

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The author of this thesis will be referred to as the “researcher” or the “writer” in the passages.

### **I.1 Background**

In today’s society, the majority of young people and even children are computer literate and technologically savvy. Most of them own a mobile phone, providing themselves with unlimited access to information and the ability to keep in touch with people from around the globe. This way, they are able to connect with each other with such convenience and ease that previous generation could only imagine.

However, there is a repercussion as a result of this rising new digital world; Cyberbullying. Cyber bullying occurs when new technologies are misused to threaten, harass, humiliate or embarrass other cyber users.

Generally, bullying is an unwelcomed, aggressive behavior among people that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying has been considered as a ‘serious unsolved problem’ between youth (Stopbullying.gov 2013) and cyber bullying has provided an extra realm for bullying to be extended into.

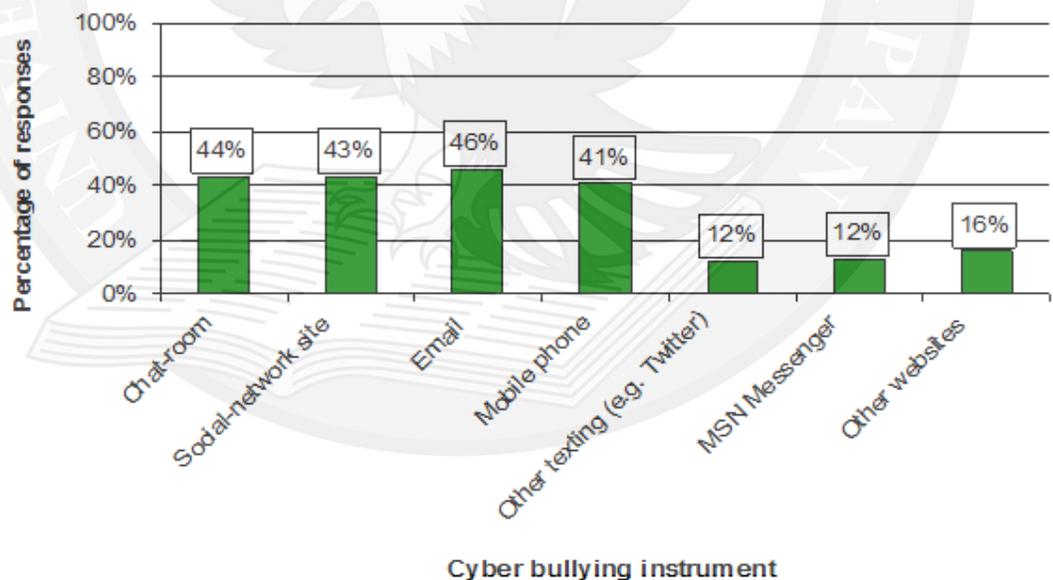
The proliferation of smartphones and institutionalized use of the Internet has expanded bullying to include cyberbullying. ‘Cyberbullying’ is an extended concept of typical bullying; the key difference being that the medium used to cyber bully involves new technologies such as Internet based mobile equipment.

The anonymity features of these tools have emboldened cyber bullies and greatly increase the fear factors for victims (Kids Helpline 2013).

Another similar definition of cyber bullying that is commonly acknowledged is the repeated and unwanted aggressive behavior over a period of time with an imbalance distribution of power between the bully and the victim using new media technologies as a source of weapon (Larry 2013).

A recent online survey conducted by Kids Helpline (2013) with 548 young people across Australia found that the most typical form of cyberbullying includes name calling, abusive comments, spreading rumours, threats of physical harm, being ignored or excluded, having opinions slammed, online impersonation and receiving rude or upsetting images via emails.

A few common situations for cyberbullying to occur is shown in picture 1.1 below.



Picture. 1.1 Percentage of Cyber bullying Instrument by Kids Helpline (2013)

From the figure, chat-room, social network site, email and mobile phones has been ranked the top few medium in which cyber bullying occurs. Most methods are generated from Social Network Service(SNS), especially Facebook as it combines all services such as chatting, texting, messaging.

Social networking service (SNS) is an online service, platform, or site that focuses on facilitating the building of social networks or social relationships in cyber space among people who, for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-life connections (Brickmarketing 2013).

There are a lot of Social network services available today. However, Facebook has been selected by the researcher as the main medium of cyber bullying. According to Socialbakers (2013), the number of Facebook users in Indonesia is ranked No. 4 in the world, thus, the researcher presumed that majority of Korean students living in Indonesia have a Facebook account. Moreover, Facebook has various features such as chatting, messaging, posting text, photo and video which is usually of interest to young people. Therefore, Facebook is an appropriate research object for this purpose.

Facebook provides a quick and easy ways to catch up, share photos and exchange opinions or comments. However, it can also be abused and used to spread gossip and rumours.

Peers pressure to appear popular by having large numbers of followers or friends can lead children to accept strangers as 'friends', giving them access to personal information. Besides, it is also a relatively simple process to open a fraudulent account and approach a cyber-target posing as else one (Rogers 2008, 16).

However, the dangerous part of cyberbullying is that the perpetrator and victim have different perceptions about cyber bullying unlike typical bullying.

Perception refers to the active process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting people, objects, events, situation, and activities. Perception and communication influence each other; shapes our understanding of others and the choices we make in our own communication (Wood 2008, 45).

So when children is misled into thinking that cyber bullying is not equivalent to violence, they continue to keep such violent cyber communication which subsequently becomes a habit even when offline.

According to the interview in Busan News (2012), Professor Kim Cheol Geon from Dong-Ah University said that most cyber bully does not feel guilt as the act feels like a harmless joke to them.

Mostly people behave and communicate based on what they perceive about something. Therefore, the difference in perceptions between the perpetrator and victim about cyber bullying is significant.

For the perpetrator, many of them perceive cyber bullying as a joke and not considering it as school violence as it does not involve direct physical or verbal abuse at the victim (MK News 2013). In contrast, victims of cyber bullying, facing such a distress situation, which is often difficult to escape, shows a variety of reactions (Li 2007).

Reactions to cyber harassment were investigated and it was focused on the different emotions and subsequent behaviour of the victim in face of a cyber-bullying experience. The most common emotions recorded were those of anger, sadness, anxiety, embarrassment, crying, fear, and self-blame.

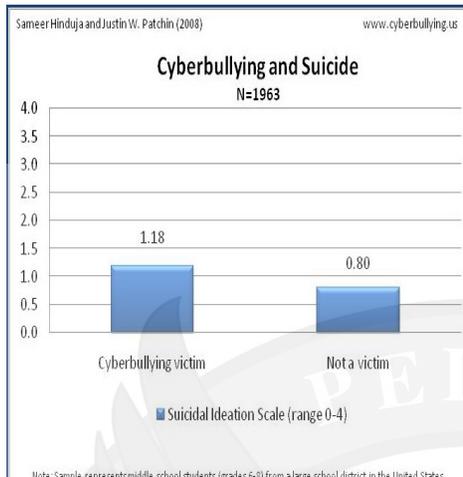
One psychiatrist in Korea, Park Se Hyun mentioned in the interview at Busan News (2012) that the feature of cyber bullying is anonymity. As a result, more aggressive language and insults are initiated as compared to face-to-face bullying.

Also, it tends to focus on more than one person as the victim. Thus, the victims are more likely to get bigger psychological shocks, making it a very serious problem (Busan News 2012, 22).

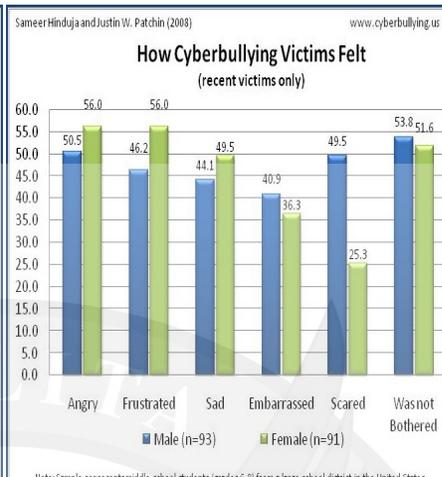
Besides such impacts, others reactions includes low self-esteem, loss in confidence, anxiety, sadness or depression, fear, anger, embarrassment and decreased academic achievement.

Moreover, cyber bullying causes a child to play truancy in order to avoid being bullied. This will lead to poor mental health and the persistent feelings of being physical ill. Self-harming/suicidal thoughts and behaviours will be more prominent, resulting in negative impacts on the quality of their relationships with family, peers, and others (Kids Helpline 2013).

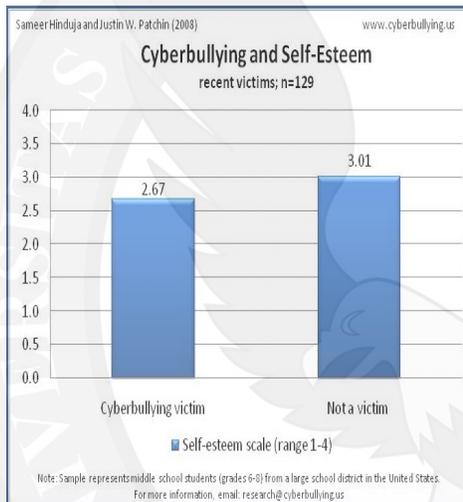
The chart below represents how victims feel when being bullied, the relationship between cyber bullying &suicide and the relationship between cyber bullying &self-esteem. It can be observed that young people who are subjected to cyber bullying was induced a more negative mind-set as compared to people who are not. In addition, these victims are also more likely to have higher score on a suicidal ideation scale (Hinduja & Patchin 2009).



Picture.1.2 Cyberbullying and Suicide



Picture. 1.3 How cyberbullying victims felt



Picture.1.4 Cyberbullying and Self-Esteem

As seen above, today's model of cyber bullying is a new phenomenon extended from traditional bullying, and is becoming very serious, dangerous and possibly lethal in terms of suicide.

People's behaviour is usually influenced by the way they think and their reactions to events are often shaped by the way they perceive it. Therefore, perception shapes and governs our behaviour and this link between mind-set and our action set has become the main motivation of the researcher. Cyber bullying is

the action set and in order to curb it, the corresponding mind set will have to be tuned and cultivated.

Jakarta International Korean School (JKS) is the only Korean school in Indonesia and is one of the best Korean international schools in the world. JKS is the centre of educational institution for Koreans. Curriculums include not only the typical Korean syllabus but several other programs as well to cater to a diverse range of interest and knowledge, training outstanding individuals each year.

Students are typically from grade 10 to 12 and the entire cohort has strength of about 400 students. Each year, top students will be qualified to get into the top universities in Korea (JKS's guidance 2013).

For this study, the writer will chose students grade 10 to 12 at JKS as her sample population.

## **I.2 Identification of Problem**

Nowadays, teenagers in Korea are suffering from school violence such as cyber bullying. In fact, one middle school student was reported last year to have committed suicide due to cyber bullying.

According to the interview with the director in the foundation for Preventing Youth Violence at Kukmin News (2012), the extent of school violence has increased tremendously since the 1995 and is now affecting more school students.

He also mentioned that bullying on cyber space is now wide spread and because of its ability to harass victims regardless of geographic or timings, the

solution has become extremely complicated and difficult to implement successfully.

Besides, he added that a lot of teenager/students are subjected to cyber bullying right now and are narrowly battling between life and death. Thus the government, school, and parents should cooperate to help and protect them (Kumin News 2012).

At the same time, another country that should be made aware of cases of cyber bullying is Indonesia. Before the researcher meets Kak Seto, a member of the National Children Protecting Commission in Indonesia, she thought that cyber bullying seldom occurs in Indonesia as it is really difficult to look for any sources of cyber bullying that is related to Indonesia and many ordinary people do not know what cyber bullying is.

However, according to the interview with KakSeto, school violence is a common occurrence among students, and the mode of violence is usually cyber bullying. Suicide cases are also present in these cyber bullying incidents.

In addition, he mentioned that although the frequency of suicide (due to cyber bullying) in Indonesia is not as prevalent as in Korea, it still occurs and therefore should be dealt with in the youth society.

Based on the information above, Korea and Indonesia faces the rising problem of cyber bullying. However, the Koreans are presently more active in engaging in this problem as compared to Indonesia.

Ultimately, we have to be very clear of the underlying causes of cyber bullying and to select and implement the best solution that will solve the root problem, saving and protecting our young people from it.

## **1) Cyber bullying in Korea**

A study showed that one out of seven students is harassed through their mobile phones, by receiving insulting text messages and being victimized in malicious jokes. Professor Jeon Shin-hyun from Korea Cyber University and Professor Lee Seong-sik from Soongsil University asked 718 students in Seoul if they had experienced bullying through their cell phones. 13%, or 98 students, answered yes.

“Bullying through cell phones is different from ordinary bullying as it occurs to derive simply pleasure and entertainment, not due to anger, control or exclusion. Necessary measures must be taken as soon as possible” (Korea Times 2011).

## **2) Cyber bullying in Indonesia**

According to a new Ipsos/Reuters poll in Indonesia, 91% polled that they knew about cyberbullying, in which a child, group of children or teenagers intentionally intimidates, threatens or embarrasses another child or group through the use of information technology such as social media or mobile devices.

Although the 53% of people answered that they knew someone in their community was a target of cyber bullying, only 14% answered that their children had been subjected to cyberbullying.

Gottfried said that future studies could show whether there was a trend toward greater awareness of cyberbullying, and shed some light on what affects parental awareness (Reuters 2012).

According to the study of Ipsos/Reuters again, the online research polled more than 18,000 adults in 24 countries, 6,500 of whom were parents. It showed

the most widely reported medium for cyberbullying was social networking sites like Facebook, which make up 60% of all bullying (Reuters 2012).

As both studies show, the adolescent in Korea and Indonesia have experienced the phenomenon of cyberbullying. Therefore, the writer in this study will focus on what motivates them (offenders) to cyberbully the victim and how they (offenders & victims) perceive cyber bullying.

After gathering the data that represented the conditional set of Korean students and the conditional set of Indonesian students on cyber bullying, the researcher is curious and keen to study about how Korean students in Indonesia are affected by cyber bullying. Therefore, the writer is determined to investigate the phenomenon of cyber bullying from the sample populations size of students at JIKS.

### **I.3 Research Questions**

To guide the study, the writer has chosen the most popular social networking site Facebook and presents two main questions that seek to understand cyber bullying.

- 1) What motivation makes high school students (offenders) at JIKS to “cyber bully” his peers?
- 2) What is the perception of high school students at JIKS about cyber bullying on Facebook?

#### **I.4 Purpose of the Study**

- 1) To examine what motivation makes students (offenders) at JIKS to cyberbully the targeted person
- 2) To investigate how students (grade 10-12) at JIKS perceive cyber bullying on Facebook
- 3) To conduct the research about what factors influence on their perception of cyber bullying on Facebook
- 4) To acknowledge what functions of Facebook are often used by students at JIKS

#### **I.5 Significance of the Study**

The writer desires to use the contents and results of this study to alleviate the problem of cyber bullying

The beneficiary of this study will include:

- a. Experts, lecturers who investigate into cyberbullying

The study would shed light on the statistics of Koreans involved in cyber bullying at JIKS. Such data would be extremely useful for professionals who research and analyse cyberbullying in Korea.

- b. Parents and students

The results of this study will inform and educate both parents and students on the effects of cyber bullying and on the preventive measures to counteract against it. More importantly, this study will create a sense of awareness among the parents and their children on the prevalence of cyber bullying.

c. Researchers in the field of communication

This study will allow them to understand the influence of communication in the phenomenon of bullying. The results from this study could be useful to further studies performed by researchers that involve analysing communications in other areas such as conflicts and engagements.

