

Elementary School Students' Experience on WhatsApp Cyberbullying: Victimization through Social Networking Sites in Classmates

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Abstract---*The fast growing of technology affects many aspects of human life. Huge shifting of any social interactions and phenomenon occurred as the result of technology to make them be borderless. Bullying in the context of public has shifted into the cyber form through some social networking platforms available, such as; WhatsApp. Students' experience on cyberbullying as part of victimization is seen to be more vulnerable phenomenon. The purpose of this research is to examine students' experience in cyberbullying by means of WhatsApp group within the classmates across gender and grades. This research involved 3 elementary schools students by fourth to sixth grade ranging from nine to twelve years old. A questionnaire dealing with the victimization through cyberbullying in WhatsApp classmates group had been completed by them to gain the data as the private discourse. It was assessed by considering the types of cyberbullying consisted of; visual bullying, verbal bullying and exclusion. The results showed that cyberbullying by social networking site as in WhatsApp as occurred in the classmates group is more vulnerable compared to direct public victimization in all level of grades. It was also found that gender has not contributed to any differences on the behavior in cyberbullying.*

Keywords: cyberbullying, classmates, victimization, students' experience

I. INTRODUCTION

The way most adolescents and children to interact and communicate one another has changed rapidly by the existence of social networking platforms or sites recently. It becomes the essential part in having their social life for ones at the children school-age [1]. These social networking platforms can be varied in services, visual appearances, specialties and some others that attract children to try and use them by some purposes. One of the platforms which raises its popularity among the globe including Israeli youngsters is WhatsApp application [2]. While these platforms can bring some impacts including to achieve positive communication in promoting and serving social

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construction, they have big potential to be misused to attack individual or others mentally and physically through some harmful and destructive varied actions and behavior [3].

It has become the main concern for years to be the content for research. The social networking sites as available in any platforms and establishing virtual communication for social relationship by children bring impact of cyberbullying on their development [4]. The effect of cyberbullying has been studied by previous research to link it with some other aspects such as; age and gender differences, but the showed results to be not linear one another. By the background overview as exposed above, examining students' experience on cyberbullying within classmates in WhatsApp group across the grade and age becomes the aim of this study among the elementary school students in Special Province of Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

AI. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Networking Site of WhatsApp

Established in 2009, WhatsApp has made as the most leading instant mobile messaging applications around the globe. This application presents interactive, fast one on one communication and in group by members solely. The feature in this platform where the users have the chance to shift from public to private mode makes school aged students especially children be very fond in it. Survey also showed that WhatsApp has reached its popularity through mobile phone data comparison from 187 countries and there were over 55% of them or over 100 countries used this platform for cyber messaging [5].

Some perceptions obtained from the students perspective in how they perceive WhatsApp features could support the effectiveness of building communication among classmates by group. They consist of: 1) written format of communication, 2) keep the users privacy, 3) able to change from group to individual, person to person communication channel, 4) long last durability of high traffic and tense communication. Related to its ability to perform group and private channel within the feature, a micro community is one of the form social virtual communication resulted from WhatsApp group. The use of this application is triggered by the more possibility to have open and uninterrupted communication among them. It provides alike of direct communication by accessing audio visual appearance that gives the sense of real between individual and group members by interface. [6].

Victimization in Cyberbullying

In American adolescents and school-aged children by range of 29%, it was exposed that social networks played role to the cyberbullying, 14% in Australian 20%, in European. Social networking sites can be used as a medium to do aggressive victim in negative consequences. It refers to continuous aggressive online behavior and cyber aggression behavior [7].

Social networking sites opens more possibilities in field of cyberbullying occurred in many ways. It comes over within bullying as conducted in class investigation, the social contact among classmates by online discourse creates relationship on and off line. The WhatsApp classmates group create a social group in off-line class. This social

virtual group gives pressure within that contributes to the individual behavioral change. In social networking site has anonym and non- anonymous discourse which develop more possibility to give in turn pressure that happens bullying to others in this social group [8]. Some roles come up in the social virtual group as in WhatsApp among the participants whether as bystanders, defenders, victims, and active perpetrators. The one which is passive and making distance in the group to be less in taking part in any subject of discussion, most probably becomes the bullies' victim. As a result, the group pressure to individual by perpetrators leads into preference of social pressure to social conformity where they change their behavior to match as others [9]. It is found that students who experience of bullying virtually and directly at school have more tendency to copy the typical behavior to others. The class condition as pro cyberbullying influenced by social factor improve the the risk of cyberbullying victimization and perpetration for students [10].

Cyberbullying is categorized into four types in behaviors by classmates in WhatsApp group, covering); 1) visual bullying (sharing or posting personal or private photos, embarrassing one, without any permission), 2) avoidance (to be passive as a feeling of fear), 3) verbal bullying (threats, curses, offensive messages), 4) exclusion (individual blocked from group other members). [11]

III. METHOD

Participants and procedure

There were 250 students from 8 classes in 2 state elementary schools from 4th-6th grades (n= 155, 100%) by the composition of 60% females. The participants in this study coming from middle social-economy level where the parents and their children have the financial ability to purchase related devices and access for information by using smartphone. The students' distribution by grades is given in table 1 below;

Table 1. Students' Frequencies by Grade

Grades	n	%
4	55	35.6
5	50	32.2
6	50	32.2
N	155	100%

In collecting the data, students were give questionnaire to be completed in the classroom by the teacher's presence to supervise. The teacher remains seated on his place during the process of students' responses completion. It is not allowed to go around the class to give students comfortable feeling and not under pressure. [12]

There are 6 items in the questionnaires specialized in an aspect of cyberbullying in WhatsApp group of classmates. Those 6 items reflected by four types of cyberbullying, involving; visual bullying, exclusion, avoidance,

and verbal bullying. Based on the items of questions as mentioned above, the students were asked to state and report related to the amount of frequency, its media and referring only to the WhatsApp group in classmates. One of the sample question such as, “Have you been cursed classmates in WhatsApp group?”. To measure their recorded responses, it applies 4 scales point ranging from 0 = it has not happened to me, 1 = it happened to me once, 2 = it happened to me several times, and 3 = it happened to me many times. The gained data is analyzed by using correlation regression framework to see the effect or influence of WhatsApp group in classmates to cyberbullying victimization.

IV. RESULTS AND FINDING

It is reported that 99% participants of this study used WhatsApp application in their daily life and involved into the classmate groups for virtual social interaction and communication. The results show that 63% (n = 97) of all students stated becoming the victim of cyberbullying in their WhatsApp group and 3% (By considering the four types of cyberbullying, it can be elaborated in the composition of percentage covering; victimized in visual cyberbullying by 71% (n = 110), visual cyberbullying by 65% (n = 100), exclusion by 56% (n = 87), and Avoidance by 58% (n = 90).

Seen from the aspect of grade dealing with the cyberbullying, the rate found for the experience is in the 4th grade as the lowest one by 20% (n = 10), the 5th grade at the middle number of 50% (n = 25), and the highest exposure on virtual bullying at 6th grade by 91% (n = 50). Connected to the gender point of view, it is revealed that in the context of public cyberbullying by WhatsApp group, girls experienced more compared to boys in any ways or type of cyberbullying.

Table 2. The main effects of cyberbullying by context, grade and gender

		Visual	Verbal	Exclusion	Avoidance	Total
Total		0.14	0.14	0.04	0.18	0.20
Context						
	Private	0.5	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.05
	Group	0.12	0.27	0.06	0.15	0.18
Gender						
	Female	0.19	0.18	0.20	0.17	0.22
	Wale	0.10	0.09	0.15	0.12	0.14
Class						
	C4	0.8	0.10	0.3	0.12	0.16
	C5	0.10	0.7	0.5	0.11	0.14

	C6	0.15	0.14	0.8	0.9	0.18
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The purpose of the study is to find out the cyberbullying experiences by elementary school students by classmates in WhatsApp group, its context and those four aspects consisting of, visual, verbal, avoidance, and exclusion. It is also captured that gender takes part in contributing of bullying by means of social networking sites as available in WhatsApp platform. The finding shows that cyberbullying by public context in private WhatsApp group as occurred in elementary school level within the classmates giving negative online behavior. By means of virtual platform, the one who did has a chance to escape without control and punishment as no intervention by adult to be included in the communication established in online way.[13]

The finding gives a result that if the children at school age ranging from 4-6 grades of elementary school who participate in WhatsApp group within the classmates see themselves as less even not to be under pressure by being bullied others, they generally do behavior to be attitudes of cyberbullying to the low or weak self- defense one. It can be said that the higher feeling of dominant to others in virtual social contact in the group, the more pressure result in cyberbullying.

It is also noted that among those four types of cyberbullying, verbal bullying as appeared in the forms of offensive messages and threats was found higher in WhatsApp group which could be easily accessed, read and seen by others. It is done by purpose in order to be witnessed by other members creating fear and showing dominant power by delivering offensive messages. It effects on children insecurity to others by getting humiliated and get hurt. It leads them to be cautious in the group by making a distance or becoming silent reader to not get offensive or threats responses.

V. CONCLUSION

Elementary school students especially at the grade 4-6 have already use the internet and some social networking platforms for instant messaging with no training in how to use and operate it as well its risks due to the usage exposed to them. Varied types of cyberbullying by some forms as appeared in visually, verbally, exclusion and avoidance will lead to their cautious, insecurity, fear and under pressure which lead them into psychological or mental shocked. Moreover, negative behavioral change in long term has more possibility to be self-depression as it taken place by virtual social instant messaging groups in an online platform accessed by smartphone where adult interference is most likely to be less possible to take an action of prevention.

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