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Cyber Media Analysis: How to Read Cyber Bullying Messages among Children

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Abstract

In this paper, we focused on a novel method to explain cyberbullying experience among children in the Facebook. The method is Cyber Media Analysis (CMA). It is a mixed-method of analyzing the stages of text and context. The text level discusses the form of messages related to cyberbullying produced and received by children. They are sentences, photos or other visual representation in the Facebook that examine cyberbullying phenomenon. To obtain cyberbullying text, we conducted a content analysis of Facebook posts by children aged 8 to 12 (N = 250) in the elementary schools in Solo areas. In the context level, we conducted in-depth interviews and group discussion to find out why children produced cyberbullying messages and how they reacted when receiving cyberbullying messages. Merging these two methods gives a comprehensive explanation of cyber bullying phenomenon among children.

Keywords: Children, Cyber Bullying, Facebook, Messages production and reception, Cyber Media Analysis

1. Background of Study

Internet has become an integral part of the daily life of children and teenagers. In Indonesia, UNICEF and the Department of Communication and Information Technology conducted a research in 2014 that shows there are at least 30 million children and young people who are active Internet users. The vast majority uses the internet for social media mainly on Facebook and Twitter.

The administrators of Facebook, for example, have already introduced rules where children under the age of 13 years do not have the right to access this media. This is based on the assumption that children cannot understand fully the type, content and effects of using social media. Nevertheless, internet users among younger age are increasing. Mishna, Saini, Solomon [12] note that the age at which children use the internet and other communication technology is becoming "younger and younger". A study by the London School of Economics, EU Kids Online, reveal that 38% of children in Europe aged 9 to 12 years are active users of the Internet with the main purpose of social media, where one out of five of them are Facebook users.

Research on the impact of internet use and children generally showed a significant increase in the occurrence of cyberbullying phenomenon among children as social media users. Cyberbullying can be interpreted as an act of harassment that occurs via a cyber medium [1, 21], which could range from email, instant messaging (IM) and mobile phones, to social media, chat rooms, digital messages, and messages sent via computer [2].

Cyber bullying can take many forms. Willard [21] mentions that there are seven forms, ranging from flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing and trickery (fraud), exclusion, to cyberstalking. Children with cyberbullying will have experienced that can harmful them physically and mentally. Patchin and Hinduja [16] show children who are exposed to cyberbullying will have a variety of feelings ranging from anger, sadness, depression, humiliation, distress and fear. Beran and Li [10] explain that children who have cyberbullying experience will be impaired in their learning that can result in failure in their studies. Children, who experience cyberbullying will also miss school, perform deviant behavior [22].

1.1. Previous Research on Children Cyberbullying

Kokkinos, Antoiadou and Markos [9] surveyed 430 children in Italy who were involved in cyberbullying. Children who were exposed to cyberbullying showed psycological symptoms disorder ranging from stress, sensitivity personal high, depression, anxiety and paranoid to psychotic symptoms. Researchers concluded that since the sample was convenient and originated from limited geographic region, the future researches could aim at investigating cyberbullying in a more targeted sample. Akbar, Huang and Anwar [2]'s study on cyberbullying by using a self-administered questionnaire surveyed 245 students to measure the emerging types of cyberbullying among children in Aceh. Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho and Tippet's [19] study looked at the types of media that can lead to cyberbullying of children ranging from text messages, picture / video clip, email, chat rooms, instant messaging and website. Mishna [12] conducted research of the establishment of cyberbullying. She used focus group discussion to explore children experience cyberbullying. In her study, she mentioned that children could share their experiences of cyberbullying, what caused the cyberbullying, the type of cyberbullying and what would they do to overcome the effect of cyberbullying.

2. Cyber Media Analysis (MCA)

Cyberbullying researches with quantitative and qualitative methods have both advantages and limitations. Foot [6] asserts an approach or method to see reality in a new cyber media in particular to assess the production of messages in it, the meaning

arising from the production of such messages, relationships and patterns of users as well as the cultural patterns that shape it. In Indonesia, Nasrullah [13] attempts a method known as Cyber Media Analysis (CMA). The analysis occurs on two levels – text and context. In the text level, it is conducted quantitatively using a variety of methods ranging from content analysis, framing or discourse analysts. In the context level, it is done by in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and participatory research.

3. Finding and Discussion

Cyber mediaanalysis at the level of the text is done with content analysis. It is conducted by capturing children 'online identity' displayed. Starting from how they put their names, photos of themselves and information related to them. Another important step is looking at the content of messages that children produce, especially related to cyberbullying. It finds in Facebook the children put their name with the original name and the pseudo names. Most children do not put their personal photographs, but rather with a photo montage technique, conjures images of pets, games or movie idol.

The most interesting finding in this study is that children use fake identity about their age. All children observed put the data of their year of birth do not fit with their current age. Average of them writes that their birth in the 1990s, which means they cheat about their age to be more than 10 years, to be able to create Facebook's account. If someone opens an account on Facebook, it is required to accept the terms and conditions apply including the minimum age specified in order to create an account. It is 13 years old and has an email address that can be verified. No other proposed requirement makes it easier for children under the age specified to create an account for the absence of an authentic age requirements that must be shown to create an account. This is what makes it easy to children under the age of 13 years, meaning that elementary school children can use the entire contents of Facebook.

The main analysis in the text level is the messages produced by children that are classified as cyberbullying forms. Based on Willard [21] there are 7 forms of cyberbullying appearing in children Facebook. Firstly, flaming is children dispute spread involving many individuals departing from the issue. Secondly, harassment, which amounts to continual negative messages posted on their friends' social media. Thirdly, denigration or insult: children were sent verbal or written words that degrade their friends who are being bullied. Fourthly, impersonation: children impersonate another friend with the intent to poke fun or ridicule. Fifthly, outing and trickery: when they write something to defraud or deceive another friend, and to embarrass a friend. Sixthly, exclusion / isolation: children post their messages to reject a friend of their group. Finally, cyberstalking: to closely follow the activities of their friends in the Facebook with the intent of knocking off other followers.

In the context level, through in-depth interviews and focused group discussions, data collected mention three categories of motives why children produce cyberbullying messages. The first is an internal drive to cyberbully. Children may bully their friends to be considered as brave, trying to fit in or trying to belong. The second category is based on negative experiences with the victim, such as jealousy, friend breaking up of a friendship or relationship. The third categories is based on characteristics of the victim, this may involve appearance, socially related characteristics and personality. The result of study also mentioned that children conduct cyberbullying together with their friend, sometimes they do not hav problem with the victim or even they do not know personally with their friends who are bullied. The children compose their cyberbullying messages with expressive design logic. O'Keefe says that the messages in this mode are open and reactive in nature, with little attention given to the needs or desires of others. It is self-centered, rather than centered person.

When children receive a message of cyberbullying, from the interviews, it can be mentioned that they have 3 strategies to handle their problems. Firstly, children have a passive attitude in accepting cyberbullying messages. It is hard for them to admit being disliked by their friends. In this group, the effects of cyberbullying that appearing are they became frightened, depressed, angry, embarrassed even do not want to go to school if the cyberbullying are done by their classmates. Secondly, there are small groups of children that engage in the negotiation strategy when received cyberbullying messages. They try to answer cyberbullying messages and dare to respond. Thirdly, there are children who have courage to express it to others, particularly friends and teachers, but few notify their parents. The result of study examines whether a small number of children let cyber-bullying message arise because they regard friends who send the message only as a joke or funny behavior.

4. Conclusion

Cyberbullying behavior arise among children because they do not yet fully understand the type, content and effect of cyber media use. Children are not able to sort out the message or the appropriate action to be done in using the cyber media. An important implication is the need for adult, especially parents and teachers to recognize the importance of cyber interaction for children.

The findings also show that children use fake identity to apply for a Facebook member. They change their age into the older one to overcome administrative rules where children under the age of 13 years do not have the right to access this media. It is essential that adults provide guidance and protection on how to use communication technology among children.

The role of parents is to monitor or protect their children from cyberbullying. It requires a way of communicating between parents and children to recognize the effects of cyber interaction. It is necessary to differentiate the children's use of technology for positive purposes from the uses that are abusive or negative.

The study using Cyber Media Analysis in the level text and context describe comprehensive methods to explore cyberbullying phenomenon among children. For this reason, CMA method can be used to explore variety problems related to message production and messages reception in the internet.

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