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iBully: the impact of gender of bully and victim on perception of cyberbullying and its consequences

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IBULLY: THE IMPACT OF GENDER OF BULLY AND VICTIM ON
PERCEPTION OF CYBERBULLYING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

by

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ABSTRACT

In today's technologically sophisticated world, people have many electronic methods of exchanging information and communicating. Unfortunately, these methods are not always used in positive ways; they can also be used to convey aggression and bullying. Recently, such acts of aggression have been labeled many things from cyberbullying to online social cruelty, and have received much media attention due to their tragic consequences including victim suicide. This study explores the impact of victim and bully gender in relation to perception of bully likability, punishment, impact on victim, and victim responses. Participants reviewed a Cyberbullying scenario in which the gender of the victim and perpetrator were manipulated. All scenarios were identical except for the gender pairs of the victim and perpetrator: Male (bully)-Male (victim), Male (bully)-Female (victim), Female (bully)-Female (victim), and Female (bully)-Male (victim). Participants then completed the Likability of Bully, Punishment for Bully, Impact on Victim, and Victim Response scales. A main effect of gender on the Punishment Scale for the gender of bully indicated that participants desired lighter punishment for females independent of the gender of the victim. The results of this study suggest that increasing awareness of the seriousness of all cyberbullying regardless of gender of bully is important.

Keywords: Bullying, Cyberbullying, Gender, Punishment, Severity, Likeability

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INTRODUCTION

Cyberbullying is still a relatively new enigma to the world of social psychology. In fact the earliest recognition of cyberbullying only goes as far back as 2004. When nationally recognized Canadian educator, Bill Belsey, made one of the first attempts to define cyberbullying. He described cyberbullying as “the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others” (Belsey, 2004, para. 1). Subsequently, Vanderbosch and van Cleemput (2008) and Smith et. al (2008) expanded Belsey’s work by delineating additional components of cyberbullying. Vanderbosch and van Cleemput suggested that cyberbullying has three key aspects: intention to hurt, repetition, and power imbalance. Vanderbosch and van Cleemput distinguish between cyberteasing and cyberbullying. Cyberteasing contains intent to hurt and power imbalance but not repetition. Smith et. al (2008) defined cyberbullying as “an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself” (p. 376). Cyberbullying can also come in the form of sexual harassment through electronic means (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Shariff & Johnny, 2007). The definition provided by Smith et al. (2008) has been adopted and endorsed by subsequent researchers because it includes the three elements noted by Vanderbosch and van Cleemput and also includes aggression as the fourth element (Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009). Therefore, the present study adopts the definition of cyberbullying set forth by Smith et al.

Researchers have also identified the medium in which cyberbullying most commonly occurs. Cyberbullying may occur via computers or cell phones (Mishna, Saini, &

Solomon, 2009). Yet in the Vanderbosch and van Cleemput (2008) study, many student participants equated cyberbullying with bullying via the internet. Smith et. al (2008) report seven more specific and common mediums of cyberbullying: phone call, mobile phone text messaging, e-mail, picture/video clip, instant messaging, website, and chatroom.

In addition to mediums of cyberbullying, gender has also been investigated in relation to cyberbullying. Men are more likely than women to engage in traditional bullying behaviors (Forero, McLellan, Rissel, & Baum, 1999; Nansel et. al., 2001; Sourander, Helstela, Helenius, & Piha, 2000). However, exploration of gender of the bully in cyberbullying has mixed results. Li (2006) found that cyberbullying, much like traditional bullying, more often involved male bullies. Blair (2003) identified women as more likely to communicate through electronic means (i.e. texting and e-mail) than men which led to expectations that women would be more likely to cyberbully. According to the studies by Williams and Guerra (2007) and Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) men and women were equally likely to harass others online, which could lead to men and women being equally likely to cyberbully. Finally, Slonje and Smith (2008) report no gender difference in bully prevalence or victim prevalence. The issue of bully and victim gender in relation to prevalence rates of cyberbullying remains unresolved, but what is known is that both males and females are bullies and victims of cyberbullying. Therefore, this study will use the following bully-victim: Male-Male, Male-Female, Female-Male, and Female-Female.

Cyberbullying may not seem to be as serious as traditional bullying, because the victim may be perceived as having more control or distance than with traditional bullying and cyberbullying lacks physical aggression. However, several recent instances of suicide linked to cyberbullying received widespread media attention and highlighted its dire consequences. In

2010 alone, there were two reported major cases in which teens took their own lives following a cyberbullying assault. On January 14, Phoebe Prince committed suicide following a combination of cyberbullying on Facebook and face-to-face bullying by a group of peers. On September 22, Tyler Clementi reportedly committed suicide after his college roommate used iChat to expose Tyler making out with a fellow male student. Their suffering is not unique. According to Beran and Li (2005) cyberbullied students reported feeling sadness, anxiety, and fear. Mitchell, Ybarra, and Finkelhor (2007) found higher levels of depression, substance abuse, and delinquency in cyberbullied students than non-cyberbullied students. Additionally, Hinduja and Patchin (2010) found that people who experience traditional bullying and/or cyberbullying demonstrated increased levels of suicidal ideation. Due to the diverse psychosocial repercussions of cyberbullying, this study created an Impact to Victim scale to identify which bully-victim gender pair would be more at risk for psychosocial affects.

Due to its often anonymous nature, cyberbullying perpetrators are harder to identify. Traditional bullying has an identified aggressor. Traditional bullying has also been addressed more systematically with formal policies and procedures within our educational systems. Often traditional bullying has an established hierarchy of punishment. The basic level of punishment is generally a phone call home to the bully's parents. The mid-level is generally detention for the bully, and the higher-levels of consequences typically involve suspension or expulsion in extreme cases. Due to cyberbullying taking place outside of schools, it is more challenging for the schools to enforce their rules and consequences. In fact, the result of the Phoebe Prince suicide brought forth the question of what, if anything, should be done as punishment. In the case of Phoebe Prince, all six bullies are currently awaiting trial for their felony charges. Similarly, in the case of Tyler Clementi, the aggressor is being charged with

invasion of privacy with the intention of adding hate crime to the charge. Taking into consideration the lack of established policies and procedures in our schools and the current lack of legal precedent in relation to punishment of cyberbullying, this study created a Punishment Scale to investigate what, if any, levels of intervention and punishment are deemed appropriate by the participants. This study also explores whether the nature and degree of punishment perceived as appropriate may be influenced by the gender of the bully and victim.

Much like the traditional bully, the cyberbully is not necessarily isolated or ostracized by their peers. In fact, according to the Health Resources and Services Administration (2009), the perception of peer rejection of the bully is myth. In reality, bullies do have a small social group and find it easier to make friends than other children. In cyberbullying, this is no exception. For example, in the Phoebe Prince case, the bullies were described as popular. In fact, one bully was actually captain of the football team. Similarly, with the Tyler Clementi case, the bully was with friends and contacting friends during and after the bullying. Due to this phenomena of people aligning themselves with the bully, this study also explores perceptions of bully likability/acceptability and investigates if gender of the bully and victim influence the perceived likability and acceptability of the bully.

One of the key components of both traditional bullying and cyberbullying is that the victim does not tell anyone about the bullying. According to Hanish and Guerra (2000) and Mishna and Alaggia (2005) a high percentage of children bullied did not disclose their experience to their parents or others. This has also been the case with cyberbullying. O'Connell, Price, and Barrow (2004) found that a high proportion of students who experienced cyberbullying did not disclose their experiences to parents. Due to the disturbing reluctance of

victims to disclose their experience, this study explores what college students think the victim should do.

The study makes the following hypotheses in relation to bully likability/acceptance, perceived punishment for the bully, perceived impact on victim, and perceptions of appropriate victim responses where F= Female; M= Male in Bully-Victim gender patterns:

Hypothesis 1 Bully Likability/Social Acceptance: F-F=M-M=F-M>M-F. The reason for the Male-Female bully-victim group being perceived as least likable is the social stigma that comes from male aggression against females. (Sorenson & Taylor, 2005)

Hypothesis 2 Punishment: M-F>M-M=F-F=F-M. The Male-Female bully-victim group will be perceived be as the scenario of deserving of the strictest punishment. This hypothesis is supported by the Sorenson and Taylor (2005) study which found that male-to-female aggression is judged more harshly than female-to-male aggression.

Hypothesis 3 Impact on Victim: M-F>F-F=M-M>F-M. The greatest perceived impact on the victim will be with the Male-Female bully-victim group.

Hypothesis 4 Victim Response: M-F>F-F=M-M=F-M. Due to the suffer-in-silence nature of all bullying and lack of reporting, most groups should be equal in their response rates on the Victim Response Scale. However, due to the fact that male bullying of females violates social norms and is perceived as particularly inappropriate and wrong, scenarios that involve male bullying a female will be perceived as necessitating more victim response.

METHODS

Participants

The sample consisted of 83 undergraduate students at the University of Central Florida (UCF). Participants were recruited through the UCF Psychology Department's SONA Systems research participation website, and all participants received extra credit for their participation. Information was collected through voluntary, anonymous self-reporting questionnaires. Informed Consent was obtained by participants prior to beginning the study. The sample was 80.7% females. Of the respondents, 22.9% reported being cyberbullied, and 6% reported being a cyberbully at one point.

Measures

Five self-report scales were used in this online study.

Bully Likability/ Social Acceptability Scale is reported in Appendix A. The scale contains 7 items on a 5-point Scale (1 = *Strongly Agree*, to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*). The scale measures the students' perception of the bully's social acceptance. The *Bully Likability/ Social Acceptability Scale* contains items such as, "You would pick (Bully) to be in your group for class." and "You would be friends with (Bully.)" A higher score indicated that participants disagreed with the bully's actions as being socially acceptable.

Punishment Scale is reported in Appendix B. The *Punishment* scale is used to measure the various means in which the bully should be punished for their actions. The *Punishment Scale* consists of 11 items rated on a 5-point Scale (1 = *Strongly Agree*, to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*). The

Punishment Scale contains items such as, “*UCF should fail (Bully) this semester.*” A higher score indicated that participants wanted the bully to have a lighter punishment.

Impact on Victim Scale is reported in Appendix C. The *Impact on Victim Scale* is used to gauge participants perception of the impact of the cyberbullying on the victim and consists of 9 items rated on a 5-point Scale (1 = *Strongly Agree*, to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*). The *Impact on Victim Scale* contains items such as, “*(Victim) will avoid going to parties.*” and “*(Victim) will feel depressed after being bullied.*” A higher score indicated that participants felt the bully would have minimal to no impact.

Victim Response Scale is reported in Appendix D. The *Victim Response Scale* is used to gauge participants perception of the response victims should take in regards to being bullied and consists of 12 items rated on a 5-point Scale (1 = *Strongly Agree*, to 5 = *Strongly Disagree*). The *Victim Response Scale* includes items such as, “*(Victim) should find and fight (Bully)*” and “*(Victim) should tell their friends.*” A higher score indicated that participants believed victims should not respond to the bullying.

Participant Information Form: A participant information form was used to obtain general background information about the participants. Items on this questionnaire were used to gain information pertaining to age, gender, GPA, class standing, and the degree program they are currently enrolled in. The participant information form is located in Appendix E.

Procedure

This study was conducted online. Through SONA systems, potential participants were informed of the opportunity to participate in a study exploring cyberbullying. Participants reviewed and signed an electronic waiver of Informed Consent reported in Appendix F, before they were able to continue with the study. After signing the consent waiver, participants were provided with an email address and asked to contact the researchers. As participants emailed the researchers, they were randomly assigned to one of the four cyberbullying scenarios in which gender of the bully and victim were manipulated, and received an email reply from the researcher providing them with a link to the study. Participants reviewed the link containing a cyberbullying scenario, reported in Appendix G, and then completed the *Bully Likability/ Social Acceptability Scale*, *Punishment Scale*, *Impact on Victim Scale*, and *Victim Response Scale*. Finally, the participants completed the *Participant Information Form*.

RESULTS

A 2 (gender of bully) x 2 (gender of victim) multivariate analysis of variance was performed to examine the relationships between gender of bully and victim. Participant responses on the 4 scales (*Bully Likability Scale*, *Punishment Scale*, *Impact on Victim Scale*, and *Victim Response Scale*) were averaged for each scale and served as dependent variables. The alpha level for statistical significance was set at .05. The means and standard deviations for all scales as a function of gender of bully and victim are reported in Table 1. A statistically significant main effect of bully was found on the *Punishment Scale*, $F(1,79) = 5.88 p < .05$. Participants were more willing to advocate for punishment when the bully was male $M = 3.01$ ($SD = 0.71$) compared to when the bully was female $M = 2.65$ ($SD = 0.64$). There were no other statistically significant effects for the gender of the bully. Additionally, there were no statistically significant effect of gender of the victim, nor were there any statistically significant interactions.

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations as a function of Gender of the Bully and Gender of the Victim on the 4 scales.

	Gender of Bully	
	Male	Female
	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
Punishment		
Male Victim	2.75 (0.65)	3.05 (0.73)
Female Victim	2.55 (0.64)	2.97 (0.70)

Impact on Victim			
	Male Victim	2.51 (0.51)	2.53 (0.40)
	Female Victim	2.59 (0.34)	2.62 (0.34)
Likability			
	Male Victim	4.07 (1.09)	4.22 (0.71)
	Female Victim	4.46 (0.55)	3.97 (1.02)
Victim Response			
	Male Victim	2.47 (0.38)	2.67 (0.40)
	Female Victim	2.53 (0.44)	2.68 (0.59)

DISCUSSION

The finding of a main effect of the bully's gender on the Punishment Scale indicated that participants desired lighter punishment for female bullies regardless of the gender of the victim. One possible reason females are seen as deserving a relatively lighter punishment for the same act of aggression as males could be that social norms against female violence are somewhat less clear whereas male violence carries definite social stigma (Sorenson & Taylor, 2005). A second possibility for the main effect could be due in part to females being the in-group due to 80.7% of participants was female. The finding that male bullies were perceived as deserving harsher punishment is interesting in light of the fact that there were no significant differences in perceived likeability of the bully regardless of whether the bully was male or female. Moreover, there was no significant difference in perception of the impact of the bullying on the victim regardless of the gender of the bully. These findings suggest that male cyber bullies are

perceived as deserving harsher punishment even though they are not viewed as less likeable or more harmful to their victims.

However, the lack of statistically significant results on the other scales could be due to the small sample size of 84 students. Future research could increase the sample sizes and the number of male participants. In addition, future research could explore bully groups because cyberbullying is at times conducted by multiple individuals targeting a victim. Also, this study could be expanded to investigate other forms of cyberbullying in addition to text messaging used in the present study to examine which form people perceive to be more common or damaging. Furthermore, researchers should investigate High School students, who are the target demographic of the majority of cyberbullying cases.

The results of this study suggest the increasing awareness importance of cyberbullying regardless of gender of bully is important. In particular, the severity and potential victim impact of female cyberbullying should not be minimized simply due to social stigmas. Cyberbullying represents one of the instances in society in which technology is ahead of any form of policies or procedures. From current outbreaks of cyberbullying, many of which are started in educational environments, there is a need for policies and procedures in educational institutions as well as legal precedent to be established. The results of this study provide a significant first step toward understanding attitudes about cyberbullying.

APPENDIX A: BULLY LIKABILITY/ SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY SCALE

Instructions: Please read the following statements then select the answer that best fits for you.

1. You would sit next to (bully) in class.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. You would pick (bully) to be in your group for class.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. You would be friends with (bully).

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. You would accept (bullies) friend request on a social network (Twitter, Facebook, etc.).

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly

Agree

Disagree

5. You would join a club at school that (bully) is in.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. You would invite (bully) to hang out with your friends.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. You would go to a party that (bully) was at

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX B: PUNISHMENT SCALE

Instructions: Please read the following statements then select the answer that best fits for you.

1. Nothing should be done to (bully)

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. UCF should give (bully) a disciplinary warning.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. UCF should make (bully) and (victim) attend mediation.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. UCF should put an education sanction on (bully).

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. UCF should put (bully) on disciplinary probation.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. UCF should put (bully) on a disciplinary suspension.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. UCF should put (bully) on a disciplinary expulsion

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. UCF should notify the parents of (bully).

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. UCF should contact the campus police about (bully's) behavior.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. The police should issue a restraining order against (bully).

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
Agree				Disagree

11. The police should arrest (bully) overnight.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
Agree				Disagree

APPENDIX C: IMPACT ON VICTIM SCALE

Instructions: Please read the following statements then pick the answer that fits for you.

1. There will be no impact on (victim) from being bullied.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. (victim) will skip class due to being bullied.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. (victim) will avoid going to parties.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. (victim) will avoid going out with friends.

APPENDIX D: VICTIM RESPONSE SCALE

Instructions: Please read the following statements then pick the answer that fits for you.

1. (victim) should not take action against (bully)

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. (victim) should tell their resident advisor (RA).

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. (Victim) should tell their campus housing authority.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. (victim) should tell a faculty member.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. (victim) should tell their parents.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. (victim) should tell their friends.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. (victim) should go to UCF's counseling services.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. (victim) should report this to an academic advisor.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. (victim) should report this to the department head or dean of their college.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. (victim) should report the bullying to the campus security or campus police.

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. (victim) should cyberbully (bully).

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

12. (victim) should find and fight (bully).

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

Participant Information Form

Instructions: Please read the following questions carefully and answer them to the best of your ability. Remember answers are confidential.

1. Which UCF college are you in?
 - A. College of Arts and Humanities
 - B. The Burnett Honors College
 - C. College of Business Administration
 - D. College of Education
 - E. College of Engineering and Computer Sciences
 - F. College of Graduate Studies
 - G. College of Health and Public Affairs
 - H. College of Medicine
 - I. College of Nursing
 - J. College of Optics and Photonics
 - K. Rosen College of Hospitality Management
 - L. College of Sciences
 - M. Interdisciplinary Studies
2. Major:
 - A. Anthropology
 - B. Art
 - C. Biology

- D. Communication
- E. Communication Disorders
- F. Computer Science
- G. Criminal Justice/Legal Studies
- H. Digital Media
- I. Education
- J. Engineering
- K. English
- L. Forensic Science
- M. History
- N. Hospitality Management
- O. Interdisciplinary Studies
- P. Mathematics
- Q. Music
- R. Nursing
- S. Philosophy
- T. Political Science
- U. Psychology
- V. Social Work
- W. Sociology
- X. Theatre
- Y. Other: _____

3. Age:
4. Race/Ethnic Background:
 - A. American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - B. Asian
 - C. Black or African American (Not of Hispanic origin)
 - D. Hispanic or Latino
 - E. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - F. White or Caucasian (Not of Hispanic origin)
5. GPA:
6. Grade level
 - A. Freshmen
 - B. Sophomore
 - C. Junior
 - D. Senior
 - E. Graduate student
 - F. Other, describe:
7. Gender:
 - A. Male
 - B. Female
8. Are you currently attending school full-time or part-time?
 - A. Full-time
 - B. Part-time
 - C. Neither

9. About how many hours a week do you spend on the internet? _____ hours

10. Are you familiar with cyberbullying?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Somewhat

11. Have you ever been a victim of cyberbullying?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Unsure

12. Have you ever been a cyberbully?

- A. Yes
- B. No.
- C. Unsure

13. Where do you live?

- A. On-Campus
- B. Off campus alone
- C. Off campus with roommates
- D. Off campus with parent(s)
- E. Off campus with significant other and/or children
- F. Other, describe,:

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT



Informed Consent

Principal Investigator: Karen Mottarella, Psy.D.

Sub-Investigators: Christopher Sharpe
Shannon Whitten, Ph.D.

Investigational Site: Psychology Department
University of Central Florida, Palm Bay Campus

University of Central Florida IRB
IRB NUMBER: SBE-11-07431
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 3/4/2011
IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 3/3/2012

Introduction: Researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) study many topics. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being invited to take part in a research study which will include about 200 people at UCF. You have been asked to take part in this research study because you are a current student at UCF. You must be 18 years of age or older to be included in the research study.

The person doing this research is Dr. Karen Mottarella, member of UCF Psychology Department, and Christopher Sharpe. Dr. Shannon Whitten is also involved in this research. Christopher Sharpe is an Honors in the Major undergraduate student in the Psychology Department. This research is conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors in the Major Program in Psychology.

What you should know about a research study:

- A research study is something you volunteer for.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You should take part in this study only because you want to.
- You can choose not to take part in the research study.
- You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
- Whatever you decide it will not be held against you.
- Feel free to ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to investigate cyber bullying which is a form of bullying that takes place over electronic communication rather than face to face. This study explores what people perceive to be cyberbullying and what consequences they believe should result. Cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon springing from today's technology, and this study hopes to advance our understanding of it.

What you will be asked to do in the study: In this online study, you will be asked to read a scenario that may contain cyberbullying. Following the scenario, you will be asked to use the information in the scenario to complete a *Likeability/ Social Acceptability Scale*, *Punishment Scale*, *Impact on Victim Scale*, *Technology Comfort Scale*, and then to complete a Participant Information Form. You do not have to answer every question. You will not lose any benefits if you skip questions.

Location: The study is entirely online and can be completed from a location that provides you with internet access.

Time required: We expect that this study will take up to 1 hour to complete.

Risks: There are no reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts involved in taking part in this study.

Compensation or payment: There is no direct compensation for taking part in this study. However, participating in this research allows participants to learn more about the research process from the participant's perspective. Participation may also provide you with the opportunity to earn 1 SONA point which can be applied to your psychology courses that are utilizing SONA points as an extra credit option. Refer to your course syllabi or speak to your instructor for information regarding their extra credit policy. Also check your syllabi or speak to your instructor for information regarding alternatives to research participation. Extra credit will be awarded through the SONA system used by the UCF Psychology Department.

Confidentiality: Your responses to all questions in this study will be anonymous. Upon completion of the study, you will be given a code and asked to email the researcher with your name and the code. You will be providing your name only for the purposes of assigning you credit in the SONA system. You must provide your name in order to be assigned SONA credit. You do not need to provide your name if you do not want to receive SONA credit. It is important to realize that your name and the code are not connected to or associated with any of the data collected in this study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to Dr. Karen Mottarella, Building 3 Room 226, Psychology Department, University of Central Florida Palm Bay Campus. Dr. Mottarella can be reached by phone at 321-433-7987 or by email at kmottare@mail.ucf.edu.

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB. For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901. You may also talk to them for any of the following:

- * Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- * You cannot reach the research team.
- * You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- * You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Withdrawing from the study:

You are free to skip any question in this research that you do not feel comfortable answering. You are also free to withdraw your participation from this research at any time. If you decide not to complete this study, you may or may not be credited for the participation you did put in, and will need to contact the investigator in order to possibly be credited for participation that you did put in.

Student Support Resources:

If you believe you are being cyberbullied, the following resources are available for assistance:

UCF Victim Services

Website: <http://victimservices.ucf.edu/home.html>

To make an appointment: (497) 823-2425

Confidential 24-hour Hotline: (407) 823-1200

UCF Counseling Center

Website: <http://counseling.sdes.ucf.edu/>

To make an appointment: (407) 823-2811

Email: councntr@mail.ucf.edu

UCF Police Department

Website: <http://police.ucf.edu/>

4000 Central Florida Boulevard, #150

Orlando, Florida 32816

Phone: (407) 823-5555

Emergency: 911

Email: policedept@mail.ucf.edu

University

1. You are at least 18 years old

Yes

No

2. You are currently enrolled at UCF.

Yes

No

3. You understand your rights and responsibility as a participant in this study.

Yes

No

APPENDIX G: CYBERBULLYING SCENARIO

Males: John and James

Females: Mary and Patricia

(Bully) 3:00 pm

You never should have been at a party we were at, you freak!

(Victim) 3:00 pm

You've been doing this all week. I'm sick of people harassing me! Stop messaging me. Leave me alone!

(Bully) 3:00 pm

Well, it's going to continue because now over 500 people know who you are what a loser you are! We posted proof of it!

(Victim) 3:00 pm

What are you talking about??????

(Bully) 3:01 pm

Me and my friends posted an "I Hate Group..." on Facebook... go see for yourself! Apparently we aren't the only people who know what a kiss ass and loser you are!

(Victim) 3:02 pm

Are you kidding me?! Please stop. Don't do this.

(Bully) 3:03 pm

Oh and we included pictures and videos of you from the party—now everyone can laugh at how you dance and that you passed out-- looking like the asshole you are! There is no way you can take them down.

(Victim) 3:03 pm

Please don't do this!

(Bully) 3:04pm

I'd watch my back, walking around campus if I were you.

(Victim) 3:04pm

What are you going to do?!

(Bully) 3:05pm

Signed off

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