

Study finds online bullying creates off-line fear at school

July 1 2014



Ryan Randa, Assistant Professor, Sam Houston State University, College of Criminal Justice. Credit: Harriet McHale

Cyberbullying creates fear among students about being victimized at school, a recent study by Sam Houston State University found.

While traditional bullying still creates the most [fear](#) among [students](#), [cyberbullying](#) is a significant factor for fear of victimization at school among students who have experienced bullying or disorder At school, such as the presence of gangs. The fear from cyberbullying is most prominent in [minority populations](#).

"It cannot be overstated – online victimization has offline consequences, and those consequences may have a number of negative effects for students, including fear of victimization," said Ryan Randa, Assistant Professor at Sam Houston State University, College of Criminal Justice.

Cybercrime is any behavior performed through digital or electronic media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicate hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others. Studies have shown that bullying and cyberbullying may lead to such consequences for victims as decreased academic performance, diminished perceptions of safety, depression, anxiety, reduced self-esteem, self-harm, emotional distress and [suicidal ideation](#).

The study was based on a survey of more than 3,500 students from ages 12-18 from across the nation. The students were asked questions about bullying and cyberbullying, including whether hurtful information about them were posted on the internet or if they had been insulted or threatened by email, instant messaging, text messaging or online gaming programs. The students were also asked if they had been excluded from online friends or buddy lists.

About 7 percent of the students in the survey said they had experienced cyberbullying, while 29 percent said they were the victims of traditional bullying.

More information: The study was published in the *Security Journal* at www.palgrave-journals.com/sj/journal/v26/n4/index.html

Provided by Sam Houston State University

Citation: Study finds online bullying creates off-line fear at school (2014, July 1) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-07-online-bullying-off-line-school.html>

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