

**PERSONALITY TRAITS AND DYNAMICS OF CYBERBULLYING:  
A BASIS FOR A PROPOSED INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The descriptive quantitative research aimed to look into the personality traits, dynamics and effects of Cyberbullying among the High School students of St. Scholastica's Academy Marikina School Year 2014-2015. Slovin's Formula and purposive sampling techniques were utilized in identifying and selecting participants who are knowledgeable about and experienced the study of interest. The Self-made Cyberbullying Survey and the High School Personality Questionnaire, a self-report inventory that measures 14 personality characteristics were used as data gathering tools. Further, frequency and percentage, mean, sten score, Chi-square test, ANOVA and t-test were used for data analysis. From the results of the study, it was assessed that cyberbully participants have a "very low" to "low" experience of the forms of Cyberbullying while the cyberbullied participants have a "low" to "moderate" experience yet both groups of participants still experience the negative effect. Accordingly, flaming is the most commonly used way to victimize the object of Cyberbullying, and the foremost reasons why the participants engage into Cyberbullying are for the bullies to have fun and to avoid face to face confrontation. Hence, the participants felt sad and became conscious of their behavior after the Cyberbullying experience. Thus, the bully participants are more assertive, dominant, individualistic and self-reliant while the bullied participants are submissive, conforming, insecure and self-indulgent.*

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**Keywords:** *Personality traits, dynamics of cyberbullying, cyberbully, cyber bullied*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon that media and schools have been reporting numbers of cases of such occurrence. Electronic bullying, more commonly known as Cyberbullying, is described as the act of sending or posting harmful or cruel text or images using the Internet or other communication device (Willard, 2007). It involves the use of information and communication technologies like email, cell phone and pager text messages, defamatory personal websites, and defamatory online personal polling websites to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group intended to harm others (Li, 2007).

In the Philippines, the House of Representatives is currently working on Senate Bill No. 2677 or the proposed Anti-Bullying School Policy Act of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, where schools are required to create policies that would address the increasing incidents of bullying including cyberbullying. In existence, there are limited data and studies in the country. Cases have been increasing in schools and as a School Counsellor, the researcher has been a witness to the difficulties of the students about the effects and impact of cyber bullying in their personal and social life. According to the information presented by the Stairway Foundation Inc. from the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) Annual Convention in September 2013, Filipinos spend nearly a day or an average of 21.5 hours a day on the Internet (ADMA, 2012). The Philippines ranked 8 of the top 10 countries with 27 million Facebook users. Moreover, it was stated that 9 out of 10 children had access to the Internet and 4 out of 10 children went online at least once a week (Stairway Online Safety Study, 2012). The digital age considers children as the native online citizens. The question of what draws the children to the Internet gives several answers like they would like to explore the world, interact with friends, express themselves, play and meet new friends. Furthermore, the result of the study will contribute to the minority of local studies and researches about Cyber bullying in the country.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The research paradigm presented serves as a guide for the researcher in making the investigation of the problem of the study. In the study, the

underlying reasons of performing the act and the effects of Cyber bullying were explored and established using the Cyber bullying Survey. Results of this study served as basis for the preparation of an intervention program under the guidance program, for the correction of the Cyber bullying phenomenon in schools and the development of the students.

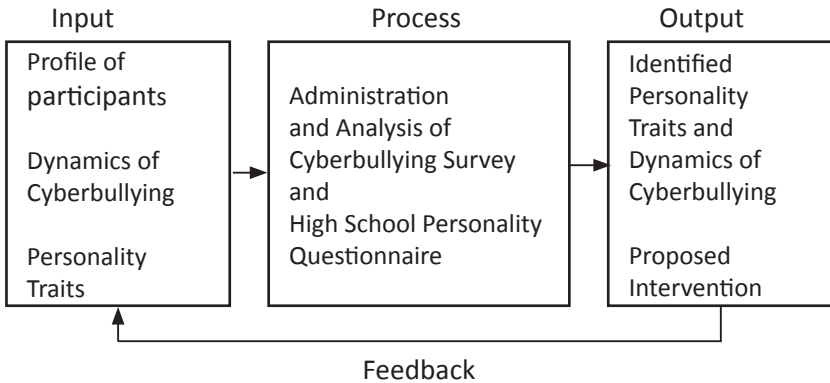


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study aimed to look into the personality traits, dynamics and effects of Cyberbullying among the High School students of St. Scholastica’s Academy Marikina, School Year 2014 -2015.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the participants regarding:
  - 1.1 Grade Level; and
  - 1.2 Classification;
    - 1.2.1 Bully; and
    - 1.2.2 Bullied?
2. To what extent are the forms of Cyberbullying experienced by the two groups of participants when they are grouped according to grade level?

3. Is there a significant difference in the extent of which the forms of Cyberbullying are experienced by the two groups of participants when they are grouped according to grade level?
4. What are the reasons of the bully and the bullied participants for Cyberbullying?
5. What are the effects of Cyberbullying to the bully and the bullied participants?
6. What are the types of personality traits of the two groups of participants when they are grouped according to grade level?
7. Is there a significant relationship between the personality traits and the profile variables of the participants?
8. What intervention program can be proposed based on the result of the study?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The quantitative-descriptive research design was used to gather information about the existing personality traits and dynamics of cyberbullying: a basis for a proposed intervention program.

### **Participants of the Study**

The participants of the study were the perpetrators and the victims of cyberbullying among high school students of St. Scholastica's Academy Marikina, during the school year 2014-2015. From the total number of the cyberbully and the cyberbullied students, the Slovin's Formula was used to calculate the appropriate sample size per grade level. Further, the researcher made use of the purposive sampling technique in identifying and selecting participants who are knowledgeable about and experienced the study of interest.

## **Instrumentation**

The primary instrument that was used in the study is the Cyberbullying Survey constructed by the researcher. The survey is composed of three sets. The first set was given to identify the cyberbully and the cyberbullied. The second set of the instrument was used to gather data from the cyberbully participants, and the third set of the instrument is to gather information from the cyberbullied participants. The Cyberbullying Survey has 28 items divided into three (3) parts, namely: Forms of Cyberbullying, Reasons for Cyberbullying and Effects of Cyberbullying. To gather information about the participants' personality traits, the results of the High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ) was obtained from the students' cumulative record secured from the Student Development Center of St. Scholastica's Academy Marikina. The High School Personality Questionnaire is a self-report inventory that measures 14 personality characteristics. It addresses Warmth, Intelligence, Emotional Stability, Excitability, Dominance, Cheerfulness, Conformity, Boldness, Sensitivity, Withdrawal, Apprehension, Self-Sufficiency, Self-discipline and Tension.

## **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researcher secured permission from the Principal of the high school department of St. Scholastica's Academy Marikina to conduct the survey and to gather other necessary data for the study. After the approval of the Principal, the survey was conducted during the time most convenient for the students, during their Guidance Period. The researcher had a preliminary talk on the general purpose of the survey. It was explained to the participants that all information would be treated with strict confidentiality. The participants were given no time limit to accomplish the survey and free from pressure. The participants were made to identify themselves by writing their names in the survey. In this way, the researcher was able to go with the appropriate set of the survey to be given whether it is for the cyberbully or the cyberbullied. After, the retrieval of the accomplished instruments, scoring, and tallying were made. A Focus Group Discussion was conducted to deepen and validate the responses obtained from the survey. A consent letter to participate in the Focus Group Discussion was explained to the randomly selected

students. They were asked to affix their signature in the consent letter. Guidelines were given before conducting the group discussion, and they were informed that the discussion would be recorded for documentation purposes. Lastly, the integration and interpretation of the data followed.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were evaluated through: frequency and percentage distribution to present the profile variables, effects and reasons of Cyberbullying, and personality traits of the participants; Mean distribution to present the data on the forms of Cyberbullying experienced by the participants; Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test for independent samples to determine the significant difference in the extent to which the participants experienced the different forms of Cyberbullying when grouped according to profile variables; Chi-square test was to test the relationship of the personality traits with their profile; and Sten Score to interpret the personality traits from the High School Personality Questionnaire.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Participants' Profile***

According to Grade Level, most or 34.10 % of the participants were grade 7 students.

According to Classification (Bully and Bullied), majority or 68. 21% of the participants were bullied.

### ***Extent of Experience of Bully participants of the Various Forms of Cyberbullying when Grouped According to Grade Level***

Results revealed that Flaming (2.09), Denigration (2.06), Exclusion (2.25) and Outing (2.35) are experienced by the bully participants at a "low extent" while Trickery (1.56), Impersonation (1.43), Harassment (1.26) and Cyber Stalking (1.21) are experienced at a "very low extent." The results showed that the bully participants have a "little" experience

of Flaming, Denigration, Exclusion and Outing as a form of Cyberbullying, and they have a “very little” experience of Trickery, Impersonation, Harassment and Cyber stalking as a form of Cyber bullying.

***Extent of Experience of Bullied Participants of the Various Forms of Cyberbullying when Grouped According to Grade Level***

Results revealed that Denigration (2.61) is experienced at a “moderate extent” by the bullied participants. Furthermore, Flaming (2.54), Exclusion (2.50), Outing (2.21), Trickery (2.00), Impersonation (1.81) and Harassment (2.01) are experienced by the bullied participants at a “low extent” and Cyber Stalking (1.62) is experienced at a “very low extent.” Denigration as a form of Cyber bullying is “moderately” experienced by the bullied participants. Also, the bullied participants have a “little” experience of Flaming, Exclusion, Outing, Trickery, Impersonation and Harassment; and have a “very little” experience on Cyber stalking as a form of Cyber bullying. This implies that the participants’ experience on Cyberbullying moderately evolves in victimizing through the posting of mean messages or gossips.

***Difference on the extent to which the forms of Cyberbullying were experienced by the bully participants when they are grouped according to grade level***

Chi-square test showed no significant difference on the extent of experience of the bully participants on the different forms of Cyberbullying when they are grouped according to grade level. The results implied that the forms of Cyber bullying used by the bully participants are “more” or “less” the same in all the grade levels.

***Difference on the extent to which the forms of Cyber bullying were experienced by the bullied participants when they are grouped according to grade level***

Chi-square test showed a significant difference on the extent of experience of bullied participants on Exclusion as a form of Cyberbullying when they are grouped according to Grade Level. Conversely, there is a no

significant difference on the extent of experience of bullied participants on Flaming, Denigration, Outing, Trickery, Impersonation, Harassment, and Cyber stalking as a form of Cyberbullying when they are grouped according to Grade Level. The results imply that there is a difference on the use of Exclusion as a form of Cyberbullying across the grade levels.

### ***Reasons of Cyberbullying of the Bully and the Bullied participants per Grade Level***

Majority or 66.67% of the cyberbully participants said that they engage into Cyberbullying just for fun. While that of the other said that they do it because they hate other person or people and to vent their anger. On the part of the cyberbullied participants, majority of them said that they were cyberbullied because the cyberbully wanted to demonstrate power over them (68.42 %) and for fun (70.27 %).

### ***Effects of Cyberbullying to the Bully and the Bullied participants***

Results showed that majority or 70.91% of the cyberbully participants said that they became conscious of their behavior, and the rest of the participants felt sad after the cyberbullying experience. On the other hand, the majority or 90.00% of the cyberbullied participants said that they felt hurt and sad, while others felt anxious and stressed after the cyberbullying experience.

### ***Types of personality traits of the bully participants***

For the bully participants, there are more reserved or detached than the outgoing participants; there is a greater number of less intelligent participants than the more intelligent; there are more participants who are less emotionally stable than the emotionally stable; there is an equal number of bully participants who are less excitable and those who are more excitable; there are more who are dominant than the submissive; there are more who are expressive than the incommunicative; there are more bully participants who have the tendency to disregard obligations to people and undependable; there are more who are emotionally cautious and withdrawn than the impulsive participants; there are more who



are self-reliant and tough-minded than the self-indulgent and insecure participants; there are more who are individualistic than the group-joiner; there are more who are insensitive to people's approval or disapproval and rudely vigorous than the worrying and anxious participants; there is a similar number of bully participants who are apprehensive and self-sufficient; there are more who are careless of social rules and uncontrolled than the socially precise and controlled participants; there are more frustrated and emotional than those who are unfrustrated and relaxed.

### ***Types of personality traits of the bullied participants***

For the bullied participants, there are more reserved or detached participants than the outgoing participants; there are more less intelligent than the more intelligent participants; there are more who are less emotionally stable than the emotionally stable; there are more number of bullied participants who are less excitable than those who are more excitable; there are more who are submissive than the dominant; there are more participants who are incommunicative than the expressive; there are more bullied participants who have the tendency to be conscientious and rule-bound; there are more participants who are emotionally cautious and withdrawn than the impulsive; there are more participants who are self-indulgent and insecure than the self-reliant and tough-minded; there are more participants who are individualistic than the group-joiner; there are more participants who are insensitive to people's approval or disapproval than the worrying and anxious; there are more bullied participants who are self-sufficient than those who are apprehensive; there are more participants who are careless of social rules and uncontrolled than the socially precise and controlled; there are more bullied participants who are frustrated and emotional than those who are unfrustrated and relaxed.

### ***Significant relationship in the personality traits of the participants and the profile variables***

T-test results implied that the level of dominance and sociability regarding classification as the bully and the bullied participants are significantly correlated wherein the bully participants are more "assertive"

and “dominant” while the bullied participants are “submissive” and “conforming.” Regarding the level of Sensitivity, the bully participants are more “individualistic” and “self-reliant” while the bullied participants are more “insecure” and “self-indulgent.”

## **CONCLUSION**

From the results of the study, it is concluded that the cyberbully participants have a “very low” to a “low” experience of the forms of Cyberbullying while the cyberbullied participants have a “low” to a “moderate” experience of the forms of Cyberbullying yet both groups of participants still experience the negative effect.

Flaming is the most commonly used way to victimize the object of Cyberbullying, and the foremost reasons why the participants engage into Cyberbullying are for the bullies to have fun and to avoid face to face confrontation.

Consequently, the participants felt sad and became conscious of their behavior after the Cyber bullying experience.

The bully participants are more assertive, dominant, individualistic and self-reliant while the bullied participants are submissive, conforming, insecure and self-indulgent.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are drawn:

The School Administrators may inform the community that there is an existing policy on bullying to garner the support of school staff, parents, and other key partners. In so doing, such awareness may be a preventive measure on the occurrence of Cyberbullying.

The Life Mentors may empower the students by intensifying the dissemination of information related to Cyberbullying. This may be done by conducting activities on self-assertiveness, coping skills, enhancing

communication, relationship building, and resiliency during Guidance Period.

The Teachers may keep their fingers on the pulse of students' concerns, gain insight on the meaning of adolescents' behavior and coordinate with the Life Mentors to be an active partner in the Cyber bullying prevention effort. Topics on self-assertiveness and communication between student and teachers should be included during homeroom period.

The Parents may keep the line of communication open by being present and becoming more sympathetic listeners. Thus, they may become more aware of the activities of their children so that they can take an active role in addressing their children's concerns.

The Students may have a heightened awareness of the dynamics of Cyber bullying and become a part of the prevention effort by initially reporting any Cyber bullying experience to parents, Life Mentors and or school authority.

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