The Moral Implications of Cyberbullying Vis-À-Vis Parental Concerns

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Abstract

Bullying has been deep-seated in human society since its conception. With the development and increase of social networking sites, online activity and messaging apps, bullying has been transposed into cyberspace. Social media has allowed this problem to expand and become more elusive; increase in the use of alcohol and drugs to overcome depression and frustration, school skipping, lack of concentration in classrooms, poor grades, low self-esteem, as well as poor emotional and social adjustment among kids. This study attempts to examine the impacts of cyberbullying on emotional health, academic-wellbeing, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Interestingly, this paper was carried out to understand the moral implications of cyberbullying and to proffer solutions. Considering the consequences/impacts of cyber-bullying, this study highlights the roles of parents, educators, and law enforcement agencies in combating the crime of cyber-bullying among teens and anyone who is a victim of cyber-bullying. The study concludes with the role of moral education in helping students to develop good character and positive worldview as well as learn how to manage their anger, frustrations and other negative tendencies that lure them into cyberbullying activities.
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Keywords: Cyber, -bullying, parenting, social media, Education, teachers, teens

Introduction
Cyberbullying is like a fun fact or entertainment for the bullies of the past and present. It presents the "problems of meaningfulness, meaninglessness, verifiability and functions" (Ottuh & Godwin, 2011). Problems of cyberbullying, schools and kids have been struggling with for a very long time. Bullies have always enjoyed embarrassing people and fooling around with them (Alanah and Madeline, 2016). It is not known exactly when cyberbullying started but the strategies of cyberbullies have expanded greatly in correlation with the fast growth of technological tools in communication (Straw, 1995). An Internet bully usually makes demands for the personal information of others, constantly repeating the requests and attempting to embarrass those who refuse to give such information.

Cyberbullying is perilous and complex to contain. Technologies like cell phones, social media sites, chat rooms, among others have allowed bullying to infiltrate cyberspace. The misuse of electronic technology has led to the expansion of cyber-bullying among teens and it is a concern for both kids and parents (Irabor & Monday, 2021). Although school is advantageous for academic as well as moral development cyberbullying continues unabated in schools. Bullying is to frighten or hurt a smaller person (Irabor & Monday, 2021). It is intentional harm caused by the misuse of social media. PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, 2013). The internet has become a place for some children to post inappropriate comments about their peers. Cyberbullying includes negative text messages or emails, rumours sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles among others (Irabor & Monday, 2021). Cyberbullying is harassment, threat, as well as humiliation, death threat or a credible threat of serious bodily harm among others, usually inflicted on others through the use of computers, cell phones, and other technological or electronic devices has a lot of emotional impacts on teens academic life in particular and social relations in general (PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, 2013). Because humans have both rational and irrational tendencies which inform their actions and inactions. Irrational is self-defeating behaviour which prevents goal attainment. It leads to inner conflict, as well as conflict with others. It also affects the relationship, self-blame, jealousy, envy, ill-feeling, guilt, frustration, intolerance and depression (Irabor & Monday, 2021). We argue that there should be the inclusion of well-thought-out programs in the school curriculum that can help teens identify, evaluate, dispute, and act against their irrational self-defeating beliefs which inspire them to cyberbully others. Moral education and active-directive school program will help teens to know how to identify irrational and self-defeating tendencies as well as how to forcefully and emotionally dispute them, and replace them with more constructive rational, logical, and self-helping will reduce or eliminate high rates of cyberbullying among teens.

Unfortunately, some children find an avenue for their frustrations through bullying others. In the time past, antisocial actions could be better controlled because they were limited to face-to-face interactions. The high rate of cyberbullying and its emotional consequences among school teens is of great concern to teachers in

general and parents in particular as it has led to the problem of poor relationships, use of alcohol and drugs to overcome depression and frustration, school skipping, lack of concentration in classrooms, poor grades, low self-esteem, as well as poor emotional and social adjustment among kids. The paper avers that genealogical research into various forms of cyberbullying. Flaming (electronic transmission of angry or rude messages), harassment (repeatedly sending insulting or threatening messages) cyberstalking (threats of harm and intimidation), denigration (insults, spreading painful rumours), masquerading (pretending to be someone else and sharing information to damage a person's reputation), outing(revealing personal beliefs, perceptions, attitude, as well as internalized judgments about things and events which contributes to unhealthy feelings and self-defeating behaviours that inspires or leads them to engage in cyberbullying.

The paper provides background information about bullying, defines the problem and where it is focused, looks at the various issues and consequences of cyberbullying, and discusses possible preventative programs. The study examines the role of teachers and educational stakeholders in designing and including in-school curricula, and programs that can help in resolving emotional and behavioural problems and disturbances that lead children to indulge in cyberbullying activities.

What is Cyber Bullying?
With the advancements in technology, a new form of bullying called cyber bully has emerged. Cyberbullying is the use of technology to embarrass another person (Irabor & Monday, 2021; Lanhart, 2010). Cyberbullying is the willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices (Hinduja and Patchin, 2014). Cyberbullying involves the use of technologies to support premeditated, hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others (Irabor & Monday, 2021). Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, hurt, embarrass, humiliate, and intimidate another person (PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center, 2013). Hinduja and Patchin (2009), maintain that cyberbullying must incorporate bullying's essential elements. In other words, the broadest sense of the term cyberbullying must have the following necessary elements: (1) intractable; (2) recurring; (3) such that causes harm perceived by its target; and (4) perpetrated via computers, and phones, or other electronic devices (Kowalski et al., 2008). By definition, it occurs among young people. When an adult is involved, it may meet the definition of cyber-harassment or cyberstalk (David,1998). Kids are reluctant to report being bullied, even to their parents, it's impossible to know just how many are affected (Vanisher, 1994). Recent studies had shown that cyberbullying rates are 1 in 5 teens, have been the victims of cyberbullying, and about 1 in 7 admit to having cyberbullied someone (Vanisher, 1994). In some studies, more than half of the teens surveyed said that they've experienced abuse through social and digital media. Severe, long-term, or frequent cyberbullying can leave both victims and bullies at greater risk for anxiety, depression, and other stress-related disorders (Freggy, 1999).

More importantly too, cyberbullying can take place in many forms or ways. For example, a person or group a blog or website just to bully a person or the individual. They may encourage the person to join the blog they have created and pretend to be friends and when the person joins he or she sees all the bullying postings. Such as: posting embarrassing pictures or threatening messages. In this case, a student who does not understand social cues or who is trying to become a member of the peer group may mistake this attention for friendship, when it is the opposite. This implies that cyberbullying usually takes place over the internet, such as through instant massaging (IM), social networking sites, chat rooms, blogs, and gaming sites. It also takes place over the phone, by Short Message Service (SMS) or Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) and the latest trend- social networking websites such as MySpace, Facebook and Bebo.

Cyberbullying may rise to the level of a misdemeanour such as a cyber-harassment charge, or if the child is young enough may result in the charge of juvenile delinquency. However, why does the issue of cyberbullying persist?

Causes of Cyber Bullying
The 'perceptions of people affect their behaviours and relationships with others (Lawrence, 1995). Cyberbullying is not limited to: flaming (electronic transmission of angry or rude messages), harassment (repeatedly sending insulting or threatening messages) cyberstalking (threats of harm and intimidation), denigration(insults, spreading painful rumours), masquerading (pretending to be someone else and sharing information to damage a person's reputation). We posit that individual perceptions or attitude, as well as internalized judgments, contributes to unhealthy feelings and self-defeating of cyberbullying (Lawrence, 1995). The fact of human nature which finds expression in rational and irrational tendencies contributes to the

inspirational cause of cyberbullying. That is to say, the rational and irrational tendencies which inform human action and inactions, and irrational self-defeating thinking, and behaviour which prevent goal attainment, while leading to inner conflict, as well as more conflict with others, poor relationships, self-blame, jealousy, envy, ill-feeling, guilt, Frustration, intolerance, depression, anxiety as well as ill-feeling for others contributes to inspirational causes of cyberbullying among teens and adults.

Cyberbullying can make a person feel overwhelmed as well as result in many feeling embarrassed that they are going through such a devastating time, and not knowing what support is available to them (Putman, 1995). Besides, many children feel unable to confide in an adult because they feel ashamed and wonder whether they will be judged, told to ignore it or close their account which they might not want to do (Thomas, 1996). Unfortunately, with mobile technology being so freely available cyber bullying has become an ongoing issue and one that is relentless. Thus tragically, not only does cyberbullying and its effects go on after school, college or work has finished, but it then carries through into the next day and the cycle continues.

The Moral implications of cyberbullying

The concept of cyberbullying is one of the central discussions in philosophy and other disciplines (Ottuh & Idjakp, 2019). Because of the social implications of cyberbullying and its effects on society, it is a concept that is now discussed in law, philosophy, ethics and religion. This paper explores the ethical implication of cyber bully. However, understanding the meaning of cyberbullying as used has far-reaching implications for moral philosophy (Ottuh & Idjakpo, 2020). It is important to understand what ethics is. Ethics is the study of ethical values and why people make ethical and unethical decisions. It centres on why people ought to behave based on their ethical compass or morals, and society's shared values, laws, and background (Monday, 2020). Cyberbullying is an assault and is becoming more common in Nigeria. Social media bullying has raised ethical issues, this includes post-traumatic disorder (PTS), invasion of privacy ethics, emotional harm, suicide and physical violence. It has also expanded; increased the use of alcohol and drugs to overcome depression and frustration, school skipping, lack of concentration in classrooms, poor grades, low self-esteem, as well as poor emotional and social adjustment among kids (Freggy, 1999). The recollections of cyberbullying are unanalyzable remains of what bullied victims have perceived, heard and done (Jerry and Clim, 2010). In rare situations, someone with severe PTSD may harass him/her, abuse him/her, or engage in severe violence (Monday, 2020). Cyberbullying has invaded privacy ethics (Tammy and April 2019). Violations of information ethics can take place in various contexts. Its one of the areas in which information ethics can be violated because it involves nerve-racking, intimidating, niggling, mortifying and embarrassing of others (Siphamandla, 2016)

Cyberbullying is a potential threat of violence, wars and social evils. There are many limitations to combating cyberbullying. Hinduja and Patchin (2014), identified two principal challenges that make it complex to prevent cyber-bullying and they include: a nonchalant attitude and a lack of technical skills on technology. The problem of nonchalance finds expression in the fact that, though the problem of cyber-bullying has been there for years around the globe, yet, some people do not see the harm associated with it and its resulting consequences on the teens' moral and academic life (Susan, 1996). They believe that there are more serious problems for adolescents than the issue of cyberbullying. There is also the issue that has to do with technical skills. Most parents often say that they do not have the technical skills to check-mate their kid's online activities and that schools should be covering it in detail during class time and through other programs. Most parents often sue the teacher or school for infringing on the right of their kind. Besides, most parents do this to show their kids that they care about their well-being but they do not know that they are making matters worse by such actions.

Roles of Various Agents:

The duty of preventing Cyberbullying involves so many hands, the kids, parents, educators, counsellors, youth, law enforcement, social media companies as well as the community at large. When cyber-bullying involves a threat of violence, sexually-explicit photos or messages, stalking or hate crimes, it constitutes a crime and a victim should file a report with local law enforcement. Let the person that is cyber-bullied know that it is not his or her fault, and that bullying says more about the bully than the victim. Praise the victim for doing the right thing by letting you know about it. Remind the bullied that he or she is not alone. Let him know that a lot of people get bullied at some point. Reassure the victim that the two of you will figure out what to do about it together.

Let the school authority or teacher know about the situation. Let them know that joking and teasing might seem harmless to one person, but it can be hurtful to another **(**Kowalski and Limber, 2013). Besides, bullying in any form is unacceptable; there can be serious (and sometimes permanent) consequences at home, school, and in the community if it continues. Parents should remind their children that the use of cell phones and computers is a privilege that can easily be taken away if abused.

The parents have the role of procreation as well as the role of educating their children. Besides, opines that education and character formation of children is one among the responsibilities of the parents and others (Wanda 2010). That is to say, the parents are the first educators of their child. Besides, a child will find it difficult to discuss cyberbullying with the parents for many obvious reasons: not to be embarrassed about what is happening to them and afraid that the bullying may increase if they tell their parents. To discourage them from cyber-bullying others.

Parents must talk and listen to their children. We maintain that parents whose kids have experienced cyberbullying should engage them in conversation. That is to say, parents should take time to listen to their kids to learn exactly what had transpired. Besides, listening to the whole story without interrupting gives the child some sense of belonging and lures her to be more straight with the truth. Parents are to ensure that their children do not post any message or post about their children no matter how hurtful or untrue. Lawrence R. and Jeanne S. (2016), write that responding to cyberbullying on the internet will make the situation worse because provoking a reaction from the child is what the cyberbullies want. Since Parents normally set safety roles for their children to avoid mistakes they should also set cyber safety rules for their kids. Lenhart, et al., (2010), opines that parents are to remind their children of the implications of cyberbullying. Cautions should be applied to message exchanges and dealings with the person. To this effect, they offered two principles when chatting online. First, do not say anything online that you would not do or say in person and second do not reveal anything you would not tell a stranger. Others include telling them not to share email passwords, photos or any personal data, because a bully may use the information to harass the child.

Parents should be able to know what their children are doing online. This is why, National Crime Prevention (2007), speaking on Teen and Cyberbullying advises that parents should keep their children's computers in an open spot, such as a family room to enable them to know their child's activity online. We argue that parents should make it a common practice to check text messages and pictures on their children's cell phones.

Jerry and Clam (2010) assert that parents are to contact law enforcement of threats of violence, harassment or sexually explicit images of their children. Also reporting threats of harm and inappropriate sexual messages to police is a way of curbing the menace of cyberbullying (Hinduja, 2015). The child with the help of the parents should contact the relevant service providers (Apps, Internet, Websites or cell companies) about the harassment of their child for appropriate actions. Since cyberbullying harms the child emotionally and physically, parents should seek the help of a counsellor/psychologist for their kids because they may not be able to handle the harm or the negative effects it creates on the child. Hinduja (2015) opines that it is more beneficial for children who have been cyber-bullied to speak with a mental health professional because children will prefer to dialogue and be freer to discuss with a third party who may be more objective than parents.

The school an organized social institution with the primary function of humanizing and imparting knowledge to people has a fundamental role to play in addressing the issue of cyber-bullying among teens (Odor, 2010; Kowalski and Limber, 2013). Since schools complement the informal education a child gets from home with formal education it means that the role of the schools should be that of assisting and completing the work of parents, furnishing children and adolescents with an evaluation value and task of the whole person (Childnet, 2007). This is why Pazhayampallil (2002) opines that parents and teachers should see that children between seven and eleven years of age, imbibe good habits, get proper nourishment, play with good companions, and read good books

School educators and teachers should ensure that educational policies, curricula training and assemblies which will enable teens to shun cyberbullying are provided. This is why Hinduja & Patchin (2014), opine that the most important preventive step that schools can take is to educate the school community about responsible internet use. That is to say, students need to know that all forms of bullying are wrong and those who engage in harassing or threatening behaviours will be subjected to various disciplinary measures.

Since the school is the breeding ground for future leaders it must educate students on the Proper use of Information Communication Technology. That is to say, the promotion of positive use of technology can be encouraged during the class on technology by teaching the students the proper use of the internet and appropriate online communications. This is very necessary because, technology is successfully being used to support positive and effective learning, and to realize and increase the potential of personalized learning by making learning more flexible, creative and accessible.

Besides, the school administrator has to work with parents to convey to the students that cyberbullying behaviour is taken seriously and is not underestimated. To this end, schools must seek to create and promote an atmosphere where certain conduct is not tolerated by students and staff alike.

Law enforcement officers also have a role in preventing and responding to cyberbullying (Donegan, 2012). In this wise, law enforcement needs to be aware of ever-evolving state and local laws concerning online behaviours, and equip themselves with the skill and knowledge to intervene as necessary. If a parent discovers that his child is being cyberbullied, the parent of the child is to save the Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) of the location where the bullying took place.

Cyberbullying involves teens; there is a lot for them to do in the prevention of cyberbullying. First and foremost the youth should develop a good relationship with an adult they trust (a parent, teacher and someone else) to whom they can talk freely about the things they do online and offline that upset them and create uncomfortable situations. Youths should go online with their parents and show them what sites and apps they use. In addition, Childnet (2007) offers the following safety advice to children and young people:

1.   One way to prevent cyberbullying is that teens and students to adjust their account settings to private to avoid unwanted visitors seeking information on any of their social media
2.   Always respect others- be careful of what you say online and what images and text you send.
3.   Think before you send- whatever you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever.
4.   Treat your password like your toothbrush- keep it to yourself.
5.   Save the evidence-learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations.

The problem of Cyber-bullying and the role of moral education as a remedial approach
Margaret, (2015), argues that the inclusion of moral education as a well-thought-out program in the school curriculum will help teens to identify, evaluate, dispute, and act against their irrational self-defeating beliefs. Moral education as an educative and active-directive school program aims at helping teens to know how to identify irrational and self-defeating tendencies as well as how to forcefully and emotionally dispute them, and replace them with more constructive rational, logical, and self-helping ones and this will reduce or eliminate high rate of cyberbullying among teens.
The role of moral education is to help students to acquire those virtues or moral habits that will help them individually to live good lives and at the same time develop good character, learn how to manage their fits of anger and frustrations, and develop good human relationships that can never be over-emphasized. It will also help humans to respect each other, and achieve a better, more balanced environment (Ottuh and Idjakpo, 2021). The high rate of cyberbullying among students has caused great damage and disorder in the academic life and human relationship of many students. Cyber-bulling in any institution or organization creates an atmosphere of insecurity, frustration and instability in such a system and this kind of defector situation discourages effective learning (in the case of education) or productivity (in the case of an organization) which is reflected in student's poor academic performance and poor human relationship or lack frustration as the case may be (Lenhart et al., (2011).
Straw, (1995) avers that genealogical research into the problem of cyberbullying among teens shows that it stems from the idea of educating for character and good moral values. In the heart of the objectives of moral education lies its mission of educating for character and good moral values such as honesty, respect, fairness, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, and courage among others (Wanda, 2010). These moral values can be sustained by Reinforcement Theory which is based on B.F Skinner's behaviourist theory which suggests that behaviour that is reinforced by immediate reward or recognition is more likely to occur again and behaviour which is ignored gradually becomes extinguished. Positive reinforcement in school administration encourages discipline which enhances good academic performance, good character and good moral value development.

Conclusion
Cyberbullying is both a rational and irrational action, which requires the cooperation of parents, teens, and other agents to ameliorate the impacts. The study suggests redesigning school curriculums to accommodate moral education and active-directed school programs, will go a long way to reducing or eliminating cyberbullying among teens.

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