

Research Methods Final Project: Kaleigh Bantum & Douglas Strahler

Research Question:

Are students who experience cyberbullying more likely to experience suicidal ideation in comparison to other students?

Hypotheses:

Alternative hypothesis: High school students who experience cyberbullying experience significantly higher suicidal ideation than their peers.

Null hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school students.

Participants:

High school students, both male and female

Variables:

Independent →

1. Students who are cyber-bullied
2. Students who are bullied in another way
3. Non-bullied students (control)

Dependent → Scores on the Inventory for Suicide Orientation-30 (ISO-30) by John King and Brian Kowalchuck

This is a 30-item survey using a 4-point rating scale that is used to identify suicidal symptoms and ideations in people 13-18 years old. Can be done via the computer or pencil and paper.

Methods:

Researchers will find a school and/or school district that are willing to participate in the student. The study will consist of only secondary schools.

Permission and consent will be obtained from school personnel, parents, and students.

Students who choose to participate will be administered a packet of materials that will contain a page on demographic information, a survey designed by the researchers that includes various questions regarding the current bullying situations in their school, as well as other contexts (outside of school). Specific

questions pertaining the means where cyberbullying may be occurring (i.e.: Facebook, MySpace, etc.) will also be addressed. The Inventory for Suicide Orientation-30 will also be included to gather information on possible suicidal symptoms and ideations.

This data will then be organized into three categories (or three levels of an independent variable): not bullied, bullied, cyberbullied.

Further analysis will take place via a statistical Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). To see if there is a significant difference between the three groups and their scores on the ISO-30. Following this, if there is a significant difference, post-hoc tests will be conducted to specify where the specific differences exist between the groups (i.e.: cyber vs. control, bullied vs. control, cyber vs. bullied).

Included in this methodology:

Identifying basic statistical information:

This will be addressed given that the data gathered will provide insight into the amount of students being bullied, not being bullied, and those who are experiencing cyberbullying. Furthermore, data will provide basic statistical information on mean ISO-30 scores for each groups, in addition to descriptive statistics related to age, gender, and ethnicity.

Examining naturally occurring relationships among variables:

The descriptive data mentioned above will provide significant information regarding many relationships that may exist between types of bullying, suicidal ideation, gender, age, and ethnicity. This provides information for future related studies.

Testing hypotheses:

Our hypotheses of whether or not students who experience cyberbullying are impacted the most with regards to their suicidal ideations will be addressed. Additionally, bullying as a whole and its impact on suicidal ideation can be gathered from this data.

Building models:

Models for addressing cyberbullying in schools will be able to be developed after this study. The researchers hope the information provided will help school personnel further address issue of bullying and suicide in high school students.

Issues & Concerns:

This study is dealing with a sensitive subject, and therefore several issues arise in dealing with the school personnel, parents, and the students themselves.

Some that may arise are: general willingness to participate in the study, obtaining consent, appropriate debriefing procedures, confidentiality, honest reporting of information, and emotional distress.

Time is not of particular concern, although it should be noted that the study should remain as brief as possible given that the researchers will be coming into a school environment.

Appropriate attention needs to be made as to what should take place given a situation that may arise dealing with the matter being addressed in this study. For example, how to deal with potential increases in bullying after the study, increased distress for students who may have been experiencing suicidal ideations, and what is to be done if a severe case arises during this study.

References:

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