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Involvement of Teenage-Students in Cyberbullying on WhatsApp

Yy Wima Riyayanatasya¹ & Rahayu²

Abstrak/Abstract

Cyberbullying menjadi isu penting yang terus berkembang sejalan dengan kemajuan teknologi. Penelitian ini hadir untuk menunjukkan bahwa cyberbullying dapat dikaji melalui sudut pandang ilmu komunikasi, terutama karena kehadiran cyberbullying ada pada media sosial Whatsapp. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap intensitas keterlibatan siswa sekolah menengah pertama (SMP) dalam cyberbullying melalui media sosial, WhatsApp, dan respon mereka terhadap cyberbullying yang dialaminya. Penelitian ini menerapkan metode survei dengan melibatkan 281 responden dari enam SMP di Kota Yogyakarta, yang dipilih secara acak. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui kuisisioner. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa seluruh siswa yang menjadi responden penelitian ini terlibat setidaknya satu dari tujuh jenis tindakan cyberbullying, yaitu flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing dan trickery, exclusion, dan cyberstalking. Intesitas keterlibatan siswa cukup bervariasi dan berada dalam kategori rendah dan sedang. Exclusion merupakan jenis tindakan cyberbullying yang paling sering dialami oleh siswa, sedangkan impersonation memiliki intensitas terendah. Dalam penelitian ini, siswa kelas tujuh lebih banyak yang menjadi korban cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying has become a crucial issue that continues to develop in line with the advancement of technology. This study is presented to show that cyberbullying can be analyzed through the perspective of communication science, particularly since cyberbullying can be found on the social media WhatsApp. This article aims to reveal the intensity of junior high school (*sekolah menengah pertama* – SMP) students' involvement in cyberbullying via the social media WhatsApp, and their responses to being a victim of cyberbullying. The research employed a survey method by involving 281 randomly selected respondents from six SMPs in Yogyakarta Municipality. Data collection was carried out by using a questionnaire. The study found that all the students, who were respondents in the research, had been involved in at least one out of the seven types of cyberbullying, which are flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing and trickery, exclusion, and cyberstalking. The intensity of the student's involvement varies and is identified to be in the low and moderate categories. Exclusion is the most common type of cyberbullying often experienced by the students, while impersonation is categorized as having the lowest intensity. In the study, more students in seventh grade were found to be victims of cyberbullying.

Kata kunci/Keywords:

perundungan online, media sosial, WhatsApp, remaja

cyberbullying, social media, WhatsApp, young teen

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Introduction

Bullying cases involving children have been progressively increasing year after year, as indicated by an international survey research Ipsos conducted throughout 28 countries (Cook, 2020)¹. Report of a survey carried out by Comparitech on over one thousand parents in 2019 also demonstrates similar tendencies². As many as 60% of parents reported that their children had been a victim of cyberbullying. Children aged 11 – 13 also experienced cases of bullying and the total number of cases ranked second at 56%, following cases experienced by children aged 14 – 18 which reached 59.9% (Cook, 2020). Social media sites and apps became the most utilized digital media

for cyberbullying. One out of five bullying cases occurred in these media.

Bullying cases also seem to be on the rise in Indonesia. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (*Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia* – KPAI) recorded as many as 322 cases of pornography and cyber crime with children detained in 2014. In 2015, the cases increased to 463 cases, and in 2016 it rose to 587 cases. In the following year, in 2017, there was a total of 608 cases and in 2018 it went up to 679 cases³. KPAI received 26 thousand child cases in the period of 2011 until September 2017, which include cases of cyberbullying⁴. KPAI stated that social media and online games affect the rise in bullying of school-age children⁵.

Washington (2015) shows that social media is an information and communication technology that serves as the main cause of cyberbullying. Several scholars (such as Yilmaz, 2011; Tokunaga, 2010) also demonstrate that involvement of junior high school students in cyberbullying is carried out via social media. Although, social media provides students benefits in fostering and broadening relations, media may also lead to students having to deal with unsafe risks, like cyberbullying (Livingstone & Brake, 2010).

A number of researchers (for instance, Aboujaoude et al., 2015; Vazsonyi et al., 2017; Lee, 2017) consider the phenomenon of cyberbullying as a transformation from the 'traditional' form of bullying, which emerged as a result of the thrust provided by the rapid development of digital media. Bullying is a form of violence that most often occurs in the school environment (Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012; Coelho, et al., 2016). The use of digital media has caused bullying to jump from the school ground and move about or extend its reach beyond the school.

Zhou et al. (2013) and Coelho et al. (2016) suggest that cyberbullying needs to be seriously addressed as it has negative influences on students of which among them are declining academic performance and widening relational gap. Cassidy, Faucher, and Jackson (2013) also state that cyberbullying causes students to lose concentration, increased school absence, and students feel unsafe in the school environment. Van Geel, Vedder, & Tanilon (2014) even show that cyberbullying is a risk factor driving children and teenagers to try and commit suicide.

There have been numerous studies on cyberbullying carried out by several scholars using various perspectives. Some studies on cyberbullying focus on cyberbullying involvement among boys and girls (Barlett & Coyne, 2014; Yilmaz, 2011). Other studies in Indonesia examine factors and effects of cyberbullying on social media, like Facebook and Line (Riffaudin, 2016; Nasrullah, 2015). There are also studies that explore the forms of cyberbullying (Febrianti & Hartana, 2014; Meilawati, 2016; Israyana, 2018). In 2017,

Sartana and Afriyeni (2017) found that cyberbullying in early teens was mostly observed in online media such as SMS, Facebook, and Instagram. The study also observed three roles in cyberbullying, which are perpetrator, victim, and bystander. Subsequently in 2019, Yuliati and Saptiasari (2019) found that teenagers tend to be involved as both perpetrator and victim of cyberbullying after being exposed to violence from school and the media.

According to several of the studies above, it seems that the attention given by previous scholars on issues relating to cyberbullying on WhatsApp remains to be limited, including the forms and intensity of cyberbullying that occur on this particular social media platform. Based on this gap, the study we conducted aims to provide empirical evidence regarding student involvement in cyberbullying on WhatsApp. The study is also intended to show forms of cyberbullying on WhatsApp involving students and their reaction in confronting cyberbullying.

Literature Review Cyberbullying on Social Media

Social media facilitates communication and various social interactions nowadays (Nilan et al., 2015; Sarwar, 2018). These media are undoubtedly inseparable from teenagers. As many as 90% of teenagers use social media in their daily life (Byrne, Vassef & Pfeifer, 2018).

There are numerous motives for using social media. Alhabash and Ma (2017) suggest eight reasons for using social media, namely: information sharing, self documentation, social interaction, entertainment, spending free time, medium for self expression, appeal medium, and comfort. For its users, social media also contributes in reinforcing friendship, inducing a sense of interconnectedness, and providing support when necessary (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Social media has resulted in real world relationships becoming more expansive and connected with a lot more people. According to O'Keeffe et al. (2011), social media has made the online world into an extension of the offline one.

Nevertheless, social media also has its dark side as it enables cyberbullying (Byrne, Vessey & Pfeifer, 2018). Cyberbullying is virtual harassment perpetrated deliberately and it tends to be carried out repeatedly by an individual or group of individuals through digital media (like email, short messages, chat rooms, social media, games, and so on) in the form of texts, graphics, photos, or videos (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014). In brief, Belsey (2004) considers cyberbullying as an act perpetrated to harm others by using digital media.

Among the various social media platforms, cyberbullying frequently occurs on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram (Byrne, Vessey, & Pfeifer, 2018). These three social media platforms con-

tain various features that are exploited by bullies. Byrne, Vessey, and Pfeifer (2018) mention that Facebook and Instagram allow users to edit and upload graphics with the intention of humiliating the victim. These social media platforms also contain a comments feature enabling anyone to unrestrictedly post aggressive, demeaning, or hurtful comments to others online (Byrne, Vessey, & Pfeifer, 2018).

As a messaging application, it is very likely that WhatsApp is not impervious to cyberbullying cases. As any other social media platforms, WhatsApp allows its users to be actively involved in communicating with others or with their respective communities (Aizenkot & Kashy-Rosenbaum, 2018). A study by Aizenkot and Kashy-Rosenbaum (2018) indicates several types of cyberbullying that have occurred on WhatsApp in the form of verbal violence, group violence, visual violence, and group selectivity.

Verbal violence is manifested in the form of threats, curses, insults, and so on. Group violence refers to the act of avoiding someone which is performed by individuals gathered in a group so that the person feels excluded. Visual violence occurs when someone uploads embarrassing or offensive photos or videos of others. Group selectivity is observed in group members conducting forced removal of other members.

In identifying characteristics of cyberbullying, Barlett and Gentile (2012) state that cyberbullying no longer demonstrates an imbalance of power, particularly physical power, between the perpetrator and the victim, as often observed in bullying. Technology has led to a new method where anyone can perpetrate cyberbullying by utilizing social media (Wade & Beran, 2011). Smith (2012) states that one of cyberbullying's considerable power is its perpetrator's capability in operating technology allowing them to produce manipulative contents.

Student Involvement in Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a serious issue in the school environment (Yilmaz, 2011). Most cases of cyberbullying involve 7th and 8th grade students in junior high schools (Tokunaga, 2010). A study by Hinduja and Patchin (2014) shows that 25% of 10,000 teenagers aged 11 – 18 have experienced cyberbullying at least once in their life. Approximately 16% of junior high school (*sekolah menengah pertama* – SMP) students experienced cyberbullying in the last month when the study was conducted (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014).

Maharani et al. (2016) suggests six motivations for an individual to engage in bullying, namely: joking, upset and seeking revenge, frustration, seeking attention, entertainment to pass the time, and desire to show force. These motivations are quite similar with cyberbullying motives (Maharani et al., 2016).

Willard (2007) categorized cyberbullying into seven types. *First*, flaming, which is identical to

brief confrontations by using rude, vulgar, offensive, demeaning, even threatening language online. *Second*, harassment, which is a type of cyberbullying conducted by sending offensive messages containing insults repeatedly through personal communication channels. *Third*, denigration, which is the act of putting down someone online by creating rumors and gossips. *Fourth*, impersonation, wherein the perpetrator pretends to be someone else and carries out online activities such as sending or uploading materials using other people's account to put that person in difficulty, in danger, and to tarnish the victim's reputation and relations. *Fifth*, outing and trickery, which is the act of sharing secrets, information, and images that embarrass others online. *Sixth*, exclusion, which is an action to deliberately and maliciously exclude others in an online forum. *Seventh*, cyberstalking, which is a type of repeatedly sent intimidating message involving threats or even extortion.

Some scholars use several other terminologies to identify the various types of cyberbullying, for instance sexting (Kowalski et al., 2014), name-calling (Aoyama et al., 2012; Kowalski, 2014), cyber forgery and hiding identity (Cetin, Yaman & Peker, 2011). Sexting is the act of sending or receiving sexual messages, images, or videos. Name-calling is a type of cyberbullying that is conducted by calling someone with particular names that are demeaning, embarrassing, and offensive. Cyber forgery and hiding identity is a type of cyberbullying that involves falsifying and concealing one's identity to harm others online.

In terms of dealing with cyberbullying cases, students show rather varied responses, such as silence (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006), telling their friend (Slonje & Smith, 2008; Topcu et al., 2008), telling parents and teachers (Bhat, Chang & Linscott, 2010), and some even collect evidence then report them to proper authorities (Bhat, Chang & Linscott, 2010). These responses are aimed at alleviating anxieties and stress as well as resolving problems (Weiten & Llyod, 2006). Another study result indicates that cyberbullying has driven children and teenagers to attempt suicide (Van Geel, Vedder & Tanilon, 2014).

Research Method

The study aims to explore student involvement in cyberbullying, such as the types of cyberbullying they have experienced. Similar to other surveys in general, the study involved a number of samples taken from a population and data collection was based on self reports given by the respondents regarding their opinion or experience on cyberbullying (Neuman, 2014).

Population and sample

The population of the study were junior high school (*sekolah menengah pertama* – SMP) students of Yogyakarta Municipality with 7th and 8th grade students as the target population under

the consideration that cyberbullying is mostly experienced by students in this group (Tokunaga, 2010). The study involved 281 students from two public junior high schools and four private junior high schools. The schools were selected randomly out of the entire pool of junior high schools in Yogyakarta Municipality.

The schools were given the freedom to choose one class of 7th grade and one class of 8th grade to determine the number of samples taken from every school. This method was chosen to make it easier for the schools to determine the students participating in the study. The number of students participating in the study was left in the hands of the schools as it depended on the number of students present in the schools respectively. Every school had different amounts of 7th and 8th grade classes, the number of students in the classes also varied.

Measurement

Data were collected by using a closed questionnaire. The questionnaire contained a number of questions concerning the background of the respondent, the intensity of involvement in an act of cyberbullying, and the student's response when they become a victim of cyberbullying.

The questions relating to the respondent's background include age, sex, grade, and habit in using technology. The intensity of the respondent's involvement in an act of cyberbullying was asked in 28 statements. There were four statements about flaming, namely experiences relating to online confrontation using rude, vulgar, offensive, demeaning, and even threatening language. There were four statements about online harassment, namely experiences in receiving offensive messages containing harassment, insults that are sent repeatedly via personal communication channels. There were three statements about denigration, which relates to the experience of being put down by someone online by way of creating rumors and gossips. There were three statements on impersonation, namely the experience of having someone impersonating them and conducting online activities such as sending or uploading materials that put the victim in difficulties or danger and tarnish the victim's reputation and relations. There were four statements relating to outing and trickery, which refers to the experience of having embarrassing secrets, information, images of themselves being published online. There were three statements concerning exclusion, which is the experience of being deliberately and maliciously excluded from an online forum. There were four statements on cyberstalking, which refers to the experience of receiving intimidating messages involving threats or even extortion being sent repeatedly. The Likert scale was used as a means of measurement for each of the question with a score of 1 to 4 referring to the Cyber Bullying Inventory (CBI) by Erdur-Baker, with a choice of answers from never to very frequently (more than five

times) (Topcu & Baker, 2010).

A score interval calculation with a 0.75 scale span was conducted to produce categories in the intensity of cyberbullying and intensity of student's involvement in types of cyberbullying. The distribution of these averages is shown in four categories, low (1 – 1.75), moderate (1.76 – 2.5), high (2.51 – 3.25), and very high (3.26 – 4). These categories of average span function as a scale in determining the intensity that various cyberbullying types have.

The student's response to cyberbullying refers to action carried out by the student when they become a victim of cyberbullying. There were seven statements relating to their response which include: telling their friend, telling their parents, telling their teacher, silence, collect evidence and report to proper authority, and suicidal ideation (Tokunaga, 2010). The Likert scale was also used as a measuring tool with a score of 1 to 4, starting from never to very frequently.

The questionnaires have previously passed the validity and reliability tests. The data analysis technique employed in the study is cross tabulation and descriptive statistics. Data were processed using the SPSS Statistics program version 21.

Research Findings

The distribution of respondents based on grade level (7 and 8) seemed balanced. Nevertheless, out of the total number of student respondents (n=281), the number of students in the 8th grade was a little bit more (145 students or 52%) than 7th grade (136 students or 48%). Most of the respondents aged 13 to 15 years old (238 students or 85%). The respondents were in the young teen age category, which is often involved in cyberbullying (Tokunaga, 2010). The number of male students (152 students or 54%) was a little bit more than their female counterpart.

All the respondents were internet users. Most of the respondents access the internet at home (251 respondents or 89%). Some students access the internet at internet cafes (13 respondents or 5%) due to lack of internet access at home. Most of the respondents use internet to communicate with their school friends (95 respondents or 34%) and play online games (91 respondents or 32%). The time the respondents most often use to access the internet was after school (162 respondents or 58%). The media they use to access the internet was mostly their cellular phone (261 respondents or 93%).

All the respondents used social media and WhatsApp, with varying duration of use. A number of respondents use it for an average period of 1 – 3 hours per day (101 respondents or 36%), some for 3 – 5 hours per day (87 respondents or 31%), and some for even more than 5 hours per day (65 respondents or 23%). The social media platform that they most frequently use was WhatsApp (176 respondents or 63%). The high use of WhatsApp corroborates the fact that this

Table 1. Distribution of respondents

| Attributes | Number of respondents (percentage) |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Grade: | |
| Grade 7 | 152 (48%) |
| Grade 8 | 129 (52%) |
| Age: | |
| ≤ 12 years old | 38 (13%) |
| 13-15 years old | 238 (85%) |
| 16-18 years old | 5 (2%) |
| Sex: | |
| Male | 152 (54%) |
| Female | 129 (46%) |
| Duration of social media use: | |
| < 1 hour | 28 (10%) |
| 1-3 hours | 101 (36%) |
| 3-5 hours | 87 (31%) |
| > 5 hours | 65 (23%) |
| Internet access location: | |
| Home | 251 (89%) |
| School | 7 (2%) |
| Internet café | 13 (5%) |
| Others | 10 (4%) |
| Favorite online activity: | |
| Communicate with friends | 95 (34%) |
| Browse social media | 66 (24%) |
| Play online games | 91 (32%) |
| Perform school assignments | 29 (10%) |
| Internet access time: | |
| Afterschool | 162 (58%) |
| During school | 6 (2%) |
| Morning-after waking up | 2 (1%) |
| Night-before sleeping | 23 (8%) |
| Anytime | 88 (31%) |
| Media to access the internet: | |
| Cellular phone | 261 (93%) |
| Computer PC/Laptop | 12 (4%) |
| Tablet | 8 (3%) |
| Most frequently used social media: | |
| WhatsApp | 176 (63%) |
| YouTube | 55 (19%) |
| Instagram | 45 (16%) |
| Facebook | 5 (2%) |

Notes: sample (n) = 281

messaging platform is the most popular in Indonesia, including among young teens.

Data summary on the respondents can be observed in Table 1 (Distribution of Respondents).

Study findings show that the seven types of cyberbullying suggested by Willard (2007) were experienced by the students, although in varying degrees. The type of cyberbullying most frequently experienced by the students is exclusion or the act of deliberately excluding others in an online forum. Willard (2007) states that this act results in the victim feeling left out of the group. Female students experienced more exclusion (102 respondents or 51%) than male students (98 respondents or 49%) did.

Other types of cyberbullying observed to be quite a lot are flaming and denigration. Flaming is a type of cyberbullying that refers to confrontations using rude, vulgar, offensive, demeaning, and even threatening language online (Willard, 2007). Denigration is the act of putting down

someone online by way of making rumors and gossips (Willard, 2007). The distributed information is false and malicious with the intent of damaging the victim's reputation and relations. Table 2 shows the types of cyberbullying experienced by the respondents via WhatsApp.

Table 2. Types of cyberbullying via WhatsApp experienced by junior high school students

| Types of Cyberbullying | Total response from respondents (percentage) | |
|------------------------|--|-----------|
| | Yes | No |
| Flaming | 96 (34%) | 185 (66%) |
| Harassment | 65 (23%) | 216 (77%) |
| Denigration | 90 (32%) | 191 (68%) |
| Impersonation | 15 (5%) | 266 (95%) |
| Outing & trickery | 70 (25%) | 211 (75%) |
| Exclusion | 200 (71%) | 81 (29%) |
| Cyberstalking | 38 (14%) | 243 (86%) |

Notes: sample (n)= 281

The research findings show that the intensity of student involvement in cyberbullying is at the low and moderate category. Although it is not categorized as high, cyberbullying remains to be a point of concern as it leads to serious impacts on students (Zhou et al., 2013; Coelho, 2016; Hana & Suwanti, 2019).

Table 3. Intensity of Student Involvement in Various Types of Cyberbullying

| Various Types of Cyberbullying | Intensity Score | Category |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Flaming | 1.65 | Low |
| Harassment | 1.49 | Low |
| Denigration | 1.61 | Low |
| Impersonation | 1.11 | Low |
| Outing & Trickery | 1.61 | Low |
| Exclusion | 1.82 | Moderate |
| Cyberstalking | 1.40 | Low |

Table 3 indicates that the intensity of student involvement in the exclusion type of cyberbullying to be the highest (intensity score of 1.82). Meanwhile, the intensity of student involvement in acts of impersonation was found to be the lowest (intensity score of 1.11). The exclusion type of cyberbullying often occurs in online forum, such as WhatsApp groups. In this case, the students experienced exclusion from the group due to in-group and out-group classification occurring in their relations. The online group feature WhatsApp provides has been proven to mediate the high level of exclusion intensity among the students. This finding shows that the online group feature does indeed provide the opportunity for cyberbullying to emerge (Willard, 2007; Aizenkot, 2017).

The research also employed cross tabulation to examine the correlation between types of cyberbullying and other variables, such as grade level and sex. The cross tabulation results between types of cyberbullying and grade level show that 49 respondents (36%) from grade 7 and 47 respondents (32%) from grade 8 experienced flam-

ing. Subsequently, 40 respondents (29%) from grade 7 and 25 respondents (17%) from grade 8 experienced harassment; 52 respondents (38%) from grade 7 and 38 respondents (26%) from grade 8 experienced denigration; 9 respondents (7%) from grade 7 and 6 respondents (4%) from grade 8 experienced impersonation; 48 respondents (35%) from grade 7 and 22 respondents from grade 8 (15%) experienced outing and trickery; 100 respondents (74%) from grade 7 and 100 respondents (69%) from grade 8 experienced exclusion; while 22 respondents (16%) from grade 7 and 16 respondents (11%) from grade 8 experienced cyberstalking.

The results indicate that grade 7 respondents were being cyberbullied more. As mentioned by Coelho (2016), the school transition period is a period when cyberbullying is prone to happen. During this period new students still have little understanding of their school environments and are still learning to adapt. Their limited understanding is then exploited by certain individual or group to make them victims of cyberbullying.

Other results show that female respondents experienced more cyberbullying in the following four types: harassment, outing and trickery, exclusion, and cyberstalking. 49 male respondents (32%) and 47 female respondents (36%) experienced flaming; 31 male respondents (20%) and 34 female respondents (26%) experienced harassment; 45 male respondents (30%) and 45 female respondents (35%) experienced denigration; 30 male respondents (20%) and 40 female respondents (31%) experienced outing and trickery; 98 male respondents (64%) and 102 female respondents (79%) experienced exclusion; while 17 male respondents (11%) and 21 female respondents (16%) experienced cyberstalking. As for the impersonation type of cyberbullying, both female and male respondents have the same percentage of 5%, with 8 respondents and 7 respondents respectively.

Several prior studies state that girls are more likely to be involved in cyberbullying as victims, while boys tend to be cyberbullying perpetrators (Connell, Schell-Busey, Pearce, and Negro, 2014; Li, 2016; Kim, Kimber, Boyle, and Georgiades, 2019). This study suggests that not all types of cyberbullying are experienced more by girls.

Table 4. Student response to being a victim of cyberbullying

| Responses | Intensity (Number of respondents (percentage)) | | | |
|---|--|-----------|----------|------------|
| | Never | Seldom | Often | Very Often |
| Silence | 59 (21%) | 97 (34%) | 69 (25%) | 51 (20%) |
| Telling a friend | 71 (25%) | 112 (40%) | 74 (26%) | 24 (9%) |
| Getting revenge for being cyberbullied | 98 (35%) | 112 (40%) | 51 (18%) | 20 (7%) |
| Telling parents | 99 (35%) | 111 (40%) | 40 (14%) | 31 (11%) |
| Telling a teacher | 172 (61%) | 86 (31%) | 18 (6%) | 5 (2%) |
| Collect evidence and report to proper authority | 185 (66%) | 68 (24%) | 17 (6%) | 11 (4%) |
| Suicidal ideation | 251 (89%) | 24 (9%) | 3 (1%) | 3 (1%) |

Notes: sample (n)= 281

The students who were involved in cyberbullying, particularly as a victim, demonstrated differing reactions, Table 4 displays the students' responses to being a victim of cyberbullying.

The study found that "silence" is the most chosen response among the students in confronting cyberbullying. As many as 69 respondents (25%) selected "often" and 55 respondents (20%) selected "very often" in keeping their silence when being cyberbullied. Such attitude is associated with the psychological impact imposed upon the students, which is the fear to react (Hana & Suwanti, 2019). Although observed as a relatively minor percentage in comparison to other response categories, suicidal ideation is also a type of response that students show in dealing with cyberbullying.

Moreover, the respondents in the study have a tendency to tell their cyberbullying experience to their friend rather than their parents and teachers. The study results support previous research stating that teenagers prefer to be more open to their friends than to their parents. De Goede, Branje, Delsing, and Meeus (2009) mention that parental influence tends to decline while peer influence tends to intensify in the social life of teenagers.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that cyberbullying involved young teenagers. This age group is said by Tokunaga as being susceptible to acts of cyberbullying. At such a young age, individuals are still in the process of figuring out their identity, and their social environment has a significant influence in their attitude and behavior (Varjasas cited in Kowalski et al., 2014, p.1112). The large amount of 7th graders involved in cyberbullying corroborates Coelho's (2016) argument that the school transition period is a period that is prone to bullying as new students usually do not have proper understanding of their social environment making them an easy target for bullies.

The type of cyberbullying that most of the students experienced is exclusion, which correlates with the students' involvement in virtual groups. Although students use WhatsApp to communicate with their teachers and school friends, the virtual groups are also proven to facilitate acts of exclusion.

There is a possibility that exclusion cases are associated with communication imbalance instead of with likes or dislikes of a person, which is commonly observed in 'traditional' bullying cases. In this case, the students' understanding of the characteristics of social media is crucial in order to avoid misassumptions and conflicts in communication. This also correlates with the five concepts of media literacy, wherein every individual has a different understanding of the same message (Goodman, 2014). Goodman (2014) also states that media message shapes people's perception in perceiving reality.

Other types of cyberbullying many students experienced are flaming and denigration. Both

are cases that typically follow communication activities. Flaming, for instance, refers to confrontations using rude, vulgar, offensive, demeaning, and even threatening language that are conducted online (Willard, 2007). Denigration also refers to communication activities like rumors and gossips (Willard, 2007). Based on the cases above, it seems that not only is understanding of social media an important issue, the way we communicate through social media is also of no less importance. Students need to understand how to politely communicate on social media and to properly solve problems.

The type of cyberbullying experienced the least by the students is impersonation. Willard (2007) mentions that impersonation can be committed by someone who has the ability to imitate and behave very similarly to the victim, and upload things that may reflect a bad image of the victim. Impersonation may happen if the perpetrator is capable of disguising themselves as the victim by using any means of online communication channels. In doing this, the perpetrator must possess exceptional information and communications technological capacity, like hacking. This type of activity may happen to the victim's personal web page, their social media, profile, blogs, short messages, social media conversations, or through any means of communication (Willard, 2007). The study results indicate that possibly junior high school students still lack such high level of computer and technological skills.

In addition to computer and technological skills, impersonation may occur when students exchange their social media password with others. This may indicate that students understand the meaning of privacy and not to share their password or cellular phone with others.

The use of cellular phone as the student's main media for accessing the internet and communicating does seem to allow greater opportunity for cyberbullying to happen. Cellular phones enable students to engage in social contacts and communicate with their peers or people outside of their environments. But, this also means that there is greater opportunity for danger to emerge. Mediated communications sometimes make people forget that they are dealing with another person and that there are risks involved. Children need to understand the conditions of their social environment when communicating using these media. Accordingly, parents also need to control and, if necessary, restrict the types of applications installed in the cell phone, and only select applications that children truly need (Roche, 2005).

The research findings also show that the intensity of the student's involvement in cyberbullying is at low and moderate levels. Despite not being in the high category, cyberbullying still needs to be taken seriously. The impact of cyberbullying on students is extremely serious and it cannot be ignored (Davison & Stein, 2014). Sartana and Afriyeni (2017) also mention that serious mental impacts were found in cyberbullying victims in

comparison to traditional bullying ones.

The students' reactions in being a victim of cyberbullying are quite varied. The research findings indicate that most students who experienced cyberbullying tend to keep their silence about the case. This is perhaps caused by a sense of fear, particularly fear of reprisals⁶. The research findings also indicate that the students have a trust crisis of their teachers and parents in helping them deal with cyberbullying. Some of the students preferred their friends as someone to share their experience with instead.

The study findings suggest that children engage in interactions via the internet and social media at home after school more. This means that cyberbullying most likely happens when the students are at home. The parents' role in monitoring their children's communication via the gadget they use cannot be ignored. It is important for parents to accompany and control their children in using their gadgets, particularly in communication activities with their friends or peer groups.

Concerning the school's role, Bhat, Chang, and Linscott (2010) suggest that schools can curb cyberbullying by holding digital literacy programs. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission also considers schools and teachers have a vital role in preventing bullying⁷. Buckingham (2015) states that digital literacy can help children to protect themselves from deviant behaviors or violence in media contents. Digital literacy refers to competence in using technology in an effective and efficient manner, evaluating, and creating contents for productive purposes (Buckingham, 2015). Children who possess digital literacy skill tend to behave well in engaging with social media and the like as they are able to control their attitude and conduct. Nevertheless, the responsibility of developing children's competence in digital literacy does not only fall in the hands of the schools, it is a joint responsibility that includes the children's community and family (Buckingham, 2007).

Conclusion and Limitations

Cyberbullying is a crucial issue amidst the advancement of information and communications technology. The rise of social media has facilitated in fulfilling our communication needs beyond space and time, yet such media development has also intensified cyberbullying. The proximity of children and teenagers to social media is inevitable, and this opens up opportunities for them to be involved in cyberbullying.

The study found that junior high school (SMP) students experience various kinds of cyberbullying with varying degrees of intensity. There are seven types of cyberbullying experienced by SMP students, namely flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing and trickery, exclusion, and cyberstalking. Impersonation is the type of cyberbullying with the lowest intensity, while exclusion has the highest intensity. The

findings in the research suggest that the intensity of cyberbullying experienced by the students is in the low and moderate categories.

A number of variables pertaining to the respondents' background were correlated with cyberbullying. The study results show that more female students were victims of cyberbullying in the harassment, outing and trickery, exclusion, and cyberstalking types. As for male students, there were more of them who were victim to cyberbullying in the flaming and impersonation types. In terms of grade level, more 7th grade students experienced various types of cyberbullying than 8th grade students did.

The research was limited to identifying types of cyberbullying and their intensity, as well as the contribution of digital literacy to the issue of cyberbullying. Moreover, the research only focused on the social media WhatsApp, hence in subsequent studies the scope may be developed further in other social media platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. The study did not provide in-depth discussions on the specific

digital literacy format that can be used to effectively curb one's involvement in cyberbullying. Future studies may explore further, or even develop a specific digital literacy guide in dealing with cyberbullying. In addition, subsequent studies may also develop a digital literacy program format that is applicable in various education levels.

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Notes

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