

## Investigating the Antecedents of Cyberbullying

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### ABSTRACT

This research attempted to fill the knowledge gap in cyberbullying by revealing one of the five main themes of cyberbullying that is the antecedents that contribute to the working hypothesis or paradigm model of the phenomenon. The actual research reveals the antecedents and the contexts and prevailing conditions that influence it, as well as the phenomenon, the coping strategies and the consequences resulting from the coping strategies. Using a grounded theory methodology, in-depth interviews were conducted on adolescents aged between 12 to 18 years from different schools in the state of Perlis. The data were analyzed using NVivo 10 by methodically coding and categorizing the data in open, axial and selective coding to arrive at a model development. A paradigm model was obtained based on these themes and subthemes which uniquely contribute to the body of knowledge on cyberbullying phenomenon in Malaysia. The involved elements derived from the model are; the antecedents of cyberbullying; the phenomenon; the coping strategies by informants and the consequences resulting from these strategies. The significance of this study lies in its attempt to provide a working framework for reducing adolescents' technology abuse that will eventually lead to cyberbullying and to find solutions for adolescents to tackle cyberbullying problems if it ever happened. This study is hoped to benefit all the parties: adolescents, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to minimize adolescents' cyberbullying phenomenon.

**Keywords:** Cyberbullying, antecedents, grounded theory.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Cyberbullying has to be given a priority in both quantitative and qualitative research particularly in Malaysian context. In 2012, there has been a staggering seven cases of cyberbullicide been reported all over the world which accumulated to 25 cases up to December 2012 (Abu Bakar, 2012). Therefore, there is a dire need for an in-depth look into this phenomenon, particularly among adolescents in Malaysia. Given that cyberbullying is a global concern, the

current study has initiated the investigation and for future research to adapt its working hypothesis for other similar analysis. This current study, therefore, has explored adolescents' personal experiences and perceptions of cyberbullying within the Malaysian environment, and examines all factors that cause this phenomenon.

## **2.0 CURRENT STUDY**

Before cyberbullying came to light, many researchers have put their interest on traditional type of bullying or the face-to-face bullying. Currently, traditional bullying has been confirmed that it is related to cyberbullying as research shows physical bullying were triggered after online misunderstanding.

## **3.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to Hinduja and Patchin (2007), cyberbullying phenomenon, is not yet entirely explored but it has been recognized just as harmful, and it has been associated with many psychological, emotional, and social problems among adolescents (Shariff, 2004; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a; Beran & Li, 2005; Strom & Strom, 2005; Li, 2005, 2006; Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, & Tippett, 2006). Additionally, cyberbullying has been associated to unsuccessful educational progress and unacceptable communications among students (Beran & Li, 2005; Li, 2006). Many teachers, however, are not even conscious of the harming nature of cyberbullying to their students as it is indistinctive in nature (Beran & Li, 2005). In addition to this, it is confirmed that adults as the guardian often underestimate the incidents (Holt & Keyes, 2004). Therefore, do not think that cyberbullying is a dilemma at school (Li, 2008). Furthermore, it is also found that poor monitoring on adolescents' online behavior by their guardian has been reported (Mason, 2008). The digital divide between adolescents and the guardians (Lenhart, Rainie, & Lewis, 2001; Levin, Arafah, Lenhart, & Ramie, 2002; Roberts & Foehr, 2004; Strom & Strom, 2004) is said to provide this lack of adult consciousness on cyberbullying as well. As Shariff (2004) and Ybarra and Mitchell (2004b) pointed out, while these activities go unnoticed, the negative consequences continue to build. It is vital for the guardians to become mindful of cyberbullying so that they may help to produce nurturing ambiance for student learning (Shariff, 2004).

Adding to the dilemma, the adolescents described that they did not think adults at school could help them if they were cyberbullied (Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2007; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Aoyama & Talbert, 2009). Moreover,

cyberbullying incidents were not reported to the guardians due to the fear of losing online privileges or a restriction of Internet use (Agatston et al., 2007; Juvonen & Gross, 2008). The researcher will examine the phenomenon of cyberbullying in three different schools as several preliminary studies have mentioned the importance of considering the effects of cyberbullying within the school setting (Elinoff, Chafouleas, & Sassu, 2004; Shariff, 2004, 2005; Strom & Strom, 2005b; Shariff & Gouin, 2006; Wolfsberg, 2006) and what are the coping strategies for these adolescents.

As cyberbullying is still in its infancy, many studies were based on face-to-face bullying. Cyberbullying compared to traditional bullying has many unique aspects such as anonymity, infinite audience, and viral in nature which the latter does not have (Shariff, 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). Thus, based on the three reign arguments regarding the knowledge gap of the research, there is a need for sound empirical research that helps define the prevalence and nature of the phenomenon of online bullying as it occurs among our adolescents.

## **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Participants**

One hundred and five adolescents from four secondary school and three from a primary school participated in this research. Data were collected over a period of seven months and these were done after major examinations as not to disrupt their academic activities. Most of the informants were chosen through the school counselors but many of the participants were picked up by snow-balling technique as the adolescents will inform about others who have engaged in the cyberbullying activities as a perpetrators or victims. The researcher also went online for a period of six months in order to experience the real situation of cyberbullying phenomenon and to collect the examples related to themes of study. This was done particularly via one of the most prominence social networking sites among adolescents – Facebook. The researcher purposely setting up a new Facebook account and had successfully adding all adolescents that researcher found actively engaging in cyberbullying behavior. All informants come from Malay ethnicity. Table 1 summarizes the four stages and number of participants in each stage.

## 4.2 Procedure

Data were collected using grounded theory procedures described in Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998). Creswell (1998) suggested that a standard grounded theory research will comprise 20 to 30 interviews that collectively saturate the categories that emerge during analysis. Data are accumulated in four phases that differ with regard to purpose and data collection strategies (Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005) is summarized in Table 1. Analysis of data of current study were completed by using NVivo Version 8 Software as to meet the terms of "trustworthiness", "rigorousness", or "quality" of the data, therefore it is important that this are carried out in a thorough and transparent manner (Crawford, Leybourne & Arnott, 2000; Creswell, 1998; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Seale, 1999). Therefore, using software in the data analysis process has been thought by some to add rigor to qualitative research (Richards & Richards, 1991).

**Table 1: Four Phase of Data Collection**

Phase	Coding	Purpose	Participants
1	Open	Identify codes within categories for further analysis	30 individuals and 11 in focus groups
2	Axial	Explore codes in detail; relate codes to one another to construct themes	9 individuals and 4 in focus groups
3	Selective	Construct preliminary paradigm model and discuss themes in relation to model; Establish story line that integrates paradigm model	31 in focus group
4	Selective	Test, validate and explicate paradigm model until saturated; identify emergent Principles consistent with paradigm model; conduct member checks	20 in focus group

Phase 1 data collection incorporated individual interviews and focus group interviews that allowed the researcher to generate a list of codes within five categories in the paradigm model specifically antecedents, definitions of the phenomenon, context and conditions that affect the phenomenon, coping strategies, and consequences of the coping strategies taken. The main reason of open coding is to distinguish significant topics creditable of closer analysis and explanation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Thirty adolescents were interviewed individually and eleven informants which were divided into three groups with three individuals in two groups and five in a group. The interviews in this stage

was to explore preliminary thoughts and impressions about cyberbullying in a setting in which informants could react to each other (Krueger, 1994). All interviews were based on both open-ended responses to the following questions:

1. How would you describe cyberbullying?
2. What do you do when you cyber bully? What others did to you when you are cyber bullied?
3. Are there any situations when you are most likely to cyber bully? Are there any situations when you are most likely to be cyber bullied?
4. How do you cope when you do cyberbullying? How do you cope when you being cyber bullied?
5. What are some positive and negative consequences of cyberbullying?

These questions are consistent to the major elements of the paradigm model described by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Table 2 shows 103 preliminary codes obtained from the interview sessions with each code represent a significant topic of discussion related to cyberbullying. Many adolescents for instant, mentioned characteristics of online technology such as social networking are facilitating factors to cyberbullying. The researcher thus concluded that the focus group and individual interviews saturated the codes that were necessary to understand the phenomenon of cyberbullying after similar codes emerged during the interviews.

Phase 2 which exercised axial coding encompassed of nine individual interviews and four in a focus group which aimed to elucidate codes in detail. Phase 2 clusters codes into themes and patterns related to cyberbullying. Axial coding allowed the researcher to structure an advance understanding of each of the five main components in the paradigm model (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A structured interview was used in which each individual responded to nine questions and follow-up probes. Question 1 was intended to familiarize individuals to a typical cyberbullying situation. Questions 2 through 9 were based on the five questions presented in Phase 1 of data collection. Follow-up probe questions were added to focus in more detail on prominent categories mentioned during Phase 1.

1. Describe a typical situation in which you might cyber bully? Or being cyber bullied?
2. What causes you to cyber bully others or being cyber bullied by others? Probes: self, perpetrators (friends, strangers), online technology characteristics
3. Please list as many reasons as you can why you bully cyber? Probes: Constructive, Destructive behavior

4. What do you do to cope with cyberbullying? Probes: Active, aggressive, avoidance, cognitive
5. By means of what you would be cyber bullied? Probes: Internet, mobile phone
6. Can you identify conditions or situations where you are most likely to cyber bully? Probes: issues specific to cyberbullying, characteristics of guardian
7. How you been bullied or bullied on-line or via a mobile phone? Probes: word, sentences, image, voice, video (methods of cyberbullying)
8. What are the impacts of cyberbullying? Probes: emotional, behavior, social, physical, academic
9. What are the positive and negative consequences of cyberbullying? Probes: quality of life and quality of academic.

The researcher identified a range of preliminary themes on the foundation of five categories and codes as illustrated in Table 2. The researcher merged themes in a way in accordance with the interviews. Phase 2 provide the researcher with the possibility to organize and label themes that could be tested in Phase 3. Therefore, macrothemes and themes identified in Phase 2 were viewed as provisional, subject to revision and removal in Phase 3.

**Table 2: Initial Categories and Codes in Phase 1**

Category	Code
Antecedents	1. Hatred
	2. Easily offended
	3. To gain satisfaction
	4. Sense of security
	5. Jealousy/envy
	6. Afraid to confront
	7. Inhibited in real life
	8. For fun
	9. Vengeance
	10. To vent anger
	11. Doesn't inflict pain
	12. To relief boredom
	13. Revealing photos
	14. Lack of knowledge on online security
	15. Enticing strangers
	16. Revealing too much information
	17. Prompr in manners

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Definitions of cyberbullying

18. Inexpensive
  19. Source of information
  20. easy to use
  21. Remove inhibitions
  22. Befriend with many people
  23. Anonymous commenting
  24. Availability/permanence of expression
  25. Being bullied in Facebook
  26. Being bullied in cyber space
  27. To gain dignity
  28. Be courageous
  29. Be confident
  30. Cyberbullying
  31. Diatribe, invective, ribaldry
  32. Threats
  33. Denigration
  34. Identity theft impersonation/masquarade
  35. Disclosure of sensitive, embarrassing of personal information
  36. Exclusion/ostracism
  37. Editing pictures
  38. Recording and uploading cyberbullying incidents
  39. Ridiculing and contempt
  40. Romor spreading
  41. Lewd, vulgar, bawdy (words, images, video)
  42. Feeling edgy/uneasy
  43. Feeling offended
  44. Feeling stressed
  45. Feeling frustrated
  46. Emotionally disturbed
  47. Was not bothered
  48. Regret/remorse
  49. Exasperated
  50. Feel sad
  51. Hate
  52. Feel embarrassed
  53. Feel angry
  54. Feel scared (victim/perpertrator)
  55. Feel satisfied
  56. Becoming aggressive (victim/perpertrator)
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	57. Reserved
	58. Bearing grudge (victim/perpetrator)
	59. Loose concentration
	60. Decline in grades
	61. Headache
	62. Hurting
	63. Withdrawn/shying away
	64. Constantly irritated
	65. Being rejected
Contexts and conditions	66. Can bully or be bullied anywhere, anytime
	67. Lack of supervision
	68. Limitless victimization, infinite audience
	69. Viral in nature
	70. Anonymity and pseudonymity
	71. Expansion of traditional bullying
	72. Expansion of cyberbullying
	73. Disinhibition
	74. Technology cant be separated from teenagers
	75. No or less supervision from guardian
	76. Negligence
	77. Be concerned
Coping strategies	78. Block bully
	79. Concede/give in
	80. Replace password or sim
	81. Logging off
	82. Retaliate
	83. Disregard/ignore
	84. Confront the perpetrator
	85. Determine to make police report
	86. Seek counseling
	87. Tell friends
	88. Tell parents
	89. Tell siblings
	90. Tell tacher
Concequences	91. Feeling guilty
	92. Managed to prevent bully
	93. Happy because bully doesn't dare to bother
	94. Increased confidence

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Selective coding was intended for Phase 3. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) selective coding is the process of assessing the macrothemes and themes identified in Phase 2, linking the categories to one another, and developing a plot that integrates the paradigm model. Thirty one informants participated in six focus groups interviews to serve several purposes such as one to duplicate crucial codes and themes that were identified in Phase 1 and 2 (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Secondly selective coding was used to delve into detail the connection among macrothemes within each category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A third objective was to request informants to discuss the five categories in the paradigm model related to each other for example in order to understand the process of cyberbullying, informants discussed the relationship between antecedents and contextual conditions of cyberbullying (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This information facilitated the researcher to construct a credible paradigm model that could be authenticated in Phase 4. Final objective was to create a story line, which consists of a descriptive story about central phenomenon of this research. This phase consists of two major outcomes. The first outcome distinguished range of themes that were considered within macrothemes in each of the five categories. Altogether as shown in Table 3, 29 themes were identified and were grouped into 12 macrothemes. The second outcome was a constructed preliminary paradigm model that has been validated in Phase 4 of data collection and illustrate in detail in a following section. The preliminary paradigm model consisted of the macrothemes and themes acknowledged so far.

Finally phase 4 was projected to validate and explain the paradigm model constructed in Phase 3. Twenty informants in four focus groups were interviewed and were asked to respond to a paradigm model based on responses in Phase 3. The central idea was to perform member checks on the preliminary paradigm model. Informants were asked whether the themes and macrothemes were conceivable to them. A second purpose was to ask for comments and reactions concerning the reliability of the paradigm model. Informants in Phase 4 were shown preliminary diagrams of the paradigm model and asked to comment on whether the model is sensible to them and in line with their own cyberbullying activities. A third purpose was to encourage adolescents to refine or add to any of the categories, macrothemes, or themes in the paradigm model. According to Maxwell (1996), this last stage facilitated to guarantee that the final paradigm model was fully saturated, reliable, and credible.

**Table 3: Macrothemes and Themes in Phase 3**

Category	Macrothemes	Themes
Antecedents of Cyberbullying	Perpetrator's behaviors	1. Hatred
		2. To get even
		3. Sense of security
		4. Jealousy/envy
		5. Cowardly
		6. Introverted
		7. Self gratification
		8. For fun
	Victim's behavior	9. Revealing behavior
		10. Lack of safety measures
		11. Enticing strangers
	Bystander behavior	12. Instigating
		Characteristics of online media
14. Inexpensive		
15. Easy to use		
16. Anonymity		
17. Availability		
Definitions of cyberbullying	Constructive behavior	18. Self-esteem
		19. Gain courage
	Destructive behavior	20. Gain confidence
		21. Flamming and trolling
		22. Online harassment
		23. Cyberstalking/threats
		24. Denigration
		25. Identity theft/impersonation
		26. Outing/trickery
		27. Exclusion/ostracism
		28. Photoshopping
		29. Happy slapping
		30. Name calling
		31. Rumor spreading

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		32. Sexting
		33. Emotional impact
		34. Behavioral impact
		35. Impact on accademic
		36. Physical impact
		37. Social impact
		38. Cyberbullying of works
		39. Without boundary
Contexts and conditions that affect cyberbullying	Issues	40. Lack of supervision
		41. Limitless victimization
		42. Viral in nature
		43. Anonymity and pseudonymity
		44. Expansion of traditional bullying
		45. Expansion from cyberbullying
		46. Remove inhabition
		47. Permanence of expression
		48. No or less supervision
		49. Seeking social support
Coping strategies	Active	50. Retaliation
	Aggressive	51. Confront bullies
	Cognitive	52. Diplomatic ways to solve problem
Consequences of cyberbullying	Avoidance/helpless	53. Give in to the circumstances
	Life condition	54. Cognitive efficiency
		55. Increase quality of life
	Learning condition	56. Improve quality of learning
		57. Cognitive development

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### 4.3 Adequacy of Current Research Procedure

Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested in order to conveying results of a grounded theory study, all researchers must incorporate thorough information about the research procedures, and a number of criteria for judging the sufficiency of the research process must be outlined. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), if the sequence is provided therefore, the readers can comprehend the common sense of the researcher's complex coding process.

The researcher has exercised the seven criteria suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998).

Criterion number 1:

How was the selection of original sample? On what justification utilizing the purposive sampling?

Criterion number 2:

What main categories surfaced?

Criterion number 3:

What were some of the events, incidents, actions, and so on that signified some of these major categories?

Criterion number 4:

How did theoretical preparation steer some of the data collection?

Subsequent to the theoretical sample, how descriptive did these categories prove to be?

Criterion number 5:

What were some of the hypotheses concerning to associations between categories? On what basis were they created and assessed?

Criterion number 6:

Were there examples when hypotheses did not support against what was really seen? How were the inconsistency accounted for? How did they influence the hypotheses?

Criterion number 7:

How and why was the main category preferred? Was the selection abrupt or ongoing, complicated or straightforward? On what grounds the concluding analytic decisions were made?

Therefore, Tables 1, 2, and 3, with the description, provide the analytic decisions that occurred within the present study in details.

The documentation of data collection and analysis within each of the four phases demonstrate the logic of the coding procedures. This thorough information about the research process also demonstrates the trustworthiness of the research (Guba, 1981).

## **5.0 RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

Data analysis of informants (n = 103) (M = 41, F = 62) using NVivo 8 established that the five main principles of cyberbullying that were acknowledged in the literature review surfaced as the key concepts in this research. Beside antecedents, phenomenon, contexts and conditions or prevailing conditions, coping strategies and consequences, characteristics of online media and interactions also surfaced as significant conceptions. Figure 1 points out the main themes and subthemes that construct cyberbullying among informants.

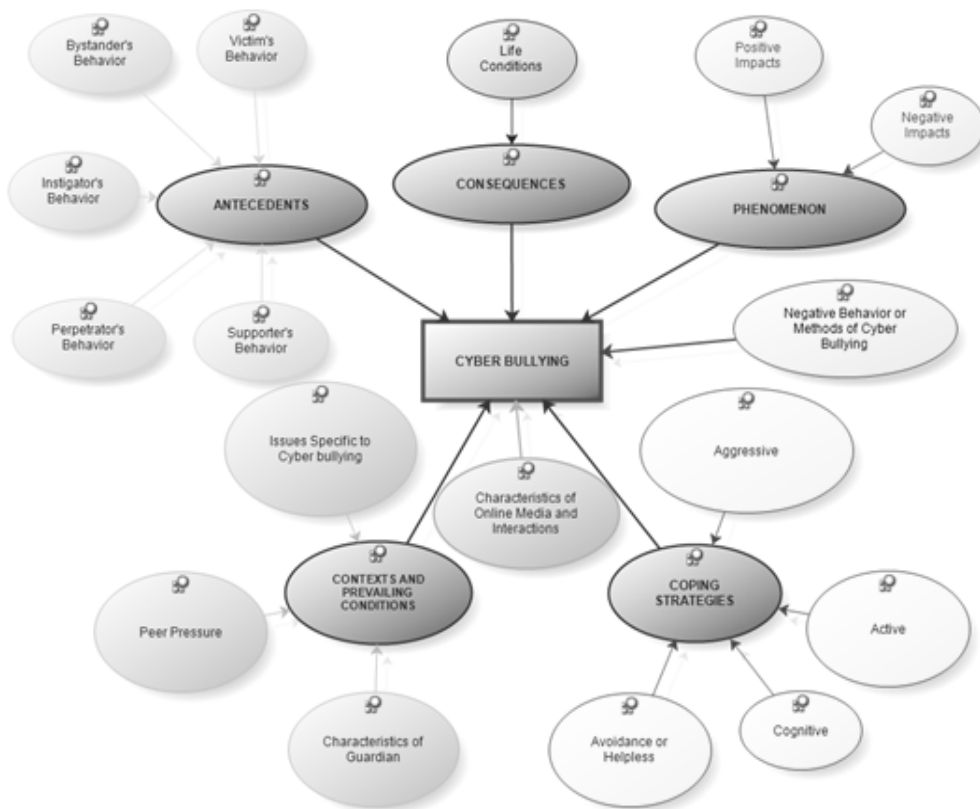


Figure 1: Main Themes and Subthemes of Cyberbullying

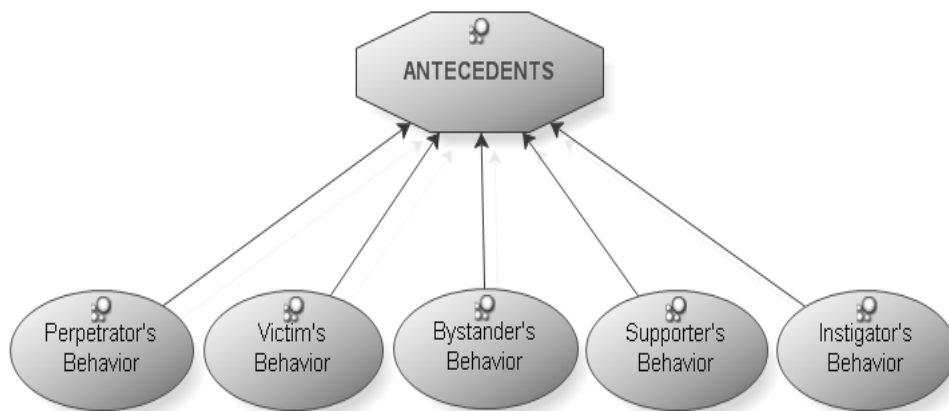
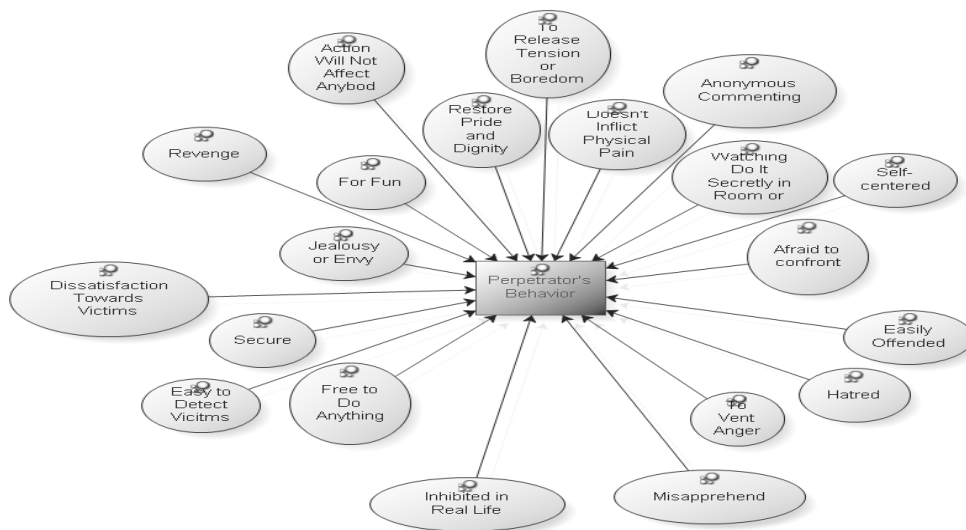


Figure 2: The Antecedents of Cyberbullying

This paper however will discuss only on the antecedents of cyberbullying. Adolescents attributed cyberbullying to four types of antecedents, including the victim's online behavior, the perpetrator's or bully's behavior, the bystander's behavior and the supporter's behavior with characteristics of online media and interaction as it's facilitating factors to cyberbullying. The bystanders' and the supporters' behavior were suggested by informants in phase 3 and 4 of data collection process.

### 5.1 The Perpetrator's Behavior



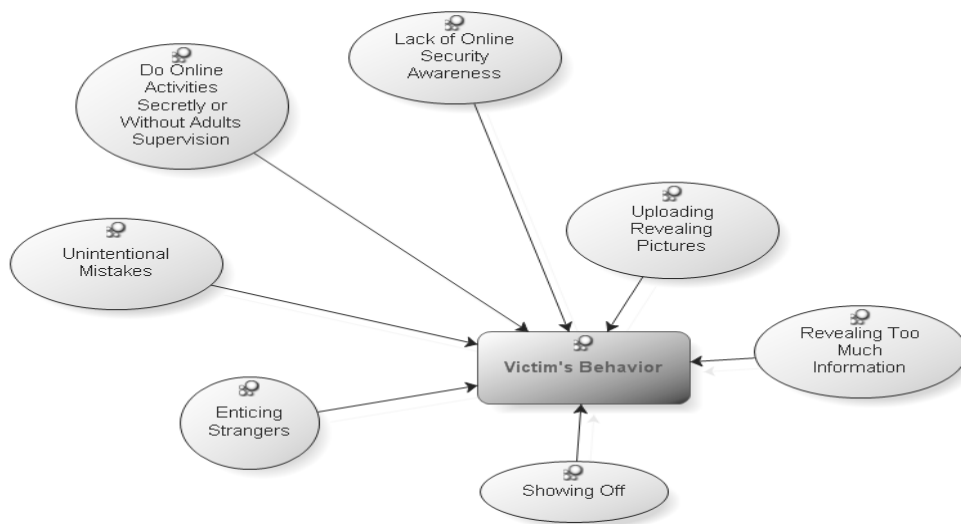
**Figure 3: Perpetrator's Behaviour**

The findings as stated in Figure 3 revealed that there are many reasons why adolescents conduct cyberbullying. However, the prevalent factors why cyberbullying occurs are for them to vent anger for various reasons (M = 62%, F = 38%), to release tension (M = 31%, F = 69%), sense of security to do online bullying (M = 25%, F = 75%), to seek revenge (M = 31%, F = 69%), and nobody is watching what they are doing so that they can do anything they want (M = 59%, F = 41%). The researcher found that many female respondents (F = 72%) engaged in cyberbullying because of jealousy or envy with others while some informants (M = 16%, F = 84%) are inhibited in real life so they would utilize online media to harass their victims. In addition, many male respondents (M = 67%) did it because of hatred. Meanwhile, many female adolescents (F = 69%) responded that they did it to have fun. However, most informants (M = 11%, F = 89%) just mentioned dissatisfaction as a motive for cyberbullying to occur. From the interviews with adolescents (M = 41%, F = 59%), it was found

that the anonymity of online interaction means a safer place for them to harass others as they are hard to be identified and detected as some of them (M = 68%, F = 32%) are afraid to confront or do it face-to-face.

Informants in Phases 3 and 4 have also suggested that the contributing factors toward cyberbullying are the bystanders, supporters and instigators themselves.

## 5.2 The Victim’s Behavior



**Figure 4: Victim’s Behavior**

Interestingly, the researcher found that informants’ own behaviours were the reasons for them to be bullied online. As demonstrated in Figure 4 the researcher noticed that many informants could not resist uploading their revealing pictures. Many of the female informants have some degree of online bullying after they put their ‘sexy’ pictures up against the wall of their social network. These cases, however, were not derived from the informants. Instead, they were from online observations. The number of cases coded (F = 18, M = 8) revealed another intriguing behavior, that most respondents (F = 81.78%, M = 11.37%) liked to entice strangers for the sake of having many online ‘friends’.

These informants described that they were willing to accept as many people as they could as friends, as well as adding or requesting others to befriend them. This was a clear concept which the researcher conceptualized as lacking online security awareness due to negligence and foolishness. The researcher’s proposition is that the informants are eager to show off they have many online

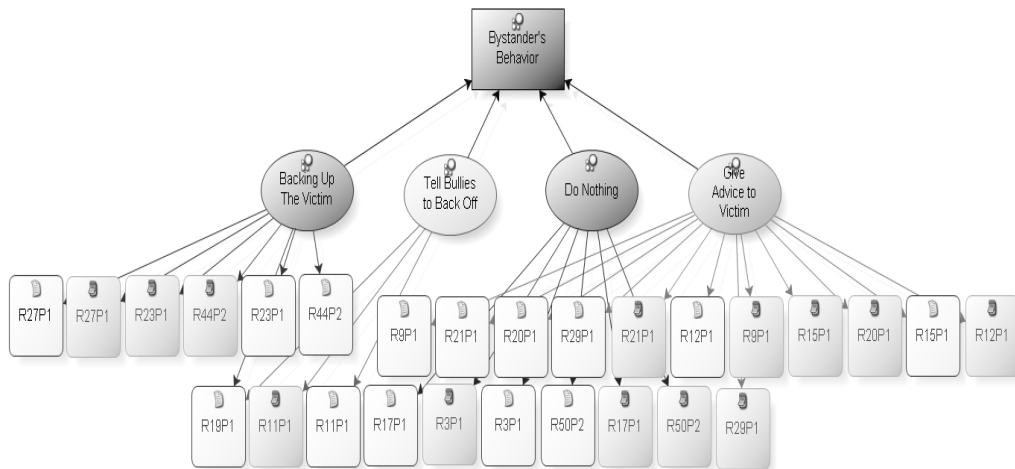


friends that eventually lead to cyberbullying incidents. Another interesting fact is that the researcher also found that these adolescents (F = 60.3%, M = 39.7%) did not realize that they were actually revealing too much personal information for strangers when there were online. The researcher's proposition regarding this matter is that strangers who have bad intention could utilize the information to do harm on the victims such as stalking them.

All female informants (number of cases coded = 5 and 1 respectively) unveiled that their unintentional mistakes and showing off behavior made them fall victim to cyberbullying. These two informants below explained that they did not realize their actions invited dissatisfaction from others; a distinct concept of misinterpretation and envy due to the lack of nonverbal communication and feedback while communicating online. The lack of nonverbal communication due to the fact that informants mostly utilized written communication when expressing themselves also contributed to a slow feedback from the victims in order to defend themselves and to make clarification.

Other findings showed that the informants liked to do their online activities without adult's supervision (F = 62.78%, M = 37.22 %) and in addition they (F = 60.10%, M = 39.90%) had no or little security awareness when using online applications. A clear concept which the researcher conceptualizes is the negligence among adults, which ranges from the technology incompetency and less or no supervision. Therefore, the researcher proposes that the combination of informants going online freely and the lack of attention among the adults cultivate cyberbullying among adolescents.

### 5.3 The Bystander's Behavior

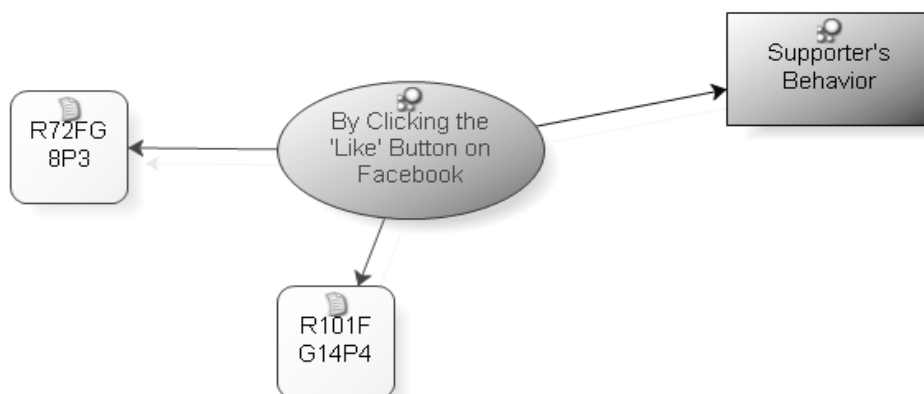


**Figure 5: Bystander's Behavior**

As displayed in Figure 5 there are the bystanders or those who have nothing to do in cyberbullying activities. The researcher found that 83.65% of male informants and 16.35% of female informants did not do anything when they saw their friends being bullied online. However, many informants (M = 38%, F = 10%) told the researcher that they supported the victim by giving advice to them (M = 20%, F = 58%) and telling the perpetrators to stop bullying the victim (M = 33%, F = 67%).

The informants who have nothing to do with cyberbullying incidents can be conceptualized in the concept of either concern or simply did not care about it. The researcher's proposition is that this thing happens because of the relationship between the victim and bystander, whether they are close or not. If they have a close relationship, then the bystander will defend the victim but if there is no close relationship involved, the bystander will not intervene due to being afraid of getting involved.

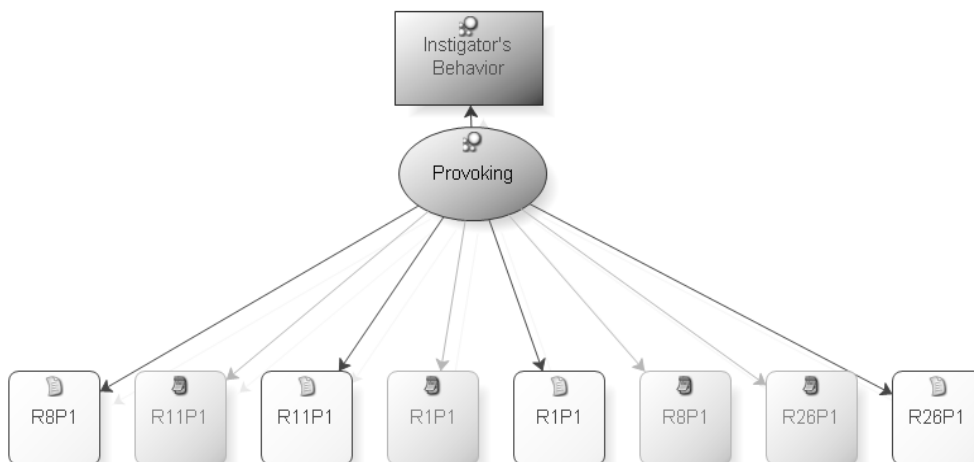
## 5.4 The Supporter's Behavior



**Figure 6: Supporter's Behavior**

As illustrated in Figure 6 two informants differ in opinion on who likes to support the perpetrator's cyberbullying behavior. The informants elucidated another characteristic of others involved indirectly in cyberbullying activities, namely the supporter. According to the informants, the supporter differs from the instigator as he or she does not actively participate in cyberbullying activities but merely or simply showing that they like the perpetrator's wrongdoing, for example, by clicking the 'like' button on Facebook when the bully writes something bad regarding the victim. This act of nonverbal communication has brought a huge impact on the victim because many other people can see and perform this supporting behavior.

## 5.5 The Instigator's Behavior



**Figure 7: Instigator's Behavior**

According to two female informants based on the interviews, these act of instigating happened when a third person became involved either passively or aggressively in a conflict between the victim and the bullies.

The informants described the challenges they faced when someone else apart from the bully was involved in the cyberbullying incidents. This is a clear concept of instigating from others due to feeling good to see the victim being harassed. The researcher's proposition is provoking can lead to serious argument between the victim and the bully.

## 6.0 DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Research Limitations

The researcher observed three limitations of the current research. One is that the data consisted of the judgments of informants who admitted they had involved in cyberbullying incidents. However, it is possible that these adolescents provided incorrect statements or that the bystanders, supporters and instigators reported different beliefs and behaviour. A second insufficiency is that the paradigm model is intended to disclose associations among the diverse aspects of cyberbullying rather than to propose a fundamental connection among the five components. The third inadequacy is that only one particular

ethnic group has been implicated in this study. The Malays may perhaps be bounded with beliefs and attitudes that might be totally different from other main ethnics in Malaysia and this could result in dissimilar reactions regarding cyberbullying experience.

## **6.2 Recommendations for Further Research**

The purpose of current study was to explore the cyberbullying phenomenon in detail. This was accomplished by interviewing 105 adolescents ( $n = 105$ ), who were directly and indirectly involved in cyberbullying activities. Additionally, the researcher did intensive online observations in order to acquire factual illustrations of cyberbullying in action. The research was vastly investigative in nature and primarily established on oral reports that nonetheless may be deficient. Anyway, the underlying principle for this research was to construct a preliminary paradigm model that could be put to the test in future study, rather than investigating an existing theory. Suppositions are presented as claims to be tested and expanded on by both qualitative and quantitative research in future. Findings are based on the informants' perceptions and attributions concerning their behavior as Creswell (1998) stressed that one of the main features of qualitative research is that it concentrates on informants' point of views and it is not anticipated to be generalized to a wider population.

Seeing that there are varieties of issues which have emerged in the current research, the possibility for additional and advanced explorations are immense. Embedded in this research framework is the idea that such research is eventually seeking to advocate safer online communication among adolescents.

This research has been paying attention principally on the informants' self-confessed point of views, opinions, experiences and behaviors using a qualitative research framework. The informants, among others, have attributed numerous features, values and behaviors to cyberbullying phenomenon, which may or may not be perfect as only Malay adolescents were chosen. For that reason, accomplishing further research which engages other races and different contexts in order to confirm or oppose the perceptions of informants articulated in this research is advisable. This might entail asking informants to react directly to present research outcomes. Besides, since one of the inadequacies mentioned is slight inconsistency between adolescents' description and real behavior, observational investigation focusing on informants' online behavioral patterns would be complementary. Furthermore, many issues emerged in the present research offer a structure for generating suitable quantitative research instruments especially for the Malaysian perspective, which can then be used to produce findings that can be extended to broader

populations. It is of the essence that future research conducted ought to in due course be intended at improving adolescents' live experiences.

In conclusion, adolescents nowadays have two choices of doing bully activities – physical bullying, cyberbullying or a combination of both. Current research findings demonstrated that online media and applications from time to time are becoming more user-friendly, therefore information could be saved or pictures could be downloaded or tagged with ease without the owner's permission even though social network such as Facebook has provided a comprehensive 'Statement of Rights and Responsibilities' for its users. In view of that, it is recommended that other researchers should be aware of the date of this current research so that comparison could be made. Consequently, future research could investigate users of online applications whether they abide by the rules and regulations imposed to them and whether they are penalized if these rules are broken.

The researcher is confident that the current research findings or outcomes contribute to a deeper comprehension of the characteristics of cyberbullying in the Malaysian context. Results from the current study supported several claims from earlier research and produced several new findings. The findings have undoubtedly confirmed the claim that cyberbullying yields several harmful impacts on adolescents (Shariff, 2008; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). It is crucial to differentiate the diverse types of cyberbullying factors that contribute to the development of the paradigm model. The research found different types of contributing factors of cyberbullying with two emerging themes, several types of circumstances that influence the antecedents, the positive impacts for both the perpetrator and victim of cyberbullying, and other emergent themes yet to be discussed prior to this study. The researcher recommends that it is critical to state the year in which studies on cyberbullying are completed, as the diffusion of new applications and technologies to adolescents and the intensification of new capabilities are sprouting in haste and therefore changing the nature of cyberbullying phenomenon. Future researchers ought to grasp new technology before trying to delve into cyberbullying studies.

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