

Cyberbullying through  
Social Websites and its role  
On Self-Esteem, Inadequacy  
and Optimism levels in college

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## **Abstract**

The Aim of the current study is to view Cyberbullying and its impact on Self-Esteem, Optimism and Feelings of Inadequacy levels on college students. A mixed design was used in the study; a correlation design to look at the relationship that cyber bullying had on levels of self esteem, inadequacy and optimism while a quasi-research design was used to look at the difference in gender and cyberbullying through websites. Self-Administered Questionnaires were distributed to 105 DBS undergraduates. Analysis found that cyber bullying had a significantly negative impact on all the examined variables. No significant gender differences were found. Results showed, although college cyberbullying may not be as prevalent as secondary school, it does occur and impacts greatly on the student.

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## Introduction

Today, we are growing up in a technology obsessed environment. (Besley, 2005). Besley (2005) explained how young Canadian people's online usage from home had risen from 79%-2001 to 94%-2005, and these percentages have not lowered, with 1 in 4 minutes a day been spent online in India. ( Press Release, August 19, 2012). Technology advances had made constant communication between peers at home and abroad easy. It is when the dark side of this technology breaks through that we become aware of the negative impact of it, such as cyberbullying. When an individual becomes vulnerable to threatening and abusive attacks from the anonymity of behind the computer screen, the "always on" generation is no longer an enjoyable place but a place that causes great anxiety.

**"It's the phenomenon of no place to run and no place to hide. Now, you can be stalked electronically. You can't even see your predator coming."**

– Kevin Jennings,  
Assistant Deputy Secretary,  
US Department of Education

Within the current study the dark side of the internet will be focused on and a greater look into cyberbullying's impact on college student's self-esteem, inadequacy and optimism levels. Due to the limited amount of research on the area of bullying and cyberbullying, the current review will draw on research on cyberbullying and traditional bullying in adolescence and workplace bullying.

Slonje & Smith, (2007); Smith, Mavhdavi & Carvalho, (2008), explain different definitions of cyberbullying, so a direct definition is hard to put on it. Overall it is referred to 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." (Smith et al., 2008, p. 376). Bullying has come a long way since the first

investigation carried out by Olweus (Olweus,1973). His results showed how bullying decreases with age, supported by studies in other countries such as in England and Wales (Smith, 1999) and In Ireland (O' Moore, Kirkham & Smith, 1997). However studies discussed further on in this review investigates this and the growing frequency in college and the workplace in evident.

## **Literature Review**

### **2.1 Traditional Bullying vs. Cyberbullying**

A recent study carried out discussed how traditional bullying can act as a potential warning sign of cyber bullying (Kowalski, Morgan& Limber,2012).Common features shared between traditional and cyber bullying were examined but more importantly their differences were viewed(Katzer, Feechenhauer, &Belschak, 2009). While in some ways cyber bullying is no worse than traditional bullying, cyberbullying does have a number of idiosyncrasies. Bullying is “aggressive behaviour intended to harm another individual” which more often occurs during education hours(Nansel et al,2001, p.2094), where the more recent bullying- Cyber bullying can occur at any time with no restrictions, day or night. Another clear distinctive feature of cyber bullying is the cloak of anonymity it has (Kowalski& Limber, 2007). This mask offered by the miracle of the worldwide web increases the likelihood of potential bullies to engagein the behaviour as it requires little less effort than a click of a mouse, where they may be less likely to start in a face to face circumstance. Research carried out discussed how cyber bullying is an extension from traditional bullying (Li, 2005, 2006.) 65% of cyber bullying victims were found to also been subjected traditional bullying at some point; and 77% of bullies who cyber bullying admitted bullying in the traditional way also.(Hinduja and Patchin, 2010). Mason (2008) found that, coinciding with the effects of

traditional bullying, cyber bullying causes great distress and low self-esteem among victims of cyber bullying among college students.

## **2.2 Cyberbullying and Social Networking:**

The evolving dangerous trend of cyber bullying has gripped modern society by the rise in suicides been related to social networking websites such as Ask.fm, MySpace, Facebook (Ruedy, 2007; Livingstone, 2008; Kemp, 2012.) and has become ever prevalent in our education system with college society often been forgotten. Bullying of adults although is not as focused on as adolescences, does occur and if more attention is not drawn on the topic the problem will remain and continually worsen. Attention was prominently drawn to the effect of cyber bullying and online threats and harassment in relation to adults by the saddening and untimely death of Politian Shane McEntee at 56 years of age who took his own life following a blizzard of abusive threats, tweets and messages online. A common misperception discussed in articles was that because he chose a job in the public eye, Mr McEntee was immune to all abuse he was subjected too. It became too much for him and as a result he took his own life, and his death is now cited as potentially the first case of a politician “dying at the hands of excessive online abuse”. (Preston, 2012). This highlights a case of cyberbullying after secondary school and with the mask of anonymity aiding these bullies, there no end to the harassment coming through the computer screen. The basis for the current study to research the less common area of bullying in college among adults, and the effects it can have. These college students have the pressures of college life ( Smedley, Myers & Harrel, 1993.) along with bullying, many psychological difficulties of the student can occur.

There have been numerous studies carried out on Cyber Bulling in secondary schools and among adolescences (Li, 2005; Agaston, Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Smith et al, 2008.) With the evolution of new technology, bullying on the web is a new territory for



bullies to prey on their victims and with the freedom of speech rights; it's proving difficult to get a website taking down(Reilly, 2013).The wireless technology, "always on" generation and the peer pressure on teenagers to be constantly online lets the perpetrators of cyber bullying extend their harassment long after school has ended.( Belsey, 2005; O-Erdur-Baker,2010.) Although it may be happening outside school hours, it leaves an effect on the student which will be carried on into the next school day.The fear of the mask of anonymity is frightening at any age, but these students are at their most vulnerable.Berson and Berson (2005) say this 'pseudoanonymity' gives cyberbullies an increased sense of power and security by hiding behind a computer screen. Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin& Patton (2001), examined student's aged 13,who had been measured over two years, showed results that the victims of bullying and low social relationships led to emotional problems in these adolescences such as depression and anxiety.

Beran and Li (2005) examined gender difference and its relationship with cyber bullying on adolesences and found that no gender differences prevailed. Gender difference are investigated in a study about the effects of indirect aggression (Owens, Slee& Shute,2000) in which teenage girls showed a range of negative effects psychologically such as depression and lack of self esteem . Often vulnerable victims of this indirect aggression can be those who are new to a school and are out of their comfort zone.(Owens, Slee& Shute, 2000). With college been a new time where students are starting a new chapter, new college and may not have friends starting with them, making a person vulnerable, it is aimed in the current study to see if gender differences among college cyber bullied victims and whether adult victims have similar emotional issues as the younger victims

### **2.3 Incidence of Cyberbullying in Schools**

An in depth study by Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell & Tippett (2008) explained in detail all the methods used in cyber bullying such as mobiles, texts, emails, and the internet via social websites. The study involving 11-16 year olds found that traditional bullying did occur more frequently in this age bracket but cyber bullying was used more outside school hours. It was found that cyber bullying, website bullying to be more specific, occurred more as the students got older rather than traditional. Therefore if cyberbullying does increase with age, then college students are likely to be subjected to it.

Raskauskas and Stoltz (2007) examined cyber bullying among 13-18 year old students found 49% were cyber victims with 21% admitting to been cyber bullies. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) found that the more time a person spent on the internet, the more likely they were to be involved in the cyber bullying through been a bully or a victim with 12% of their study, admitting to engaging in an aggressive behaviour toward someone else online within the last year. A Turkish study carried out also showed 11% of their study admitting to been victims of bullying in previous months. (Kowalski, Limber, 2007).

### **2.4 Cyberbullying in Ireland**

Even though much research has been carried out worldwide about the “dark side” of the internet, Ireland’s statistics are not very well known. One study investigated primary students aged 8 to 12, experiences of bullies and aggressive behaviour in Irish schools, and found that experiences of aggression were seen and gender was a distinctive factor also with males been a target for more “in-direct” forms of bullying. Bullying showed to be a persistent problem occurring over a three month period was evident and the need for interventions then was needed. (Minton, 2010).

These non-identifiable threats, insults and taunts cause emotional problems (Kroon, 2011.) depression, anxiety, distress and loneliness; suicidal thoughts have become more associated with the topic. Empirical studies examined the relationship between suicidal thoughts and bullying experiences(Hinduja&Patchin,2010)showed that adolescences that had experienced cyber bullying and traditional bullying as a victim or bully had more suicidal ideas and more likely to attempt suicide than a person who hadn't experienced it at all but victims were more likely to attempt suicide than the bullies offending them. Such tragedies have been seen in recent times in Ireland with over 6 suicide cases known directly linked with cyber bullying in an 18 month period. With 3 young teenage girls, Ciara Pugsley(15), Erin Gallagher(13) and Laura Burns(12) taking their own life after cyber bullying took place on the website "ask.fm" and ShannanGallagher (15)sister of Erin Gallagher taking her life only seven weeks after her sister, an imminent solution is needed.(Irish Examiner News Articles) These emotional problems and suicidal ideations can carry on into adult college life, they do not come to halt nor do the perpetrators (Chapel et al, 2004; Chapel et al, 2006.) Lecturers and year heads need to be aware of this evolving problem also to deal with this form of attack through the screen.

### **2.5 Self –Esteem in Bullying**

Self Esteem is a well documented emotional problem investigated while looking at younger victims and bullies of cyber bullying,(Rigby &Slee, 1991; O'Moore, Kirkham, 2001; Hoff, Mitchell, (2009); Patchin& Hindjuia, 2010.). Limitations of these studies are usually the age group stopping at 18. A study carried out on the relationship between self esteem and bullying behaviour (O'Moore& Kirkham,2001) showed the significant relationship between being bullied and global low self esteem levels but the relationship between self esteem and the bullies proved controversial. "Pure Bullies" who have never themselves been bullied have significantly lower self esteem levels than someone who has never bullied nor been a victim

of bullying. Contradictory however Rigby and Slee (1991) reported that bullies had high levels of self esteem. Self esteem can come as a result of being bullied as previous viewed but it was also make a person a vulnerable target in the first place. This expressed how a high self esteem is a way to avoid these “pure bullies”. This study on children ages 8-18 showed an important result when the age of the bullies increased, their level of anxiousness decreased. Therefore these “pure bullies” who transcend from primary to secondary schools will also continue to transcend into college if low self esteem is a factor in their bullying behaviour. “Pure victims” have lower self esteem levels globally, therefore remain a target as they go forward into college. Chapell, Hasselman, Kitchin, Lomon, MacIver & Sarullo, (2006) found significant relationships between been a bully in primary, secondary and college and se been a victim of bullying throughout the three stages also. The current study been carried out is to view more up to date research and findings of cyberbullying and its effect on self esteem levels on college students where social networking and internet has taken over the way we communicate daily.

## **2.6 Workplace Bullying**

An area which is prone to bullying occurring between adults is in the workplace. Workplace bullying is a harmful form of bullying whether face to face conventional bullying or Cyber bullying, it causes huge distress, hostility and tense working environment for the staff. Not only does it affect the individual experiencing it, damaging their physical and mental health, it influences the productivity of the company with low commitment and poor job performance and leave them open to law suits and legal action (Glendinning, 2001; Mc Cormack, Casimir, Djurkovic & Yang, 2006.)

In 1997, limited supply of research in workplace bullying carried out in English, however much work has been done since internationally (Rayner & Hoel, 1997). The lowering

of self esteem, makes easier targets for bullying and can transcend from primary up to college and further into the workplace. Rayner and Hoel (1997) found that victims tend to be more neurotic and less agreeable, contentious and extravert than non victims of bullying, and scored higher on a scale of emotional instability than non victims, although there is no such thing as a “general victim personality profile”, in order to understand this bullying phenomenon, personality should be looked at as a determining factor in it.

Most of Ireland’s knowledge regarding the problem of workplace bullying stems mainly from international research. However studies have been done investigating victims of bullying in the workplace in Ireland and their own views of the causes of victimisation. (O’Moore, Seigne, McGuire & Smith, 1998) 30 adults from 25-60 years were looked at and the effects stemming from bullying examined also. Results found supported international research of the effect workplace bullying on the individual mentally and physically but also found its detrimental effect on the careers of victims, forcing workers out of jobs and lack of morale to continue work. Recommendation advised if earlier interventions were put in place it may ease the problem of workplace bullying. If earlier interventions were applied in a college setting, it could encourage victims to come forward and speak to someone and it could help stop bullies in college and halt them furthering their torment onto the workplace.

A Study (Niedhammer, David & Degioanni, 2006) carried out on the French working population, showed that bullying in the workplace was found to have a strong risk factor in the development of depressive symptoms in both males and females exposed to it. The study concluded that workers who had previous experiences of bullying for example in school/college were of higher risks of developing these depressive symptoms.

Gender again was investigated in bullying in the workplace among prison officers (Vartia & Hyyti, 2002) where 20% of overall workers reported they were victims of

workplace bullying but with no gender difference seen in the adults apart from females with sexual harassment more so than men. For the current study, gender will be examined in the adult ages therefore the research done will be compared against results found in relation cyber bullying in college.

## **2.7 Cyberbullying in the Workplace**

Cyberbullying in the workplace is one of which that is not well developed with the majority of the attention been highlighted to adolescences. Studies have identified cyber bullying as “the new face of workplace bullying” (Privitera&Campbell, 2009) This study addressed cyber bullying among a male dominated workplace, results showing that 34% had been face-face bullied with 10.7% of those who experienced face to face been subjected to cyber bullying also. The fact in which cyber bulling has entered the workplace, makes it’s evident that it has transitioned itself from adolescence into adulthood.

When society think of adult bullying, they don’t realise it existence in such a force, but it is a problem, it was originally seen that bullying decreases with age and maturity, however (Borg, 1998) explained how it does not stop; it changes from the aggressive forms to more passive forms of verbal attacks, and the new phenomenon of hiding behind the world of a computer screen and the click of a mouse makes this all too easy to carry out.

Although Cyber bullying highlighted in today’s media does suggest that these devastating actions are mainly found among secondary school, it is evident from previous research that it does occur in adults also. Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder& Reese,(2012, CH 14.) addressed cyber bullying in college. Empirical data emphasised that cyber bullying frequency doesn’t decrease with age and does occur widely among college students. Results from the study found that 30% of college students identified their first experience of cyber bullying

occurring at college. The negative outcome associated with cyber bullying in this domain of life were also identified such as lack of concentration and poor quality of work.

## **2.8 Cyber Bullying in College**

When Tyler Clementi's tragic suicide over harassment on social networking site "Facebook" broke in September 2010, the young victimised man didn't realise the light his death would put on the issue of cyber bullying in college.(Strong, 2010.) Videos of him in a private intimate moment with another man were put onto the web by a roommate. These video went viral and the harassment became too much. Tyler plunged 600ft to his death into the Hudson River of the George Washington Bridge. Much research begun to be carried out as a result and a review of all literature surrounding this electronic phenomenon to be carried out in a book "Cutting-Edge Technologies in Higher Education" as well as explaining methods in dealing with cyber bullying in the college setting. (Smith, Grimm, Lombard & Wolfe, 2012).

A study carried out in the department of psychology in West Virginia University by Allison Schenk carrying out her masters in cyber bullying in college examined 18-24 year old student's, she reported that 69 of those examined were victims of cyber bullying more than once at the college and out of that 69, 4 students had attempted suicide. Her findings also found that victims had higher levels of depression, anxiety and paranoia than those who had never been bullied. (WVU Press release,.2011) These studies carried out have been international and more research into the impact of cyber bullying on college student is essential in Irish colleges.

## 2.9 College Cyberbullying and Optimism

Giddens (2008) showed that feelings of hopelessness and pessimism resulting from bullying can lead to the worst consequence of all suicide; therefore the need for more awareness on the effects of optimism levels of college students is essential. A study carried out investigating the effect of cyber bullying on a college students academic, social and emotional adjustment, which 50.7% of the total sample of 18-51 year olds were victims of cyber bullying and significant relationships were found between cyber bullying and the ability to academically, emotionally and socially adapt in college life.(Beebe.,2010). Furthermore it is strongly related to adaptive coping responses to ongoing stressors in a person's everyday life. (Barnum, Snyder, Rapoff, Mani, & Thompson, 1998) and not the unhealthy coping strategies such as alcohol as reported by Mäkikangas, & Kinnunen, (2003). College life is a stressful time for students and as well as the importance of self esteem, optimism has an effect on coping strategies and the overall quality of life of college students. (Harju&Bolen,.1998) The study found that students with high optimism levels had highest life satisfaction levels as well as using mostly action and reframing coping strategies. While those who scored low optimism levels were found to be overall dissatisfied with their quality of life and coping strategies were noted as the use of more alcohol and disengagement. These results indicate that optimism plays a very important factor in college life, therefore the impact on cyber bullying on optimism levels that will be examined in this study and it is hypothesised that cyber bullying will cause lower optimism levels in college students.

Makiikangas & Kinnunen, (2003) showed the importance of optimism levels in adults. Results found a negative relationship between low levels of self esteem and optimism and emotional exhaustion and mental distress on male employees. It was seen how optimism moderated the relationships between time pressures in the workplace, job insecurity and poor organisational climate on mental distress. Shaw, Sutton and Pelled (1994) discussed the



importance of optimism in the workplace and the positive consequences which can come from this optimistic atmosphere. Greater persistence of employees' relationships with others, more helpfulness between employees as well as reactions of others to the employees are the three main benefits. These lead to job satisfaction, work achievement in addition to social context level being higher. A rise in levels of optimism leads to improvements in workers' performance and the two are significantly linked (Medlin, 2008.).

### **2.10 Impact of Feelings of Inadequacy in Oneself**

Breguet (2007) examined bullying through electronic means and found a strong relationship between cyber bullying and insecurity in oneself following being subjected to electronic bullying. It can be viewed that bullies tended to be compensating for their own high feelings of inadequacy when they feel the need to bully others and target vulnerable victims. (Stephenson, Smith, Tattum, 1989). O' Moore et al, (1998) supported these findings with significant higher levels of feelings of inadequacy were found in bullies who had been previously bullied themselves compared to "pure bullies" who never had. Lowered self-worth, shyness and reduced self-confidence were all seen as negative consequences of bullying in adolescences. Obadina (2009) examined how 75% of students had experienced cyber bullying and the problems which were reported by the students included feelings of inadequacy, fear of receiving another phone call and mood swings, all related to persistent cyber bullying. Forero, McLellan, Rissel & Bauman, (1999) examined how victims of persistent bullying reported low self worth, low self insecurity and low self esteem. (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; O' Moore et al, 1998) Feelings of self-hate which is a strong linkage to inadequacy of oneself can be seen in adults suffering from bullying in the workplace. (Einarsen et al, 1994.) Embarrassment is strongly correlated to feelings of inadequacy in oneself (Modigliani, 1968). Victims of bullying can be seen to experience embarrassment and shame due to victimisation by bullies (Lewis, 2004) therefore can lead to

high inadequacy levels not only in adolescence and in the workplace but among college students also.

### **2.11 Aim of Current Research:**

The main aim of the current study is to examine the relationship between self-esteem and cyberbullying in college student', specifically that lower levels of self-esteem will be seen in college students who have been victims of cyber bullying compared to those who have not been victimised by bullying through social networking. Research examined previously (O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001, Li, 2005; Smith et al, 2008) has focused of bullying and cyber bullying and its impact on self esteem of adolescences but limited of college students, hence the need for more research.

General overall optimism levels of college students will be examined also. It is hypothesised that lower levels of optimism will be evident in college students who have experienced cyber bullying through the phenomenon of social networking.. Optimism has been examined in the workplace (Makiikangas & Kinnunen, 2003) and the effects of levels of optimism in college(Harju & Bolen, (1998). It is evident the importance to recognise cyber bullying and its effect on levels of optimism.

The final factor been examined is self inadequacy levels of college students and the impact of cyber bullying on these feelings of inadequacy. Research has been conducted in relation to bullying on adolescences in school, ( Mikkelsen& Einarsen, 2002; O' Moore et al, 1998) and adults in the workplace (Einarsen et al, 1994.) A limited amount of research has been carried out on this particular emotional factor in the college setting, therefore the need to show the impact among college students is needed.

It is also aimed to examine gender differences among college students and their frequencies of cyberbullying through websites. Vartia & Hyyti, (2002) examined gender

differences in the workplace while Beran and Li (2005) examined it among adolescents, therefore the aim of the current study is to examine gender in relation to cyberbullying among college students.

### **Hypothesis of the Current Study:**

There will be a significant relationship between low levels of self esteem and high levels of cyberbullying in college.

Optimism levels will be significantly lower in those who have had been cyberbullied in college than the levels of those who have not.

Significantly higher levels of social inadequacy in oneself will be scored among those who have been cyberbullied in college.

There will be a significant difference in gender and frequencies of cyber bullying through websites in college students.

## **Methodology**

### **3.1 Participants-**

105 Dublin Business School undergraduate Psychology Students participated in the study ranging from 18-44 years (mean 24.85, SD 6.62). There were 71 females in majority to 34 males. They were selected from the college population by contacting lecturers in order to distribute the chosen questionnaires in their lecturers. The participants took part in the study in voluntary manner with no pay or course credit administered.

### 3.2 Design-

The predictor variable is cyberbullying and the way in which it affects the criterion variables of self-esteem, optimism and feeling of inadequacy levels amongst college students. No groups were assigned in the study as the questionnaires were distributed evenly to everyone in the lecture that was willing to volunteer in filling it out. A mixed design was used in the study. A correlation design will be used to look at the relationship cyber bullying had on levels of self esteem, inadequacy and optimism. A quasi research design will also be used to look at the difference in gender and cyberbullying through websites.

### 3.3 Materials-

Questionnaires *“Gather information by asking people directly about the points concerned with the research. Questionnaires work on the premise that if you want to find out something about people and their attitudes you simply go and ask them what it is you want to know, and get the information ‘straight from the horse’s mouth’..”*(Denscombe, 2007, Pg 154)

Self-administered questionnaires were used. The questionnaire consisted of combining Rosenberg’s Self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1989) a specific, very well-known measure of self-esteem levels. This scale consisted of 10 questions such as “On a whole, I am satisfied with myself”, which was answered on a scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree or Strongly Disagree. The sum of all scores was then totalled and indicated the higher overall total, the greater the level of self esteem. The Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) (Scheier, Carver & Bridges,(1994) was the revised version used which consisted of 10 items. “If something can go wrong for me, it will” is an example of an item from the test which was answered by rating the item from 4-I Agree a lot, 3- I agree a little, 2- I neither agree or disagree or 0-I disagree a lot. This scale is a measure of optimism/pessimism levels, higher scores on the scale indicates greater levels of optimism; The Revised Janis and Field Feelings

of Inadequacy Scale (FIS; Fleming & Courtney, 1984; Janis & Field 1959) contained 9 subscales which include Feelings of Inadequacy, Argumentativeness and Social Inhibitions. There was 36 questions in the Scale overall for example “How often do you feel inferior to most of the people you know” and they were rated from 5- Very Often, 4- Fairly often, 3- Sometimes, 2- Once in a great while and 1- Practically never. While scoring for this scale, high scores indicated high self esteem and adequacy with oneself while the lower score indicated greater feelings of inadequacy and low levels of self esteem.

Cyberbullying Questionnaire (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell, & Tippett, (2008) Questions in this cyberbullying questionnaire were based on original copy but wording was minimally changed from ‘in school’ setting to ‘in college’ setting. Only the website section of cyberbullying questionnaire was used to focus on social networking bullying. The questions are to assess the prevalence of cyber bullying among college students and its role on their self esteem, inadequacy and optimism/pessimism levels. “How often have you been bullied through websites (in the past couple of months) in college?; is an example of a questionnaire used in the questionnaire. Each question was independent so therefore no overall score could be obtained, each answer must be looked at individually.

### **3.4 Procedure:**

Permission to distribute questionnaires during the lecturer’s class had been achieved prior to this by email. A verbal introduction to the researcher and instructions explaining the voluntary basis and anonymity of the study was explained. The researcher addressed that a sheet of help lines and websites were available on a removable sheet at the end of questionnaire for any participants that may have been affected by the issues raised in the questionnaire. Once the questionnaires were distributed, the researcher then waited beside the lecturer, in order not to put pressure on the participants by constantly monitoring their

progress but necessary to be present to answer any questions they may have had regarding any questionnaires. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes. Once participants were finished filling out the questionnaires, they were collected and the participants were thanked for their co-operation in the study. Questionnaires were then read thoroughly by researcher and key notes taken on which type of bullying participants felt had more an impact on an individual. The results were then imputed into SPSS18 and data analysis was carried out, results of which will be discussed in next chapter.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

Whilst carrying out the current research study one had to be careful as to not upset any participant within the course of the research. Every participant's ethical considerations had to be taken into account prior to any research commencing. The topic been discussed can be a sensitive subject to research, so an Information Sheet was distributed with the questionnaires for the participants to read before deciding to complete the questionnaire or not. This included a small introduction on the nature of the current research and the voluntary manner in which it was been carried out. Prior to questionnaires being distributed, the participants were ensured of the strictest of confidence and anonymity.

It was crucial for participants to understand the anonymity of the questionnaires before they participated as once the questionnaire was collected, no questionnaire could be withdrew due to the anonymous nature of the study.

## RESULTS:

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics.

The first thing carried out after all data had been imputed into SPSS 18 was the descriptive statistics to find out all necessary statistical information such as mean, mode, standard deviation, minimum and maximum. The mean and Standard deviation of the variables used within the study were calculated; results are shown in table 1 below.

**4.2 Table 1** *Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Measures*

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self Esteem	16.28	2.64
Feelings of Inadequacy	118.03	24.56
Optimism	14.58	5.46

As seen in Table 1, the mean for Feelings of Inadequacy (mean= 118.03) is significantly higher than mean of self esteem and optimism levels. Standard Deviation (SD= 24.56) is also much higher than that of the other variables. This indicates that there is a huge level of disparity among the levels of feelings inadequacy of college students.

Descriptive analysis ran on frequencies of cyberbullying through websites in college students are shown below in table 2, ranging from never been cyber bullied in college to several times a week.

**4.3 Table 2** *Cyberbullying statistics in valid percentages.*

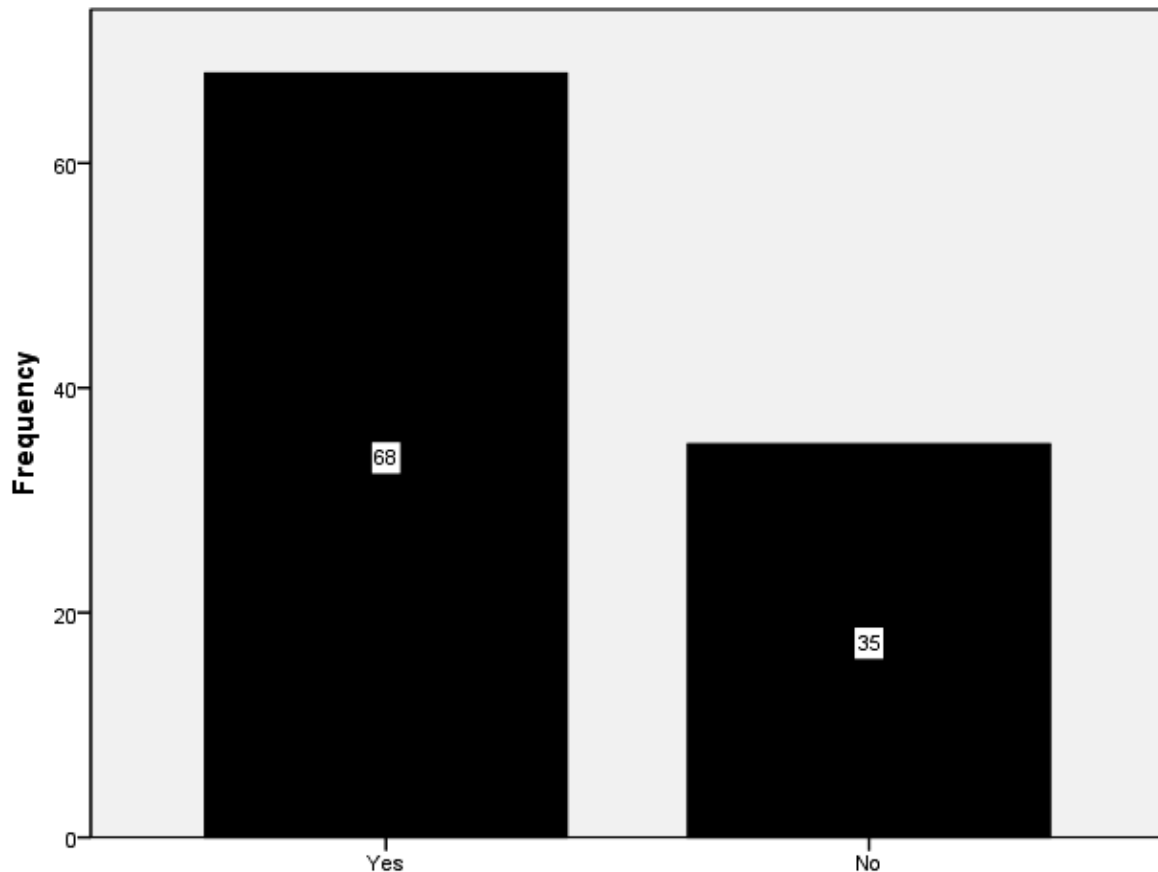
Question	I haven't been Cyberbullied in college in past few months	It only happened once or twice	It happened 2 or 3 times a month	Several times a week
Q2. Just thinking of cyberbullying, How often have you been Cyber bullied in college in the past few months?	76.7%	18.4%	3.9%	1.0%
How often have you been cyber bullied through websites IN college in past few months?	77.7%	17.5%	3.9%	1.0%
How often have you been Cyber bullied through websites OUTSIDE college in past few months?	76.7%	15.5%	5.8%	1.0%

As seen in Table 2, results show that although the majority of the sample of college students nearly 80% had not been cyber bullied through social networking websites in college in the past couple of months; it can be seen that 17.5 % were cyber bullied once or twice during the past couple of months in college while nearly 6% (5.8%) were bullied up to 2-3 times month through websites outside the college.



#### 4.4 Attitudes on Cyberbullying.

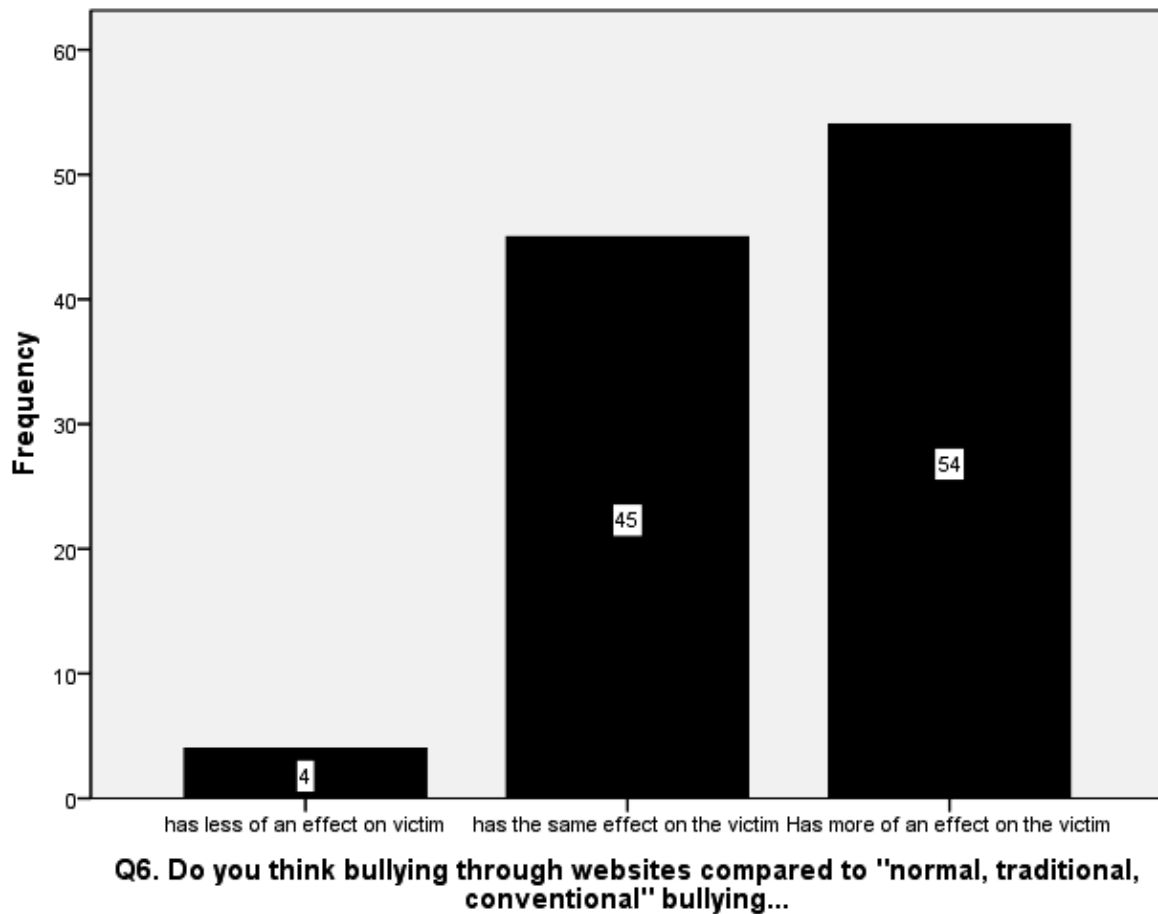
The bar chart below shows the knowledge of cyberbullying been carried out within the college setting by the participating college students.



Q5. Have you heard of bullying taking part through websites in your college or circle of friends in the past couple of months?

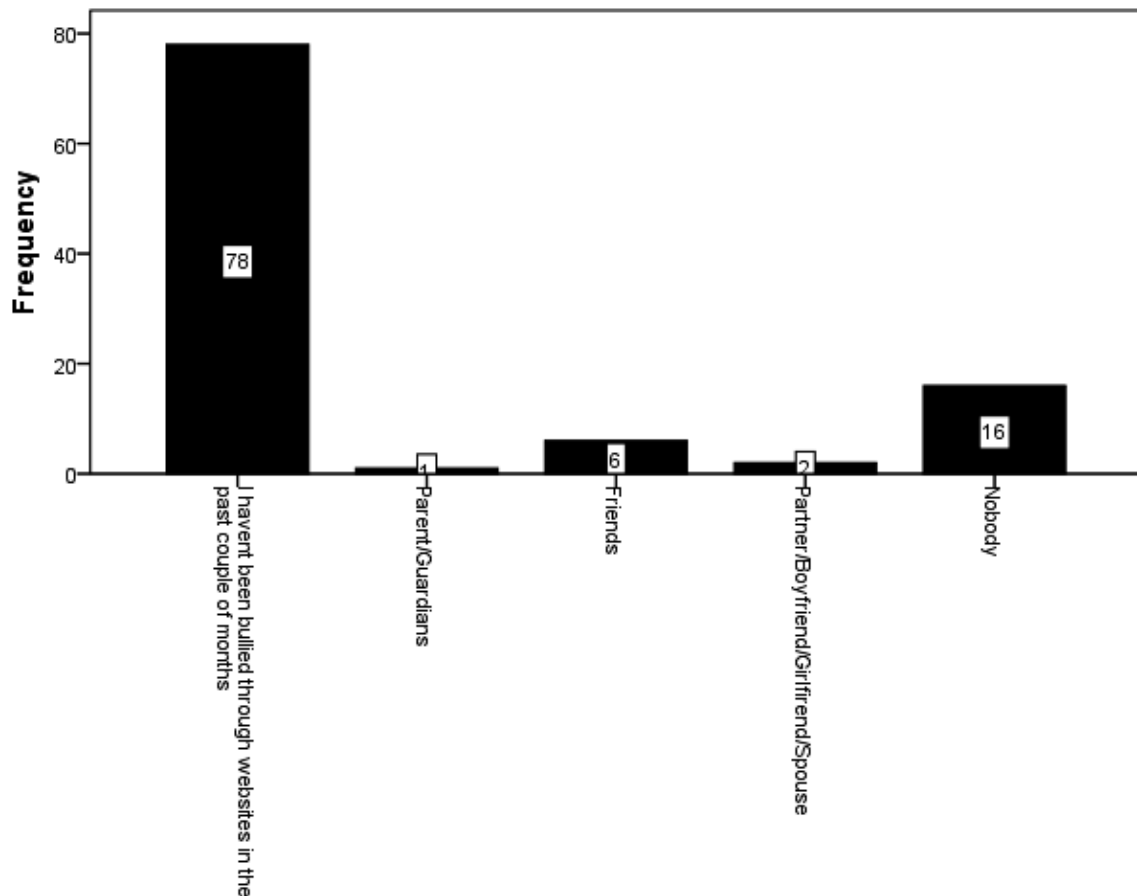
In Figure 1 Bar chart, it's shown that 68% of college students within the current study reported knowing someone in their circle of friends and/or college that have been subjected to cyberbullying. In comparison 35% of the sample reported not knowing anyone who has been cyberbullied in college.

The bar chart below shows how cyberbullying compares to “traditional” bullying from the point of view of the college students themselves.



In Figure 2, the Bar Chart indicates attitudes of cyber bullying among college students, with 54% of the sample revealing that they felt cyber bullying through websites had more of an effect on the individual than traditional bullying. While 45% felt cyberbullying had the same emotional impact as “traditional, face to face” bullying

The final bar chart shows from the percentage of college participants that had been subjected to cyber bullying, who they had told and confided in.



**Q11. Who have you told that you have been bullied through websites**

In Figure 3, it is seen that from the college students who had reported been bullied through websites in college in the past couple of months, 16% of them told “nobody”. While only 6% had confided in telling friends that they were or had been cyberbullied.

#### 4.5 Inferential Statistics

Following descriptive statistics been carried out, determining the test to be used for inferential statistics was then done. Due to cyberbullying been a ordinal level of measurement and the variables been discussed a scale level of measurement, the non-parametric versions of persons correlation-Spearman’s Rho, was used to examine the relationship between cyberbullying and each variable and the non-parametric version of the independent t-test, the Mann Whitney U used to examine gender differences between frequencies of cyberbullying.

Table below shows results established from analysis carried out on the relationships of cyber bullying in general, through websites in college and cyberbullying through websites outside of college and its impact on levels of self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy and optimism levels. The questions were as follows:

Q2: Just thinking of Cyberbullying, how often have you been cyber bullied at college in the past couple of month?

Q3.How often have you been cyber bullied through websites IN college in past couple of months?

Q4. How often have you been cyber bullied through websites OUTSIDE college in past couple of months?

**4.6 Table 3** *Correlation Table*

Variable	Q2	Q3.	Q4.	Self Esteem	Optimism	Inadequacy
Q2. Correlational C.	1000	.926**	.886**	.185*	-.404**	-.465**
Sig value		.000	.000	.031	.000	.000
Q3. Correlational C.	.926**	1000	.862**	.193*	-.398**	-.470**
Sig value	.000		.000	.025	.000	.000
Q4. Correlational C.	.886**	.862**	1000	.136	-.418**	-.461*
Sig value	.000	.000		.085	.000	.000
Self Esteem.						
Correlational C.	.185*	.193*	.136	1000	-.184*	-.160
Sig value	.031	.025	.085		.030	.052
Optimism						
Correlational C.	-.404**	-.398**	-.418**	-.184*	1000	.547**
Sig value	.000	.000	.000	.030		.000
Inadequacy						
Correlational C.	-.465**	-.470**	-.461**	-.160	.547**	1000
Sig value	.000	.000	.000	.052	.000	

\*correlation is significant at 0.05 level (One Tailed)

\*\*correlation is significant at 0.01 level (One Tailed)

The mean scores for self esteem were (mean 16.28, SD 2.64) and for Q3 Cyberbullying was (mean 1.29, SD .636 ) A Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient found that there was a significantly positive relationship between cyber bullying through websites in college and levels of self esteem of college students.

$$rs(103)= .193, p= .025$$

The means scores for optimism were (mean 14.58, SD 5.46) and Q2 Cyberbullying was (mean 1.30, SD=.639) A Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient found moderate negative significant relationship between levels of optimism and levels of cyberbullying among college students. As cyber bullying levels raised, optimism levels decreased

$$rs(103)= -.404, p<.01$$

The mean scores for feelings of inadequacy were (mean 118.03, SD 24.56) and Q3 Cyberbullying was (mean 1.30, SD .639). A Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient found a moderate negative significant relationship between cyberbullying through social websites and its impact on feelings of inadequacy levels. Therefore as stated in methods the lower the number found on the measure indicated the greater the feelings of inadequacy.

$$rs(103)= -.470, p< .01$$

#### **4.7 Gender Differences of Cyber Bullying in college.**

The Non-Parametric test, Mann Whitney U was used to test hypothesis 4, that there will be a significant difference between gender and their frequencies of cyber bullying. Females had mean of 53.96, compared to males, mean of 48.03. The Mann Whitney U revealed that there was no significant difference in gender and frequencies of bullying. ( $Z= -1.305, p=.192$ )

# Discussion

## 5.1 Aim of Research

The primary aim of the current study was to examine cyberbullying among college students and its impact on their levels of self-esteem, optimism and feelings of inadequacy. Self administered questionnaires had been distributed to 105 DBS undergraduate college students which gave valuable information on the topic of cyberbullying and its impact on the college participants. After analysis had been ran on the data collected from the questionnaires much valuable information emerged for the current study.

## 5.2 Findings

Hypothesis 1 of the current study stated that significantly lower levels of self esteem would be seen with high levels of cyber bullying in college. A Spearman's Rho correlation showed that those who had been subjected to cyberbullying, had significantly lower levels of self esteem than that of non – victims, therefore hypothesis 1 was accepted. Cyberbullying did have an impact on the self esteem levels of college students as predicted

Furthermore Hypothesis 2 stated that optimism levels would be significantly lower in cyber bullied participants than the levels of those who had never been cyber bullied. When the Spearman's Rho analysis had been carried out a negatively significant correlation between optimism levels and cyberbullying was seen, thus giving the reader the understanding that as cyber bullying levels increased, optimism levels of the victim decreased significantly. Therefore hypothesis 2 is accepted in the current study.

Feelings of Inadequacy of college students had huge disparity after results had been analysed. Hypothesis 3 stated that cyber bullied victims would have significantly greater levels of feelings of inadequacy than those not subjected to cyber bullying. A Spearman's Rho correlation found a moderate negative significant correlation between cyberbullying and

feelings of inadequacy. Thus hypothesis 3 is accepted in the current study. Those who had been cyber bullied in college was a minority group however this small group led to the increase in the standard deviation as it was the cyber bullied participants which had the significantly greater feelings of inadequacy among oneself.

Gender was also examined in the current study and it was hypothesised that there would be a difference in gender in relation to frequencies of cyberbullying among college students. However when the data was analysed using the Mann Whitney U, no significant difference between male and females and the frequencies of cyberbullying was seen. Therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Overall, cyberbullying in college was not seen to be as prevalent as within secondary schools with the majority of the sample reporting never been cyberbullied in college however it does occur, supporting previous research that it does continue into college and “doesn’t stop after secondary school”(MacDonald & Roberts-Pittman, 2009; Smith, Grimm, Lombard, & Wolfe, 2012). A further look into this will be conducted later on in the chapter. A view in previous research in relation to these findings will be done in each section.

### **5.3 Self-Esteem**

From the research carried out in the current study, a significant relationship between cyber bullying and its impact causing low levels of self-esteem in college students is evident. The fact the cyberbullying does lead to low self esteem levels, supports previous studies mentioned, (Rigby & Slee, 1991; O’Moore, Kirkham, 2001; Hoff, Mitchell, (2009) done on the relationship between traditional and cyber bullying on self esteem levels. The majority of this research concentrates on the emotional problem when looking at cyber bullying at

secondary school levels, and found a significant relationship between cyberbullied individuals and low levels of self-esteem in adolescents. (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010.) Furthermore following victimization in adolescents leads to this low self-esteem and negative feelings continuing on into adulthood (Olweus, 1993; Batsche & Knoff, 1994). The current study's findings of the significant relationship between cyberbullying and low levels of self-esteem are supported by Mason (2008) who found that like traditional bullying, cyberbullying causes distress and low self-esteem among college cyberbullied victims. However O'Moore & Kirkham (2001) did find that low self-esteem could be a causal factor in predicting bullying behaviour, with "pure bullies" showing significantly lower levels than those who had never bullied, thus an area for more research to be carried out on within the college setting.

#### **5.4 Optimism**

Dispositional optimism is usually defined as an outlook, or explanatory style which leads an individual to generally expect good things to happen to them, even when faced with major challenges (Scheier & Carver, 1985).

Very few previous research studies have been carried out to date on cyberbullying and its impact on a victim's optimism levels. Therefore the significance of the current study's findings is critical in creating more awareness and knowledge that cyberbullying causes a decrease in one's optimism levels thus the acceptance of hypothesis 2 in this current study. Due to this very limited research available to support the current findings, it is essential to view the impact of optimism levels in one's area of workplace and college as discussed in the introduction. However the findings in the current study are supported by those found by Sullivan (2000) who found that a negative outlook sets in following cyberbullying and a prevailing sense of failure and guilt.

There is a significant amount of research which supports the need for optimism as a buffer for every day stressors. As previously stated, high self-esteem and optimism levels are



essential in coping strategies and overall life satisfaction of college students.(Harju& Bolen,1998). From findings in the current study, cyberbullied students show a significant decreased level of optimism which from previous studies leads to their inability the ability to academically, emotionally and socially adapt in college life (Beebe, 2010). The significance of this finding in the current study is that Mäkikangas& Kinnunen(2003)showed the importance of optimism levels not only in college but for the workplace environment also. Healthy optimism levels assisted the individual in dealing with the pressures of their work as well as leading to high work achievement and satisfaction.Decrease in optimism levels tends to lead not only to an unhappy and discontent life but due to its importance in coping methods of stressors(Barnum, Snyder, Rapoff, Mani, & Thompson, 1998)the development of unhealthy coping strategies also such as alcohol can occur which can be common coping strategy among college students (Mäkikangas, & Kinnunen, 2003).

Findings in the current study are also supported by Giddens (2008) which showed that these feelings of hopelessness and pessimism resulting from bullying can lead to the worst consequence of all suicide, a very topical issue discussed previously in the literature review.

### **5.5 Feelings of Inadequacy.**

The significantly negative correlation found in the current study between levels of cyberbullying and high levels of inadequacy in oneself in college student thus hypothesis 3 been accepted after analysis had be carried out is supported by much research previously carried out. The current findings although focused on college students supports findings from Mikkelsen &Einarsen, 2002 & O' Moore et al, 1998 among middle school victims of bullying and examining the negative consequences of self inadequacy in low self confidence and low self worth of oneself which was seen. Victims of persistent bullying reported higher levels of anxiety and insecurity in them than non victims while low self esteem and low self worth levels were also reported. (Forero, McLellan, Rissel& Bauman, 1999) These findings

greatly support findings in the current study with low levels in self esteem and high feelings of inadequacy found in the cyber bullied college students as hypothesised. Research conducted by Einarsen (1994) who examined how self hate was seen in those who were subjected to workplace bullying supports the current findings. Self hate as previously stated has been strongly related to feelings of inadequacy in oneself, therefore by showing how self hate and inadequacy in oneself is seen in adults in both the workplace and college; supporting research carried out to show bullying does not halt after secondary school ends by Borg (1998) who reported the bullying only appears to decrease when actually, it just transitions itself from aggressive to more verbal and passive forms. The current findings that cyber bullying leads to inadequacy in oneself is supported by results found by Obadina (2009) which found that 75% of students had experienced cyber bullying reported problems of feeling inadequate, fearful and mood swings. Breguet (2007) also supports findings of the relationship of cyber bullying and insecurity in oneself following electronic bullying.

Findings in the current study are consistent also with findings from Modigliani, (1968) who found a sense of embarrassment cause from been victimized by bullies is related with high inadequacy levels in social settings.

### **5.6 Attitudes of Bullying in College**

This embarrassment and sense of failure (Modigliani, 1968) due to been bullied can be seen to be an attitude toward cyber bullying in the current study. Although the majority of participants may have reported not been cyberbullied in college, more than 65% of participants knew someone in the circle of friends who was been subjected to cyber bullying.

Furthermore, when a victim is embarrassed to come forward (Modigliani, 1968), the establishment of peer nominations in reporting cyberbullying behaviour and victims of cyberbullying by peers could be crucial in the college setting as well as the secondary schools. Peer support and nomination can result in the victim been encouraged to report the

victimisation and these methods can show how social support to assist in the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying. The method of peer nomination as examined by Espelage, Holt and Henkel (2003) and Fox and Boulton (2005) showed the effectiveness of nominating victims of bullying instead of relying solely on self reported issues. Fritz (2010) found 80% of students believe that peer support is essential.

The influence of social support and peer nominating helps the bullied victim hugely. Peer support can be seen to promote psychological well-being and the victim is seen to experience less negative consequences such as feelings of inadequacy, low self esteem and optimism as previously discussed as those victims who tell no-one about the ordeals. As viewed in the results of the current study those who had been subjected to cyberbullying over 16% chose to tell no one.

From the results found in the current study, it's clear that college students have a knowledge of the impact cyberbullying has on a victim, with over 50% reporting they felt it had more an effect on the victim than the traditional style, face to face bullying due to "more embarrassment as its more public" and "anonymous nature, you don't know who it is to look out for". Smith, Mahdavi and Carvalho (2008) found results supporting the current findings when examining their sample of secondary school adolescents. Therefore it can be seen that although college students are older in comparison to secondary school students, cyber bullying can still lead to more of an emotional impact than traditional bullying. With the research suggesting cyber bullying is an evolution from traditional, (Li, 2005, 2006), it is the extra of the "pseudoanonymity", that gives the bullies even more control and elicit more fear onto the victim than traditional "normal" bullying could.(Benson & Berson, 2005).

### **5.7 Gender Differences**

According to the results found by analysis ran in the current research study, no significant gender differences were found when look at frequencies of cyber bullying among the college students. This corresponds with previous research carried out by Vartia&Hyyti,(2002) who found that no gender difference was seen among prison officers in the workplace in realtion to victims of bullying.The findings in the current study of no significant difference in gender and frequencies of cyberbullying is supported by Niedhammer, David & Degioanni(2006) who found no difference in males and females in relation to workplace bullying. However the findings do contradict evidence found by Owens, Slee&Shute(2000) who examined this indirect aggression on teenage girls and they experience more negative psychological effects than males. Although the current study examined gender differences in college students, findings in relation to gender difference in teenagers, Beran and Li (2005) corresponded with the current findings by reporting no significant differences in gender were found. Further research should be carried out in relation to gender in college as it is a limited research field and the current study only used a small sample which consisted of 71 females in comparison to 34 males, which could have influenced findings.

### **5.8 Strengths and Weaknesses**

A major strength of the current study is that more much awareness was raised in relation to the very topical issue of cyberbullying within the college setting as limited research in this area has been carried out. Much research has been carried out on adolescences but few have examined when it transcends into college life and the emotional impact on its older victims.

A further strength of this study also is that it has looked at the impact cyberbullying has on college student's self-esteem, inadequacy and optimism levels. Inadequacy and

optimism is not a well researched area in relation to college students and cyberbullying. Therefore the current study drew more attention and awareness onto its impact on these emotional factors among college students.

Few limitations and weakness were found during the course of the study. One minor weakness could be seen of the gender imbalance while collecting the required data. Females were in majority to males, which could have slightly affected the results found. However by choosing to distribute the questionnaire to undergraduate psychology course which has a high female rate, this factor had been anticipated pre-collection.

The stigma attached to cyberbullying could be seen to act as a limitation while carrying out this research among college students. This issue of social stigma has to be taken into account in the current study as the questionnaires were distributed in a very close proximity to one and other, therefore people may have felt somewhat “embarrassed” or “ashamed” to admit to been subjected to cyberbullying while sitting beside their friends and fellow class mates.

### **5.9 Future Research**

A future research recommendation for carrying out studies on the sensitive issue of cyberbullying in college would be to ask for participants online to complete the questionnaire in the privacy of their own home or to distribute the questionnaire as was done but perhaps recommend the participant to bring it home and complete it in privacy, the researcher could provide a drop in box for leaving them back the following day.

The need for more knowledge on the effect of cyber bullying on optimism levels is crucial when looking at college students. A major strength of this study was in the way it arouse more awareness on the very limited research area of cyber bullying and its effect of on college student’s optimism levels. Steinberg and Gano-Overway (2003) examined how having an optimistic outlook on life encourages people to see failure as more of a challenge

to overcome rather than perceiving themselves as a failure before attempting to conquer it, therefore showing high optimism levels as an important need in dealing with college life situations.. The more awareness that is created , further intervention techniques can be established to help in raising college students optimism levels who had cyberbullied as the importance of high optimism levels for coping and adjustment are evident.

As previously stated, peer nominations would be a huge benefit to research within a college sample as it would again help those who are been subjected to bullying but are too intimidated or embarrassed to come forward and report it themselves. It could be hugely beneficial not only for the victim themselves but for the college to make sure the proper resources and implications are put in place to help victims and stop the cyber bullying transcending into the workplace as previously discussed in the literature review.

A final topic for future research would be the motivators behind cyberbullying among college students and the emotional issues which causes cyberbullies to strike in college. The current study only focused on the victims on cyberbullying in college and the impact it causes on them. Future research to create more awareness on not only the victims and the bullies but also the bully victims and bystanders within the college setting is essential.

The Current Study has huge real life implications as cyberbullying is a growing phenomenon not only among children and adolesences, but our college students also. When cyber bullying is boxed in to effect one particular age group, for example teenagers, those outside the box tend to be forgotten about. By carrying out these studies, more awareness is created and the social stigma is broken down by normalising the issue and setting up interventions and support services to help.

## 5.10 Conclusion

To conclude, the main findings was that cyberbullying among college students causes a significant decrease in their self esteem and optimism levels. It was acknowledged also how as cyberbullying increased, the greater the feelings of inadequacy in the college students were seen. Over 50% of college students did report cyberbullying having a worse impact on the victim than traditional and 68% of the sample reported knowing a friend who was cyberbullied in college over the past few months. From these finding, the evidence to show cyberbullying is prevalent in college settings and does not halt after secondary schools is clear; and the emotional impact on the victim remains not regarding what the age is, primary, secondary, college and workplace. Cyberbullying through websites is a very prevalent topic today, its cloak of anonymity, its 24/7 nature and its worldwide audience makes it,as said in the current study “effect the victim more”. A final line to finish this study is taken from Slonje and Smith (2008), feelings of a cybervictim,

“I believe that cyberbullying hurts the person more psychologically, I don’t mean that ordinary bullying does not do it but I think that the effect becomes more psycho-logical. You become more frightened if you e.g. get a sms [text message] that says: ‘I will kill you’”

(p.152)

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# Appendix

## Information Sheet:

Hello. My name is Rachelle Mc Gaughran and I am a Final Year Psychology student here at DBS. I am currently undertaking my final year project to which the main topic discussed will be cyberbullying among college students and how it is related to self esteem, optimism, and inadequacy levels.

The main aim of gathering this information is to draw more attention to the very topical issue of cyberbullying and to show that it does not come to a halt when Secondary school finishes.

The questionnaire will take roughly 15 minutes to complete and you are under no obligation to answer, but it would greatly appreciated. Please answer as honestly as possible knowing that anything that you write will be treated as most confidential. You do not have to put your names on the questionnaire.

Your lectures, the Year head or your fellow college students will not be shown your answers. However if you do decide to complete it, because all results are anonymous, you will not be able to withdraw your results after you have completed the questionnaire.

If at any time during the questionnaire, you feel like stopping, please raise your hand and it will be collected from you. If you are affected by any of the issues raised in this questionnaire, a list of relevant websites and helpline information have also been provided at the end.

**It is important that you understand that by completing and submitting the questionnaire that you are consenting to participate in the study.**

Should you require any further information about the research, please contact Rachelle Mc Gaughran, [REDACTED]. My supervisor can be contacted at [REDACTED]

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Rachelle.

## Cyberbullying Questionnaire

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

College Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you male or female?

Male	
Female	

Most of the questions are about **your life in and out of college in the past 2 or 3 months, that is..** So when you answer, you should think of how it has been during the past couple of months and **not only how it is just now.**

By the use of websites we are talking about social networking such as “Facebook” “Twitter” “My space” etc or any other type of websites you visit.

Cyber bullying is defined as when:

**“an individual or a group wilfully using information and communication involving electronic technologies to facilitate deliberate and repeated harassment or threat to another individual or group by sending or posting cruel text and/or graphics using technological means” (as cited in Dilmac, 2009, p. 1308).**

**\*Please indicate your answer by ticking appropriate box beside your answer.\***

- 1. First of all, have you been bullied at college in the past couple of months (any kind of bullying, including cyber-bullying)?**

I haven't been bullied at college in the past couple of months	
It has only happened once	
2 or 3 times a month	
About once a week	
Several times a week	

**2. Now, just thinking about cyber-bullying, how often have you been cyber-bullied at college in the past couple of months?**

I haven't been cyber-bullied in college in the past couple of months	
It has only happened once or twice	
2 or 3 times a month	
About once a week	
Serveral times a week	

**3. How often have you been bullied through websites (in the past couple of months) in college?**

I haven't been bullied through websites in the past couple of months in college	
It has only happened once or twice	
2 or 3 times a month	
About once a week	
Several times a week	

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. How often have you been bullied through websites in the past couple of months OUTSIDE of college?**

I haven't been bullied through websites in the past couple of months outside college	
It has only happened once or twice	
2 or 3 times a month	
About once a week	
Several times a week	

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Have you heard of bullying taking place through websites in your college or circle of friends in the past couple of months?**

Yes	
No	

**6. Do you think bullying through websites compared to "normal, traditional, conventional" bullying...**

Has less of an effect on the victim	
Has the same effect on the victim	
Has more of a effect on the victim	
Don't know	

Reasons:

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. In which lectures are the student or students who bully you through websites?**

I haven't been bullied through websites in the past couple of months in college	
In my lectures	
In different lectures/modules but same year	
In higher year	
In lower year	
Not in my college/ different college	

**8. Have you been bullied through websites by males or females?**

I haven't been bullied through websites in the past couple of months	
Mainly by 1 female	
By several females	
Mainly by 1 male	
By several males	
By both males and females	
I do not know who set up website/ anonymous	

**9. By how many students have you usually been bullied through websites?**

I haven't been bullied through websites in the past couple of months	
Mainly by 1 student	
By a group of 2-3 students	
By a group of 4-9 students	
By a group of more than 9 students	
I do not know who set up website/ anonymous	
By several different students/ groups of students	

**10. How long has the bullying through websites lasted?**

I haven't been bullied through websites in the past couple of months	
It lasted about one or 2 weeks	
It lasted about a month	
It lasted about 6 months	
It lasted about a year	
It has gone on for several years	

**11. Have you told you (that you have been bullied through websites)?**

I haven't been bullied through websites in the past couple of months	
Your Year head	
Another adult at college	
Your parents/guardians	
Friends	
Your Partner/boyfriend/Spouse	
I have told nobody	

**12. Do you think that banning private internet use in college would help to avoid website bullying?**

Yes	
No, students will use internet whilst lecture is not looking	
No, they will just use internet after college	

**\*Please circle the appropriate answer.\***

		<b>STRONGLY AGREE</b>	<b>AGREE</b>	<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b>
1.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
2.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
9.	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
10.	At times I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD

**\*Please enter appropriate number ranging from 0-4 in the boxes provided.\***

I agree a lot	I agree a little	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree a little.	I disagree a lot.
4	3	2	1	0

1.	In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.	
2.	It's easy for me to relax.	
3.	If something can go wrong for me, it will.	
4.	I'm always optimistic about my future.	
5.	I enjoy my friends a lot.	
6.	It's important for me to keep busy.	
7.	I hardly ever expect things to go my way.	
8.	I don't get upset too easily.	
9.	I rarely count on good things happening to me.	
10.	Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.	

**Each item is scored on a scale from 1–5 using terms such as:**

**5 = “very often”**

**4 = “fairly often”**

**3 = “sometimes”**

**2 = “once in a great while”**

**1 = “practically never”**

**\*Please indicate your answer by placing appropriate number in the box beside each question.\***

1.	How often do you feel inferior to most of the people you know?	
2.	How often do you have the feeling that there is nothing you can do well?	
3.	When in a group of people, do you have trouble thinking of the right things to talk about?	
4.	How often do you feel worried or bothered about what other people think of you?	
5.	In turning in a major assignment such as a term paper, how often do you feel you did an excellent job on it?	
6.	How confident are you that others see you as being physically appealing?	
7.	Do you ever think that you are a worthless individual?	



8.	How much do you worry about how well you get along with other people?	
9.	When you make an embarrassing mistake or have done something that makes you look foolish, how long does it take you to get over it?	
10.	When you have to read an essay and understand it for a class assignment, how worried or concerned do you feel about it?	
11.	Compared with classmates, how often do you feel you must study more than they do to get the same grades?	
12.	Have you ever thought of yourself as physically uncoordinated?	
13.	How confident do you feel that someday the people you know will look up to you and respect you?	
14.	How often do you worry about criticisms that might be made of your work by your teacher or employer?	
15.	Do you often feel uncomfortable meeting new people?	
16.	When you have to write an argument to convince your teacher, who may disagree with your ideas, how concerned or worried do you feel about it?	
17.	Have you ever felt ashamed of your physique or figure?	
18.	Have you ever felt inferior to most other people in athletic ability?	
19.	Do you ever feel so discouraged with yourself that you wonder whether you are a worthwhile person?	
20.	Do you ever feel afraid or anxious when you are going into a room by yourself where other people have already gathered and are talking?	
21.	How often do you worry whether other people like to be with you?	
22.	How often do you have trouble expressing your ideas when you have to put them into writing as an assignment?	
23.	Do you often feel that most of your friends or peers are more physically attractive than yourself?	
24.	When involved in sports requiring physical coordination, are you often concerned that you will not do well?	
25.	How often do you dislike yourself?	
26.	How often do you feel self-conscious?	
27.	How often are you troubled with shyness?	
28.	How often do you have trouble understanding things you read for class assignments?	
29.	Do you often wish or fantasize that you were better looking?	
30.	Have you ever thought that you lacked the ability to be a good dancer or do well at recreational activities involving coordination?	

31.	In general, how confident do you feel about your abilities?	
32.	How much do you worry about whether other people regard you as a success or failure in your job or at school?	
33.	When you think that some of the people you meet might have an unfavourable opinion of you, how concerned or worried do you feel about it?	
34.	How often do you imagine that you have less scholastic ability than your classmates?	
35.	Have you ever been concerned or worried about your ability to attract members of the opposite sex?	
36.	When trying to do well at a sport and you know other people are watching, how rattled or flustered do you get?	

**Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**

## Sheet of Support services available, supplied with questionnaire

### SUPPORT SERVICES

If you have been affected by any of the issues raised in this questionnaire, please make use of these useful resources.

#### Research

- Research carried out for the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), Cyberbullying: its forms and impact in secondary school pupils by P. Smith, J. Mahdavi et al, 2006:  
[www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RBX03-06.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RBX03-06.pdf)
- MSN cyberbullying report, 2006:  
[www.msn.co.uk/customercare/protect/cyberbullying/default.asp?MSPSA=1](http://www.msn.co.uk/customercare/protect/cyberbullying/default.asp?MSPSA=1)

#### Helplines

- **Childline** – free 24 hour helpline for children and young people. Tel: 0800 1111  
begin\_of\_the\_skype\_highlighting 0800 1111 end\_of\_the\_skype\_highlighting.
- **Get Connected** – free confidential helpline for young people (open 1pm-11pm every day). Tel: 0808 8084994  
begin\_of\_the\_skype\_highlighting 0808 8084994 end\_of\_the\_skype\_highlighting.
- **Samaritans** – helpline for those in distress, offering multi-channel support. Tel: 08457 90 90 .**Email:**[Jo@samaritans.org](mailto:Jo@samaritans.org). **SMS text:** 07725 909090.

#### Useful websites

- **Cyberbullying.org** – one of the first websites set up in this area, for young people, providing advice around preventing and taking action against cyberbullying. A Canadian-based site ([www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org))
- **Chatdanger** – a website that informs about the potential dangers online (including bullying), and advice on how to stay safe while chatting ([www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com)).
- **Anti-Bullying Alliance** – the Alliance brings together over 60 organisations into one network with the aim of reducing bullying. Their website has a parents section with links to recommended organisations who can help with bullying issues ([www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)).

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

