Cyberbully, Cybervictim, and Forgiveness among Indonesian High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying has been commonplace practice among Indonesian teenagers engaging in on-line space. However, this phenomenon has not been extensively researched in the context of Indonesia. This present study aims to examine the extent to which level of forgiveness contribute to varying degrees of cyberbullying. It is a quantitative in which the data were drawn from 495 senior high school students in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The research findings revealed that there was a significant correlation of $\beta = .255$, $p = .011$ between level of forgiveness and patterns of response towards cyberbullying and also a correlation of ($\beta = .316$, $p = .001$) between cybervictim and cyberbully. The study concluded with some recommendations with regard to the effect of cyberbullying.

Keywords: senior high school students, cyberbullying, cyberbully, and forgivenes.

INTRODUCTION

It is generally acknowledged that communication technology via the Internet brings positive benefits such as easy access to information (Subrahmanyam & Smahek, 2011), internationalization and organizational growth (Davis & Harveston, 2000). On-line communication can also serve as a significant predictor of people's social capital, civic and political participatory behaviors (Gil de Zúñiga, H., Jung, N., & Valenzuela, S, 2012). However, in addition to its positive contribution, cyber-space communication also brings some undesirable consequences such as cyberstalking (Seto, 2002), sexual predation (Dombrowski, Lemasney, Ahia, & Dickson, 2004), cyberstalking (Seto, 2002), sexual predation (Dombrowski, Lemasney, Ahia, & Dickson, 2004), pornography, cybercrime and cyberbullying (Tokunaga, 2010).

Cyberbullying is a form of harassment and humiliation through the virtual world. In other words, cyberbullying is an act of bullying which is transformed into cyberspace (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2008; Juvonen, & Gross, 2008). Cyberbullying differs from conventional bullying. Whereas conventional bullying involves face-to-face encounter and predominantly takes place in school grounds, cyberbullying occur in on-line space without physical contact (Smith et al, 2008; Slonje, & Smith, 2008; Agatston, Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Suprihatin, 2012).

Therefore, cyberbullying has no physical constraints. Perpetrators of cyberbullying can disturb the victim outside schools through mobile phones, emails and online social media (Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009). Cyberbullying is a concept associated with similar construct like online bullying, electronic bullying and internet harassment (Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009). Thus, cyberbullying has four main characteristics, namely the action should be repeated, involving psychological torture, done on purpose, and happen in cyberspace platform.

Frequency of Cyberbullying

Nowadays cyberbullying is becoming a big issue around the world. In Indonesia, the prevalence cyberbullying among children is considerably high. One of eight parents stated that their children had been the victims of harassment and humiliation via online media. As many as 55% of parents said they are aware that their child is experiencing cyberbullying (Ipsos, 2011).

Another study by Lindfors, Kaltiala-Heino, & Rimpelä (2012) in a sample of 5516 adolescences found that girls reported more often than boys that they had experienced at least one dimension of cyberbullying during the last

year. The proportion was highest among 14-year-olds and lowest among 18-year-olds of both sexes. Among girls, the most commonly encountered dimension was witnessing the cyberbullying of friends (16%); and being a victim was slightly more common than being a bully (11% vs. 9%). Among boys, an equal proportion, approximately 10%, had been a victim, a bully, or had witnessed cyberbullying. The proportion of bully-victims was 4%. Serious and disruptive cyberbullying was experienced by 2% of respondents and weekly cyberbullying by 1%; only 0.5% of respondents had been bullied weekly and considered bullying serious and disruptive.

Another study involving 1454 American teenagers found that 72% of respondents reported having experienced at least one type of cyberbullying, 85% of them also experienced bullying at school (Juvonen and Gross 2008). Forms of cyberbullying most often experienced by respondents is insult and a name-calling (Juvonen and Gross, 2008). 90% of respondents never reported cyberbullying that happened to other people, and only a few respondents used a digital tool to prevent incidents of cyberbullying. Moreover, cyberbullying victimization was associated with increased social anxiety (Juvonen and Gross, 2008).

Furthermore, Goebert et al (2011) in his study of 677 teens found 1 out of 2 respondents have been victims of cyberbullying. Girls have more frequent experience of being victims of cyberbullying via SMS and online social media. Girls were also more likely to have anxiety symptoms, and idea to suicide compared to teenage boys. Study by Schneider et al (2012) in a sample of 20.406 Metro West Massachusetts adolescents, found 15.8% were victims of cyberbullying and 25.9% being bullied at school during the past 12 months. 59.7% of cyberbullying victims were also being bullied at school. 36.3% of bullying victims had also become victims of cyberbullying.

Psychosocial Consequences of Cyberbullying

The negative outcomes of cyberbullying on the victims have been confirmed in several previous studies. But, the negative effects of cyberbullying depend on the frequency, duration, and severity of the cyberbullying itself (Tokunaga, 2010). Cyberbullying that happens occasionally have lower long-term outcomes compared to cyberbullying that occurs continuously (Tokunaga, 2010). Gradinger, et al (2009) found that victims of bullying or cyberbullying had poor adjustment, including reactive aggression, instrumental aggression, depression symptoms and somatic symptoms. In addition, Gradinger et al (2011) found that victims of cyberbullying are more at risk of mental health, especially triggering drug abuse and attempting suicide. Cyber victimization also predicts depression symptoms among Turkish secondary school children (Baker & Tanrikulu, 2010).

Another study by Bauman (2009) in sample of 221 teenagers in the rural area of the Southwestern United States, found 1.5% were perpetrators of cyberbullying, 3% and 8.6% cyberbullying victims were also perpetrators of cyberbullying. Victims of cyberbullying experienced and increased their emotional distress and the likelihood of behavioral acting out. Some of the negative outcomes of both types of bullying (school bullying and cyberbullying), including decline in school performance, reduced involvement in schools, increase in symptoms of depression, ideas for suicide, and self-harm, was found (Schneider et al, 2012). Increased psychological distress was found either on victims of cyberbullying as well as on school bullying (Schneider et al, 2012).

Teenagers who became victims of cyberbullying showed decreased concentration in learning, increased school absenteeism, and decreased learning achievement at school (Beran & Li, 2007). Another study involving a sample of 432 teens found 42% have never experienced cyberbullying, whereas 58% experienced cyberbullying action more than once. As many as 37% respondents reported becoming victims of both either cyberbullying or school bullying (Beran & Li, 2007). Fu, Chan, & Ip's (2014) study found that countries with higher rates of cyberbullying were more likely to have a higher incidence of unnatural child death. Based on their data, an increase of 1% in the prevalence of cyberbullying was translated into a 28% increase in risk of unnatural child death. The study reveals a positive ecological association between the rates of exclusively online bullying and unnatural death mortality of the age 10–14 children among 24 European countries.

One study by Beran and Li (2007) found that adolescents who were victims of cyberbullying showed a decrease in concentrations, increase school absence, and a decrease in school achievement. Goebert et al (2011) found that girls who were victims of cyberbullying have higher level of anxiety symptoms, and suicide attempts than in boys. Victims of cyberbullying usually feel angry, sad, frustrated, and anxious. This is because the perpetrators used hurtful ways, by sending threaten messages, humiliate and degrade the victim. Furthermore, Schneider et al (2012) found that cyberbullying victim has declined school performance, decreased involvement in schools, increased symptoms of depression, ideas of suicide, self-harm, and suicide attempted. The increased of psychological distress that caused by cyberbullying (depression, suicidal ideation, self-injury, and suicide attempts) also occurred among victims of school bullying as well, above result was confirmed by Patchin and Hinduja's study (2010) that found low self-esteem on both victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying. One theory

concluded that low self-esteem encourage teenagers to bully others in order to improve their self-esteem, while low self-esteem in victims cause inability for them to be assertive against perpetrators.

The Effect of Forgiveness on Cyberbullying

For almost three centuries, the notion of forgiveness has been forgotten and it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that social scientists began to learn more about this (McCullough, Pargament, &Thoresen, 2000). Forgiveness can be viewed from three different perspectives, in terms of response, personality disposition, and characteristic of the social unit. Response constitutes prosocial changes in thinking, emotions, and behavior of actors (transgressor). The key feature of response is forgiveness whereby someone forgive others, and their responses (what they think, feel, what they want, how's behavior change) become less negative and more positive all the time (McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000).

In view of personality disposition, forgiveness refers to the tendency of individuals to forgive others in interpersonal situations. While from the viewpoint of the social unit, forgiveness is seen as a similar attribute to intimacy, trust, and commitment (McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000). In some social structures such as family or marriage, forgiving behavior is very important, so that the perpetrators are directly forgiven for his mistakes. While on the other social structures such as a business or government organization, performers are not easily forgiven even after being punished and exiled.

The relationship between forgiveness and physical health has also been a subject of interest in some research. Witvliet, Ludwig, and Vander Laan (2001) designed an experiment in which subjects were asked to imagine a painful event in the past in two perspectives either forgiving or unforgiving imagery trial. During the session when the subject practiced the imagery, the physiological response was measured and recorded. They found subjects undergoing forgiving imagery trial showed decreased physiological stress response and negative emotions (anger and sadness), increased positive emotions and perceived control. In contrast, subjects undergoing unforgiving imagery trial showed increased physiological stress response (increased heart rate and blood pressure), negative emotions, and decreased levels of self-control.

Some past studies have found a significant relationship between forgiveness with subjective well-being and mental health. Mauger et al. (1992) found that individuals who have low scores on a forgiveness scale appeared to have a tendency to demonstrate depression, anxiety, anger, and low self-esteem. Another study by Tangney et al. (1999) found that the tendencies to forgive other people have a correlation with low depression, hostility, anger, prejudice, and interpersonal sensitivity. Exline, Yali, and Lobel's (1999) study of 200 students found that an individual who had forgiven God for negative events in their life had a low depression and anxiety.

An experimental study by Hebl and Enright (1993) found that older women who took the forgiveness therapy sessions showed increased willingness to forgive, and decreased depression and anxiety scores. In addition, the experimental group that showed a high level of forgiveness was associated with increased self-esteem score, decreased levels of anxiety and depression. Other studies by Freedman and Enright (1996) involving 12 female survivors with physical incest who underwent forgiveness therapy showed increased forgiveness tendency and hope, decreased anxiety and depression. Further data showed a positive result obtained 1 year later. Lawler et al. (2005) found that forgiveness had a significant association with a decreasing of physical symptoms, use of medications, improved sleep, decreased fatigue and somatic complaints.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the current study is to explore the nature of cyberbullying in a sample of Indonesian teenagers. There have been a few studies and publication exploring the impact of cyberbullying and the role of forgiveness in Indonesia senior high school students. Therefore, this study is expected to shed light on how to prevent, design prevention programmers and decrease cyberbullying phenomenon among senior high school students. The current study replicates and develops Safaria's study (2016) with recruiting more sample, and focus on several research questions below. The following research questions were developed to guide the study:

1. How frequently does cyberbullying occur among the selected Indonesian adolescents as research participants?
2. What kinds of online platforms are most frequently used as a playground for cyberbully attacks?
3. Does the victim know the perpetrators?
4. Whether there a relationship between forgiveness with cyberbully and cyberbullying?

METHODS

Participants

The data were collected from three high schools in Yogyakarta region, involving as many as 495 students in the study. Simple random sampling was used to select the participants. Informed consent was given to all participants, and they have the right to refuse participating in the study anytime. Meanwhile, the researcher has had permission from the school to collect the data. 63.6% (315) of the sample were boys and 36.4% (180) were girls. All participants agreed to get involvedin the study without coercion or incentive.

Measurement

A questionnaire was developed for the purposes of this study after the items were adapted from previous research (Bauman, 2009; Kwan & Skoric, 2013; Li, 2005). A pilot study was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire before being used to collect data. The consistency of internal tests reliability was carried out using Cronbach alpha, and content validity was assessed using professional judgment. Two external experts in the field of psychology were involved in checking items in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consists of general questions on the frequency of cyberbullying; i.e., *"Have you ever experienced cyberbullying?"* The response options include: *never, once or twice, several times, often, almost every day.* The questions measure the types of media used by bully, such as "W*hat kind of online media was used by bully to harass you?" (Response options included: email, phone call, text, Facebook, and video), who perpetrated the abuse, and how they responded after being bullied, i.e., "What did you do when you experienced cyber victimization? (Response options included: ignored it, fight back, told the teacher, told the parent, told the police, and told a friend*). This questionnaire was used in the previous study focusing on cyberbullying and its impact (Safaria, 2016).

The questionnaire also contains a cyberbullying victimization scale which consists of several items that measure the frequency of cyber victimization experienced by the participants (*"I have received humiliation messages on my social networking account (Facebook, twitter), mobile phone and email". "I have received negative name calling harassment on my social network account (Facebook, Twitter), mobile phone and email". "I have received unwanted sexual suggestions/ sexually explicit pictures on my social network account (Facebook, Twitter), mobile phone and email"*). Response options comprised of a four-point scale, from e.g., "I have not been bullied" (scored 1), "only once or twice" (2), "two or three times a month" (3), and more than three times a month" (4).

Forgiveness. Transgression-related Interpersonal Motivation Inventory [38] (TRIM; McCullough &Witvliet, 2002) was used to measure state forgiveness and was translated to Indonesian language. TRIM consists of 12 items, answered on a 1-5 Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Forward backward translation method was used to validate the items of TRIM. The example of the items is: *"I will make him/her pay"; I keep as much distance between us as possible"; "I am going to get even with".*

Table 1: Reliability of Questionnaires	
Scale	Cronbach alpha
Cybervictim	.808
Forgiveness	.750

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analaysis was performed for the purpose of this study. Descriptive analysis and regression analysis were applied to acheive the aims of the study. SPSS version 18 was used in the quantitative data analysis.

RESULT

Overall frequency data

The results indicated that out of 495 senior high school students, 16.2% (80) had never experienced cybervictimization, 43.2% (214) experienced it occasionally (*one or twice*), 26.3% (130) rarely experienced it (*twice or three times*) and 13.1% (65) experienced it frequently (*four or five times)*. The remaining 1.2% (6) of participants experienced cybervictimization almost every day (*more than five times*). Approximately 83% of the sample had experienced cybervictimization from occasionally to almost every day. In response to the question *"Did the person who bullied you on cyberspace also bullied you in school"* a total of 24.2% (120) reported they had never experienced bullying in school, 44.4% (220) experienced occasional bullying, 21.2% (105) of participants experienced bullying several times and 8.1% (40) of participantsfrequently experienced bullying.The remaining 2% (10) of participants experienced bullying almost every day.

Type of cyberbully's media used

Out of 495 students, 18.2% (90) experienced cyberbullying through mobile phone communication. Many participants experienced cyberbullying on Facebook (255, 51.5%), Twitter (65, 13.1%), Email (10, 2%) and Short Message Service (65, 13.1%). The rest of the participants experienced cyberbullying via Youtube (10, 2%).

Types of cyberbullying act

The majority of participants had experienced name calling harassment (225, 45.5%), 31.3% (155) had experienced rumors/gossip, while 5.1% (25) had experienced threats. 2.6% (13) of participants had experienced unwanted sexual contents, and 15.6% (77) of participants had experienced their personal matters being uncovered.

Who does the cyberbullying?

26.3% (130) of participants in the sample do not know (anonymous) who committed cyberbullying against them. 33.3% (165) noted that the bully was their friend in class, 8.1% (40) reported that the bully was their former best friend, 24.2% (120) said that the bully was someone in their school, and 8.1% (40) of the participants said that the bully was someone from another school.

What did you do when you were cyberbullied?

Regarding what action was taken when the participants experienced cyberbullying, 25.3% (125) ignored the behavior, 49.5% (245) fought back against the bully, 4% (20) reported it to teachers/school administrator, 11.1% (55) said that they told their parents about it, 9.1% (45) told a friend about what happened to them, and 1% (5) told the police.

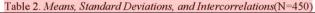*Relationship between forgiveness and cyberbullying victimization with cyberbully*

The results showed that forgiveness has a significant relationship with cyberbully (β= .255, p = .011) and cybervictim have a significant relationship with the cyberbully (β = .316, p = .001). Table 1 below presents the results of regression analysis.

Table 1. *Regression analysis for cybervictim, forgiveness and cyberbully*(N=450)

Variable	B	SEB	β	t	p
cybervictim	.038	.011	.316	3.306	.001
forgiveness	.019	.010	-.192	2.007	.048

Note. Adjusted R^2 = .161 (N = 99, p = .000).

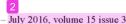While the descriptive data presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations*(N=450)

Measure	M	SD	1	2	3
cyberbully	1.53	.67	1.000	.255	.354
forgiveness	41.7	6.7	.255*	1.000	.201
cybervictim	15.6	5.6	.354**	.201	1.000

* p< .05. *p< .01**

DISCUSSION

While the advance in information technology has brought positive changes to the society, it has also led to undesirable consequences. The present study found that approximately 83% of the research partitipants experienced cybervictimization from occasionally to almost every day. These findings indicated that cyberbullying became a significant problem among Indonesian teenagers, and it should deserve our serious consideration.

Regarding what online media most frequently used by cyberbully, the finding suggests that the majority of teenagers (51.5%, 225) in our sample have become cyberbullying victims through Facebook. These finding is consistent with Li's study (2005; 2007) which found that 36.4% to 39.4% cyberbullying victimization occurred in online social media like Facebook. The result also supports MacDonald and Roberts-Pittman (2010) who found online social media as a site where the cyberbully occurred. Goebert et al (2011) suggested that girls more frequently experienced cyberbullying victimization via SMS and online social media like Facebook. A large proportion of Internet users in Indonesia (50-80%) are young people from 15-30 years of age (MarkPlus, 2011)

with a considerable proportion of this age group using the Internet for social networking. Facebook (Abbott, 2013: Yulianti & Tung, 2013) have become the most popular means of online communication in Indonesia (Galih & Ngazis, 2012). This fact should be taken seriously and used for educating young people in Indonesia to communicate in Facebook wisely. One of the important questions is what action should be taken when cyberbullying occurs. This question is beyond the scope of present study.

The anonymity is a unique aspect of online technology as it is being used as a shield for the bullies. It is also a characteristic of cyberbullying not found in bullying (Tokunaga, 2010), and become a serious obstacles for combating cyberbullying (Li, 2007).The present study found 26.3% (130) of participants in the sample do not know who committed cyberbullying against them. This finding is consistent with Slonje and Smith (2008) who found that the majority of respondents do not know who bullied them.

The results suggest that 25.3% (125) of cyberbullying victim ignored the harassment, 49.5% (245) fight back against the bully, 4% (20) told a teachers/school administrator, 11.1% (55) said that they told their parents about it. This finding supports Bauman's study (2009) that found 24% of his respondents ignored bully, and 32% bullied back, meanwhile 16% told adults in school and 13% told parents. Retaliation is the most action taken by the victims in order to make the bully stop their harassment. It may be caused by the nature of cyberbullying that as a form of indirect aggression, rather than using physical contact. This condition allows the victims to have equal power to defend their selves against the threats.

The present study found a significant role of forgiveness in the prevalence of cyberbullying, and this finding supports previous studies. Watson, Rapee, and Todorov (2015) found that a person advised to forgive the perpetrators shows low level of anger against the perpetrators, and less likely has the desire to revenge the perpetrator. Egan and Todorov's study (2009) showed that teens with a high level of forgiveness experienced lower feelings of hurt when being bullied. In addition, forgiveness also corresponds with emergent tendency of positive coping strategies (Flanagan, Vanden Hoek, Ranters, and Reich, 2012), and the influence of forgiveness ethos decline retaliation on the victims of cyberbullying (Hui, Tsang, & Law, 2011).

Aftab (2008) identified four types of perpetrators of cyberbullying, first, vengeful angel (angel avenger), second, power hungry (the thirst for power), the third revenge of the nerds (retaliation the nerds), fourth the mean girls, and inadvertent (provocateur). Four profiles are based on personality characteristics and based on the motives underlying the act of cyberbullying. In this study the forgiveness variable and cybervictim have a role in acts of cyberbullying. Persons who become victims of cyberbullying and have low tendency to forgive, is more likely to take revenge to the bully. This means that forgiveness attitude can change the intention to take revenge, and can play a role to diminish revenge personality tendency. As suggest by König, Gollwitzer and Steffgen (2010) in their study that found the victims of bullying tend to choose revenge on the perpetrators. Hinduja and Patchin (2009) also reported that the primary explanation for the occurrence of cyberbullying acts was revenge.

There were limitations to this study. As a correlation study, the current study cannot establish causation, and only shows association between variables. Future inquiry using experimental design is recommended to examine the role of forgiveness on cyberbullying for more convincing results. It is also highly recommended that a longitudinal study be conducted to look more deeply at cyberbullying phenomena as suggested by some scholars (Kowalski et al., 2012: Sticca et al., 2013: Kowalski & Limber, 2013). It is clear that bullying prevention programs should address cyberbullying specifically, as some teenager's bullying experiences happen only online. In conducting prevention program, this present study suggests looking at forgiveness as disposition or attitude that should be developed among teenagers to stop the cycle of retaliation. It also found that Facebook has become dominant online social media where cyberbullying occurs, and it should become our main focus in preventing cyberbullying among teenagers. Teenagers should be informed how to engage wisely in online social media, and how to cope with bullying acts and manage themselves effectively when cyberbullying occurs.

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