase, C. N., Goldberg, S. B., Smith, D., Stuck, A., & Campain, J. (2015). Impacts of Traditional Bullying and Cyberbullying on the Mental Health of Middle School and High School Students. *Psychology in Schools*, 52(6), 607-617.
- Heider, F. (1958). *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*. New York: Wiley.
- Heirman, W., & Walrave, M. (2008). Assessing concerns and issues about the mediation of technology in cyberbullying. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 2(2), Article 1. Retrieved from <http://cyberpsychology.eu/view.php?cisloclanku=2008111401&article=1>
- Henault, C. (2001). Chalktalk: Zero tolerance in schools. *Journal of Law and Education*, 30(3), 547-553.
- Hinduja, S. & Patchin, J. W. (2008). Cyberbullying: An exploratory analysis of factors related to offending and victimization. *Deviant Behavior*, 29(2), 129-156.
- Hinduja, S. & Patchin, J. W. (2010). Bullying, cyberbullying, and suicide. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 14, 206-221.
- Hoffman, J. (2005). Violence at school: Can hard-line policies top school violence - or do they ignore the real problem? Retrieved July 27th, 2016, from <http://www.todaysparent.com>
- Horner, S., Asher, Y., & Fireman, G. D. (2015). The impact and response to electronic bullying and traditional bullying among adolescents. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 49, 288-295.

- Huang, Y. & Chou, C. (2010) An Analysis of Multiple Factors of Cyberbullying Among Junior High School Students in Taiwan. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26, 1581-1590.
- Hunter, S. C., Mora-Merchan, J., & Ortega, R. (2004). The long-term effects of coping strategy use in victims of bullying. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 7, 3-12.
- Jackson, M., Cassidy, W., & Brown, K. (2009). Out of the mouth of babes: Students' voice their opinions on cyber-bullying. *Long Island Education Review*, 8(2), 24–30.
- Jäger, T., Amado, J., Matos, A., & Pessoa, T. (2010). Analysis of experts' and trainers' views on cyberbullying. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 20, 169–181, doi:10.1375/ajgc.20.2.169.
- Juliano, M., Werner, R. S. & Cassidy, K. W. (2006). Early correlates of preschool aggressive behavior according to type of aggression and measurement. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 27, 395-410.
- Juvonen, J., & Galván, A. (2008). Peer contagion in involuntary social groups: Lessons from research on bullying. In M. J. Prinstein, & K. A. Dodge (Eds.), *Understanding peer influence in children and adolescents* (pp. 225-244). New York: Guilford Press.
- Juvonen, J. & Gross, E. F. (2008). Extending the school grounds? – Bullying experiences in cyberspace. *Journal of School Health*, 78(9), 496-505.
- Kadushin, C. (1968). Power, influence and social circles: a new methodology for studying opinion makers. *American Sociological Review*, 33, 685-699.
- Kanani, K., & Regehr, C. (2003). Clinical, ethical, and legal issues in e-therapy. *Families in Society*, 84, 155-162.
- Katzer, C., Fetchenhauer, D., & Belschak, F. (2009). Cyberbullying: Who are the victims?: A

- comparison of victimization in internet chatrooms and victimization in school. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 21, 25-36.
- Kennedy, H. (2006). Beyond anonymity, or future directions for internet identity research. *New Media & Society*, 8(6), 859-876.
- Kift, S. (1999). Stalking in Queensland: From the nineties to Y2K. *Bond Law Review*, 11(1), 144.
- Kim, J., & Park, H. S. (2011). The effect of uniform virtual appearance on conformity intention: Social identity model of deindividuation effects and optimal distinctiveness theory. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27, 1223-1230.
- Kowalski, R. M., Giumetti, G. W., Schroeder, A. N., & Lattaner, M. R. (2014). Bullying in the digital age: A critical review and meta-analysis of cyberbullying research among youth. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140(4), 1073-1137.
- Kowalski, R. M. & Limber, S. (2007). Electronic bullying among middle school students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41, 22-30.
- Kowalski, R. M., Limber, S., Limber, S. P., & Agatston, P.W. (2012). Cyberbullying: Bullying in the digital age. *John Wiley & Sons*.
- Kowalski, R. M., Morgan, C. A., & Limber, S. P. (2012). Traditional bullying as a potential warning sign of cyberbullying. *School Psychology International*, 33(5), 505-519.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0143034312445244>
- Kraut, R., Kiesler, S., Boneva, B., Cummings, J., Helgeson, V. & Crawford, A. (2002) 'Internet paradox revisited', *Journal of Social Issues*, 58, 49-74.
- Lapidot-Lefler, N., & Dolev-Cohen, M. (2015). Comparing cyberbullying and school bullying among school students: prevalence, gender, and grade level differences. *Social Psychology of Education*, 18(1), 1-16.

- Larrain, M.E., Zegers, B., and Trapp, A. (2007). Do adolescents compromise their identity when chatting on the internet? *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 4(2), 91-109.
- Larrañaga, E., Yubero, S., Ovejero, A., & Navarro, R. (2016). Loneliness, parent-child communication and cyberbullying victimization among Spanish youths. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 65, 1-8.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1987). Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping. *European Journal of Personality*, 1(3), 141-169.
- Li, Q. (2007). New bottle but old wine: A research of cyberbullying in schools. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 23, 1777-1791.
- Li, Q., Smith, P. K., & Cross, D. (2012). Research into cyberbullying context. In Q. Li, D. Cross, & P. K. Smith (Eds.), *Cyberbullying in the global playground: Research from international perspectives* (pp. 3-12). New York, NY: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Lieberman, H., Dinakar, K., & Jones, B. (2011). Let's gang up on cyberbullying. *IEEE Computer Society*, 93-96.
- Lodge, J., & Frydenberg, E. (2007). Cyber-bullying in Australian schools: profiles of adolescent coping and insights. *Australian Educational and Development Psychologist*, 24, 45-58.
- Loukas, A., Suzuki, R., & Horton, K. (2006). Examining school connectedness as a mediator of school climate effects. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 16, 491-502.
- Lowenstein, L. F. (1978). Who is the bully? *Bulletin of the British Psychological Society*, 31, 147-149.
- Machmutow, K., Perren, S., Sticca, F., & Alsaker, F. D. (2012). Peer victimisation and

depressive symptoms: Can specific coping strategies buffer the negative impact of cybervictimisation? *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 17, 403-420.

Magid, L. J. (1998). *Child safety in the information highway*. Retrieved January 25th, 2016, from <http://portal.peoriaud.k12.az.us/sites/MarshallRanch/Shared%20Documents/Internet%20Safety.htm>

Malecki, C. K., Demaray, M. K., Coyle, S., Geosling, R., Rueger, S. Y., & Becker, L. D. (2015) Frequency, Power Differential, and Intentionality and the Relationship to Anxiety, Depression, and Self-Esteem for Victims of Bullying. *Child Youth Care Form*, 44, 115-131.

Marczak, M., & Coyne, I. (2010). Cyberbullying at school: Good practice and legal aspects in the United Kingdom. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 20, 182–193, doi:10.1375/ajgc.20.2.182.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McDonald, R. I. & Crandall, C. S. (2015). Social norms and social influence. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 3, 147-151.

McNeely, C. A., Nonemaker, J. M., & Blum, R. W. (2002, April). Promoting school connectedness: Evidence from the national longitudinal study of adolescent health. *Journal of School Health*, 72(4), 138-146.

Menesini, E., & Nocentini, A. (2012). Peer education intervention: Face-to-face versus online. In A. Costabile, & B. A. Spears (Eds.), *The impact of technology on relationships in educational settings* (pp. 139–150). New York, NY: Routledge.

Mesch, G. S. (2009). Parental mediation, online activities, and cyberbullying. *CyberPsychology*

- & *Behavior*, 12(4), 387-393.
- Mishna, F., & Alaggia, R. (2005). Weighing the risks: A child's decision to disclose peer victimization. *Children & Schools*, 27, 217-226.
- Mishna, F., Cook, C., Gadalla, T., Daciuk, J., and Solomon, S. (2010). Cyber Bullying Behaviors Among Middle and High School Students. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 80(3), 362-374.
- Mishna, F., Khoury-Kassabri, M., Gadalla, T., and Daciuk, J. (2012). Risk factors for involvement in cyberbullying: Victims, bullies and bully-victims. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 63-70.
- Mishna, F., McLuckie, A., and Saini, M. (2009a) Real-World Dangers in an Online Reality: A Qualitative Study Examining Online Relationships and Cyber Abuse. *Social Work Research*, 33(2), 107-118.
- Mishna, F., Saini, M., and Solomon, S. (2009b). Ongoing and online: Children and youth's perceptions of cyberbullying. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31, 1222-1228.
- Mitchell, K. J., and Jones, L. M. (2015). Cyberbullying and Bullying Must Be Studied Within a Broader Peer Victimization Framework. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 56(5), 473-474.
- Monks, C. P., Mahdavi, J., Rix, K. (2016). The emergence of cyberbullying in childhood : Parent and teacher perspectives. *Psicología Educativa*, 22(1), 39-48.
- Monks, C. P., Robinson, S., & Worlidge, P. (2012). The emergence of cyberbullying: A survey of primary school pupil's perceptions and experiences. *School Psychology International*, 33, 477-491, doi: 10.1177/0143034312445242.
- Moon, B., & Alarid, L. F. (2014). School Bullying, Low Self-Control, and Opportunity. *Journal*

- of Interpersonal Violence*, 30(5), 839-856.
- Moon, B., Hwang, H., & McCluskey, J. D. (2011). Causes of school bullying: Empirical test of a general theory of crime, differential association theory, and general strain theory. *Crime & Delinquency*, 57, 849-877.
- Morgan, C. (2003). A Brief History of Special Education. *Elementary Teacher's Federation of Ontario Voice*, 10-14.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Navarro, R., Yubero, S., & Larranaga, E. (2015). Psychosocial Risk Factors for Involvement in Bullying Behaviors: Empirical Comparison Between Cyberbullying and Social Bullying Victims and Bullies. *School of Mental Health*, 7(4), 235-248.
- Nicol, J., Valiquet, Dominique, author, & Canada. Library of Parliament, issuing body. (2013). *Bill C-13: An Act to Amend the Criminal Code, the Canada Evidence Act, the Competition Act and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act* (Legislative summary (Canada. Parliamentary Information and Research Service); no. 41-2-C13-E).
- Noguera, P. A. (2001). Finding Safety Where We Least Expect It: The Role of Social Capital in Preventing School Violence. In W. Ayers, Dohrn, B., & Ayers, R. (Ed.), *Zero Tolerance: Resisting the Drive for Punishment in our Schools*. New York: The New Press.
- O'Connell, R., Price, J. & Barrow, C. (2004). *Cyber stalking, abusive, cyber sex and online grooming: A programme of education for teenagers*. Lancashire, England: Cyberspace Research Unit, University of Central Lancashire.
- Office of the Premier (2009, May 7). *Making Student Achievement Our Top Priority: McGuinty*

- Government Moves to Improve School Boards*. Retrieved from <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2009/05/making-student-achievement-our-top-priority.html>
- Olweus, D. (1978). *Aggression in the schools: Bullies and whipping boys*. New York: John Wiley.
- Olweus, D. (1991). Bully/victim problems among school children: Basic facts and effects of a school-based intervention program. In K. Rubin & D. Pepler (Eds.), *The development and treatment of childhood aggression*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Olweus, D. (2001). Peer harassment: A critical analysis and some important issues. In J. Juvonen & S. Graham (Eds.), *Peer harassment in school: The plight of the vulnerable and victimized* (pp. 3-20). New York: Guilford Press.
- Olweus, D. (2012a). Cyberbullying: An overrated phenomenon? *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 9, 520-538.
- Olweus, D. (2012b). Comments on cyberbullying article: A rejoinder. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 9, 559-568.
- Ong, R. (2015). Cyber-bullying and young people: How Hong Kong keeps the new playground safe. *Computer Law & Security Review*, 31, 668-678.
- Opportunities suspended: The devastating consequences of zero tolerance and school *discipline*. (2000, June). *Civil rights project*. Retrieved October 11, 2002, from www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/research/discipline/call_opport.php
- Ortega, R., Elipe, P., Mora-Merchan, J. A., Genta, L., Brighi, A., Guarini, A, Smith, P. K., Thompson, F., & Tippett, N. (2012). The emotional impact of bullying and cyberbullying on victims: A European cross-national study. *Aggressive Behavior*, 38, 342-356.

- Owens, L., Shute, R., & Slee, P. (2000). 'Guess what I just heard!': Indirect aggression among teenage girls in Australia. *Aggressive Behavior*, 26, 67-83.
- Özdemir, Y. (2014). Cyber victimization and adolescent self-esteem: The role of communication with parents. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 17(4), 255-263.
- Pabian, S., Vandebosch, H., Poels, K., Van Cleemput, K., & Bastiaensens, S. (2016). Exposure to cyberbullying as a bystander: An investigation of desensitization effects among early adolescents. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 62, 480-487.
- Palladino, B. E., Nocentini, A., & Menesini, E. (2016). Evidence-Based Intervention Against Bullying and Cyberbullying: Evaluation of the NoTrap! Program in Two Independent Trials. *Aggressive Behavior*, 42(2), 194-206.
- Patchin, J. W. & Hinduja, S. (2008). Cyberbullying: An exploratory analysis of factors related to offending and victimization. *Deviant Behavior*, 29(2), 129-156.
- Patchin, J. W. & Hinduja, S. (2010). Cyberbullying and self-esteem. *Journal of School Health*, 80(12), 614-621.
- Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2011). Traditional and non-traditional bullying among youth: A test of General Strain Theory. *Youth and Society*, 43, 727–751, doi:10.1177/0044118X10366951.
- Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2012). Cyberbullying: An update and synthesis of the research. In J. W. Patchin, & S. Hinduja (Eds.), *Cyberbullying prevention and response: Expert perspectives* (pp. 13–35). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2015). Measuring Cyberbullying: Implications for Research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 23, 69-74.
- Peets, K. and Kikas, E. (2006). Aggressive strategies and victimization during adolescence:

- Grade and gender differences, and cross-informant agreement. *Aggressive Behavior*, 32, 68-79.
- Peluchette, J. V., Karl, K., Wood, C., & Williams, J. (2015). Cyberbullying victimization: Do victims' personality and risky social network behaviors contribute to the problem? *Computers in Human Behavior*, 52, 424-435.
- Pepler, D.J., Craig, W.M. & Roberts, W.R. (1995). Aggression in the peer group: Assessing the negative socialization process. *Coercion and Punishment in Long-term Perspectives*. Pp. 213-28. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Perkins, H. W. & Berkowitz, A. D. (1986). Perceiving the Community Norms of Alcohol Use among Students: Some Research Implications for Campus Alcohol Education Programming. *International Journal of the Addictions*, 21(9-10), 961-976.
- Perren, S., Corcoran, L., Cowie, H., Dehue, F., Garcia, D., McGuckin, C., et al. (2012). *Coping with cyberbullying: A systematic literature review*. Final Report of the COST IS 0801 Working Group 5 (published online).
- Perren, S., Dooley, J., Shaw, T., & Cross, D. (2010). Bullying in school and cyberspace: Associations with depressive symptoms in Swiss and Australian adolescents. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 4(28), 1-10.
- Pew Internet & American Life Project (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2005/Teens-and-Technology.aspx>
- Pfetsch, J., Steffgen, G., & Konig, A. (2009). *Banning solves the problem? Effect of banning mobile phone use in schools on cyberbullying*. Poster presented at XIV Workshop on Aggression, Berlin.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1989). Phenomenological Research Methods. In R. S. Valle & S. Halling

- (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology* (pp. 41-60). New York: Plenum.
- Queen's University, and York University. "Bullying. The Facts." *PREVNet*.N.p., 22 Sept. 2014. Web. 09 Sept. 2016. <<http://www.prevnet.ca/research/bullying-statistics>>.
- Reid, P., Monsen, J., & Rivers, I. (2004). Psychology's contribution to understanding and managing bullying within schools. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 20, 241-244.
- Rigby, K. (2005). Why do some children bully at school? *School Psychology International*, 26(2), 147-161.
- Rigby, K., & Slee, P. T. (1991). Bullying among Australian school children: Reported behavior and attitudes towards victims. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 131, 615-627.
- Robinson, M. (2007). Digital nature and digital nurture: Libraries, learning and the digital dative. *Library Management*, 29(1), 67-76.
- Robson, C. & Witenberg, R. T. (2013). The influence of moral disengagement, morally based self-esteem, age, and gender on traditional bullying and cyberbullying. *Journal of School Violence*, 12, 211-231.
- Sakellariou, T., Carroll, A., & Houghton, S. (2012). Rates of cyber victimization and bullying among male Australian primary and high school students. *School Psychology International*, 33, 533-549, doi:10.1177/0143034311430374.
- Salmivalli, C. (1999). Participant role approach to school bullying: Implications for intervention. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 453-459.
- Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Bjorkqvist, K., Osterman, K., & Kaukiainen, A. (1996). Bullying as a group process : Participant roles and their relations to social status within the group. *Aggressive Behavior*, 22, 1-15.

- Salmivalli, C., & Voeten, M. (2004). Connections between attitudes, group norms, and behaviors associated with bullying in schools. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 28, 246-258.
- Salmon, G., James, A., Cassidy, E. L., & Javaloyes, M. A. (2000). Bullying a review : Presentation to an adolescent psychiatric service and within a school for emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 5, 563-579.
- Schenk, A. M., & Fremouw, W. J. (2012). Prevalence, psychological impact, and coping of cyberbully victims among college students. *Journal of School Violence*, 11, 21-37.
- Schmitt, K. L., Dayanim, S., & Matthias, S. (2008). Personal homepage construction as an expression of social development. *Developmental Psychology*, 44, 496-506.
- Schwartz, D., Proctor, L. J., & Chien, D. H. (2002). The Aggressive Victim of Bullying: Emotional and Behavioral Dysregulation as a Pathway to victimization by Peers. In J. Juvonen & S. Graham (Ed.), *Peer Harassment in School: The Plight of the Vulnerable and Victimized*. (pp. 147-174). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Ševčíková, A., Šmahel, D., & Otavová, M. (2012). The perception of cyberbullying in adolescent victims. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 17(3-4), 319-328.
- Shariff, S. (2008). *Cyber-bullying: Issues and solutions for the school, the classroom and the home*. London: Routledge.
- Slee, P. T. (1994). Situational and interpersonal correlates of anxiety associated with peer victimization. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 25, 97-107.
- Slonje, R., & Smith, P. K. (2007). Cyberbullying among youngsters: profiles of bullies and victims.
- Slonje, R., & Smith, P. K. (2007). Cyberbullying: Another main type of bullying? *Scandinavian*

- Journal of Psychology*, 49, 147-154.
- Slonje, R., Smith, P.K., & Frisen, A. (2012). Processes of cyberbullying, and feelings of remorse by bullies: A pilot study. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 9, 244-259.
- Smith, P. K. (2012). Cyberbullying and cyber aggression. In Shane R. Jimerson, Amanda B. Nickerson, Matthew J. Mayer, & Michael J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: International research and practice* (pp. 93-103). New York: Routledge.
- Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S., & Tippett, N. (2008). Cyberbullying: its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49(4), 376-385.
- Smith, P. K., Shu, S., & Madsen, K. (2001). Characteristics of victims of schoolbullying: developmental changes in coping strategies and skills. In J. Juvonen & S. Graham (Eds.), *Peer Harassment at School: The Plight of the Vulnerable and Victimised* (pp. 332-352). New York: Guilford Press.
- Smith, P. K., & Slonje, R. (2010). Cyberbullying: The nature and extent of a new kind of bullying in and out of school. In S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 249-262). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Smith, P. K., Talamelli, L., Cowie, H., Naylor, P., & Chauhan, P. (2004). Profiles of non-victims, escaped victims, continuing victims and new victims of school bullying. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74, 565-581.
- Sourander, A., Klomek, A. B., Ikonen, M., Lindroos, J., Luntamo, T., & Koskelainen, M., et al.

- (2010). Psychosocial risk factors associated with cyberbullying among adolescents: A population-based study. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 67, 720–728.
- Sticca, F., Ruggieri, S., Alsaker, F., & Perren, S. (2012). Longitudinal risk factors for cyberbullying in adolescence. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 23, 52-67.
- Stuart-Cassell, V., Bell, A., & Springer, J. F. (2011). *Analysis of state bullying laws and policies*. Report submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oepd/ppss/index.html>
- Subrahmanyam, K., Greenfield, P. M., & Tynes, B. (2004). Constructing sexuality and identity in an online teen chat room. *Journal Applied Developmental Psychology*, 25, 651-666.
- Sughrue, J. (2003). Zero tolerance for children: Two wrongs do not make a right. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(2), 238-258.
- Suler, J. (2004). The online disinhibition effect. *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, 7(3), 321-326.
- Swearer, S., Espelage, D., Vaillancourt, T., & Hymel, S. (2010). What can be done about school bullying? Linking educational research to practice. *Educational Researcher*, 30, 38-47.
- Tangen, D., & Campbell, M. (2010). Cyberbullying prevention: One primary school's approach. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 20, 225–234, doi:10.1375/ajgc.20.2.225.
- Teräsahjo, T., & Salmivalli, C. (2003). “She is not actually bullied”. The discourse of harassment in student groups. *Aggressive Behavior*, 29, 134-154.
- Tokunaga, R. S. (2010). Following you home from school: A critical review and synthesis of research on cyberbullying victimization. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26, 277-287.
- Topçu, Ç., & Erdur-Baker, Ö. (2012). Affective and cognitive empathy as mediators of

- gender differences in cyber and traditional bullying. *School Psychology International*, 33, 550–561, doi:10.1177/0143034312446882.
- Tsitsika, A., Janikian, M., Wójcik, S., Makaruk, K., Tzavela, E., Tzavara, C., Greydanus, D., Merrick, J., & Richardson, C. (2015). Cyberbullying victimization prevalence and associations with internalizing and externalizing problems among adolescents in six European countries. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 51, 1-7.
- Twemlow, S. W., Fonagy, P., & Sacco, F. C. (2004). The role of the bystander in the social architecture of bullying and violence in schools and communities. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1036(1), 215-232.
- Valkenburg, P. M. & Peter, J. (2007). Online communication and adolescent well-being: Testing the stimulation versus the displacement hypothesis. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4), 1169.
- Valkenburg, P. M. & Peter, J. (2011). Online communication among adolescents: An integrated model of its attraction, opportunities, and risks. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 48, 121-127.
- Vandebosch, H., & Van Cleemput, K. (2008). Define cyberbullying: a qualitative research into the perceptions of youngsters. *Cyber Psychology & Behavior*, 11, 499-503.
- Vandebosch, H., van Cleemput, K., Mortelman, D. and Walrave, M. (2006). Cyberpesten bij jongeren in Vlaanderen [Cyberbullying among youngsters in Belgium]. Brussel: viWTA.
- Verbeke, W. & Wuyts, S. (2007). Moving in social circles: social circle membership and performance implications. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28, 357-379.

- Virpi, P., Juvonen, J., and Salmivalli, C. (2012). Standing up for the victim, siding with the bully or standing by? Bystander response in bullying situations. *Social Development*, 21(4), 722-741.
- Völlink, T., Bolman, C. A. W., Dehue, F., & Jacobs, N. C. L. (2013). Coping with cyberbullying: Differences between victims, bully-victims and children not involved in Bullying. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 23, 7-24.
- Von Marées, N. & Petermann, F. (2010). Bullying in German primary schools: Gender differences, age trends and influence of parents' migration and educational backgrounds. *School Psychology International*, 31, 178-198.
- Von Marées, N., & Petermann, F. (2012). Cyberbullying: An increasing challenge for schools. *School Psychology International*, 33, 467–476.
- Waasdorp, T. E., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2015). The Overlap Between Cyberbullying and Traditional Bullying. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 1-6.
- Walrave, M. & Heirman, W. (2011). Cyberbullying: Predicting victimisation and perpetration. *Children & Society*, 25, 59-72.
- Wang, J., Iannotti, R. J., & Nansel, T. R. (2009). School bullying among adolescents in the United States: Physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 45, 368-375.
- Wang, J., Nansel, T. R., & Iannotti, R. J. (2010). Cyber and traditional bullying: Differential association with depression. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 48, 415-417.
- Wellman, B., Haase, A. Q., Witte, J. & Hampton, K. (2001). 'Does the internet increase, decrease, or supplement social capital?' *American Behavioral Scientist*, 45, 436-445.
- Whitney, I., & Smith, P. K. (1993). A survey of the nature and extent of bullying in

- junior/middle and secondary schools. *Educational Research*, 35, 3-25.
- Willard, N. (2006). Flame retardant: Cyberbullies torment their victims 24/7: Here's how to stop the abuse. *School Library Journal*, 52(4), 54-56.
- Williams, K. R. & Guerra, N. G. (2007). Prevalence and predictors of internet bullying. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41, 14-21.
- Wilton, M. M. M., Craig, W. M., & Pepler, D. J. (2000). Emotional regulation and display in classroom victims of bullying: characteristic expressions of affect, coping styles and relevant contextual factors. *Social Development*, 9, 226-245.
- Woods, S. & Wolke, D. (2003). Does the content of anti-bullying policies inform us about the prevalence of direct and relational bullying behaviour in primary schools? *Educational Psychology*, 23, 381-401.
- Völlink, T., Bolman, C. A. W., Dehue, F. & Jacobs, N. C. L. (2013). Coping with Cyberbullying: Differences Between Victims, Bully-victims and Children not Involved in Bullying. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 23, 7-24.
- Ybarra, M. L. (2004). Linkages between depressive symptomatology and Internet harassment among young regular Internet users. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, 7, 247-257.
- Ybarra, M. L., Diener-West, M., & Leaf, P. J. (2007). Examining the overlap in Internet harassment and school bullying: Implications for school intervention. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41, S42-S50.
- Ybarra, M. L., & Mitchell, K.J. (2004). Online aggressor/targets, aggressors, and targets: A comparison of associated youth characteristics. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 45, 1308-1316.
- Yilmaz, H. (2011). Cyberbullying in Turkish middle schools: An exploratory study. *School*

Psychology International, 32, 645-654.

You, S. & Lim, S. A. (2016). Longitudinal predictors of cyberbullying perpetration: Evidence from Korean middle school students. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 89, 172-176.

Zhao, S. (2005). The digital self: Through the looking glass of telecopresent others. *Symbolic Interaction*, 28(3), 387-405.

Zheng, X., Zeng, D., & Wang, F.-Y.(2015). Social balance in signed networks. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 17(5), 1077-1095.

Appendix A

#	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Time spent online/day	Year of study	Program of study
1	Male	19	Asian	5-6 hours	1 st year	Linguistics & Psychology
2	Male	21	Caucasian	2-3 hours	1 st year	Social Science
3	Female	18	Black	3-4 hours	1 st year	Psychology
4	Female	19	Caucasian	2-3 hours	1 st year	Psychology
5	Female	19	Black	4 hours	1 st year	General Sciences
6	Female	19	Black	20 hours	1 st year	Biopharmaceuticals
7	Female	19	Caucasian	12-13 hours	1 st year	Psychology
8	Female	20	Middle-Eastern	8-10 hours	3 rd year	Commerce
9	Female	20	Black	5 hours	3 rd year	Health Sciences
10	Male	18	Black	4 hours	1 st year	Public Administration

Appendix B – Composite Textural & Structural Descriptions

Composite Textural Description

The rapid increase in use of the Internet and other forms of technology such as instant messaging, e-mail, social networking sites, and Webcams has enabled children and youths to engage in a vast array of communication experiences beyond the confines of their homes, schools, and local communities. Some respondents were already permitted to access social media in secondary school, while others were allowed to access it as early as elementary school. Certain respondents placed higher importance on the development and maintenance of online relationships than others. The respondents claimed that they were exposed to both direct and indirect tension in cyberspace. Cyberbullying, by both real-life acquaintances and friends, and those with whom relationships had developed online, was frequent and common. Respondents experienced cyberbullying by their peers that often related to sensitive issues such as physical characteristics, family history and popularity.

The detrimental effects of cyberbullying in this study were evident: they include feelings of depression, isolation, confusion, guilt, anger, fear and shame, as well as self-harm and withdrawal from peers and family. The respondents described techniques to cope with cyberbullying, such as denying the seriousness of the experience and avoiding the person who abused them. Only a few of the respondents actually confronted their bullies, and very few obtained support from adults such as parents, teachers, counsellors and law enforcement personnel. Consequently, the respondents reacted to their experiences in three different ways: confronted their bullies, internalized their emotions, or “reared what they learned”. The negative experiences acted as a learning experience for some respondents. However, there was a general consensus among respondents that the online environment needs to be navigated with caution.

Essentially, respondents realized that they needed to reduce their online connectivity by moderating the amount of information and photos that they would share, and by deleting “friends” from their profiles to regain control over their social media environment.

Composite Structural Description

Participants’ online experiences were framed by their vulnerability in terms of connectivity, age and unwillingness to disclose their encounters to an adult. Social mores and technological advances dictating how adolescents form and maintain relationships prompted some participants’ to immerse themselves in cyberspace. Respondents learned that as their connectivity increased, their exposure to tension in their social media circles also increased. It was easy for respondents to generalize that cyberspace harbours a negative environment; however, several factors that contributed to the internet’s volatile nature were identified. The lack of face-to-face interaction, bystanders and anonymity all played a role in stretching the boundaries that define socially acceptable behaviour. Respondents admitted that they would have appreciated the presence of operative filters, run by the websites, to regulate and help re-establish social norms in cyberspace.

Age was identified as an element that influenced how respondents interpreted and reacted to their negative encounters in cyberspace. As adolescents, cyberbullying had a higher negative impact on the participants because they needed validation from their peers to build their self-confidence. However, if faced with the same encounters in the present, the respondents would not be as affected since they have already established their identity as young adults. For some, high-levels of involvement from parents in their internet activities helped reduce the mental harm

that participants could have experienced, since children often misjudge bullying as normal peer interaction.

Most of the respondents had not disclosed their experiences of cyberbullying to an adult, even when they were deeply frightened. Decisions to conceal their negative experiences might have been influenced by a multitude of factors, such as the belief that they could cope with the situation alone, that adults would not be able to empathize, they were not aware that resources were available, and/or they did not trust those resources. Some respondents did not want to seek help out of a sense of pride, while others were in denial that their negative experiences constituted cyberbullying. Fear that their parents would not understand the gravity of the situation and would dismiss the emotions that the respondents experienced as a result of these encounters deterred certain respondents from communicating with them. Instead, respondents preferred confiding in their friends about their encounters because it was the approach that was the most comfortable to them. Conversely, certain participants admitted that they would have wished that their parents or educators had approached them to offer assistance instead of having to reach out to them. Finally, respondents did not consider seeking help from counsellors or teachers because the educational staff had not earned their trust.

Appendix C - Tables

Theme Clusters with their Associated Formulated Meanings

Age
➤ All of the respondents got access to social media at a young age ➤ Some of the respondents are oldest child, their younger siblings got access at an even younger age ➤ Younger generations require social media for them to stay in the loop ➤ Encountered bullies between the ages of 11-18 years old ➤ Most would react differently to cyberbullying if they were to encounter it today ➤ Importance of online interactions are diminished with age ➤ Kids don't understand what they're doing when they go online ➤ Intervention from parents is essential ➤ Some were grateful for parent's high-level of involvement ➤ Understanding of online environment increased with age ➤ More cautious with online interactions with age
Connectivity vs. Vulnerability
➤ Social media is important for making and maintaining friendships ➤ Those placed higher importance tended to add more friends and posted more information/pictures online ➤ A way to improve self-concept ➤ Some had low importance because their friendships were based offline ➤ Bullied through platforms such as; MSN, Facebook, Ask.fm and boysaskgirls.com ➤ All platforms that are easy to access and have low gate-keeping ➤ The more people, pictures and information that they added online, the more they were targeted ➤ Eventually learned that keeping a large friend base online wasn't realistic because it was making them vulnerable ➤ Some eventually scaled down the amount of information, friends and photos that they posted online to avoid negative interactions ➤ Lack of face-to-face aspect of online interactions was a factor that affected the environment, lack of a reaction ➤ Bystanders play a role in affecting the outcome of an online interaction ➤ Anonymity redefines the social norms on the internet ➤ Some would have liked an operative filter system for social media platforms ➤ Process for reporting abuse was extensive
Reaction to Cyber Abuse
➤ All cyberbullying victims experienced feelings of isolation ➤ Some experienced anger, fear and/or depression ➤ Some victims internalized their emotions and tried to change themselves so they wouldn't be targeted anymore ➤ Some victims reared what they learned and became bullies themselves ➤ Only two respondents confronted their bullies ➤ Respondents were bullied for physical characteristics, family history and popularity
Not Telling Parents or Other Adults
➤ Respondents didn't want to be helped out of denial and/or pride ➤ Didn't trust counsellors because of past experiences ➤ Don't want to draw more unwanted attention from bullies ➤ Parents wouldn't understand ➤ Felt like they could handle it on their own because the internet is their control ➤ They didn't realize that they were being cyberbullied ➤ Didn't want to draw negative attention ➤ Wanted to be approached by parents and/or educational staff instead of having to reach out themselves ➤ Didn't realize that resources were available ➤ Didn't want to worry their parents

Appendix D

Consent Form

Title of the study: The new era of bullying: a phenomenological study of university students' experience with cyberbullying

Researcher: Bowie Chen
bchen089@uottawa.ca

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Rocci Luppici, Associate Professor at the University of Ottawa
 Department of Communications, Faculty of Arts
 55 Laurier East (DMS 11125)
 Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
 Tel: 613-562-5800 (ext.) 8971
 Email: rluppici@uottawa.ca

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Bowie Chen and Dr. Rocci Luppici.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences that youth in Ontario encounter when they are faced with cyberbullying. This perspective should facilitate the understanding of how young, vulnerable internet users express their emotional and psychological distress by looking into the recounting of their experiences with cyberbullying. Methods of inquiry will include phenomenological reflection of the responses collected through the interviews about youth experiences with using forums on the internet.

Participation: My participation will involve attending an interview with the primary researcher (Bowie Chen), during which I will be asked to respond to questions about my personal experiences with cyberbullying in my youth. The interview sessions will be scheduled at a place convenient to me, they may be recorded, and they will last for an approximate time of one hour.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I volunteer very personal information, and this may cause me, understandably, to feel emotional or mental distress or discomfort. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks. In the event that I find any aspects of the interview difficult, I will be provided with additional information and support if required.

Benefits: My participation in this study will help increase understanding of the importance of technology in young people's lives, initiate discussion that will help young people identify with targets of cyberbullying; and encourage more governmental and educational organizations to get involved with addressing the issue of cyberbullying.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for the research report that is a component to fulfill the researcher's Master's degree requirements. **Anonymity** will be protected as I will not be identified and/or directly quoted without my permission. If my responses must be referenced in the text, I will be referred to by a pseudonym (fabricated name).

Conservation of data: The data collected both hard copy and electronic data of consultation transcripts will be kept in a secure manner. Electronic data will be stored in an external hard drive that will be protected by a passcode known only by the researcher and her thesis supervisor. The hard drive itself and any hard copies of data will be kept on the University of Ottawa campus during the full period of retention. Data collected during the study will be retained for a 5 year conservation period after the study is complete. After the conservation period, any hardcopy data will be shredded, electronic data will be permanently deleted from the researcher's computer, and audiotapes will be erased. Also, any identifiable information about myself will be removed from audio recordings and written transcripts, and will not be published, so that any third party will not be able to link interview data with my identifiable confidential information.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered from my interview, until the time of withdrawal, will either be given to me or destroyed.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Bowie Chen of the Department of Communications, Faculty of Arts at the University of Ottawa; under the supervision of Dr. Rocci Luppicini.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

Tel.: (613) 562-5387

Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Respondent's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix E – Recruitment Text

Hello students,

You are invited to participate in the abovementioned research study conducted by Bowie Chen and Dr. Rocci Luppigini. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences that you (as online users) encountered when you were faced with cyberbullying. Your participation in this study will contribute to better understanding the nature of cyberbullying encounters across various online environments. I hope that my research will be able to help contribute to the literature that currently exists on the topic of cyberbullying, and hopefully we can work together to help future generations of internet users. Your participation in this study will involve attending one 60-90 minute face-to-face interview with me, where you will be able to share your experience as a cyberbully victim. I would like to emphasize that this study is completely voluntary and that you can choose to withdraw at any time. As a respondent, your identity will remain strictly confidential and you will not be identified and/or directly quoted in the study. If you have any questions or concerns about the study that you wish to have answered before you decide to participate in the study, please feel free to contact me by email at bchen089@uottawa.ca.

Thanks,

Bowie

Appendix F – Interview Protocol

- 1) How often do you use the internet or applications that have access to the internet?
- 2) What did your regular internet activities usually consist of?
 - a) Which sites did you spend the most time on?
 - b) Would you say that you spent a considerable amount of time on interactive platforms? (ex. Social media, gaming, blogs etc.)
- 3) How would you define cyberbullying?
- 4) Could you describe your first experience with cyberbullying?
 - a) What happened?
 - b) Who was involved?
- 5) On which online platforms did you encounter the cyberbullies?
 - a) Who was involved?
 - b) What was the result?
- 6) Was it persistent?
- 7) How did cyberbullying affect your online and offline behaviour at the time?
- 8) How did you deal with the cyberbullying and what strategies did you use?

Appendix G – Ethics Approval

File Number: 01-15-07

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 02/26/2015



Université d'Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Ethics Approval Notice

Social Sciences and Humanities REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Rocci	Luppini	Arts / Communication	Supervisor
Bowie	Chen	Arts / Communication	Student Researcher

File Number: 01-15-07

Type of Project: MA Research Paper

Title: The New Era of Bullying: A Phenomenological Study of University Students' Experience with Cyberbullying

Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Approval Type
02/26/2015	02/25/2016	Ia

(Ia: Approval, Ib: Approval for initial stage only)

Special Conditions / Comments:
N/A