ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, THE ANONYMOUS VICTIMS OF CYBERBULLYING

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Abstract

Today in the age of information, cellphones and tablets are being used not only as an instrument for making call, but also as cameras, accountants, organizers, and computers, etc. The question is, what are the dangers of using this technology by children, and how it threatens their mental health? Although many studies on cyber harassments focus on the youth—which has become a growing concern for parents, teachers, and government officials due to their outcomes—schools need to seriously address this issue as well. In the same vein, the present research studies the female students at elementary school who own a cellphone. The study used interviews to address the problems of girl students of elementary schools at Abadan city. The items of structured interview measured different types of cyber harassment. According to the research done in this area, a great number of those children who have easy access to internet and cellphone were exposed to Cyber harassment or victims to it. Therefore, as we do not let our children to wander alone in the city, we should neither leave them by themselves in the cyber world.

Keywords: Iran, Abadan, Abuse, Children, Cyberbullying

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, change of lifestyles and the introduction of technology into people's lives have led to a change in the pattern of bullying. In the 21st century, bullies use new ways for harassment or bullying their peers such as publishing online messages and images or on call harassment. This recent type of bullying is called non-traditional bullying or cyber-bullying, and contrary to traditional bullying, there is no face-to-face relationship between the bully and the victim [1]. Social networks are often defined as web-based platforms that allow individuals to create personal profiles and a communication network with other users [2]. Cyber-bullying is defined as a deliberate act by a group or an individual via electronic communication methods and social networks, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves. Children and teenagers are the most vulnerable class to this phenomenon [3 and 4]. Recent studies published in the field of social sciences have shown that contrary to expectations, users who often use Internet are more exposed to cybercrime compared to users who use the Internet more. The study also reported that girls are more likely to become victims of cyber harassment than boys, and boys commit cyber harassment more than

girls [5]. Research has shown that the use of social programs cause problems in mental health, although does not directly but through various factors [6] and have association with depression, suicidal thoughts and the emergence of identity crisis among the adolescence [7, 8].

Of course, we must know that in the past and in different ages, and in the past, whenever a phenomenon and science enters the existent supply, it has a positive dimension and positive uses of it, and negative and computer use are no exception. is not. While the computer has many positive uses and it can be used positively from the same computer, it can be used to make delinquency and easier to commit a victim by the perpetrators and to harm the interests of the people [9]. Perhaps the history of the first computer crime could be attributed to the time when the abacus was involved in the calculation of human beings, but again the question arises as to whether, at that time, the abusive practice of an abacus or even the subsequent times of using the "collecting machine" The Pascal Woman "or the" Paying Calculator "was criminalized because, as we know, according to the principle of the lawfulness of our crimes and punishments, any verb or detention of a verb according to the law for that punishment Determined is a crime [10]. The United Nations guidebook for preventing and controlling computer-related crimes is presented. "It's a difficult task to determine the actual time of committing the first computer crime. The computer has been somewhat discussed since the abacus that existed in Japan, China, and India since 3500 BC. In 1801, financial incentives made Joseph Jacquard, one of the owners of textile factories in France, design the first computer card. This machine was able to repeat a series of sequential steps in the fabric of special fabrics. Jacquard's employees were so worried about their job and life threats that they sought to sabotage the use of this new technology and thereby commit a computer crime "[11]. Hence, in this paper, the prevalence of this phenomenon in the elementary school, its outcomes, the necessity of appropriate and safe education instead of deprivation from access to cyberspace, and the key role of the proper communication between parents and teachers with children are discussed

2. METHOD

This study is a descriptive survey, and the statistical population includes 250 female students from 3rd to 5th grade elementary school students in district 3 of Abadan city selected via random sampling, and according to Morgan table 148 of them entered the study. After obtaining participants' consent, a structured interview was conducted. The interview included 15 questions about the definition of cyber harassment, personal information about cyber harassment, if it has occurred for the individual, how the person responds if this happens to herself or one of her peers, the frequency of its occurrence in society in her opinion, and the role of law, school, and parents in instructing them about cyber bullying and its prevention. Finally, they were asked to provide their suggestions or solutions to adults and school authorities in order to reduce cyber-bullying

3. FINDINGS

Of the 148 selected, 55 were at the third grade, 50 at the fourth and 43 at the fifth grade. Of these, 9.09% of the third grade, 26% of the fourth grade, and 25.58% of the fifth grade students reported at least one time of cyber harassment. 12% of the total students had no idea of cyber harassment and did not know what it means. 15.54% of them believed if cyber harassment happens for them, they would not let their families to know. Regarding the used instrument for cyber harassment, cell phones and then tablets were the most commonly used devices in cyber-bullying.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When parents discuss about mobile phones, tablets, and cyberspace, they often talk about their benefits. However, evidence shows that giving this device to the child without control and the necessary instruction can bring about unexpected outcomes. Thus, parents must be aware of its dangers as well as its benefits. The information and photos received through these media may not be appropriate to the child's age and harm them mentally. It is also possible that abusive individuals exploit children in this type of communications and ask for information such as their home address or parent's account number. Sexual abuse via smart phones also occurs by asking the child to upload images or videos with inappropriate content on the internet or date outside the house. The lowest rate of cyber-bullying belongs to Sweden with 5% [12]. While, the 12% statistic of Iran indicates that children are unaware and informing and instruction has been weak in this area. Today, with the advances of technology and its integration with every single aspect of life, the deprivation strategy cannot be used to prevent cybercrime anymore. Thus, the society must give Internet users the necessary education and cultivate them. Furthermore, 15.54% of students stated that they would not report to their parents if they were harassed by cyber-bullies, reflecting the need for close relationship between the parent and the child [13], in a way that the child realizes parents' unconditional love and be confident to talk about any problem with them. The children said that the reason for not informing their

parents was fear. Research has shown that the relationship between perceived authoritarian parenting and cyber-bullying is positive and significant, the relationship between perceived inattentive parenting and cyber-bullying is positive and significant, the relationship between perceived authoritative parenting and cyber-bullying is negative and significant, and no relationship was found between cyber-bullying and perceived permissive parenting styles. Based on these findings, it can be stated that perceived parenting styles can predict cyber-bullying changes in the form of causal-structural relationships and explain its occurrence in specific conditions (Ismailpour & Hashemi, 2017). Analysis of children's responses to the final question at the end of the interview and their suggestions for adults to prevent and reduce cyber-bullying can be categorized in two groups. The first group acknowledged that the school should provide parents with the necessary training in dealing with children who have been harassed in the cyber world. This is a reemphasis of the key role of parent-child relationship. The second group demanded a young advisor with high level of perception at school, so that they could share with him such problems. While in Iran, the presence of counsellor for primary school students is not mandatory, 50% of mental disorders start under the age of 14 (Massoudi, Farid, 2017). A recent study on the relationship between cyber-bullying and suicide has shown that 10 percent of children who have been exposed to cyber harassment as a victim, offender or both, are more likely to develop suicidal ideation [13]. Exposure to cyber-bullying is associated with symptoms of depression, isolation and despair, suicide, low self-esteem, anxiety and loneliness [14, 15]. Cyber-bullying can also have physical effects on the victim, such as weight loss or gaining overweight, drug abuse, headache, abdominal pain and sleeping problems [16]. In addition, the school problems are likely to increase, including violations and school violence, escape, poor educational achievement, and lack of feeling secure in the school [17, 18]. In general, it can be said that the development of social media creates benefits and harms for children and adolescents. Cyber-bullying is one of the most important disadvantages of these media that is growing fast and becoming more complex in societies; and there is a necessary need felt for the efforts and vigilance of social and behavioural researchers, media professionals, school authorities and parents to prevent its expansion and growth. School supervisors and teachers should properly communicate with children and youth, instead of depriving them from cyberspace, and encourage them to use it safely and securely in order to let them grow.

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