Cyberbullying in Higher and Tertiary Education institutions in Zimbabwe: Forms, Extent, Effects and Contributing factors

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Abstract: This research was an investigative enquiry into the forms, extent, effects and contributing factors of cyberbullying in Higher and Tertiary Education institutions in Zimbabwe. The study used one such institution as case study. A survey was conducted on a sample of 380 undergraduate students (n=380) out of a total of 3800 student population (N=3800) in the institution. Interviews were also conducted on 12 volunteers in order to obtain additional information from the participants, especially on contributing factors. The Findings indicate that cyberbullying is very common in these institutions coming in the form of phone calls, emails, text messages, video clips and online chats. The extent of Cyberbullying is very high, with 75% of respondents admitting having received a threatening message in campus, while 83% confirmed to have seen offensive messages while socializing with friends online. Key effects were identified as affecting students in their relationships on and off campus and mental health problems. Main contributing factors to cyberbullying were identified as gender issues, cultural/ethnic differences, general dislike, and some taking it as an online game (fun).

Key words: Cyberbullying; Cyberstalking; Online Aggression; Cyber Harassment; Internet Harassment; Internet Bullying; Cyber Victimization; Electronic Harassment;

1. Introduction

Bullying is an intentional, aggressive, repeated act in which there is frequently a power difference between the bully and the victim (Olweus, 1993), which has conventionally been considered to be a high school problem. However, a new method of bullying has emerged in recent years, known as Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying refers to the repeated use of technology to harass, humiliate or threaten someone (Holladay, 2011). Nearly 100% of undergraduate students access internet regularly, with 86% being on social networks and 96% owning cellphones, but as technology use increases, the prevalence of online hurtful behavior increases (Brodsky and Vangelisti, 2015). The high availability of modern communication technologies in young adults seems desirable because it ensures access to knowledge, which is a central resource today. However, technological advancements have been noted to be a mixed blessing, with both tremendous benefits and unexpected burdens, such as cyberbullying (Hoff and Mitchell, 2009).

This research focused on finding out if Cyberbullying was occurring at an institution of Higher and Tertiary education and if so, determine the forms, extent, effects, and the contributing factors. Cyberbullying is a new form of bullying which relies heavily on the availability and usage of internet and its related technologies. The findings of this research are hoped to help administrators of Colleges and Universities to understand their Cyberbullying landscape and therefore formulate policies to mitigate its occurrence or address the legal and ethical issues of such practices. The study used both survey and interview tools for data and information gathering. The research focused of adults at Higher and Tertiary Education institutions because this is the group of people who are highly active in terms of usage of internet and its associated technologies, a platform where cyberbullying thrives.

Most institutions of Higher and Tertiary education have invested so much in Information Technology related infrastructure for purposes of delivering educational content online to their students through Learning Management Systems (LMS), thus presenting new forms of learning and communicating, thereby producing cyberbullying (Smith and Yoon, 2013). Cyberbullying puts the target over a barrage of denigrating and threatening and or sexually explicit messages and images. This is done using
instant messages, websites, emails, online bulletin boards, social media platforms, blogs, chatrooms, cellphones, and personal online profiles (Blair, 2003; Harmon, 2004; sheriff, 2006; Hoff and Mitchell, 2009). The target will thus be affected psychologically and there are cases of cyberbullying related suicide in Higher and Tertiary Education (Wallstreet Journal, 2010). Research has shown that cyberbullying affects student's ability to learn (Devlin, 1997; Sharif and Strong-Wilson, 2005). It is therefore important for Zimbabwe institutions of Higher and Tertiary learning to know the forms, extent, effects and contributing factors, so that they can create the necessary policies and procedures against cyberbullying.

Unlike Traditional bullying, cyberbullying can happen anytime, anywhere, with the bully being removed from direct contact with the victim (Smith and Yoon, 2013). The perpetrator in cyberbullying can hide their identities using screen names and well-hidden internet protocols, thus making their attacks deliberate and relentless (Hoff and Mitchell, 2009). While the media in Zimbabwe has reported several cases of cyberbullying, it is the research side that is lacking. In-depth research in various sections of the Zimbabwean society need to be done so that informed decisions can be made, hence the motivation for this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Cyberbullying

Holladay (2011) defines Cyberbullying as the repeated use of technology to harass, humiliate or threaten. In an American university student conduct code, bullying is defined as aggressive behavior directed at another person, either in person or through electronic means, that causes stress or harm and is repeated over time (Smith and Yoon, 2013). While both definitions agree on the aspect of use of technology or electronic means and the repetition aspect of Cyberbullying, the second definition defines Cyberbullying in the context of Traditional bullying, which is predominantly physical. It suggests that Cyberbullying is a form of Traditional bullying which uses a different platform- electronic means. Olweus and Limber (2010) highlight the same ideology that Cyberbullying is a subcategory of Traditional bullying and should always be studied in that context and suggest that Cyberbullying, verbal bullying, physical bullying, and indirect bullying are all forms of Traditional Bullying. In all forms of bullying, three issues are common:

a) Purposeful aggressive behavior
b) Repeated behavior
c) Imbalance of power

Therefore, the only difference between Traditional bullying and Cyberbullying lies in the technological know-how between the perpetrator and the victim.

Patchin and Hinduja (2006) in Hoff and Mitchell (2009) posited that Cyberbullying is willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text. While the “electronic” and “repeated” aspect is similar with other definitions, it is “text” part which makes their definition narrow, because there are various forms of data used in cyberbullying, which include audio, video, and images. However, Hoff and Mitchell (2009) further argue that Cyberbullying is deliberate and relentless because perpetrators hide their identities using screen names and hidden internet protocols. This argument makes it different from Traditional bullying in that, while the perpetrator hides and is not physically present in Cyberbullying, in the former the perpetrator is physically involved.

Tokunaga (2010) in Aboujoude et al (2015) gave a definition of Cyberbullying, which is regarded by many researchers as the most integrative definition. They state that Cyberbullying is “any behavior performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicate hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort to others”. This researcher agrees that this definition the most integrative because some definitions ignore the “repeated” aspect concentrating on the media such as email, chat, instant messaging, social media networks and text messages, for example , Sellers et al (2009) defines it as “harassing behavior transmitted electronically”. Cyberbullying is also called by other names such as cyberstalking, online aggression, cyber harassment, internet harassment, internet bullying, cyber victimization, and electronic harassment.
2.2 Forms of Cyberbullying
Willard (2004) identified seven different categories of common cyberbullying actions:

i. Flaming - Sending angry, rude, bad messages about a person to an online group or to that person via email or other text messaging.

ii. Online harassment - Repeatedly sending offensive messages via email or other text messaging to a person.

iii. Cyberstalking - Online harassment that includes threats of harm or is excessively intimidating.

iv. Denigration (put-downs) - Sending harmful, untrue, or cruel statements about a person to other people or posting such material online.

v. Masquerade - Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material that makes that person look bad.

vi. Outing - Sending or posting material about a person that contains sensitive, private, or embarrassing information, including forwarding private messages or images.

vii. Exclusion - Cruelly excluding someone from an online group.

Smith and Yoon (2013) argue that Cyberbullies invade the emails, blogs, chat rooms, cellphones, video recorders and networked printers to communicated offensive information to other students. Cyberbullying puts the target over a barrage of denigrating and threatening and or sexually explicit messages and images. This is done using instant messages, websites, emails, online bulletin boards, social media platforms, blogs, chatrooms cellphones and personal online profiles (Blair, 2003; Harmon, 2004; sheriff, 2006; Hoff and Mitchell, 2009). When in love students take each other images and video, with consent, but when they breakup, the images and videos may be altered and posted publicly, leaving the victim exposed. Some cyberbullies create bash boards or online bulletin boards, that invite others to contribute hurtful and malicious remarks (Patchin and Hinduja, 2006; Hoff and Mitchell, 2009).

Some students initiate text wars and go on to encourages others to send such relentless messages resulting in the victim receiving numerous cruel messages (Sheriff, 2006). MacDonald and Roberts-Pittman (2010) in a survey at a Midwestern University in United States of America argued that 25% of cyberbullies used social networks, 21.2% used text messages, 16.1% used emails, 13.2% used instant messages, 9.9% use instant chatrooms and 6.8% posted on website. The researchers further suggested that Cyberbullying requires further research, which is noble because the heterogeneity of Cyberbullying statistics globally are a result different lengths of reference, recall periods, cut off points or threshold values used to classify whether one is cyberbullied or not, an ideology also supported by Olweus and Limber (2010).

2.3 Extent of Cyberbullying
The birth of web 2.0 technologies and the proliferation of social media networks has brought both tremendous benefits and the infiltration of heinous behavior in the educational environment, such as Cyberbullying (Smith and Yoon, 2013; Hoff and Mitchell, 2009). Cyberbullying has been detected in Colleges and Universities and shows to be a global problem (Sellers et al, 2009; Walker et al, 2011; Li, 2007, 2008). There have been reports of Cyberbullying related suicide in Higher education (Wallstreet Journal, 2010). The most worrying thing is that most Institutions of higher education do not have Cyberbullying policies, and in most cases rely on commercial website terms of use agreements to go after Cyberbullies (Jones, 2011).

In a survey that involved 283 students at an American university, Englander et al (2009) reported that 8% of students were cyberbullied, while 3% admitted having cyberbullied others and 50% reported to be victims of Cyberbullying. MacDonald and Robert-Pitts (2010), in a survey of 439 students at a Midwestern university in America, reports that 38% reported knowing someone that has been cyberbullied, 22% reported having been cyberbullied, while 9% admitted having cyberbullied someone. Walker et al (2011) in a survey involving 120 undergraduate students found out that 54% of the students know someone that has been cyberbullied, 30% reported receiving undesirable and obsessive communication and 11% indicated to have been cyberbullied. At Indiana State University, 22% reported being cyberbullied (Gilroy, 2013). Washington (2014), in a research involving 140 students, 12% reported they were cyberbullied, while 6% were not sure.

Studies have shown that 43% to 60% of students’ experience cyberbullying (Fekkes et al., 2015; Whitney & Smith, 2015). In a survey of students in aged 17–24, it was found that three quarters of students reported being bullied through the use of technology (Beran and Li, 2013). In Canada, survey results show that three quarters of young Canadian internet users received messages expressing hate
for others (Mnet, 2011). Similarly, in Britain, 55% of adolescents between 11 and 19 years-of-age reported being cyberbullied (National Children’s Home, 2012).

According to a study by Patchin and Hinduja (2010), which asked teens what role technology played in their daily lives, cell phones were used the most (83%), followed by the Internet for school work (50.8%), and then Facebook (50.1%). These findings can be used to argue that cellphones and the Internet are the primary mediums used for cyberbullying.

In most researches more females are reported to have been cyberbullied and cyberbullied someone than males. Cyberbullying prevalence rates range between 4% and 72%, while perpetration rate ranges between 3% and 23% (Kowalski and Limber, 2012) It should be noted that there are variations in these rates from one research to another, which is because of parameters used, measurement used and assessment across different age ranges. While most researches view Cyberbullying as a problem affecting young adults, it should be noted that the problem is also affecting seniors at work and in different spheres of life, and in Zimbabwe a number of reports have been published in the mainstream media. However, the research side is lagging behind in this area, hence the motivation for this research.

2.4 Effects of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying victims usually exhibit cyberbully behavior themselves (Clemens et al, 2011). This thus implies that someone that has been victim of cyberbullying is highly likely to cyberbully someone the same way or even worse than what was done to them. It is therefore imperative when researching cyberbullying to study the roles of all players, that is perpetrators, victims, and witnesses (Smith and Yoon, 2013). Research has also shown that cyberbullying affects a student’s ability to learn (Devlin, 1997; Sharif and Strong-Wilson, 2005). Educational institutions therefore need the right amount of resources and expertise to investigate and handle cyberbullying cases. Advancement in technology have made it difficult for University and school authorities to control or supervise the scourge, thus giving bullies an elevated sense of power and control (Hoff and Mitchell, 2009).

In Canada, a 15-year-old boy in Quebec, became an unwilling “celebrity” when a film he made of himself emulating a Star Wars fight scene was posted on the Internet by some classmates. Millions downloaded the two-minute clip. He was so humiliated that he sought counseling, and his family launched a lawsuit against his tormentors (Snider and Borel, 2004). In Japan, mobile phone pictures of an overweight boy, which was taken on the sly in the locker room, were distributed to many of his peers (Paulson, 2003). Another incident happened in Calabasas High School in California, on a website called “schoolsscandals.com” vicious gossip, racist and threatening remarks grew so rampant that most of the students were affected (Paulson, 2003).

Raskauskas and Stoltz (2013) examined qualitative data based on participants’ responses to open-ended questions assessing how they thought the bullying had affected them. The most common responses were feelings of sadness and an unwillingness to attend school. Juvonen and Gross (2010) found higher rates of social anxiety among those individuals who had been victimized in school bullying and online bullying incidents. Ybarra et al. (2004) found increased use of alcohol and other drugs among young adults who had experienced online harassment as well as increased behavior problems and weapon-carrying at school.

2.5 Contributing factors to Cyberbullying

The absence of non-verbal communication cues when it comes to the internet is a huge factor contributing towards increased cyberbullying. The absence of these cues may lead to people sharing their most intimate stories with other people without realizing what they are doing. With the absence of someone sitting there listening to the other person share their story, non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions are missed. This can lead to the storyteller divulging more information than they normally would with a particular individual or the other taking a statement the wrong way and becoming upset easier than they would if they were face to face (Heirman & Walrave, 2008; 2014).

Considering that there are limited research studies available that address cyberbullying and that some researchers view it as bullying moving to new medium, it makes sense to base hypotheses about the contributing factors of cyberbullying on the relatively well researched literature in traditional bullying. This section discusses the elements that are identified as significant factors effecting bullying in the existing literature, and consequently hypothesized as contributing factors to cyberbullying. These are: bullying, gender, culture, use of technology, knowledge of cyber safety and academic achievement.
Engagement in bullying activities is hypothesized to predict cyberbullying and cyber victimization (Beran and Li, 2005). Another factor considered is gender as it plays a significant role in school violence and cyberbullying. Extensive research work has shown that male students, compared to female students, are more likely to be bullies (Hoover and Olsen, 2001; Pellegrini and Bartini, 2000) as well as being bullied (Nabuzoka, 2003). One important factor to consider is that using aversive tactics with peers is an important social behavior for male students (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000).

Another factor relates to culture. Previous research (Nabuzoka, 2003) suggests that students from different countries and cultures behave differently with involvements in bullying. This may result from several factors. For example, people in different cultures may hold different beliefs or religions. The use of technology is also a factor. Since cyberbullying occurs in cyberspace, it is reasonable to assume that if students have limited opportunities to access to technology, they should have fewer opportunities to be involved in cyber harassments. The frequency of technology uses by students, therefore, should predict cyberbullying and cyber victimization. The awareness of cyber safety is also a crucial factor. According to the past two decades of research into the prevention of bullying, awareness is identified as one of the four most important areas that can reduce bullying in educational environments (Campbell, 2005), and educating students about safety approaches plays a major role in any effective anti-bullying programs. Campbell (2005) further suggests that increasing awareness should also help reduce cyberbullying.

Academic achievement is also a factor relating to cyberbullying and cyber victimization. Academic pressure refers to “the expectations of peers and teachers” (Ma, 2001). Students with lower academic pressure are more likely to bully than students in programs with high academic pressure. Victimization, on the other hand, relates to various factors including academic achievement.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research followed mainly an exploratory research design in seeking to determine what exactly is happening regarding cyberbullying in higher and tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. Exploratory design was chosen as it gives the researcher a valuable means to find out what is happening, seek new insights, ask questions, and assess phenomena in a new light (Robson, 2002). This research measured the variables that influenced cyberbullying among Zimbabwean higher and tertiary education students in the cyberspace. Also, the study was designed to collect statistical data to identify and explicate the effects of cyberbullying and its prevalence in these institutions. Descriptive research was also applied as a forerunner to the exploratory research in order to get a clear picture of the cyberbullying landscape prior to collection of data.

3.2 Research strategy

A research strategy is a step by step plan of action that gives directions to your thoughts and efforts enabling you to conduct research systematically and on schedule to produce quality results and detailed reports (Sauntakos, 2015). This research followed a survey strategy to determine the who, what, where, how much and how many of the cyberbullying situation in institutions of higher and tertiary education in Zimbabwe. Quantitative survey questions were used to obtain detailed insights into the phenomena and the answers received for these quantitative survey questions were analyzed and reported generated on the basis of this quantitative data. These questions formed the core of a survey and were used to gather numerical data to determine statistical results such as the prevalence of cyberbullying in Zimbabwean higher and tertiary education. However, Interviews were also conducted on 12 volunteers in order to obtain additional information from the participants.

3.3 Target population

The targeted population for this research study consisted of male and female students at a higher and tertiary education institution, who are over sixteen years of age. The age selected is the range in which students are enrolled into these institutions after their high school, hence it encompasses every student. Most of the students have mobile devices or access to computers in the library or computer laboratories. The target population was 3800 (N=3800) students which is the total number of students at the institution.
3.4 Sample size
Sampling refers to the process whereby the researcher decides and defines the population upon which the research will focus. This is an important element in any study and therefore sampling decisions regarding participants have to be made early in the research process (Cohen et al., 2007). For this study the researcher selected participants using a purposive sampling technique. Coolican (2004) suggests that this type of sampling is employed to enable researchers to focus on participants who are most representative for the issues involved and who are likely to have the appropriate knowledge and experience. This type of sampling does not represent the wider population but instead is selective in order to satisfy a specific purpose (Robson, 2002). In this study, the participants had to fulfill the criteria that they had access to the internet or had any device which would in turn facilitate communication in cyberspace.

In conjunction with the purposive sampling technique the researcher also used convenience sampling to survey students at the institution on attitudes about cyberbullying and offensive discourse among them in cyberspace. Surveys were given to target 380 (n=380) undergraduate students. The survey analysis was to test participant's attitudes about cyberbullying and offensive discourse of young adults in cyberspace. The sample size of 380 (n=380) within this study was calculated at 10% of target population, following Curry (1984) rule of thumb. Through this technique, participants were determined to be a satisfactory number in order to achieve accurate and reliable statistical findings.

3.5 Data gathering instruments
A questionnaire was designed following the structure of Olweus’ (1996) Bully/Victim questionnaire. Following small-scale piloting, the final version had multiple-choice questions, which covered 7 sub-categories of cyberbullying (Text message bullying, mobile phone call bullying, picture/video-clip bullying, email bullying, chat-room bullying, bullying through instant messaging, bullying through websites) and included some other general questions. The questionnaire also had some qualitative items, where participants could comment on a certain question, and give a more detailed answer. The questionnaire itself took 5-10 minutes to complete. The timeframe for this study was given as the “your time at the institution”, so responses only reflect incidents which occurred while they were at the institution. The questionnaires measured the participant’s attitudes based on the Likert Scale (4 =Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2= Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree). Interviews were also conducted on 12 volunteers in order to obtain additional information from the participants.

4. Findings/ Results

4.1 The forms of Cyberbullying

4.1.1 Analysis
Table 1 examines the prevalence of each form of cyberbullying, inside and outside of institution of higher and tertiary education. It also reports the number of students who are aware of each form of cyberbullying taking place. The final column presents an impact factor; through which we are able to gauge the effect that this kind of bullying has on its victim. The impact factor has been calculated by assigning values to the severity respondents believed each form of cyberbullying has on the victim (less harmful = -1; the same = 0; more harmful= +1). Thus, a more positive score means that the impact of this form of cyberbullying is seen as high, a negative score as low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often have you been bullied in campus? (Any victims, Repeat Victims)</th>
<th>How often have you been bullied outside campus? (Any victims, Repeat Victims)</th>
<th>How often have you bullied others in campus? (Any offenders, Repeat Offenders)</th>
<th>How often have you bullied others outside campus? (Any offenders, Repeat Offenders)</th>
<th>Number of students aware of this type of cyberbullying taking place.</th>
<th>Impact factor (see text)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Prevalence of each form of cyberbullying
### Table 1: Awareness and Experience of Cyberbullying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Bullying</th>
<th>Awareness (%)</th>
<th>Reported Experience (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone Call Bullying</td>
<td>49 (13%)</td>
<td>11 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text message Bullying</td>
<td>61 (16%)</td>
<td>8 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Bullying</td>
<td>38 (10%)</td>
<td>8 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture/Video Clip</td>
<td>23 (6%)</td>
<td>11 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant Messaging</td>
<td>19 (5%)</td>
<td>11 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Bullying</td>
<td>19 (5%)</td>
<td>8 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat room Bullying</td>
<td>4 (1.1%)</td>
<td>8 (2.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5. Discussion

The first two data columns of Table 1 show that phone call, text message and email bullying are the most common forms of cyberbullying, both inside and outside of campus. Picture/video clip, instant messaging and website bullying were reported to a lesser degree; and with chat room bullying, only 4 students reported suffering this at campus. Within campus, 13% of students have been bullied through text messages and phone calls at least once, while 3% were victimized in these ways or by email bullying more than once or twice. All three of these more common forms of cyberbullying have higher prevalence rates outside of the campus. Almost one quarter of the sample (88 participants) had been victimized by phone calls outside of campus at least once. Although chat room bullying was the least likely method to occur in campus, its use outside of campus was equal to several other cyberbullying forms.

The next two columns of Table 1 show the findings for students who admitted to cyberbullying others. Phone calls were again the most common method, followed closely by all the other forms, which show little difference in terms of how often they are used to bully. Again, these forms of cyberbullying are more commonly used outside of campus, especially chat room bullying which no one reported using to victimize others within campus.

The fifth data column of Table 1 presents results for awareness. When asked which forms of cyberbullying they were aware of taking place (in campus or among their friends), most students (42%) knew of bullying via pictures or video clips on mobile phones, while slightly fewer (34%) knew of phone call bullying. These figures were less for the other forms, ranging from 27% for text message bullying to 17% for website bullying; the least known method of cyberbullying was via chat rooms, with just 11% aware of this happening.

Awareness of forms of cyberbullying shows a different profile to that of reported experience. This is because awareness of the existence of a form of cyberbullying does not itself determine the cyberbully behavior in practice. The form of cyberbullying most well-known to students was through picture or video clips, with 42% aware of this taking place. This was followed by phone call and text message bullying, which 34% and 27% of students knew respectively. Chat room bullying was the least recognized form of cyberbullying, with just 11% aware of this type of victimization taking place.

On the impact factor, the reason for wider range in terms of values given by students is unclear given the current data. However, it must be noted that online applications can give the student the opportunity to block offensive messages, which may explain why bullying through chat room, instant messaging or email was perceived to be less damaging. Phone calls on the other hand, allow the bully to accost the victim outside of college hours, which may indicate why it is considered more harmful than traditional bullying, which is mostly centered around physical contact. The limited amount of data...
prevents a more thorough examination of this issue, but future research should aim to investigate why students perceive some forms of cyberbullying to be more hurtful to the victim than others, and how this compares to the harm caused by traditional bullying methods.

Respondents targeted by cyberbullying report a greater range of negative impacts on their academic and personal lives. One possible explanation for the much higher survey participation may be that, although they do not experience cyberbullying in greater numbers, they are more negatively impacted by it.

5.1 The extent of Cyberbullying

5.1.1 Analysis

Table 2 is a frequency distribution of 380 participants of the institution, indicating whether they have received a threatening message online or not. Unlike Table 1 this includes all the forms of cyberbullying. Of the 380 participants, 95 (25%) disagreed on having received a threatening message online. However, 285 (75%) agreed on having received a threatening message online.

Table 2: Threatening messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 is a frequency distribution of 380 participants of the institution, indicating whether one has seen offensive language while socializing with friends online or not. Of the 380 participants, 17% disagreed on having seen offensive language while socializing with friends online. However, 83% agreed that they have seen offensive language while socializing with friends online.

Table 3: Seen Offensive language online with friends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.2 Discussion

Of the 380 participants, 315 (83%) reported positively, and agreed that they have seen offensive discourse language while socializing with friends online. 65 (17%) of the 380 participants, reported negatively and disagreed that they have not seen offensive discourse language while socializing with friends online. The findings suggested that indeed cyberbullying is present with a massive rate of 83%.

5.2 The effects of Cyberbullying

5.2.1 Analysis

This included Measures of self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. Participants completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Beck Youth Depression Scale (BDI- Y), and the Beck Youth Anxiety Scale (BAI-Y). For each of the 10 items on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, participants used a 5-point response format to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each statement. After reverse-scoring appropriate items, participants’ scores were averaged with higher scores indicating lower self-esteem. Internal consistency with the present sample was 0.85.

The BDI-Y consists of 20 symptoms characteristic of depression (e.g., “I feel like crying,” “I feel lonely”), including one item (“I wish I were dead”) that addresses suicidal ideation. The BAI-Y consists of 20 items symptomatic of anxiety (e.g., “I worry,” “I am afraid that something bad might happen to me”). For both the BDI-Y and the BAI-Y, participants indicated how often they had experienced each of the symptoms using a 4-point scale (1¼ never; 4¼ always). Scores were averaged across the 20
BDI-Y items and the 20 BAI-Y items to provide an overall index of depressive and anxiety symptomatology, respectively. Internal consistency for the BDI-Y and the BAI-Y with the present sample was 0.96 and 0.94, respectively.

**Table 4: Acknowledged effects of cyberbullying**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects acknowledged by respondents who reported they were a victim of cyberbullying in the last 12 months</th>
<th>Total (%) among all victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional security or physical safety threatened</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affected ability to do assignments (productivity, loss of confidence, concentration problem etc.)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades suffered as a result</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt like dropping out of college</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed lectures as a result</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affected personal relationship in and outside the campus</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health issues (anxiety, depression, emotional burst etc.)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health issues (headaches, stomach pains, chest pain, sweating etc.)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt suicidal or thought about harming self</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made them want to cyberbully back</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**5.2.2 Discussion**

The highest number of students, 44% indicated that cyberbullying affected their relationships on and outside campus. Such a finding is in accordance with the relational aggression perspective. It suggests that if the cyberbullying was intended to bring about friendship troubles, exclusion, or harm to reputations, it has been rather effective in reaching those goals. The lowest was 14%, who felt suicidal or like dropping out of college. The second highest number was 42% of students indicating that cyberbullying affected their mental health, that is feelings of anxiety, depression and emotional. This show how serious the effects and consequences of cyberbullying are on the students in higher and tertiary education institutions in Zimbabwe.

**5.3 The contributing factors to Cyberbullying**

**5.3.1 Analysis**

Respondents were interviewed for reasons (or perceived reasons) for cyberbullying someone or why they might have experienced it themselves. Male and female respondents gave similar reasons for being victimized (their interpersonal problems, do not know, their physical appearance, and “other,” including such items as differences of opinion/beliefs, cyberbullying was part of an online game, or meant as a joke). Females also cited “their gender” as a primary reason for being cyberbullied, while males also listed their ethnicity as among their top choices. Among those students who admitted to cyberbullying another student, the two most cited reasons were the same for male and female respondents: The person upset them and the person bullied them first. The third most common reason for male respondents was that it was fun, whereas for female respondents it was that they just did not like the person. Among the small number of respondents who admitted to cyberbullying a faculty member, the responses were similar for males and females: the faculty member had upset them, they did not like the faculty member’s teaching style, or they just did not like the faculty member, accompanied by many other specific responses describing the faculty member as a “bad lecturer,” condescending, unpleasant. Female respondents cited a few cases where the faculty member had
bullied them first. A few male respondents provided reasons such as wanting to hurt the faculty member and wanting to tarnish their reputation.

5.3.2 Discussion
Self-identified perpetrators of cyberbullying were also asked about the intent of their cyberbullying. Both male and female respondents who had bullied other students and/or faculty members said they intended the cyberbullying to be insulting and also defaming when aimed at faculty. Several males also reported intents such as humiliating, harassing, and threatening, which was not the case for females.

5.3.3 Interpretation
Students who are bullied through technology are likely to use technology to bully others. It is possible that students who are bullied retaliate against the aggressor by returning angry statements (flames) and sending harassing messages. It is also plausible, however, that students known to have harassed others using technology are targeted by other students to get even to protect their friends. Each incident may then fuel further assaults by students directly involved, as well by their peers. When people feel angry for being wrongfully attacked, they may respond aggressively (Geen, 1998).

6. Conclusion
This research focused on determining the prevalence of cyberbullying in institutions of higher and tertiary education in Zimbabwe, using one such institution as case study. The research identified the forms, extent, effects and contributing factors of cyberbullying in the institution. It was discovered that the most common forms of cyberbullying in campus were picture or video clips and phone calls, as indicated by 42% and 34% respectively. 75% confirmed having received a threatening message, while 83% confirmed having seen offensive language when online with friends, thus indicating a high extent to which cyberbullying is affecting students in these institutions. A number of effects of cyberbullying were raised by students, but key among them were that it affects their relationships in and outside campus (44%) and that it affected their mental health - anxiety, depression, emotional burst (42%). Key contributing factors to cyberbullying were identified as gender differences, cultural issues, ethnic differences, and some taking it as an online game (fun).

It can therefore be concluded that cyberbullying exists and is very prevalent in Zimbabwean higher and tertiary education institutions to a higher extent and the effects are far reaching. The lead contributing factors have been noted. Institutional authorities hereby encouraged to formulate policies and procedures for dealing and handling this scourge before it gets worse than it is already. However further research can be done to narrow down on the specific groups of these institutions like Vocational training centers, Teacher’s colleges, Polytechnics and Universities. While this research generalized its findings, cyberbullying behavior may be different among the four categories.

7. References
CYBERBULLYING IN HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ZIMBABWE: FORMS, EXTENT, EFFECTS AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS


