AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPOSURE AND EFFECTS OF CYBERBULLYING ON STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

By

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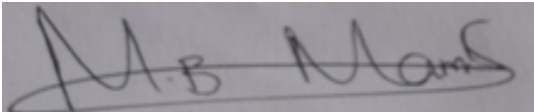
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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to the university of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Arts in Criminology has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University; that is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Mamorobela MB   (Ms)

DEDICATIONS

I would like to dedicate this project to my mother, Leah Florah Mamorobela and my daughter Rethabile Florah Mamorobela, who is my pillar of strength.

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With regards to the completion of my study, I would like to acknowledge the following people:

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND DESCRIPTIONS

BBM: BlackBerry Messenger

DPT: Deviant Place Theory

E-mail: Electronic-mail

Felebs: Facebook celebrities

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

IM: Instant Messaging

Km: Kilometres

MAU: Monthly Active Users

Mxit: Mix It

PM: Post Meridiem

RAT: Routine Activities Theory

SAPS: South African Police Service

SRC: Students Representative Council

UL: University of Limpopo

Wi-Fi: Wiress-Fidelity

ABSTRACT

In this study, the exposure and effects of cyberbullying on students at the University of Limpopo (UL) were explored. Furthermore, this study looked into the forms of cyberbullying that students were exposed to, the consequences of cyberbullying on victims, the relationship between the cyberbully and the cybervictim, the profile of typical victims, the reasons why students were reluctant to report cyberbullying incidents and the causes of cyberbullying.

This study implemented a qualitative research approach. The fifteen participants were selected by means of non-probability purposive sampling. The researcher interviewed these participants guided by the Interview Schedule Guide and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to solicit to share their personal experiences of cyberbullying. Nine (09) participants were interviewed through semi-structured face-to-face interviews and only the other Six (06) participants formed part of One (01) FGD. The findings of this study were as follows; on the forms of cyberbullying, sexting was found to be the most victimisation that students experienced, students were mostly likely to be cyberbullied by someone they know rather than just a stranger, students experienced negative side effects of cyberbullying, ranging from psychological and academical. Females also experienced more cyberbullying as compared to males.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recomendations are made; that there should be improved support for research that examines factors contributing to this type of bullying, in particular dealing with the students. There should also be an educational programme that informs people of cyberbullying and what constitutes cyberbullying. This could be done by educating people about cyberbullying and also by offering students counselling sessions. In addition, this method will help lecturers, parents and counsellors informed about the changing face of technology.

One of the efficient approaches can educate students on how to resolve the online bullying without retaliating, encourage youth to reveal their experiences to relevant stakeholders and universities to invent codes of conduct and other policies that tackle cyberbullying. Online bullying prevention strategies should be incorporated in the campus curriculum and should also include substantive instruction on cyberbullying.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

The 21st century is becoming known as the Age of Technology, and one of the most important and complex types of new technology is social media (Melekian, 2013:1). Online media has become an intergral part of life today, with over 2 billion Internet users logging in more than 142,460,000,000 hours per months online. People socialise, play games and commit serious crimes while operate online communication. Google is used to search for information for professional and personal consumption, music is accessed and brought online, videos are streamed live for real-time viewing, games are played interactively and there are social media communication channels, such as 'Chat room, Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp and Twitter' contributing to bullying in the cyberspace. This new form of abuse is known as cyberbullying (Parker & Hiew, 2006:1).

According to Payne (2014:10), adolescents are often victims of cyberbullying as they spend most of their time on social networks. Cyberbullying can have serious, and in most cases, deadly consequences for the victims. These consequences include self-harm, low self-esteem, suicidal behaviour (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2), those students who spent most of their time on cyberspace and also leave their personal details such as contacts or share private photos with friends. These categories of victims are at higher risk of being victimised online. There is also increasing evidence that the internet and social media can influence suicide-related behaviour (David, Jennifer & Jonathan, 2012:1).

The founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, in November 2016, reported on Facebook that there were over 1.66 billion mobile active users for September 2016 for example; Mobile Facebook Monthly Active Users (MAU). Facebook has become more influential when it comes to sharing information about a person's identity, family, phone number, and address. Some teenagers are not exactly aware to the fact that whatever they say or share online can be seen by more people than originally intended (Parker & Hiew, 2006:1). According a research study by Zerach (2015:292), as well as Parker and Hiew (2006:1), cyberbullying includes cyberstalking, harassment in the form of sexual exploitation and identity theft. Identity theft often begins when malicious users identify the target through the information provided by the user himself or herself (Parker & Hiew, 2006:1).

Some bullying experienced online has negatively affected and stuck with the victimised adolescents for the rest of their lives (Willard, 2006:296; and Johnson, Haralson, Batts, Brown, Collins, Van Buren-Travis & Spencer, 2016:2). Some adolescents find an outlet for their frustrations through cyberbullying others, especially those who have been previously victimised. In the past, these actions could be better controlled because they were limited to face-to-face interactions (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b:210). However, in recent years, this age-old conflict has matched the pace of technological evolutions, making it more dangerous and harder to contain (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008:136).

The researcher was motivated to carry out this study owing to the higher prevalence of cyberbullying incidencies on UL students as experienced on social media different platforms. Usually cyberbullying occurs on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp (Durkin & Patterson, 2011:452). In most cases, the cyberbullying is not reported (Mark & Ratliffe, 2011:94). Lack of reporting [Less likely to be reported] and knowledge of cyberbullying cases is witnessed based on several reasons; this scourge is sometimes seem too insignificant to report, some victims are not always aware that they are under threat or bullying had been committed against them, some victims fear retaliation or repeat vicyimisation, this crime is considered personally embarrassing or shameful, there is lack of trust in the South African Police Service (SAPS) and youth are often involved who may not understand cyberbullying issues. This type of bullying is low in visibility and accessibility, as compared to face-to-face, this makes it difficult

to determine the true nature, extent and impact on associated victims. This practice remains nountanous to assess, Singh (2020:116) and Mark and Ratliffe (2011:97); this in turn contributes to students not taking an informed action when confronted with the phenomenon and even avoiding actions that expose them to cyberbullying.

1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The exposure and effects of cyberbullying on students at the UL is a problem which negatively affect the students. The researcher observed many students who became victims of cyberbullying on social media between the 2015 and 2018 academic years, who still tend to turn a blind eye on their ordeals and fail to see that these acts are socially unacceptable. As such, they fail to take the necessary steps to tackle this kind of an antisocial behaviour. For example, the researcher is aware of two students from the UL who have been victimised on Facebook on the UL students' page named 'Turf (Campus) Expose' and Turf Expose (UL Students)', which are both public groups, this happened in the 2015 and 2017 academic years.

In one particular case the researcher saw revealing photos of a naked Facebook friend posted on Turf Expose (UL Students), in another case the researcher witnessed how another student on another UL page named 'UL gossip' on Facebook was bodyshamed by other UL students and called names in cyber space in the 2017 academic year. This motivated the researcher to seek more information about this issue. In another page which is named 'UL news' students were bullying other students based on their religion, culture, tribe and the courses they enrolled in and because the researcher noticed how students see this cyberbullying comments as normal, the researcher was interested and motivated to address students on what constitudes online bullying.

Correspondingly, the nature of some acts of bullying has set negative effects on victims, a number of whom have committed suicide and others have suffered from psychological problems such as depression, anxiety and stress (Feinberg & Roney, 2010:2; and Harris, 2010:77). Many students seem to lack information about cyberbullying. As a result, they fail to report the victimisation to the police, the university management, lecturers, Students Representative Council [SRC] members, parents and friends or any other relevant stakeholders, which can offer helping hands. This may be because they regard the incident as not serious enough. Therefore, the university management should collaborate with the local SAPS to effectively deal with matters related to cyberbullying; the activities on internet, focusing on university pages should be frequently monitored and all students should be taught proper behavioural and communication patterns based on the use of social d media. If acts of bullying are left unattended, they may escalate to more serious criminal activities such as assault, cyber stalking and sexual predatory crimes (Shaw, 2002:1).

1.3. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

A definition of concepts is very important in order to explain the researcher's trail of thought as well as the facilitation of familiar understanding thereof. The word concept can be defined as the words or phrases designated to happenings about which science tries to make sense of. The main purpose of concept clarification is mutual communication and comprehension (De Vos, 2005b:28). For the purpose of this study the following concepts will be clarified, with indications of operational definitions:

1.3.1 Cyberbullying

This concept is defined by Hinduja and Patchin (2010:1a) as the "*wilful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computer, cell phones and other electronic devices*". For an act to be regarded as cyberbullying it should be wilful, frequent and there should be some form of power imbalance. In this study; only UL undergraduate and postgraduate students who experienced cyberbullying were considered.

1.3.2 Exploration

Exploration refers to the act of investigating with the aim of finding out something, this could be information or resources, for the purpose of this study the researcher's aim is to explore more of the phenomenon of cyberbullying (Webster, 1999:1). For the purpose of this study the researcher explored the phenomenon of cyberbullying from the experiences that the UL students have experienced.

1.3.3 Exposure

Fattah (2000:np) defines this concept as the physical visibility and accessibility of individuals and objects at any given time or place, it is a situation whereby an individual's personal victimisation is increased; a person is more exposed if they come into contact with a large number of strangers who could be potential offenders in cyberspace. In the present study the researcher looked at factors that expose or put the students of UL at a higher risk of being cyberbullied.

1.3.4 University

A university is an institution of higher learning that offers courses in different fields leading to a degree or even a Diploma, Masters, Doctoral degrees and where research is done (Webster, 1999:np). For this study; the university refered to the UL, as situated at Turfloop [Mankweng/Sovenga] of South Africa.

1.3.5 Students

Webster (1999:np) defines a student as 'a learner who is enrolled in an educational insitution', the researcher further defines students as any individuals who are learning at a tertiary institution or any other teaching enviroment. Students are referred to as any individuals who was registered with the UL [Undergraduate and postgraduate students] for the academic year of 2018, with ages between 18 to 35.

1.4. BRIEF PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

An extensive literature review is found in chapter Two [02] of this study in order for the researcher to familiarise herself and her readers with the content and nature of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is generally considered to be bullying using electronic technology such as the internet and mobile phones (Li, 2010:373; and Prinsloo & Du Preez, 2017:104). Cyberbullying is generally committed via technological instruments that manifest through actions such as sending rude, offensive or aggressive messages, spreading malicious rumours, revealing personal information, publishing embarrassing pictures, or even exclusion from online communication.

Studies by Ybarra and Mitchell (2004:1313) and Feinberg and Roney, (2010:2) demonstrate a significant conceptual and practical overlap between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, such that most young people who fall victim to cyberbullying also tend to be subjected to traditional face-to-face methods.

1.4.1 Types of cyberbullying

The following types of cyberbullying, among the existing others, harassment, manipulation, denigration, impersonation, outing and trickery, phishing, cyber stalking, and sexting that students are exposed to will be explained.

1.4.1.1 Harassment

Cyber harassment is the use of Electronic-mail (E-mail), Instant Messaging (IM), and derogatory websites to bully or otherwise harass an individual or group through personal attacks. Cyber harassment can be in the form of comments made in chat rooms, sending of offensive or cruel E-mail or even harassing others by posting on blogs or social networking sites. This form of behaviour is often difficult to track as the person responsible for the acts of cyber harassment remains anonymous while threatening others online (Willard, 2006:330; and Willard, 2007:6).

1.4.1.2 Manipulation

Manipulation is a form of cyberbullying that is usually not taken seriously or considered. Examples of manipulation can include putting pressure on someone to reveal personal information or to arrange a physical meeting. This can be done by using online friendship status, for example, suggesting that a genuine friend would give out personal information such as the person's name, address, phone numbers and surname (Willard, 2006:330).

1.4.1.3 Impersonation

Cyber bullies may commit identity theft and then post on Facebook or on other social media using the new acquired identity or information thus creating the impression that such post originates from the owner of the Facebook page. The perpetrator may engage in negative, cruel, or inappropriate communications with others as if the target was voicing those thoughts (Payne, 2014:20). The perpetrator may fraudulently acquire the target's password in order to change the target's online profile on a social network site. The cyber bully is typically trying to make the target look bad or damage that person's reputation or friendships (Barak, 2005:76).

1.4.1.4 Outing and trickery

Outing is sharing personal or embarrassing information or images, online with others to whom the information was not intended to be shared with. The act also includes tricking someone into revealing such information and then publicly sharing it. This often takes the form of receiving an E-mail, a photo or text from a target and then forwarding it on to others (Willard, 2006:330; and Willard, 2007:8).

1.4.1.5 Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking involves the use of the internet, E-mail, or other types of electronic communications to stalk, harass, or threaten another person. It often involves sending harassing E-mails, instant or text messages, social media posts or creating websites for the sole purpose of tormenting the victim (Willard, 2007:10). Cyberstalking often target users over chat rooms, online forums and social networking websites to gather user information. The acquired information can be used to follow the victim's daily movements and get to know what they are up to and who they hang around with, and after acquiring such information, the cyberbullies can easily stalk and harass their victims offline through the information provided by the victim online (Siegel, 2010:15).

1.4.1.6 Sexting

Sexting is sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs or images, primarily between mobile phones. It may also include the use of a computer or any digital device. These messages, photos, and images are then often being further disseminated through E-mail and internet based social networking websites well beyond their original intended recipients (Best, 2015:15).

1.4.2 Negative effects of cyberbullying

Teen suicide is seen as the most serious consequence of being cyberbullied (Tokunaga, 2010:283). The increase in bullying on social media and other online platforms has caused instances of teen suicides to rise dramatically because many teens do not have the emotional capacity to deal with severe bullying (Feinberg & Robey, 2008:12). This is the primary reason why it is so important to put a stop to this behaviour. Cyberbullying may make a person feel very distressed and alone when he or she is bullied online (Feinberg & Robey, 2008:12; and Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2).

In their study, Adams and Lawrence (2011:6) found that the negative effects associated with being bullied as a school learner continue into the college years, which may detract such victims' ability to perform academically. Briere and Elliot (1994:np) found that cyberbullying can undermine campus climate and interfere with educational functioning, school systems, school leaders and the education sector are equally affected, both directly and indirectly. As articulated by Welker (2010:4), direct on-campus cyberbullying disruption during the academic day makes it even more complex to maintain operations, safety and academic achievement.

The impact that cyberbullying has on a student is very similar to that experienced by one subjected to traditional bullying (Trolley, Hanel & Shields, 2006:27; and Feinberg & Roney, 2010:2). Literature however indicates that due to the covert nature of cyberbullying, plus the reach of the perpetrator, combined with the humiliation of the victim across a wider audience, the reaction can be more severe (Feinberg & Roney, 2010:2; and Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a:149). Although depending on the frequency and severity of the threat, young people tend to demonstrate greater internalised negative effects as a result of cyberbullying (Tokunaga, 2010:283). The general impact of cyberbullying on students appears to be consistent in research, and include poor academic performance, decline in quality of family relationships, low self-esteem and depression (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008:142; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008:1312; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010:204; Li, 2010:1779; and Mark & Ratliffe, 2011:94).

Victims of cyberbullying are almost two times more likely to attempt suicide than those who were not bullied (Tokunaga, 2010:283). Although cyberbullying cannot be identified as a sole predictor of suicide in adolescents and young adults, cyberbullying can increase the risk of suicide by amplifying feelings of isolation, instability, and hopelessness for those with pre-existing emotional, psychological, or environmental stressors (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011:125).

It has been shown that cyberbullying leads to low self-esteem, academic problems, delinquent behaviour, suicidal thoughts and suicide in students (Goodno, 2011b:645). Adolescents who contemplated suicide were twice as likely to have contemplated such behaviour due to having experienced cyberbullying as compared to those who were exposed to traditional bullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a:204). Cyberbullying has been described as being more pernicious than traditional bullying, since it allows for the gradual amplification of cruel and sadistic behaviour and may cause an extreme emotional response, for instance, a victim taking his or her own life (Belnap, 2011:501).

Although heightened levels of frustration and distress associated with cyberbullying tend to be trivialised, the psychosocial problems and affective disorders emphasise the serious nature of the phenomenon. In particular, teenage suicide and suicidal ideation continue to be a significant public health concern; studies by Mark and Ratliffe (2011:94) have established a significant link between bullying and an increased risk of suicidal thoughts as well as attempted and successful suicides (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010b:204). Depression, low self-esteem, hopelessness and loneliness are precursors to the suicidal behaviour.

1.5. BRIEF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Deviant Place Theory (DPT) and Routine Activities Theory (RAT) are used in this study to explain the exposure of UL students to cyberbullying. These two theories were chosen as they can describe the exposure effects of students to cyberbullying. The knowledge, interpretations and applications of these theories in this study is also discussed in chapter three of this study in great details.

The researcher uses the DPT to explain cyberbullying and how deviant places where UL students spent their time can be a factor that exposes them to online bullying. The RAT field lacks this aspect in its theoretical approach and that is the main reason why the researcher decided to use both the DPT and RAT to explain the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

With the DPT there is a broad review of how deviant places can contribute to online victimisation, which the RAT lacks in its theoretical approach, this has made great pace in understanding and explaining how deviant places are a factor influencing cyberbullying. The RAT is more focused on the routine of individuals as a factor that increases the likelihood of cyberbullying, something which the DPT theory lacks.

1.5.1 Deviant Place Theory

The DPT is one of the major contemporary criminological theories which states that greater exposure to dangerous places makes an individual more likely to become the victim of a crime (Siegel, 2006:32). Unlike the 'Victim Precipitation Theory,' the victims do not influence the crime by actively or passively encouraging it, but rather are victimised as a result of being in "bad" places. This theory suggests that the places that individuals associate themselves with are the leading factors that cause people to become victims of cyberbullying, for example, an indivual who is not exposed to any dangerous place and an individual who is exposed to a dangerous place are not at the same risk of being victimised. The individual who is at a dangerous place is mostly exposed to victimisation than an individual who is not.

In relation to this theory, it can be argued that the more victims visit social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp, the more likely they will be exposed to cyberbullying. According to this theory, the risks of personal victimisation are directly related to the amount of time spent on places where perpetrators might be present (Siegel, 2006:32). To this course; individuals who provide their [True] personal information details online are at higher risks of being victimised, as the same details can be used to harass them, for example; a person who provides real cell phone numbers and often reports their whereabout can be easily stalked.

This theory argues that crime flourishes in certain places and the odds of victimisation increases when people visit risky places (Siegel, 2006:30). People who engage more in social networks are at a higher risk of being cyber bullied as compared to those who do not access any social network at all. In the context of cyberbullying, the theory would suggest that victims do not motivate cyberbullying, but rather are prone to

becoming victims, simply because they engage in cyber spaces where there are risks of coming into contact with cyber bullies. In relation to cyberbullying, the DPT would argue that individuals who post every single detail of their lives on the internet are more likely to be victimised online, as compared to those individuals who are active users of the internet but do not post their personal details online for millions of people to see. Behaviour such as posting half naked pictures of oneself on social networking sites according to this theory also put one at a higher risk of being cyberbullied because their picture might be redistributed, or even cause nasty comments (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010:103).

The theory also assumes that the more people spend time online, the more they are exposed to people with deviant intentions and the greater the likelihood of becoming cybervictims (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010:103). Cyberbullies are found on social networks and the internet, therefore an individual who is on social networking sites has a chance that are at some point in life he or she will experience cyberbullying or witness it happening to someone, whether by a stranger, a family member, or even a friend. However, cyberbullies can harass their victims even when the person is not on any social network. For example, the cyberbully can write status messages about an individual on Facebook, even when the person is not on Facebook or even friends with the bully on Facebook. The bully can also post someone's video on Youtube without the person even realising it.

1.5.2 Routine Activities Theory

The RAT which was first developed by Cohen and Felson (1979:589), pays more attention on how daily routine activities or lifestyles of individuals create opportunities for perpetrators to commit crimes (Felson & Clarke, 1998:4). The RAT proposes that the following three specific elements must be involved for antisocial activity to occur: a motivated offender, a suitable target and the absence of a capable guardian. Motivated offenders are individuals who are not only capable of committing a criminal activity, but are also willing to do so. This means that cyberbullies are willing to victimise their victims online because they are motivated by something.

For example, cyberbullies might be motivated by revenge to hurt their victims, because it might give them a feeling of enjoyment to embarrass someone who hurt them in a public space that can be viewed by a number of people. A suitable target can be a person or object that is seen by offenders as vulnerable or particularly attractive. For example, people who post personal details about themselves on social networking sites are at a greater likelihood of being suitable targets as the bully can use the very same personal posts they provided to hurt them. Certain factors make people suitable targets for cyberbullying.

Another example suggests that people who constantly update their whereabouts on social networking sites are at a higher risk of becoming the victims of cyberbullying than those who do not. Victims who post personal information may be suitable targets for offenders to exploit their emotional vulnerabilities. Such personal information might include pictures, addresses and phone numbers.

The internet has made it easy for cyberbullies to bully their victims online as they are able to identify suitable targets who post their daily activities across a number of social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram, this online bullying is often hard to anticipate because cyberbullies search for their suitable targets online, in the absence of more traditional offline locations (Karmen, 2007:1). The chances of an individual becoming a victim of cyberbullying are directly linked not only to the time spent online, but also the cyberspaces that pose the risk of one becoming a victim of cyberbullying. These are places that remove physical and social barriers and bring the victim and offender into close proximity (Yar, 2005:411). These cyberspaces also include environments vulnerable to external surveillance and thus ripe for predatory behaviour, such as message boards and chat rooms (Yar, 2005:411).

When applying the RAT to explain the exposure of students to cyberbullying, the theory would argue that people who are active users of the internet are at a higher risk of being victimised as compared to those who are not. This could be because when they spent more time on social media, they may come into contact with cyberbullies (motivated offenders), which makes them suitable targets.

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On social media there is no culpable guardian who may intervene in the victimisation. Absence of parents in cyberspace may be said to increase the likelihood of cybervictimisation. When there is no parent to monitor their children's mobile phone usage or any other digital technology, an adolescent might end up engaging in illegal as well as anti-social activities online. Adolescents who have their parents or family members on social media such as Facebook, Twitter are less likely to engage in cyberbullying because they fear that their parents or family members may see the posts (Stauffer, 2012:366).

1.6. STUDY AIM AND THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by the study aim and research questions, instead of study objectives. It was believed the aim and research questions were going to provided answers researched in this study based on university reluctantance in reporting cyberbullying to the local SAPS and other relevant stakeholders, including university management. If relevant information can be managed, used, shared and transferred effectively, cyberbulling can be better understood and addressed with ease. Furthermore, the aim of this study and research questions were respectively used to facilitate the research topic, they were seen to be in a better position of collecting relevant [Rich] information about the subject of this study and to ultimately solve the research problem.

1.6.1 The study aim

The aim of this study was to *explore the exposure and effects of cyberbullying on UL students*

This aim was designed to avoid future university students victimisations various social media platforms in the selected higher learning institution. It is the view of the researcher that if the university social media pages can be strictly monitored effectively, cyberbulling can be minimised at the UL.

1.6.2 Research questions

- What forms of victimisation have UL students been exposed to through social media?
- What are the causes of cyberbullying at UL?
- What is the relationship between victims and cyberbullies at UL?
- What are the consequences of cyberbullying in the UL?
- What is the profile of typical victims of cyberbullying at UL?

1.7. ADOPTED RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

In chapter four of this study, detailed descriptions of the adopted research design and methodology is explained by the researcher. Herewith is the introductory comment on these sections.

1.7.1 Research methodology

This study was qualitative in nature, a qualitative research methodology was chosen because it gave the selected participants an opportunity to express their feelings and opinions, and allowed the researcher to explore the given responses using follow-up questions (Denzil, 2009:208).

This study used the semi-sturctured face-to-face interviews and FGD to collect data. Both the interview schedule and focus group gave the participants the space to talk about their own lived experiences of victimisation on cyberspace. The semi-structured face-to-face Interviews and FGD were chosen in this study as forms of data collection as they were both deemed to be useful in gaining rich information on the personal experiences regarding a phenomenon of cyberbullying from the participants.

The semi-structured interview technique was used while conducting these interviews allowing the researcher to have face-to-face conversations with the selected participants, this was done for the collection of rich information and it was beneficial for this study as the researcher received an opportunity to witness the participants' facial expressions, their own feelings and opinions regarding cyberbullying.

1.7.2 Research design

The adopted research design for this study was a phenomenology research design, suppoted by exploratory research objective. Exploratory research objective is conducted to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individual (Fouchẽ & De Vos, 2011:95). The phenomenology research aims to explain how life world of subjects is developed and experienced by them. Life world according to Schwandt (2007:2) refers to a person's conscious experience of everyday life and social action. The research design guided the decisions that the researcher selected as suitable for the specific research goal (Fouche & Schurink, 2011:307).

The researcher used the lived experiences of the selected participants to explain their life world as well as to explain the phenomenon as accurately and truthfully as possible. To maintain this, the opinions of the researcher were not added to the research, the researcher stuck to the facts given by the participants only. The researcher was also as open-minded as possible and avoided being judgemental (Fouche & Schurink, 2011:309).

1.7.3 Sampling

The non-probability: Purposive sampling was used to select participants for this study. According to Brink (1996:141), purposive sampling deals with choosing individuals who are knowledgeable about the problem in question, because they have been involved in it or experienced it. The sample of study were all UL registered students; the selected students differed in terms of study levels; focusing on undergraduate and postgraduate students.

About Fifteen (15) participants shared their experiences with the researcher based on the phenomenon of cyberbullying, 09 of the 15 participants engaged with the researcher through semi-structured face-to-face interviews and the other 06 formed part of the FGD. It should be stressed that the researcher only managed to get hold of only 15 participants who were willing to participate in this study, other students were not interested, while others withdrew in the last minutes. The following following criteria was used for the selection of participants; students between the ages of 18-35, both male and female who had been victims of cyberbullying were required to form part of this study. All participants were registered students with the UL for the academic year of 2016.

1.7.4 Methods of data collections

For this study, three data collection methods were used, namely, literature review, semi-structured face-to-face interviews and one FGD. The used techniques allowed the research participants to talk in depth using their own words. This also helped the researcher to develop a sense of a person's understanding of a situation (Malose, 2011:57). To collect data, the researcher interviewed 09 participants about the experiences that they faced on cyberspace regarding cyberbullying and 06 participants formed part of the FGD, where the researcher discussed with them the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

Overall, 15 participants were selected for this study. The FGD and face-to-face interviews were held on different days at the university premises. The FGD was held at MBH residence on the 28th of March 2018 where the researcher was staying by the time of confducting this study in 2018 academic year and the face-to-face interviews were conducted from 05 March 2018 to 25 March 2018 after academic hours at 17:00 Post Meridiem (PM), across the campus, the researcher went to their residences to conduct these interviews. Both interviews to 30 minutes to an hour. The researcher was using a voice recorder and notebook to write down their answers and later transcribed their responses.

The FGD was chosen because it offered an opportunity to seek clarification and was useful in obtaining detailed information about particinats' personal feelings and perceptions (Malose, 2011:58). Qualitative research approach permitted the researcher to get information about the lived experiences of victims. The researcher created a friendly environment for the participants to make them feel relaxed and comfortable to share their views and experiences (Denzil, 2009:214).

The semi-structured face-to-face interview is a type of interview that takes place between two people (Greeff, 2011:353). The researcher encouraged the research participants to make their answers as detailed as possible to make a meaningful contribution to the research data. During this interviewing type; both the interviewer and interviewee had time to reflect on the questions asked and this time allowed for deeper processing of information.

The nature of the face-to-face interview enabled participants to disclose sensitive information that they would not necessarily do in FGD. This assists in overcoming ambiguity, embarrassment and shame associated with cyberbullying. The semi-structured face-to-face interviews and FGD were conducted using semi-structured technique. A semi structured interview involves the use of open ended questions relating to the study topic which the research participants and the researcher are exploring (Greeff, 2011:353). To achieve this the researcher asked the research participants to elaborate more on their personal experiences on cyberbullying and asked follow up questions with their experiences in order to gain rich and detailed information regarding the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

1.7.5 Methods of data analysis

Data was analysed and interpreted using Thematic Content Analysis. The researcher read all participants' views and transcribed the data collected to get a general sense of the ideas presented. Then the significant statements and phrases pertaining to the phenomenon being studied were extracted from each transcript. Meanings were then formulated from the significant statements, and they were organised into thematic analysis, after which the researcher wrote a rich and combined description of the lived experiences of victims from the essential structure of the phenomena formulated. The headings and sub-headings used in this study were fully discussed in chapter four. Braun and Clarke's (2006:82) 06 steps of Thematic Content Analysis were applied in this study:

- **Phase One: Familiarising with data:** The researcher immersed herself with the data by reading and re-reading textual data, for example; transcripts of interviews, focus groups and listening to audio-recordings.

- **Phase Two: Generating initial codes:** Once familiar with the data, the researcher then started identifying preliminary codes, which are the features of the data that appear interesting and meaningful.

- **Phase Three: Searching for themes:** The third step in the process was the start of the interpretive analysis of the collected codes. The researcher sorted relevant data extracts and combined them according to overarching themes.

- **Phase Four: Reviewing themes:** The researcher questioned whether to combine, refine, separate or discard initial themes. Data within themes should cohere together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes. This is usually done over two phases, where the themes need to be checked in relation to the coded extracts (Phase 1), and then for the overall data set (Phase 2).

- **Phase Five: Defining and naming themes:** The researcher defined and further refined the themes, presented them for analysis and analysed the data within them.
- **Phase Six: Producing the report:** The researcher transformed the analysis into an interpretable piece of writing by using vivid and compelling extract examples that related to the themes, research question, and literature.

1.7.6 Methods to ensure trustworthiness

Davies and Francis (2011:12) propose that there are two important elements of validity. The first element of validity gives emphasis on whether the conclusions of the researcher are believable and credible for the particular perspective and time given under the analysis. Results and analysis are neither correct nor incorrect; they are more or less plausible and credible. The researcher must engage in crucial evaluation during the study in order to ensure validity. The participants were asked to give their experience of cyberbullying.

The second element of validity gives emphasis on the details of the conclusions to a variety of perspectives and time given. The level of the above elements is verified and the findings of validity are accomplished by the research study. In a qualitative investigation, there is not much emphasis placed on the overview of conclusions. However, the information collected is helpful in analysing and offering recommendations, unlike in quantitative investigation, where the formulation of generalisations is not a main concern, a qualitative study seeks to represent an explanatory analysis of data (Davies & Francis, 2011: 353).

For the purpose of this study, the following four elements were adhered to in order to ensure trustworthiness, which refers to the quality criteria based on the evaluation of quality and trustworthiness of a conducted research study (De Vos, 2005a:346):

- **Credibility:** The study was carried out in a manner that permits the truthful identification and description of the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

- **Transferability:** The applicability of one set of findings was placed in different perspectives and noted.
- **Dependability:** The researcher understood that the findings were not fixed or static but were subjected to change as the phenomenon of cyberbullying evolves.
- **Confirmability:** The researcher analysed the ability of the findings to confirm the general findings of cyberbullying.

1.8. STUDY SIGNIFICANCE

This research may play a critical role in enlightening students about cyberbullying that is taking place on social networks. It is important to research about cyberbullying because many students are bullied on social networks and not much is done about it because they lack information about what constitutes cyberbullying. This study intended at finding possible solutions to tackle the problem of cyberbullying.

A number of students are victims of cyberbullying, therefore, a study dealing with the problems relating to the causes should give them the opportunity to learn more about this phenomenon, how to safeguard themselves against cyberbullying as well as how to deal with it. The research could also add value to the existing knowledge about cyberbullying as it will explain in detail what cyberbullying is and what people can do if they believe they are being bullied (Banner, 2011:1).

1.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study complied with the ethics and confidentiality guidelines of the UL. A signed TREC (Turfloop Research Ethics Committee) application form which permitted the researcher to collect data by the UL research ethics committee with the intention to safeguarding the rights, safety, dignity and also to ensure the well being of the research participants is proctected was also attached.

1.9.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation

The participants were informed about the true nature of the study through the communication process of them reading and getting an explaination of the consent letter, which enabled them to make an informed decision on whether to take part in the study or not. The researcher also explained to participants that participation is voluntary and that they were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time if they did not wish to continue with it (Barlow & Durand, 2009:116). A comprehensive letter of consent was drafted and distributed to the participants involved in this study. The researcher made it a point that each and every interview schedule had a letter of consent attached (Appendix A) to it. The research participants were also guaranteed that the research study met all the ethical requirements as compiled by the researcher and set by the UL.

1.9.2 Confidentiality

Every individual has the right to privacy and it is his or her right to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed. To maintain confidentiality; the research participants' names, addresses and cell phone numbers were not required on the interview schuedule (Morris, 2006:1).

1.9.3 Anonymity

Anonymity means that the participants' names and other unique identifying elements (address, place, professions and so on) are not attached to the data. The participants' rights and wishes to remain anonymous were respected. The responses that were given were presented in such a way that the views expressed by the participants could not be traced back to them (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:73).

1.9.4 Discontinuance

The researcher gave the participants an assurance that they were free to discontinue their participation at any time without being required to offer any explanation, this was indicated on the attached consent letter [Appendix A] (Babbie, 2008:67)

1.9.5 Emotional and physical harm

This study was not associated with any emotional or physical harm to the participants (Babbie, 2008:72). In case participants showed some signs of being overcome by emotions, the researcher would have stopped the research process and referred the participant to psychological counselling.

1.10. STUDY LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to students who had been cyberbullied at UL, therefore, due to the small sample size, the results can not be generalised to the larger population of students in other universities. As a result, the sample was not representative of the majority of the South African population and is not generalisable. The research participants were limited to age, gender, level of the study and only UL students were considered, which limited the context of the study.

1.11. STUDY PROGRESSIONS

- **Chapter Two**

In this chapter, the existing literature related to the phenomenon of cyberbullying among adolescents is discussed. The chapter explores and attempts to understand the problem of cyberbullying.

- **Chapter Three**

This chapter explains cyberbullying through two theories, namely the DPT and the RAT. In this chapter, the researcher linked the two theories in order to explain further the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

- **Chapter Four**

This chapter focuses on the research design, sampling method, data analysis and ethical considerations.

- **Chapter Five**

In this chapter the findings of the study obtained during data collection are presented simultaneously with the discussion.

- **Chapter Six**

This chapter serves as the final chapter which includes the conclusion and recommendations of the study. It also looks at the limitation of the study as well as future research and possible prevention of the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

1.12. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter [One] provided an introduction, background and motivation of the phenomenon of cyberbullying amongst students at universities. This chapter explains how cyberbullying is a problem in both national and international universities. It introduces the reader to cyberbullying and what it constitutes. Cyberbullying was also defined and the chapter also provided a brief introduction of the literature review, research design, theories that the study adopted, methods to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations as used in this study. The next chapter [Two] will focus on the literature review based on the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW ON CYBERBULLYING OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter encompasses a literature review on cyberbullying of University students. The term cyberbullying infers that the bullying takes place in cyberspace, a place in which information is exchanged through the internet (Li, 2007:438; and Hensler-McGinnis, 2008:2); cyberbullying is the use of the internet or cyber technology systems to harass a person online. The acts involved in cyberbullying include threats of harm. Cyberbullying can cause a person to feel anxious and not safe. To compile the literature review, the researcher made use of journals, internet searches, previous dissertations and books based on the exposure and effects of cyberbullying on the students at universities. Although such exposure and effects has existed throughout time, it is only recently that researchers began to seriously address the issue (Tokunaga, 2010:278). Cyberbullying has recently received full attention by professionals because of its rising statistics and also because of the negative effects it has on students (Johnson *et al.,* 2016:2).

Adolescents are gaining access to the internet now more than ever; the use of digital technology amongst adolescents is growing daily (Jaishankar & Sankary, 2005:1; McFarlane & Bocij, 2005:1, and Scholtz, Turha & Johnston, 2015:93). The internet is becoming part of their lives (Tokunaga, 2010:1). Adolescents depend on social networking sites for interacting with their peers and connecting with them, as well as other activities such as schoolwork, games and music (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004:1308; Feinberg & Roney, 2010:2; Odora & Matoti, 2015:399; and Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:93). These activities have encouraged many conversations regarding the advantages and also the disadvantages of technology (Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:93). The advantages of the use of the internet and social networks include enhanced access of knowledge, learning and maintaining relationships (Mesch & Levanon, 2003:5, Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:93).

Fears about online risks and harm have also become a significant concern. The disadvantages of the use of the internet and social networks include engaging in inappropriate behaviours such as cyberbullying (Beran & LI, 2005:267). The nature of cyberbullying is more hurtful and humiliating as it can be witnessed by a number of people (Jackson, Samona, Mooma, Ramsa, Murray, and Smith & Murray, 2007:185).

Online bullying, which is better known as cyberbullying, is a wilful and continuous psychological harm through computers and mobile phones (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009:5). Mutongwizo and Burton (2009a:5) report that in 2009 voice call and Short Message Service (SMSs) were the highest form of media used to commit cyber violence. In 2001, this had shifted and MXit and Facebook were the new open spaces for cyberbullies. New services and mobile devices are being released on a regular basis, making the need to identify these new threats and increasing the likelihood of cyberbullying, this is because the more people own mobile devices which can access the internet, hence, cyberbullying is increasing.

Subsequently; adolescents who are online bullies are most likely to engage in deviant behaviour than those who are not (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009:3). Social networks have become part of daily communications between friends and family members. Social networks include platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, WhatsApp, BlackBerry Messenger (BBM), Mix It (MXIT) and Instant Messenger (IMO). They are all used to maintain friendships, especially for those who are staying far from each other and cannot be able to meet often and therefore are keeping contact through social networks, because it is much cheaper compared to phone calls (Trolley & Hanel, 2010:5).

Throughout the world, adolescents are found to be the highest growing active users of social networks and the internet. Miller and Morris (2012:75); as well as Feinberg and Robey, (2010:2) pospulate that there are over two billion internet users worldwide, the rwo billion internet users has had a negative effect on the youth.

However, this increase in the number of the internet users and social networking sites has also become vital for the adolescents' personal and educational needs such as socialising with their peers and searching for information on the internet for their educational purposes and researching (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; Odora & Matoti, 2015:399; and Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:93). As the internet is becoming part of everyday life, cyberbullying is also on the increase, an issue that must be taken into consideration.

The research conducted by Barker and White (2010:396) reveal that the use of technology for communication via E-mail, IM and blogging have become an important part of adolescents while Reston (2007:2) states that many adolescents feel they cannot survive without social networking sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp. These social networking site have made it easier for adolescents to connect with each other. Although social networking sites are good for those who are far from each other, it also has consequences. Goodno (2011a:400) puts forth that cyberbullying takes place when adolescents use their devices intentionally and repeatedly to bully, harass and threaten others.

Cyberbullying has been an issue affecting students for many years, therefore it should not be ignored (Smit, 2015:1). Online communication has unrestricted availability, accessibility and anonymity and these characteristics have enabled face-to-face bullying to take place into the online world, which is known as cyberbullying (Miller & Hufstendler, 2009:2). Through the use of the internet, an individual can have access to social networking sites, for example, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, IM, BBM, Mxit, MySpace, E-mail, and Chat rooms (Miller & Hufstendler, 2009:2). Hinduja and Patchin (2014:3) state that cyberbullying is a rising problem because increasing numbers of adolescents are using and have completely embraced online interactivity. Moreover, many adolescents are becoming victims of aggression, mistreatment and harassment caused by cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a violation of human rights, which is the right to privacy, for example, hacking someone's E-mail address is invading their privacy and personal documents (O'Shaughnessy, 2011:44).

Direct cyberbullying is a type of online bullying whereby the bullies get in touch with the victim directly, for example: sending the victim a nasty message on their Facebook wall post, indirect cyberbullying occuring for example when an individual spreads rumours about another on cyberspace (Beran & Li, 2005:266; Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:96).

2.2. FORMS OF CYBERBULLYING VICTIMISATION

Although there has been relatively little information gathered by research into the behaviours associated with the forms of cyberbullying, few common patterns have emerged (Bocij, 2004:12; and Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009b:2). The following serves as a compilation of the major themes associated with cyberbullying behaviour.

2.2.1 Harassment

Harassment is a form of cyberbullying that involves frequently sending the victim hateful and threatening messages (Willard, 2006:57; Willard, 2007:6; Urbanski & Permuth, 2009:69; and Li, 2010:373), which irritate or cause the individual to be in fear for their life and can cause serious emotional pain in that particular person (O' Shaughnessy, 2011:44). These hateful or threatening messages can be distributed through E-mails, text messages and also on social networks (Willard, 2007:7). Cyberbullies can also log into a chat room and start bullying an individual who they do not even know because they find it interesting and fun (Agaston, Kowalski & Limber, 2012:60). Cruel phone calls, especially with a private number and nasty text messages were found to be the most common types of harrassment, with social networking bullying being the second most common type of harrassment (Willard, 2006:330).

Electronic communications provide students with the opportunity to engage in immoral behaviours such as harassing others online. Harassment is the repeated, deliberate and planned use of different types of technology such as a cell phone, E-mail, IM, and Websites by students to hurt others (Willard, 2007:1). Harassment takes place when a student or a number of students, post or text nasty and upsetting messages about another student (Beran & Li, 2005:266).

Cyber harassment also occurs when a student tries to make other students hate their victim by posting lies or false rumours on social networking sites and upsetting posts about the victim with the aim of ruining the victim's reputation. The cyberbully often writes such status updates and tag others and together they harass the victim, for this to be regarded as a harassment behaviour it must happen more than once (Willard, 2007:1).

2.2.2 Manipulation

Manipulation is a form of cyberbullying which commences with a direct or indirect command or demand accompanied by pressure or threats, followed by initial resistance from the victim, eventually ending in compliance (Willard, 2006:330). Manipulation is about the bully getting things his or her way by controlling others and abusing his or her power on social networks (Willard, 2006:330). For example, the bully might think that because he or she is the one who created a WhatsApp group and therefore has the right to control what people say in that group. Manipulators tend to use manipulative techniques to get what they want, because manipulating others gives the cyberbully a sense of value, control and also a feeling of being in charge (Willard, 2006:330).

The manipulative person draws other people into the web and gets to control conversations and discussions, while becoming the centre of attention (Willard, 2006:330). An example of manipulation is when a person make others feel guilty on cyberspace, posting or saying nasty things online about others indirectly, but denying there is a problem. A friend might post a status message on Facebook that says 'my friends are backstabbers', and when the friends questions him or her about the status, the person can respond by saying it is just a status, but the acts may not stop (O' Shaughnessy, 2011:44). In most cases of cyberbullying, the cyberbully make threats against victims, their family or even friends. Threats are regularly made via E-mail or IM. The cyberbully may also use other methods such as text messages or social networks. The victims of cyberbullying may get offensive and hateful messages and even have pornography attached (Bocij, 2004:12).

The secrecy of this method allows the cyberbully to make repeated bullying and indulge in cyberbullying and victimisation (Mullen, Pathé & Purcellet 2009:153). Pittaro (2011:282) adds that cyberbullying aims to create constant distress through a variety of threatening behaviours.

2.2.3 Impersonation

Impersonation takes place when a victim's account is hacked, or when a cyberbully create a fake account pretending to be the victim by using the victim's personal information, such as a name, surname and the victim's pictures, giving the victim's friends the impression that they are communicating with him or her (Willard, 2006:331, Willard, 2007:8, Li, 2010:373). An example of impersonation is hacking into someone's Facebook account and posting online, pretending to be the owner of the account or posting in the owner's name or even blocking access to the Facebook account so that the owner will not be able to login or use it.

The perpetrator then starts posting nasty harmful messages and pictures, the aim is to degrade the victim's reputation and make him or her look bad on social networks (Willard, 2007:8; Payne, 2014:20). The intention of the cyberbully is to ruin the victim's social relationships. The cyberbully may maintain this by posting harmful pictures, status messages or even make nasty comments by acting as if he or she was the victim. The cyberbully can then find it easier to destroy the victim's relationships using online platforms, with the victim not being aware (Willard, 2006:56).

Impersonation occurs when the cyberbully creates a fake account on social networking sites and uses their victim's personal information and not theirs, giving the impression that the victim is the one who created the account (Willard, 2007:8). This is done with the aim of causing shame and humiliation to the victim, as well as encouraging other people to take part in such harassment. For example; the cyberbully might enter a chat room using the victim's identity and post pornography and other offensive messages to an online audience, which might make the victim look as a bad person on chat room (Bocij, 2004:13).

2.2.4 Outing and trickery

Outing and trickery involves sharing the victim's messages, photos or videos without them agreeing, often sexual, heart-breaking, private and uncomfortable information are shared to embarrass the victim through the use of a technological device (Willard, 2007:9; Li, 2010:374; and Agaston, Kowalski & Limber, 2012:39). The bully can also trick the victim into giving them shameful information about themselves physically and verbally, then distribute the given information electronically (Willard, 2007:9; Urbanski & Permuth, 2009:69). The most prevalent forms of cyberbullying as stipulated by Patchin and Hinduja (2013:1) are seen as threatening text messages and sending private videos without the owner's consent. These are some of the many ways in which students use their mobile devices and computers to harass, humiliate, intimidate and bully others. Another example of outing and trickery involves sending or posting an individual's personal information that can be very sensitive, private or embarrassing, which can also include forwarding such personal information to others with the aim of making it public.

2.2.5 Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking occurs when the cyberbully frequently sends the victim unwanted text messages, instant messages or even E-mails which are full of intimidation and or irritation (Willard, 2006:56; Willard, 2007:10). Cyberstalking can also occur when a cyberbully posts messages and images which are aimed at upsetting the victim, disgusting the victim or even making the victim angry and that can be viewed by millions of active users online (Pathé, 2002:8; Willard, 2007:10; Whitty & Joinson, 2009:111; and Li, 2010:373). The messages sent by the perpetrator can cause the victim to be scared for his or her life and safety because of the frightening messages they received (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009:69).

The online bullers can also anonymously download an app that allows them to be alerted whenever their victims go online, often this is installed by cyber stalkers so that it can make it easier for them to stalk their victims (Hitchcock & Page, 2006:159). Cyberstalking takes place when an individual is unendingly followed and harassed online (O'Shaughnessy, 2011:44). This online harassment invades the victims' privacy in that their online moves including status messages, posts, information and pictures are checked. It threatens the lives of victims as they feel fearful and endangered.

The experience of cyberstalking is easy as cyberstalkers do not have to leave their homes to find or follow their targets (Jaishankar & Sankary, 2005:1). Whitty and Joinson (2009:111) define cyber stalking as a behaviour that involves the use of technology to harass victim(s) online. Cyberstalking usually occurs when there is harassing actions online made by the cyberbully to the cybervictim that would cause the victim to experience emotional distress as a result of such harassment. Mullen *et al.* (2009:152) suggest that cyber stalking can function as a form of sexual intimidation. This stems from the notion that it potentially exposes the victims thereof to sexual denigration, exploitation or subordination.

2.2.6 Sexting

Sexting can be defined as texting using sexual language and emoticons, the sending and receiving of nude pictures, photos or videos (Badenhorst, 2011:2). Sexting is a term created by combining 'sex' and 'texting' and many adolescents are engaging in sexting, which can be seen as sharing of sexual photos, videos or even messages with other people. This is an unsafe behaviour because once the first person presses the send button, the pictures are now in the hands of another person and he orshe can choose what to do with them (Trolley & Hanel, 2010:5). Makeover sexting is a dangerous behaviour, mainly because it relates to adolescents' sexuality (Schloms-Madlener, 2013:11).

Furthermore, Bandenhorst (2011:3) explains the following three ways in which sexting can take place:

- Exchanging of sexual photos, videos or messages between people who are in a romantic relationship.
- Exchanging of sexual photos, videos or messages between romantic partners, which are then shared with others outside the romantic relationship.
- In a case where at least one person is interested in starting a romantic relationship with another.

Sexting is a risky behaviour because the content of the information can be saved and then later on used as revenge by the other person. The victim often believes that their messages or photos are secure and cannot be seen by any other person, however when a relationship ends or becomes unstable, the private messages, photos or videos can be distributed as a way of getting back at the victim (Trolley & Hanel, 2010:5). Many cyberbullies involve third parties when cyberbullying others. For example, the cyberbully may post the victim's contact details with a message suggesting sexual availability.

Consequently; this is a general form of sexting and often victims report receiving hundreds of telephone calls and messages in response to such announcement made on social media (Bocij, 2004:13). Spence-Diehl (2003:1) notes that in this way, third parties are unknowingly lured into helping cyber bullies track and harass their victims. Schloms-Madlener (2013:11) argues that boys engage in sexting mainly because they are put under pressure by their friends to prove that they are courageous, have high social class and to prove their sexual powers and ability. They post naked pictures on the internet to get some kind of power from their friends and their popularity is therefore increased.

Adolescence is a period of life whereby individuals discover their own physical, cognitive and sexual growth. Young people create their own personalities and characters by both their traditional means as well as through the digital world by using the internet and social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (Harris-Cik & Steyn, 2018:34).

According to research by Coburm, Connolly and Roesch (2015:569), the reason why youth create intimate images or videos is for romantic purposes. Unfortunately, some of these images or naked pictures are used in the acts of cyberbullying by youth, especially when the relationship is not working out, calling someone by names that make them feel uncomfortable or giving them looks can also be regarded as harassment (Conburn *et al.,* 2015:569). Cyberbullying messages often have a sexual aspect and the messages are in most cases distributed publicly (Li, 2007:438). The negative impacts of sexting might include shame, isolation, misery, anxiety, suicide, criminal and illegal action (Schloms-Madlener, 2013:15).

Cyber communication, particularly about sexual matters, may put individuals under the risk of online sexual harrassment. Students who use the internet often come across unwanted sexual encounter (Mitchell, Finkelhor & Wolak, 2001:2001)**.** Adolescents who are at a higher risk of sexual solicitation and harassment online are adolescents who have been sexually or physically abused, individuals who engage in risky online behaviour and youth who often login at chat rooms and talk online with strangers about sex are putting themselves at a risk of being victimised online (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011:124). According to Schloms-Madlener (2013:5), females who take and send pictures to other individuals are reckless and immature while males who perfom the same act are also subjected to the same judgement. Hasinoff (2010, np) states that sexting occurs frequently amongst older people as compared to the younger generation.

2.2.6.1 Reasons for sexting

Adolescents often engage in sexting to start or even sustain a passionate relationship; adolescents may also use sexting as an educating and socialising tool and, therefore, engage in the activities of sexting (Springston, 2017:144; Harris & Steyn, 2018:38). Sexting permits students to expand their sexual experience and also to sustain both interpersonal and sexual communication (Harris-Cik & Steyn, 2018:38). However, females are more likely to be judged by the society when it comes to sexting whereas males freely engage in sexting and the society does not judge them (Springston, 2017:143). Men support the notion that men are sex-focused and women are sex objects, which leads to the assumption that women are pressurised into engaging in sexting with men. This assumption was confirmed by Springston (2018:143), who found a link between gendered sexual violence against women and sexting.

Students explore different sex-related topics online and part of that exploration means adolescents learn more about what constitutes sexual charm, romantic relationships and sexual behaviour (Harris-Cik & Steyn, 2018:38). Sexting provide students with the time to write romantic responses, which in face to face contact they would not have the courage to talk about, as hiding behind a screen allows more freedom when it comes to the expression of feelings and desires (Harris-Cik & Steyn, 2018:38). Sexting can offer adolescents an opportunity to be both social and sexual, but within a safe, non-threatening or embarrassing arena because they are able to avoid face-to-face communication.

2.2.7 Harrassment through sending recurring unwanted messages

The behaviour associated with this form of cyberbullying occurs when the cyberbully continuously causes harassment by sending unwanted messages to the victim. In most cases, the bully uses E-mail services or social network sites in order to irritate and overflow the victims' communicative systems. Victims are often left feeling overwhelmed and unable to use their E-mail service effectively because of a number of messages that the bully has sent and the cyberbully may be someone that is well known by the victim or a stranger (Pittaro, 2011:282).

Pittaro (2011:282) further reveals that these anonymous accounts are facilitated through a variety of websites. For instance, cyberbullies can send anonymous E-mails, in large quantities, through websites such as 'The Payback' (http://www.thepayback.com). These websites intentionally hide and protect the sender's information such as the name and contact details.

2.2.8 Spreading false accusations

The cyberbullies often try to harm the reputation of their victims by posting false information about them on social networks. The cyberbully may even go to an extent of contacting their victims' friends or colleagues with the false information to cause problems (Mullen *et al.,* 2009:154). They may also post information that is not true about the victim on the internet or cyberspace. Attacks on the victim's trustworthiness can range from malicious postings on a blog to the transmission of false claims on the internet (Bocij, 2004:12).

2.2.9 Cyberbullies seek information about their victims and use it against them

The cyberbullies get involved in a number of ways to get information about their victims so that they can stalk them online. These can be done by approaching their victims' friends, family or colleagues pretending to be a harmless friend or colleague and squeezing the information out of them which will later be used to cyberstalk the victim, for example, asking about the victim's Facebook user name and then using the information given to check their victim's Facebook wall (Bocij, 2004:12; and Mullen *et al.,* 2009:154).

2.2.10 Publishing private or embarrassing information

This behaviour is often allied with cyberbullies who want to retaliate and spite their victims by sending everyone E-mails, posting notices, or establishing websites containing personal, and often upsetting, information about their victims. The cyberbully's intention is to reveal confidential information about their victim to cause humiliation (Mullen *et al.,* 2009:153). An example is when the cyberbully post about the victim's private life online, usually what the cyberbully posts is true and often embarrassing information that the victim does not want everyone to know about, for example posting about someone's HIV status. This often happens between people who used to be close to each another and shared secrets which are later written about online to hurt the victim.

2.3. THE CAUSES OF CYBERBULLYING

Males and females are found to be victims of cyberbullying for different reasons. Males are often victimised for their sexual orientation whereas females are often victimised due to factors related to, "appearance, sexual promiscuity, and popularity" (Shariff & Churchhill, 2010:57). According to Shapka and Law (2013:1), cyberbullying can be encouraged by either proactive or reactive reasons. Proactive aggression occurs deliberately, and is frequently encouraged through perceived rewards (i.e. dominance or status); whereas, reactive violence occurs out of anger, and is often in response to disappointment (Shapka & Law, 2013:2).

Bauman (2013:249) indicates that cyberbullying is high because a number of adolescents have access to mobile phones and computers. The growth of technological devices and the need for social networking sites on the internet has caused physical bullying to expand into online bullying, causing psychological harm (Grabosky & Smith, 1998:212). Cyberbullying is very much associated with the use of violence, justification of violence, publicity of violence, and less perceived social support of friends (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009:653).

There are various causes of cyberbullying including the following; envy, jealousy, greed, discrimination and intolerance for disability, religious group, sexual category, shame, pride, revenge, guilt and anger. Other factors include retaliation, pressure from peers, frustration, popularity, or entertainment (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009:655).

2.3.1 Cyberbullying may be committed to pay revenge

In most cases a cyberbullying incidence is an extension of a traditional face-to-face bullying, the victim or the bully might take the physical bullying to cyberspace, in order to express their anger. Students who have been cyberbullied may find it easier to retaliate against their bully online (Payne, 2014:27). For example, in Mabopane, Gauteng Province, South Africa, two teenage girls created a fake Facebook account to harass and embarrass a guy who dated them both as their way of avenging themselves for being played. They used a fake Facebook account to post his nude pictures and write nasty things about him online, saying that "*he was not even good in bed*" and calling him a player. The girls also posted a message claiming that the guy died of a terrible accident, giving his Facebook friends the impression that he passed on (Payne, 2014:27). Ybarra and Mitchell (2004:1315) also highlight revenge as a frequent motivation to engage in cyberbullying along with other factors such as boredom, increasing feelings of pleasure, and to fit in with peers.

Students who are bullied through the internet and social networking sites are likely to use the internet to bully others, they engage in cyberbullying to retaliate against the aggressor by posting cruel status messages and sending harassing texts messages (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004:1311). Students who have harassed others using the internet are targeted by other students to get even and to protect their friends. Each post might fuel further insults by students who are directly or indirectly involved in the cyberbullying (Beran & Li, 2005:266). For example, a student might be traditionally bullied on the streets and then later that day sent harassing or nasty texts messages to the person who traditionally bullied him or her on the streets on cyberspace.

2.3.2 Cyberbullying may be done for entertainment

Students who are attracted to dangerous, aggressive and challenging online behaviours often engage in cyberbullying to entertain themselves. These bullies victimise others for their own entertainment, they find pleasure in causing harm to others (Antoniadou & Kokkinos, 2013:29). When offline, these types of bullies tend to search for entertainment by engaging in risky behaviours and immoral actions, for example, traditional bullying, and when they are online they seek entertainment by provoking and harassing others online. Students might also see cyberbullying as a cool act and being creative while not realising the seriousness and consequences it has on victims.

Students who engage in cyberbullying are more likely to be involved in other forms of violence, for example; relational aggression, physical argument and face to face bullying and are more likely than those who are not involved in cyberbullying to act violently toward peers (Conburn *et al.,* 2015:568). Students who are attracted to dangerous, aggressive and challenging online behaviours are high sensation seekers, similarly to traditional bullies; they tend to seek attention online. When offline, they tend to look for entertainment by physically bullying other students and when they are online they post provocative material in an effort to entertain themselves (Antoniaudou, Kokkinos & Markos, 2016:29).

2.3.3 Cyberbullying may be committed because of jealousy

Jealousy is another reason why adolescents engage in cyberbullying. Adolescents tend to bully others online because they envy what they have. For example, a student who is doing well academically is at a higher risk of being cyberbullied than those who are not, mainly because his or her peers are jealous of him or her and therefore they take their jealousy into the cyber space, the aim of this might be to disrupt the student who is doing well academically so that he or she can be at the same level as them (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009:655).

2.3.4 Cyberbullying may be committed because of anonymity

Anonimity was defined by Baraldo and Chetty (2018:25) as logging into the social media using a fake identity; this is an important contributor of online bullying. Fake accounts are used by cyberbullies to hide or attempt to hack into another people's social media using a false identity (Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:97). Cyberbullying is an opportunistic offence and anonymity reduces the chance of being caught, therefore giving adolescents an opportunity to bully others because they know that they will not be easily caught (Li, 2007: 446; Payne, 2014:23; and Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:97). Burton and Mutongwizo's (2009a:8) results are in agreement with this statement and it is clear that anonymity is an enabler of cyberbullying. Adolescents engage in cyberbullying because they know that chances of being caught are slim. Cyberbullying can be anonymous and cyberbullies do not have to be physically stronger or bigger than victims. The anonymous nature of cyberbullying may be a source of power for the bullies, where they might take the advantage of the victims not knowing their identity as a tool to bully them online (Li, 2007:446; and Baraldo & Chetty, 2018:25).

Li (2007:446) and Reece (2012:8) state that cyberbullying is dangerous because it gives the perpetrators a chance to remain anonymous and the opportunity to contact a much larger number of victims without a significant threat of punishment. The anonymity in cyberbullying gives the bully an easy way to say and do things that the bully would not normally do face to face, they hide themselves behind their phones or computers (Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:97). In addition to this anonymity power, impulsivity among adolescents can be a leading factor in cyberbullying. They will act without considering the full consequences for themselves and their victims (Li, 2007:446; and Reece, 2012:8).

Payne (2014:23) provide that most bullies do not want to confront their victims face to face, instead they hide behind their computers and mobile phones. These bullies often start a rumour about their victims online in order to make them look like bad people. Bullies will even go to the extremes of creating a fake account in order to humiliate their victims.

Cyberbullies feel disinhibited because of the anonymity that the cyberspace offers them and therefore say and do things that they would not do or say face-to-face to their victims. Bullies feel safe behind this anonymity because they are aware that their victims do not know who is bullying them because their identities are hidden (Payne, 2014:23).

2.3.5 Time spent outside home

Adolescent is a period in life in which one interacts with many people from outside the family, they socialise with different people and they get to make new friends and also spend most of their time with friends (Mesch, 2009:1). The more they spend time with their friends the more they get exposed to different people and their different personalities and also learn how to refine their socio-emotional skills to keep friendships. The lifestyle individuals live determines the likelihood of victimisation of individuals. This means that any change in the habitual actions of an individual or group, be it potential victims or offender, is enough to increase or decrease exposure to risk as well as present opportunities for victimisation (Davis, 2005:36).

The researcher submits that university students who live their lives recklessly on social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp are at a higher risk of being victimised online as compared to those who are not. For example: Students who always slay online (Slay or slaying is often a word used in social networking sites which describes those individuals who are living an expensive life and post pictures online to prove it, they often post pictures online drinking expensive drinks, wearing expensive clothes, their makeup and hair always on point and because of this having a lot of followers) and post their flashy lifestyles on any social networking sites can attract cyberbullies.

The DPT argues that spending most of the time on the internet and social networks raises the probability of being cyberbullied, this is because an individual who is on cyberspace frequently comes into contact with online bullies and as a result increases an individual's risks of victimisation (Mesch, 2009:3). Persons who spend most of their time on cyberspace tend to become victims of cyberbullies as compared to those who are hardly online because offenders tend to pick up their victims in close proximity (Meier & Miethe, 1993:479). Also students who spent most of their time on social networking sites are at a higher risk of being online victims because they come into contact with cyberbullies daily, putting themselves at risk (Mesch, 2009:1).

2.3.6 Lack of supervision and frequent use of technology

Often adolescents use their computers and mobile phones unsupervised (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010:615b). This contributes toward the frequency of adolescents exposed to abusive and hurtful comments, violent threats and invasion of privacy that forms part of the risks and dangers of online activities (Welrave & Herman, 2011:42). With the release of new forms of technology, researchers have found that there is a digital space between parents and the youth. Parents believe that they do not have the necessary digital skills to notice when their children are engaging in immoral behaviours (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014:4), which the youth might take advantage of by engaging in cyberbullying behaviours without parents noticing.

Students who spend most of their time online are most likely to become the victims of cyberbullying. This is because they are exposed to threats that are provided by them online, such as personal information and pictures that they post. Many students become victims of cyberbullying because of what they post, for example; a person might reveal a great deal about themselves in order to get attention from their Facebook friends or satisfy their need to fit in into the Facebook world, which might attract cyberbullies. For example; posting of half-naked pictures. Given that cyberbullying only occurs online, students who spend some time online are at a risk of being cyberbullied (Hill, 2010:1).

According to the RAT the likelihood of victimisation is linked to a person's everyday life's activities. A person's daily routine activities are important because they are related to the differential exposure to dangerous places such as the cyberspace where there are high risks of victimisation (Hindelang, Gottfredson & Garofalo, 1978:251). From this perspective, an individual's daily activities are the key aspects that determine danger of cybervictimisation (Hindelang *et al.,* 1978:251). People's daily routine activities such as using the internet may cause them to become cyber victims. Time spent off the internet generally decreases victim risk, while time spent on the internet increases risk.

The RAT also proposes that the lack of guardianship to supervise the indivual's mobile or computer can increase the chances of a person to become the victim of cyberbullying. An example of this is that in the household where there are parents or guardianship who are using the same computer to login, the online bully might be extra careful when bullying others and be extra careful with the computer because the bully may be afraid that the next person who is going to login might notice that they have been bullying others online and that might lead them to be grounded from using the computer in the household.

2.3.7 Culture can encourage cyberbullying

Research by Li (2007:439) and Baraldo and Chetty (2018:22) indicate that cyberbullying and culture are interrelated and that bullying online is a universal problem; it does not only happen in South Africa, but worldwide. Culture plays a major role in cyberbullying between different people with different cultures, this is because many people on cyberspace still shame other cultures for example, a recent status on Facebook that the researcher witnessed that was bad-mouthing the Swati people for exposing their bodies. The Swati people defended themselves on the posted status by insulting the poster's culture, who is a *IsiZulu*. They commented on about how the culture of the *IsiZulu* people was the worst considering the fact that unlike the other cultures the *IsiZulu* people do not go to the mountains for circumcision and that makes them half-men.

Li (2007:439) reveals that students from different countries and cultures behave differently with involvement in cyberbullying; every person believes that their culture is the best which may result in cyberbullying from different people with different believes. This is because every person then tries to defend their culture or religion by undermining other cultures online (Li, 2007:439). An example based on the researcher's observation on social networking sites are the memes/ images of other countries circulating on the internet about how one country or culture is better than the other, cyberbullies edit the culture of others on pictures and make fun of them on social networking sites.

2.3.8 Loneliness and low self-esteem may cause cyberbullying

Adolescents who are shy and often alone at schools are often the targets of cyberbullying. Saini (2012:836) states that there is a strong connection between becoming a victim of cyberbullying and loneliness. Bullies tend to take advantage of the victim's loneliness and use it to bully them online. People who are always lonely are often bullied because bullies know that they have no one to back them up (Saini, 2012:836). According to Hinduja and Patchin (2010a:616), victims of cyberbullying are most likely to be insecure and reserved and in most cases have a lower self-esteem than those who bully them (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a:616). The low self-esteem might be caused by the fact that they are being cyberbullied and they end up being bashful and losing confidence in themselves. Cyberbullies may also look for the withdrawn type of a person to bully because they believe they cannot fight back (Beran & Li, 2005:266; and Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2).

2.3.9 The misuse of the internet and social networking sites

Hill (2010:1) states that social networking web sites are a virtual setting where people nationwide communicate with each other through texting, they engage with one another throughout the world by updating their profiles with their own pictures, facts about their personal interests and ethics and they can also provide their own contact information.

Social networks give users an opportunity to create a profile, which is a representation of themselves for others to follow with the intention of among others; socialising with others, meeting and making new friends or starting romantic relationships and also finding new jobs (Gross & Acquisti, 2005:71). Social networking sites and the internet have created a social and interactive plartform where the internet users can engage and communicate with on a daily basis, despite their distance, by creating their own online profiles and providing their personal information. As social networks and the internet progress and get bigger, so does the level and strength of socialisation among the social network site users. Users are more likely to become more open and truthful on their online profiles and even when sharing their personal beliefs and views, sharing information and this makes them become exposed to internet harassment (Haron & Yusof, 2010:1).

The online environment has multidimensional implications to a person's social identity. A person may engage the cyberspace in many different ways for example, by entering a news group or E-mail discussion group, playing an online virtual game or even just browsing social network sites (Taylor & Spencer, 2004:235). In this way, users become their own promoters through the media as they become Felebs on Facebook (Felebs - Facebook celebrities are favoured by everyone and get many likes on Facebook) as they gain other users' attention and responses. They become known by everyone on social network by sharing their own opinions on cyberspace through status updates, debating on subjects or matters, communicating with each other as well as publishing personal experiences through blogs (Anon, 2011:2).

Online bullies regard people who post pictures as easier targets than those who do not have photos of themselves posted. There appears to be general consensus among researchers that although social networks cannot be identified as the only cause of cyberbullying, they do facilitate and help fuel cyberbullying as a deviant behaviour (Gross & Acquisti, 2005:71; Hill, 2010:1; Anon, 2011:1; and Smith, 2011:2). Smith (2011:1) puts forth that the research conducted by the 'British Electronic Communication Harassment Organisation' found that social networks are in most cases used as tools to harass and intimidate others online.

Adolescents make use of social media sites and some of their online activities can be viewed as risky in nature, for example posting flirty pictures online. Adolescence is a time of an important growth and in a digital world, both online and offline risk-taking behaviours are now prevalent in the lives of adolescents (Harris-Cik & Steyn, 2018:36). The internet, especially the social networking sites according to the research by Harris-Cik and Steyn (2018:36) provides students who have poor social skills with the dynamics to interact with other individuals on cyberspace.

2.4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS

Cyberbullying can take place between friends, families and strangers. Although many people victimised report knowing who the perpetrators are, some victims report that they do not know. Often the period of cyberbullying takes longer for victims who are victimised by people they know, such as a friend or someone closest to them. The main reason for this could be because the victim will always be reminded of the victimisation every time they see the perpetrator (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004:1309).

2.4.1 Cyberbullying amongst friends

Victims of cyberbullying usually had some kind of a relationship with the cyberbully, either as friends or acquaintances (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2). The cyberbully may feel that the victim had wronged him or her and therefore seek revenge by bullying them online. Crick and Nelson (2002:1) find that both males and females were more likely to be victimised by their friends. In a study conducted by Kowalski and Limber (2007:26), that examined middle school students' experiences with online bullying, perpetrators participating in the study reported online bullying by a student in their school, followed by a friend and strangers, indicating friends' role in the perpetration of cyberbullying. This study, (Kowalski & Limber, 2007:26), also indicates thatthe cyberbullies and victims are often people who were once close to each other and because of their differences, their relationship or friendships did not work out, and to deal with the broken friendships or relationships they find comfort in dealing with their emotions online, this is part of moving on for bullies.

According to Mesch (2009:1), most victims of cyberbullying are victimised by people they know. A cyberbully can be someone the victim has or had a close relationship with such as a family member or a friend, and this secrecy allows cyberbullies to behave in a manner in which they could never have in real life. Moreover, cyberbullies send rude messages, photos or even videos to the victims and the victims are not aware of the identities of the senders because they hide behind their phones. In most cases the bullies know their victims because they have a relationship with them, the cyberbullies use the information they know about the victims to expose them online (Mesch, 2009:2).

2.4.2 Cyberbullying amongst previous partners

Cyberbullying may occur as a result of a break-up or a failed romantic relationship. In most cases, this kind of cyberbullying takes place when the relationship between two romantic partners is about to end or is no longer working out. The victim's partner knows the victim closely, both on and offline and this may lead the partner to start cyberstalking the other partner to see if they are not cheating or try to find other reasons online why they are no longer interested in them (Pathé, 2002:43). Cyberstalking by a previous partner may consist of repeated phone calls, text messages and E-mails that are threatening and abusive in nature. Research by Bocij (2004:72) states that online bullying that is committed by a previous partner is more dangerous as compared to the one that is committed by a complete stranger. Victims of this form of cyberbullying often regret ever getting themselves involved with the cyberbully (Pathé, 2002:43).

2.4.3 Cyberbullying amongst strangers

Victims of cyberbullying can also be bullied by strangers (Li, 2007:446; and Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2). Victims falling under this category do not know who their bullies are and had never had any form of contact with them, either physically or online. Victims are often targeted or are exposed to cyberbullying because they are popular on cyberspace, putting them at a risk of being victimised, Pathé (2002:43).

Victims can also be victimised because they post beautiful pictures online and also because of their online expensive lifestyle (Pathé, 2002:43). Pitarro (2011:280) further states that there had been a number of strangers bullying people whom they do not know online, because the internet grant cyberbullies access to a vast amount of private information provided by the victim himself or herself.

2.4.4 Professional contacts

Students often become victims of cyberbullying because some lectures might take advantage of them sexually in exchange for favours such as an increased pass mark. Students often fall trap of this vulnerable circumstance because of desperation. In this type of cyberbullying the students are often the victims, for example, students who are not performing well academically are at a higher risk of being victimised by their lectures because they can be sexually harassed by them in exchange of higher marks (Barlow & Durand, 2009:20). The victims are often harassed through sexting, phone calls and social media which can cause great distress, disruption and disillusionment in their academic work.

2.5. CONSEQUENCES OF CYBERBULLYING

The consequences of cyberbullying are not different from that of traditional bullying (Trolley *et al.,* 2006:27; and Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2). Cyberbullying and traditional bullying both have a negative impact on the victims and can result in the embarrassment and humiliation of their victims (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2). The consequences of cyberbullying can be more painful and severe as compared to face-to-face bullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a:149; and Johnson *et al.,* 2016:2). Because of its cruelty, cyberbullying might negatively affect their victims and cause them to have low self-esteem, relationship problems, poor academic performance, delinquent behaviour, suicide and suicidal thoughts (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; Goodno, 2011a:400; and Johnson *et al.*, 2016:2).

Bullying which can take place online or physically has been linked with many harmful psychological and behavioural outcomes such as suicidal thoughts, dropping out of school, depression, anger, frustration, embarrassment, fear, aggressive behaviours and fighting as well as the use of substances (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a:209; and Payne, 2014:107).

Based on the incidence and cruelty of cyberbullying, adolescents are more likely to show or express more psychological and depressing effects as an outcome of cyberbullying (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; Tokunaga, 2010:283, 2006). The most frequent effects of online bullying experienced by students were found to be school dropout, truancy, decline in school performance, rejecting family members, low self-esteem, despair and sadness (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008:142; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008:1312; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010:204; Li, 2010:1779; Badenhorst, 2011:1; and Mark & Ratliffe, 2011:94). The effect of cyberbullying is more easily perceived as compared to that of face-to-face bullying.

Based on the research study by Popovac and Leoschut (2012:2), South Africans are found to be the highest users of mobile technology and social networking sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Mxit, Twitter, BBM and MySpace. Social networking sites have benefits such as academic purposes and socialisation and identity exploration but, on the other hand, social networking sites can elso expose adolescents to cyber victimisation such as harassment, pornography, hurtful information and upsetting images (Popovac & Leoschut, 2012:1).

Social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Mxit and Twitter are websites that encourage users to post profile pictures of themselves, as well as their personal information such as a name and contact details and the user's interests and journals so that they can make new friends online. In this age and time, social networking sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp are a way of life for many adolescents; many adolescents are on social networking sites and feel that their life would not be complete without them, Haron and Yusof (2010:1).

Although the intention of social networking sites was to connect users with each other and to enable them to socialise with one another, adolescents often engage in abusive and risky behaviours on cyberspace, which can result in harmful consequences. The disadvantages of engaging in social networks may have harmful results. Cyberbullying is one of the disadvantages that come with adolescents being on social networks (Haron & Yusof, 2010:1).

2.5.1 Social media and suicidal risks on university students

Feinberg and Robey (2010:2) Hinduja & Patchin, (2010:209a); and Johnson, *et al* (2016:2) note that adolescents who are bullied, or who bully others, are at higher risk for suicidal thoughts, attempts, and successful suicides. The connection between depression, decreased self-worth, hopelessness, low self-esteem, anxiety, fear and loneliness are all proven by research that they can lead victims to have suicidal thoughts or even commit suicide. Cyberbullying and suicide-related behaviour are strongly related, this means that any youth who is an active internet user and has reported any involvement with cyberbullying actions might be at an elevated level of suicidal thoughts (Johnson *et al.,* 2016:2). Adolescents who participate in social networks are at a higher risk of suicide related behaviour than those individuals who do not report any involvement or engagement of any sort with cyberbullying behaviour (Tokunaga, 2010:283).

The research of Belnap (2011:501) reveals that a number of victims of cyberbullying experienced or are experiencing harmful emotional warning signs such as: depression, self-harm and suicidal ideation as compared to those who are not affected by cyberbullying (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; and Smit, 2015:1). Research by Hinduja and Patchin (2010a:209) find that increased exposure of cyberbullying acts, specifically repetitive harassment, position individuals at an even greater risk for developing negative psychological symptoms such as suicidal thoughts. Individuals who as a result of cyberbullying, experience depression are also at greater risk for developing other mental health issues such as self-harm and suicidal ideation or even committing suicide, because they are not strong enough to handle the pressure that cyberspace comes with (Feinberg & Robey; 2010:2; and Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a:209).

Cyberbullying is connected to negative impacts on the victims and has pushed many students to commit suicide in few cases. Ultimately, cyberbullying can have severe consequences, being related to incidents of self-harm and suicidal ideation. Suicidal attempts are not only limited to victims of cyberbullying, Hinduja and Patchin (2010a:209) note that the bullies are also at risk of suicidal attempt.

2.5.2 The psychological effects of cyberbullying on university students

The psychological effect of cyberbullying is more traumatising than face-to-face bullying because it is more humiliating and happens in a public space where many people can witness it. Cyberbullying exposure means that everyone can witness the victim's humiliation online that may lead the victim to suffer from anxiety and depression and in some cases, even result in suicide (Beran & Li, 2005:266; Feinberg & Robey; 2010:2; and Johnson *et al.*, 2016:2). Studies by Beran and Li (2005:266), Feinberg and Robey (2010:2), and Hinduja and Patchin (2010b:616) show that cyberbullies tend to have higher and lower self-esteem than those who are not bullies.

Cyberbullying can cause many consequences such as feeling frustrated, angry (Pathé, 2002:51; Bocij, 2004:80; Drahokoupilová, 2007:152; Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; Popovac & Leoschut, 2012:4; and Conburn *et al.,* 2015:568), confused and feeling responsible (Mishna, McLuckie & Saini, 2009:108; and Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2). Youth who receive or whose naked pictures have been redistributed on the internet or any other social media often feel humiliated, embarrassed and offended (Conburn *et al.,* 2015:568; and Baraldo & Chetty, 2018:22). Individuals who are bullies or victims of cyberbullying have reported high levels of depression in all four forms of bullying, physical, verbal, relational and cyber (Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:94). This depression has resulted in an examination of cyberbullying as a phenomenon in several unfortunate cases of teen suicide (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010:209a; and Payne, 2014:27). Furhermore, the consequences of cyberbullying can also include suicidal behaviour, and it is a type of bullying that is often hidden from adults (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2).

2.5.3 Academic effects of cyberbullying on university students

Cyberbullying victims might experience challenges and complications in their educational level. For example, the victim might find it hard to concentrate in school, cheat in a school test, be absent from school without a valid reason, assault other students or forget to write their school assignments because of the trauma they are currently experiencing (Popovac & Leoschut, 2012:5). This might result in the victim's failure or not doing well in school like they used to before the victimisation (Li, 2007:438; and Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2).

The effects of cyberbullying can therefore expand to the school environment and also affect the interpersonal relationships of both the bully and the victim. The impacts of cyberbullying may indirectly affect the school operations, other students, principals, teachers and other school leaders. School management might find themselves having to deal with the consequences of cyberbullying and the affected student/s. This might force them to establish their power over cyberbullying actions that might not even be taking place at the school but outside school. They are forced to intervene because they are affected by the behaviour (Feinberg & Robey, 2008:10). Cyberbullying is both frightening and disruptive and can interfere with the adolescent's academic activities and students who were bullied online reported problems at school; they were not attending classes regularly, could not pay attention on their school work and also their marks dropped, (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2).

2.5.4 Effects on personal relationships: University students' correlation

Victims of cyberbullying typically do not take their friendship and family relationships seriously and therefore withdraw from their family members and friends (Alsakerg & Cutziwiller, 2009:90). Prince and Dalgleish (2010:55) support that victims often act out with aggression towards family members and friends as an attempt to handle the frustration and emotional experiences that result from being cyberbullied. Some victims isolate themselves from their family members because they feel less supported or misunderstood and this in most cases leads the victims not to be close with their family members and friends.

Victims of cyberbullying may sometimes feel ashamed and worried about their lives and this might lead them to not be honest with their care-givers. They often lose interest in school and school activities, as such they might start faking illnesses in order to be absent from school because they do not want to come into contact with the cyberbully. This might leave the parents extremely concerned about their child's physical and psychological health (Prince & Dalgleish, 2010:55).

Victims of cyberbullying live in fear of being victimised and harassed again and again. This might cause them to hate doing things they used to enjoy such as spending quality time with family members or going out with friends. Victims often look down on themselves, which may cause them to also look down on their loved ones as well, which in turn will damage their relationship with family (Alsakerg & Cutziwiller, 2009:90).

Therefore, the researcher relates that the victims of cyberbullying are also more likely to feel insecure, uncertain and unsure about themselves. They are also less likely to show their emotions at home, care-givers who have also experienced cyberbullying online may begin to doubt their abilities to accomplish their duties at home, leading to unstable families. As soon as cyberbullying becomes evident, some parents will fear for their children's protection so much that their parenting skills are changed to becoming unfair and strict, for example, using the internet at home for school purposes only and not for socialising. As a result, this can adversely affect an individual's quality of life, because now their decisions are influenced by previous painful experiences which can consequently be disadvantageous in terms of health, relationships and daily living.

2.6. PROFILE OF TYPICAL CYBERBULLING VICTIMS

Feinberg and Robey (2010:2) in their research study indicate that some students are more vulnerable and exposed to the dangers of cyberbullying than other students. Just like cyberbullies, victims of cyberbullying are most likely to be female students as compared to male students, and in most cases online victims are older adolescents than younger children. Approximately half of the victims of cyberbullying are also targets of traditional bullying.

2.6.1 Age as a factor influencing cybervictimisation

Age is one of the factors in cybervictimisation (Tokunaga, 2010:280). Cyberbullying is a problem that mostly affects adolescents. According to a study by Tokunaga (2010:280) about its nature and effects on adolescents, and more particularly university students, age has been found to be one of the factors increasing the likelihood of being a cybervictim. However, cyberbullying can occur at different age levels. Adolescents between the ages of 18-29 were found to be at a higher risk of being victimised online as compared to the older people (Tokunaga, 2010:280).

The study conducted by Tokunaga (2010:280) shows that adolescents in high school are more likely to become cybervictims. Tokunaga (2010:280) states that despite inconsistencies in data, literature indicates an association between age and cybervictimisation, with the greatest number of incidents occurring from 15-30 years of age (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009b:4). A study by Scholtz *et al.* (2015:95) confirm that youth between the ages of 18 to 35 use the internet more than older people. Youth are most likely to have high levels of internet self-efficacy than older people, and use the internet for entertainment activities such as social networks (Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:93). But at the same time, in examinations of online risk, children are often portrayed as innocent, exposed to risky online behaviours and in need of protection.

2.6.2 Gender as a factor influencing cybervictimisation

Ybarra and Mitchell, (2004:1309); Li, (2007:439); as well as Payne (2014:25), explain a relationship between gender and being involved in cybervictimisation as connecting. Some studies, including that of Burton and Mutongwizo (2009b:6), indicate that there is a correlation between gender and cyberbullying and that girls are at a higher chance of being cybervictims when compared with boys (Li, 2007:439). Beran and Li (2005:266) and Hinduja and Patchin (2010b:20), report that 21.8% of girls and 19.5% of boys indicate that they had been victimised online (Beran & Li, 2005:266; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010:20b). Although 14.1% of females and 18.5% of males indicated that they had been the perpetrators of cyberbullying.

Other studies, however, indicate that girls often report incidents of cyberbullying as compared to boys (Li, 2007:439), while boys are more likely to become cyberbullies, girls often are more likely to become victims of cyberbullying (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004:1309; Li, 2007:439; Willard, 2007:38; and Slonje & Smith, 2008:148). Slonje and Smith (2008:148) state that despite all these inconsistencies, there may be a slightly important rate of incidents amongst girls, as there is in relational bullying compared to physical bullying amongst boys. Reasoning for this could be attributed to the proliferation of social media platforms, which can be used to expand relational bullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010a:209).

Li (2007:439) points out that traditional bullying and cyberbullying follow the same method when it comes to gender, with males being most bullies as compared to females. Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Daciuk, and Solomon (2010:365) state that both females and males engage in cyberbullying equally, the only difference is the type of bullying they engage themselves into. Girls are more likely to engage in indirect bullying (rumour spreading or impersonating someone else), while boys are more likely to engage in direct or overt bullying (threatening) (Mishna *et al.,* 2010:365).

Odora and Matoti (2015:405) state that girls are more prone to communicate with social networks and text messages, as a result it makes sense to expect that the difference in gender perpetration of cyberbullying would not be as marked as in traditional bullying. Environmental aspects are also found to have negative effects on how the genders react to technology, in that exposure to gender specific roles, expectations and attitudes through the media and educational materials affect adolescents' access and use of computers (Kirmani, Davis & Kalyanpur, 2009:16). In their study on cyberbullying, Juvonen and Gross (2008:500) find that girls were more frequent users of E-mail, profile sites, blogs and cell phones than boys. As a result, Juvonen and Gross (2008:500) state that girls are more drawn to electronic meanness and seem to have more social power as compared to boys.

Mason (2008:1) found that male cyberbullies rated 22% as opposed to 12% of females, but there was no major difference in the genders regarding being victims. However, a study by (Li, 2007:439) found that girls were more likely to be cybervictims as compared to boys and the perception of the researchers was that girls were more involved in cyberbullying than boys. Popovac and Leoschut (2012:3) find that girls were most likely to be involved in cyberbullying than boys. They point out that this could be because of the sample conducted consisted of more girls than boys.

Li (2007:439), as well as Popovac and Leoschut (2012:3) argue that males often take part in traditional face to face bullying whereas females engaged more into cyberbullying. Mugoni (2011:np), highlights the dangers of the internet especially to women. The author states that more people are sharing personal information online, 57 per cent of young women (18 to 34) prefer to chat online through social networks rather than face-to-face, putting them at a risk of becoming the victims of cyberbullying. Mugoni (2011:1) concludes by labelling the internet as paradoxically both a tool of empowerment and a mechanism whereby women can be terrorised. Mugoni (2011:np) identifies women as vulnerable targets of cyberbullying.

A research study by Harris-Cik and Steyn (2018:36) confirm that boys log on to Facebook more often than girls (45% vs 36%), and girls make more use of Instagram and Tumblr (23% vs 17% and 6% vs 1% respectively) than boys. Adolescents share personal information such as pictures, identity document number, home addresses, telephone numbers and full names openly on social media sites and do not think about the risk that these personal information has on them. The information they provide contributes to their online victimisation because cyber bullies often use the information provided by the victims to bully them. However, research shows that although males and females adolescent share personal information at the same rates, this is not the case when it comes to mobile phone numbers – boys share their numbers more on social media sites (26%) than girls do [14%] (Harris-Cik & Steyn, 2018:36).

Li (2007:439) also finds that boys tend to engage in both traditional and cyberbullying, while girls are victims in both. Girls report incidences of traditional bullying and cyberbullying and boys are often embarrassed to report the incidence because they are afraid of being called 'cowards' by their friends, so they often keep it to themselves.

2.6.3 Level of study as a factor influencing cyberbullying

Cyberbullying among undergraduate students has become an issue of concern for university administrators (Johnson *et al.,* 2016:2). Victimisation of online bullying relates to various factors including academic achievement (Li, 2007:440). Academic achievement can be another factor relating to cyberbullying and cyber victimisation. Previous research by Popovac and Leoschut (2012:5) on bullying and victimisation found that academic achievement and academic pressure connect to bullying at tertiary institutions. Students with lower academic pressure are more likely to bully than students with higher academic pressure. Academic pressure refers to 'the expectations of peers and teachers (Popovac & Leoschut, 2012:5).

2.6.4 Victims of cyberbullying have an insecure personality

University students who are submissive or restless are often the ones who are bullied than those students who do not show those features. Students who are also lacking confidence are often bullied because other students tend to take advantage of their insecurity and fear and use it to intimidate them (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2). For example, those students who always post insecure posts and present a lack of confidence online are believed to be anxious by cyberbullies, therefore granting them an opportunity to bully them in the online environment. Cyberbullies often see them as the perfect person to bully online because they feel like they are mentally and physically stronger than them, and they can also use their insecure posts to cyberbully them, for example the victim might post a status online such as *'I feel ugly'* and the bully can comment that it is true that they are ugly and look horrible.
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2.6.5 Addiction to the internet and social networking sites

Another factor which could possibly be related to victimisation of students online, and which has been largely overlooked in current literature is the relationship between addiction of the internet usage and cyber victimisation. Spending too much time on the internet, especially on social networking sites can also lead to cyber victimisation because the victim comes into contact with the cyberbullies. The bullies might also use the information provided by the victim to harass the victim (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004:1311). Internet addiction**,** which can be defined as spending too much time using the internet to socialise with other people, can put an individual at a higher risk of being victimised, because the individual is in the same space as cyberbullies (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004:1311).

 Finn (2004:2) states that many research studies conducted on cyberbullying and the dangers of social networks highlight that university students are targeted because they are more exposed to cyber technology (Finn, 2004:1). Beran and LI (2005, 267) put forth that students at tertiary level have easy ascess to computers, this is because over a million computers are available at higher institutions of learning and it is further estimated that over 90% of these computers are connected to the internet. Cyberbullying amongst undergraduate college students has become a concern for university administrators (Johnson *et al.*, 2016:3).

2.7. REASONS STUDENTS ARE RELUCTANT TO REPORT CYBERBULLYING INCIDENTS

Many university students are reluctant to report incidents of cyberbullying. They fail to report the incidence of cyberbullying to the relevant people such as the police, teachers at schools or even parents at home because they fear retaliation, feel ashamed, or do not want to worry their parents. In most cases, adolescents who are most vulnerable to cyberbullying are the least likely to report or tell anyone about the violence (Mishna *et al.,* 2009:111). Some of the reasons why they do not disclose their abuse will be discussed below.

2.7.1 Victims of cyberbullying fear that the abuse might get worse

Many adolescents do not report incidents of cyberbullying to relevant individuals, this might be because they are afraid that the bully would get even and harass them even worse (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; and Li, 2010:383). The victims end up fearing for their lives and not reporting the victimisation to the relevant people or seek help. Victims believe that reporting the matter would give bullies even more reasons to bully them (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; and Li, 2010:383). They fear that the bully will get revenge and become even more abusive, because of that, adolescents keep the harassment as a secret and choose not to talk to anyone about it (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2). They fear that the cyberbully could get back and escalate the problem.

2.7.2 Victims of cyberbullying regard their bully as a friend

A number of adolescents are cyberbullied by individuals who they regard as their friends, and as a result they fail to report the victimisation. Cyberbullying tends to be much subtler and in most cases occurs between friends. The more a victim considers their bully to be a friend, the less likely that victim is to tell about the abuse, mainly because the victims do not wish to lose the friendship; regardless of the harassment they experience (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004:1309).

2.7.3 Victims are reluctant to report because they feel responsible for the harassment

Victims of cyberbullying often feel that they in a way encouraged the abuse and therefore they deserve to be cyberbullied (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2). Therefore, they do not report the online bullying because they feel responsible for the victimisation; they believe that somehow they triggered the bullying, for example, if the victim unintentionally does not include the bully in a WhatsApp group chat and then the bully starts calling the victim names on social networks.

Victims of cyberbullying therefore rarely talk to anyone about the bullying experienced, vmight also feel that bullying is normal and not see it as an immoral act (Mishna *et al.,* 2009:111). Many adolescents are reluctant to report cyberbullying incidents, even when their safety is threatened because they feel responsible and the possibility of criminal sanctions may further exacerbate the reluctance to disclose (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2). Youth are not likely to disclose when they or someone they know is being bullied online, even when they feel a danger of extinction from the cyberbully or at a risk of serious harm from the cyberbully (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2).

2.7.4 Victims believe reporting cyberbullying will not make a difference

Victims do not report cyberbullying because they believe it is pointless and nothing can be done about the bullying they experienced online and therefore choose not to tell anyone about it (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; and Li, 2010:382). People who are bullied online often argue that reporting the victimisation is no use and it will even make things worse, especially because they believe that the government, police in particular do not take the matter seriously (Willard, 2006:55).

Adolescents often do not report the abuse they experience online because they believe that adults, police or even teachers would not regard the incidence as immoral activity. They believe that they would not identify certain actions as bullying, for example, posting a video of a friend on Facebook without the owner's consent. The parents would sometimes not see it as victimisation but as a joke, so reporting online bullying becomes difficult for adolescents. Disclosing cyberbullying according to the youth might jeopardise the relationship with their victimisers, some individuals still regard cyberbullying as not serious because they believe that there are more serious matters to be taken into consideration (Willard, 2006:55).

2.7.5 Victim's fear of their mobile phones being taken away

Many cybervictims tell no one about their victimisation; because they fear that their mobile devices might be taken away from them, which in their opinion is even worse than the harassment they are experiencing (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; Li, 2010:383). Mobile phones and the privileges they come with, such as the internet, helps them to do their school work, offer affordable rates of communicating with friends and keep them updated about what is happening around (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; and Odora & Matoti 2015:399). Cybervictims fear that they might get themselves into trouble with their caregivers, and this might result in their mobile phones taken away or restrictions with the use of the internet. Since technology has become part of their daily lives, they feel like they cannot cope without it, therefore restricting access to the internet or other technology will affect their lives negatively (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; and Odora & Matoti 2015:399).

2.7.6 Victims do not report the incidence to maintain their relationship with the cyberbully

The victims of cyberbullying may also be scared to report the incidences of cyberbullying or obtaining support because they fear that they might lose the relationship if they report the incidence. To maintain the relationship, they make a decision to keep quiet about the online bullying experienced caused by those they consider to be their loved ones and not take steps against it, for the sake of their friendship. When people are being bullied by someone they know, such as a friend or a family member, they regularly "*rationalise or minimise the behaviour*" in order to keep the relationship (Mishna, Wiener & Pepler, 2008:568). Many students also feel that it was necessary to deal with the cyberbully themselves and not involve other people because students think that adults would not even try to prevent the victimisation (Li, 2007:447).

2.8. THE ROLE PLAYERS IN CYBERBULLYING

2.8.1 The bully

The bully can be regarded as the perpetrator and can also be described as someone who craves a feeling of power and control over others. The bully impulsively gains satisfaction from causing pain to others and dominating them (Fanti & Kimonis, 2013:397). Urbanski and Permuth (2009:45) explain the following different styles which a bully can adopt, namely proactive, reactive, extrovert, introvert or passive:

- **Proactive:** proactive bullies crave feelings of control and authority and they do not tend to be emotional, controlled or intentional in their actions. Examples of proactive bullies can be Facebook users who feel like they are in control of every situation and that only their thoughts count. Proactive bullies would post something like *'they call me BossLady because I am not afraid of anyone, if you want to challenge me comment now'*

- **Reactive**: reactive bullies are often the emotional ones and are more impulsive, and they also tend to be paranoid and constantly feel threatened. This causes them to act with violence, which they feel is acceptable. Reactive bullies tend to take social media posts very seriously and personal; they would also express their feelings through the social media. For example; *'if they fought with their significant other they would post it on their Facebook wall using violence and pouring out their emotions to their significant other'*

- **Extrovert:** extrovert bully is sociable, disloyal and presents with an angry character. These kinds of bullies are forceful in getting their way. The extrovert bullies are social netwok addicts, they are always online and they always post angry status messages and would tag people to their posts.

- **Introvert:** an introvert bully is very controlling and selfish. This type of bully has a tendency to communicate with ease, but is usually deceptive, lying and devious. Introvert bullies are often very active on social networking sites and have many

followers, example: they have 1000+ followers and often their status messages are hurtful to the next person, they post to have many likes and comment and do not consider how the person they posting nasty things about is feeling.

- **Passive:** a passive bully is not involved in any acts of bullying, these bullies are self-doubting, dependant, and unsure where they fit in which makes them to follow and support the perpetrators who perform acts of bullying. Examples of passive bullies are those individuals who wait for other cyberbullies to bully others and they gang up with them to bully their victim.

2.8.2 The victim

The victim in a bullying circumstance is anyone who is continuously faced with negative behaviours from the bully in the form of verbal assaults or psychological abuse (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009:50). Although it is not always easy to understand the reasons why a person is being bullied, it appears that factors such as race, ethnicity, social class, disability, sexual orientation or even certain personal characteristics may allow the bullying to take place (Rigby & Slee, 1991:19). Victims of cyberbullying often retaliate and respond to the online harassment, relying on the internet inherent of anonymity. Victims of cyberbully can be anyone who posts or comments on the internet.

The victim may also have low self-esteem, be insecure, lonely, disliked and may even present depressive symptoms. These symptoms might encourage the bully of online harassment to view them as the perfect victim, because they might believe that it will be hard for a shy or lonely person to share or talk about their bullying experiences with others. Two kinds of victims described by Urbanski and Permuth (2009:50) are namely passive victims and proactive victims. Passive victims are careful, introvert, reserved, non-assertive, may tend avoid and internalise problems.

The passive victims usually have problems connecting with their peers and may instead find it easier to share their online experiences with adults; proactive victims usually show a combination of concern and anger. In reaction to being bullied, they can be argumentative and aim to stand up for themselves, but this behaviour is usually disastrous (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009:51).

2.8.3 The bully-victim

The bully-victim can be described as those victims who become bullies online because they had been bullied by others themselves (Urbanski & Permuth, 2009:51). Examples of bully-victims are those individuals who bully others online because they had experienced cyberbullying themselves. This group is seen as the most awkward in terms of mental health and psychological problems. They tend to have poor academic performance and behavioural problems, socially isolated, having few friends and poor relationships with school and classmates.

2.8.4 The by-stander

A bystander can influence the bullying by cheering the bully on cyberspace or can be passive by witnessing the bullying and not taking part in it or getting involved by commenting or engaging in the online bullying (Urbanski & Permuth 2009:56). Urbanski and Permuth (2009:56) went on to describe the following different ways a bystander may react to a bullying situation on cyberspace as follows:

- **The follower:** by following, the bystander will not make a move and wait for the perfect opportunity to become involved in the bullying incidence taking place on cyberspace. For example; the bystander may not engage in the online bullying, however they may follow and read each and every comment that is pinned at the victim. They might follow the post on Facebook so that when the bully is harassing the victim they see all the notifications; the follower often achieves this by following the post, commenting or even liking others' comments on the post to ensure that they do not miss any notifications.

- **The reinforcer:** if a bystander reinforces, he or she offers support indirectly to the bully in the cyberspace in the form of comments. This might encourage the bully to go on with the bullying incidence. An example of this is when the bystander likes or reacts on the nasty comments made by the bully online, this often motivates the bully to harass the victim even more.

- **The observer:** the observer is conscious of the bullying incidence and is a spectator to it, but does not want to be caught up because of fear of victimisation. This kind of bystander observes the bullying incidence in silence, he or she does not comment, like or react but follows the post. The observer is different from the follower because at some point the follower will also engage in the online bullying whereas the observer is not interested in taking part in the bullying. The observer observes only and unlike the follower does not comment, react or like the posted status.

- **Opposition:** this involves a hate of the bullying behaviour and a need to help. An example of this is when the bystander tries to stop the cyberbullying by being a mediator. Unlike the defender, the opposition does take sides between the bully and the victim, the aim of the opposition is to stop the cyberbullying from taking place. The opposition does not encourage the bullying, an example is when the bully and the victim are harassing each other on a group chat and the opposition will comment by saying 'guys stop it'. The opposition does not focus on the bully only or the victim only but rather at both the bully and the victim to stop the bullying.

- **Defender:** the defender will stand up against the bully and try to stop the behaviour. An example of this is when the bystander is supporting the victim and the bully and not encouraging the online bullying. The defender, unlike the opposition is taking sides and siding with the victim and will try to defend the victim by harassing the bully. An example of this is when the bully writes a status message that states, for example, *'Mahlodi is a whore'* and the defender will defend Mahlodi by commenting something like *'whores call others whores'.* Consequently, the researcher states that the response of the bystander can therefore have an influence on the bullying situation online or discourage it.

2.9. TYPES OF CYBERBULLIES

The 06 types of cyberbullies have been identified. The discussion that follows will be based on these types of cyberbullies.

2.9.1 Entitlement bullies

Entitlement bullies are those bullies who consider themselves superior than others and believe that they have the right to harass or degrade others, especially if the victim is different from them. Victims of entitlement bullies are often picked on because bullies believe that they are different or inferior (Willard, 2007:37). An example of this are victims who are cyberbullied simply because they are gay or lesbian, or even those individuals who are bullied because they have mental disorders such as being slow learners.

2.9.2 Revenge bullies

Adolescents that are not physically strong to fight back the traditional bullies may more likely take revenge for themselves by using computer communications to fight back the bullies. That is, an adolescent who experienced traditional bullying may look for justice and thereby engage in cyberbullying to get their power back (Tokunaga, 2010:279). They may pay revenge themselves to those who bullied them on cyberspace by also bullying their victimisers online. Some might argue that bullying in the traditional logic needs a person to be physically powerful, while cyberbullying does not require one to be physical strong; the cyberbully just needs a mobile phone or a computer and the connection to the internet (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2).

2.9.3 By-standers

Bystanders are people who are part of the problem, they are individuals who support the bully or those who watch the bullying from a distance, but do nothing to help the victim because they do not want to get involved (Payne, 2014:28). Bystanders who are part of the solution are those who do not encourage the bullying, they may try to stop the bullying, protest it, and provide support to the victim (Urbanski & Permuth 2009:56). For example, those who are part of the problem will encourage the victimisation by commenting and supporting what the bully is saying, the bully might write a status saying '*Mahlodi is a slut*' and their comment will be something like '*finally someone agrees with me*'. Those who are part of the solution might discourage the victimisation by commenting something like '*talk about it face to face and not on Facebook*'.

2.9.4 The vengeful angel

This type of bullies does not regard themselves as cyberbullies; they see themselves as vigilant mainly because they did not start the online bullying. They only get involved trying to protect a loved one, such as a friend or a family member who is being bullied on cyber space. An example of a watchful or vigilant cyberbully is someone who only bullies' others online because they are bullying someone they love. They do not initiate the bullying; they only engage in cyberbullying trying to protect those they love (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2).

2.9.5 The inadvertent cyberbullies

These types of cyberbullies engage in cyberbullying without even realising it. They do not intend to cause any harm online or even bully others, however their comments may hurt the person whom it is directed to. They just comment without even thinking about the consequences of their comments (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2). An example of inadvertent cyberbully is someone who reacts to a Facebook status message that is bullying another person with a laughing emoji or laughs at the status message.

2.9.6 The power-hungry cyberbullies

These types of cyberbullies want to exert their authority and control others on cyberspace with fear. In most cases, power-hungry cyberbullies are victims of physical bullying. These types of cyberbullies are physically small and are often targeted by their peers for not being cool or popular. These kinds of victims hide behind their phones or computers to bully those who bullied them physically (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2).

2.10. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CYBERBULLYING AND TRADITIONAL BULLYING

Hinduja and Patchin (2014:3) describe seven characteristics that differentiate cyberbullying from traditional bullying: **(1)** For cyberbullying to take place, the bully must have a technological device, for example a mobile phone; **(2)** It is indirect because the bully does not come into contact with the victim, it can be anonymous; **(3)** The bully does not get to see the reaction of the victim **(4)** The variety of bystander roles in cyberbullying is more complex than in most traditional bullying (the bystander may be with the perpetrator when an act is sent or posted; with the victim when it is received; or with neither, when receiving the message or visiting the relevant internet site); **(5)** In traditional bullying the bully wants to gain status by bullying others physical.However in cyberbullying the bully does not even have to be physically strong **(6)** In cyberbullying, the audience is large as compared to traditional and, **(7)** It is not easy to escape cyberbullying because unlike physical bullying that requires face to face encounter, cyberbullying can happen anywhere and at anytime, it can also happen even when the bully and the victim are at different places or when the victim is offline.

Hinduja and Patchin (2014:3) address research findings that explain the factors that discriminate cyberbullying from traditional bullying. These factors consist of: technical proficiency, the not direct nature of cyberbullying, enlarged number of bystanders, that cyberbullying can spiral to wider audiences, and it might not be easy to escape from the violence since certain acts (i.e. Posting of a photo) can stay online for ever (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014:3).

Additionally, electronic bullying has specific characteristics that differentiate it from traditional forms of bullying, for example, its anonymous nature and the ability to use a choice of screen names, which may catch the attention of people to take part in this type of bullying more than other forms of bullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014:3). Cyberbullying can happen from home, at school and even when the victim or victims of cyberbullying are out having fun with friends (Mustacchi, 2009:80; Hinduja & Patchin, 2014:2). A study by Smith, Del Barrio and Tokunaga (2008) find that traditional bullying is more frequently occurring as compared to cyberbullying, however, cyberbullying was found to be more painful and sometimes not easy to notice because it is reported outside of school than during school hours.

In traditional bullying, boys are most likely to be the aggressors, whereas females are more likely to take part in indirect and relational cyberbullying, for example: girls are more likely to write a status message such as '*my friend is smelly*'. This is an indirect message because the bully does not specify which friend she is referring to. Because cyberbullying is quite indirect, researchers, Mitchell *et al.* (2001:383) state that females may be more caught up in cyberbullying compared to their male counterparts, however the technical aspect of cyberbullying may be of more interest to males (Kirmani *et al.,* 2009:17).

2.10.1 Anonymity of cyberbullying

In traditional bullying the victim gets to know who the perpetrator is, but this is not the case with cyberbullying. Bullies can, through fake character and falsified accounts, make a web of anonymity that makes it possible not to be exposed of their true identity. This false identity gives the bully the power to say and do things they would not normally do in public (Payne, 2014:23). Anonymity allow cyberbullies to feel invisible and untouchable, which increases the opportunity that they will take advantage of others (Burnham, Wright & Houser, 2011:5).

According to the DPT the cyberspace offers the cyberbullies an opportunity to remain anonymous which increases the likelihood of online victimisation, this is because the cyberbullies are aware that the chances of catching them are going to be slim when they are bullying other internet users anonymously (Siegel, 2010:72). DPT argues that every internet user should register their accounts with their real information such as names and identity document number in order to reduce cyberbullying. On the other hand, bullies can also post abusive, embarrassing, hurting messages, photos or even videos on social networks and these can go viral in minutes because they can be viewed by millions of people at once, even those who are not friends with the victim on social networks because they can be shared (Burnham *et al.,* 2011:5).

2.10.2 Accessibility of cyberbullying and physical distance

Another key difference between cyberbullying and traditional bullying is the ability of the perpetrator to reach well beyond physical boundaries to cause harm (Li, 2007:436; and Payne, 2014:23). In the past, the home was a safe place to be as compared to school, but now perpetrators are able to send hurting comments at any time, both day and night, making it difficult to escape from cyberbullying (Payne, 2014:23). Research by Tokunaga (2010:279) indicates that this harsh attack may possibly result in even greater damage when compared with traditional bullying. A further danger is the ability of a cyberbully to involve a wider audience. Harmful messages and images can be quickly and easily spread, increasing the victim's pain (Slonje & Smith, 2008:148).

The physical distance separating the victim and the cyberbully makes it easier for the bully to be cruel, nasty, sadistic and demonic in their text messages. It gives them the advantage to post things that they would not have the bravery to say face-to-face. For example, they may find it easier to call someone a witch or a slut online but face-to-face it may become difficult to call them by names (Adams, 2010:45; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010: 615b; and Payne, 2014:23).

2.10.3 Lack of feedback to cyberbullying

The lack of direct and immediate feedback, or the disinheriting effect of text-based communication account for another key difference between traditional school-yard bullying and cyberbullying (Payne, 2014:23). Without immediate feedback, which shows the victim's response to an upsetting message, the cyberbully may continue to taunt and tease persistently without fully appreciating the impact of his or her actions (Payne, 2014:23). The inherent disinhibitive nature of the online bullying makes the perpetrators not feel sorry for their victims, because they do not get to see how hurt they are or how well they are taking the hurtful messages (Slonje & Smith, 2008:805). Furthermore, a perpetrator may send a message that is supposed to be a joke and not to be taken seriously by the victim and the victim might misinterpret it and end up causing unnecessary harm.

2.10.4 The potential audience

The audience of cyberbullying is larger than that of traditional bullying because millions of people are using electronic media such as the internet and social networking sites. They also have access to IM platforms such as Facebook, Mxit (Mix It), BBM and WhatsApp, where information is also distributed broadly and fast (Kowalski & Limber, 2008:823; and Slonje & Smith, 2008:148). For example, once such content (such as a comment, status, picture, or video, among others) has been written on the internet, a social networking site or IM programme, it is almost impossible to erase it and it can be viewed, shared and redistributed by millions of people (Adams, 2010:45).

2.10.5 Gender differences in traditional and cyberbullying

A research study conducted by Payne (2014:25) found that males and females do not bully others in the same manner when it comes to cyberbullying. Mitchell *et al.,* (2001:383) find that in comparison to males, females were more likely to use cyberbullying as a way of gaining their power and social control over their peers.
As indirect and anonymous nature of cyber space is likely for the females to feel more comfortable engaging in bullying behaviours online than through direct attacks (Mitchell *et al.,* 2001:383). Unlike females, males were more involved in physical

bullying than online bullying. According to the research conducted by Payne (2014:26) males often engage in traditional bullying which later escalates in cyberbullying; males often engage in posting hurtful and aggressive messages on social networks with the aim of destroying the reputation of the victim. Upsetting messages using SMSs were also the most common form of online bullying experienced by males.

2.10.6 Absence of non-verbal clues

The absence of non verbal clues such as body language and emotional feelings is absent when commiting cyberbullying and therefore makes it a very dangerous act because the cyber bullies might not notice the effects they have on their victims unlike with traditional bullying. Due to lack of verbal clues, the perpetrators of online violence find it very difficult to notice whether their harassment on their victims has caused them to take the social exchange very far, whether they were hurt or whether their comments or posts have been misinterpreted, and whether the victims were not able to notice the harm that was caused and this may often diminish the likelihood of an empathic reaction (Popovac & Leoschut, 2012:4).

2.11. CYBERSPACES WHERE CYBERBULLYING IS MOST LIKELY TO OCCUR

2.11.1 Electronic-mail

An E-mail is a short form for electronic mail. It is a current day means of communication to send and receive messages using the internet. Although an E-mail has been shown to be a useful instructional aid for constructing an online social learning environment by providing students with greater access to peers (Willard, 2006:55), bullies use it to harass others by sending them harmful and threatening messages. The bully can send hurtful messages to a number of people within seconds (Snakenborg, 2011:91).

Naked or sexual exploiting pictures or videos of their victims can be attached in order to embarrass them online. Once received this videos or pictures can be forwarded to other people, making them to go viral in a short space of time and invading a person's privacy (Willard, 2006:55). The E-mail and social networks are the ideal medium for sending threatening messages as they are cheaper, affordable and convenient and they also give the perpetrators the opportunity to hide their identity by using fake accounts and anonymous E-mails (Mullen *et al.,* 2009:153).

2.11.2 Social networking sites

A social media site can be referred to as any website which permits for social communication between different individuals to take place (Willard, 2007:44; and Harris-Cik & Steyn, 2018:35). Students often use sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for academic learning, communication purposes and to have fun and the development of technology offers students many beneficial benefits such as educational benefits, self-learning and global awareness. However, the improvement of technology has negative consequences for example online victimisation, "Facebook depression", sexual harrassment and predation, and sexting (Harris-Cik & Steyn, 2018:35).

Social networks have become very popular amongst university students. Facebook and WhatsApp are the most popular social networking sites (Johnson, *et al* 2016:2). Facebook has an estimated 750 million visitors monthly and WhatsApp has an approximate 250 million users daily (Blazer, 2012:1). In 2011 it was found that 90 percent of adolescents were using social networking sites (Popovac & Leoschut, 2012:2).

2.11.3 Websites

A bully might use a website to create a page about his or her victim, whereby he or she posts abusive and harassing texts about that particular person (Willard, 2007:44). The plan of creating this website is to publicly expose that particular person and also to encourage others who hate him or her and to say their piece of mind about that person. This is more harmful because the victim is victimised by a number of people. An example of this is a group of people ganging up against one person, where everyone is firing their insults and harassing that person, adding more to the victimisation. An example of the most popular website created in South Africa is *#JacobZumaMustFall* (Smith & Slonje, 2010:250).

For reference; a website intended to bring the former South African President Mr Jacob Zuma to step down as the president of the republic was created. The researcher notes that citizens of South Africa were voicing their thoughts and opinions why Mr Zuma must step down as the president, however cyberbullies used this opportunity to bully Mr Zuma by calling him names and posting funny images of Mr Zuma on the website.

2.11.4 Video hosting sites

Examples of video hosting sites include YouTube, where everyone is given the chance to post any video of their choice. Cyberbullies often take advantage of this platform and use it to harass their victims by posting their videos without their permission. Cyberbullies often post inappropriate, nasty, embarrassing videos of their victims to make fun of them. These videos can be viewed by a million of people globally, especially because the site is well known and easy to access (Li, 2007:20). The bully might also secretly take a video of their target without them noticing while they are doing something embarrassing, for example, while dancing and post it online (Li, 2006:159).

2.12. PREVENTION OF CYBERBULLYING

Hinduja and Patchin (2014:5) put forth that there are various methods in which universities, parents, and students can help stop cyberbullying and intervene when cyberbullying has taken place. The preventative methods that Hinduja and Patchin (2014:6) suggest for universities contain elements of increasing knowledge and understanding of cyberbullying concerns; empowering educators, students, parents, and community members with information of how to prevent and react to cyberbullying; offering warning to cyberbullies and their care-givers about the consequences of cyberbullying; and efficiently controlling and monitoring of online activities (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; and Hinduja & Patchin, 2014:6).

Preventing cyberbullying should be a collective effort on the part of schools, families, students and society as a whole (Li, 2010:384). Educating people about what constitutes cyberbullying, how to use technological devices effectively and recognising possible signs and symptoms associated with being a victim or a bully of online bullying can be the first step to prevention (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2). This can help parents, educators and psychologists in developing intervention programmes and prevention strategies to stop cyberbullying (Williams & Guerra, 2007:15).

Raising awareness is an important action in creating partnerships and tackling the problem of cyberbullying, this will help parents to get detailed information about cyberbullying and how serious cyberbullying is (Li, 2007:439). The awareness can make them to be aware of the seriousness of the problem and the consequences on the well-being of their children (Li, 2010:384). Adolescents need to be taught about online risks at a younger age through educational programmes and awareness and be provided with guidance in order to keep themselves safe from becoming victims of online bullying. Students who experienced cyberbullying could also be discouraged to get revenge on those who cyberbullied them online because their retaliation could promote or encourage intensive harassment from the online bully. Moreover, it can also make it unclear as to who started the harassment (Beran & LI, 2007:439).

Beran and LI (2007:439) put forward that awareness campaigns about the internet such as social networks and chat rooms should be made available on the internet and at schools, in order for students to thoroughly familiarise themselves with the particular site of the internet, cyberbullying and its security measures (Bocij, 2004:179). This will help make students more aware of the possible dangers of online communicative technology and enable them to access and implement security measures to protect their online security.

2.12.1 Educational programmes

The most important preventive action of cyberbullying is to educate students about it (Li, 2007:439; and Hinduja & Patchin, 2014:6). People should be well informed about the different types of cyberbullying, their seriousness and impacts on the lives of victims and also that every person who takes part in cyberbullying will be subjected to punishment. It is very significant to educate people about problems relating to online bullying in order to prevent it (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2).

2.12.2 Getting parents involved

Hinduja and Patchin (2014:5) state that students report that they felt free to report a cyberbullying incidence to their parents than anybody else because they knew that parents would mediate reasonably and logically and not make the bullying become worse than before. Moreover, students felt that they can be more open and free to talk about their cyberbullying experiences to their parents. Adolescents believe that parents will understand their situation better (Feinberg & Robey, 2008:10; and Hinduja & Patchin, 2014:5).

2.12.3 Getting schools involved

Feinberg and Robey (2008:10); Hinduja and Patchin (2014:6) suggest that school leaders may develop a code of conduct that deals with cyberbullying. School leaders must pay attention to both the cyberbullies and the cybervictims and also to notice the early signs and symptoms of cyberbullying (Feinberg & Robey, 2010:2; and Hinduja & Patchin, 2014:7).

The university management must also understand its consequences and work together with interested parties such as parents, other schools' staff members and the government to stop this immoral activity (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014:7). The impact of cyberbullying on education is a circle that goes from one student, to a group of students, to the school and education system as a whole, and therefore needs an urgent response before getting worse (Beran & LI, 2007:439). Schools can also help prevent cyberbullying by initiating comprehensive programs to fight cyberbullying; this can include a detailed and unified policies as well as effective programmes to educate students about cyberbullying (Beran & LI, 2007:439; Feinberg & Robey, 2008:10; and Hinduja & Patchin, 2014:7).

2.13. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE REVIEWED LITERATURE

In this chapter the appropriate literature was looked at. The nature of cyberbullying and the previous research based on cyberbullying were examined. Although cyberbullying is a broad topic, the study focused on the aims and research questions of the present research study, as a result the researcher was focused on the issues set out in chapter One. The next chapter [Three] introduces the criminological theories that explain the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS ON CYBERBULLING

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Continuing from paragraph 1.5 of chapter One of this study; the applied theorentical frameworks are further discussed in this chapter (Three). New forms of technology have given bullies an opportunity to bully other individuals online using the internet and other forms of social networking sites. Theories function as possible explanations for a particular phenomenon (McMurray, 1955:1), which in this study is the phenomenon of victimisation, more particularly, cyberbullying. Theories must adhere to scientific testing in order to bring truth and comprehension. Criminological theories attempt to explain why some people commit crime and the reason for certain crime patterns (Van der Westhuizen, 2011:123). Tibbetts and Hemmens (2010:3) denote a theory as a set of concepts bonded together by a series of statements to offer clarification on why an event or a phenomenon occurs. Theories may also shed light on why certain people are more prone to victimisation than others. Thus, it is important to understand the theories pertaining to cyberbullying as a means to contextualise the criminal activity.

The Deviant Place Theory and Routine Activities Theory are used to explain the exposure and effects of the UL students [Undergraguate and postgraduate] to cyberbullying. The two theories are chosen because they can be able to describe the exposure of students to cyberbullying. The DPT was first developed by Stark in the year 1987, whereas the RAT was developed by Cohen and Felson in 1979. The RAT and DPT pay more attention on how daily routine activities and deviant places create opportunities for perpetrators to commit offensive behaviour. Both theories fall under the Classical School framework which assumes that offenders are rational and able to make decisions about what they consider to be right and wrong (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010: 103). The RAT aims to explain why a person is victimised, or offended, by explaining how his or her individual routines or lifestyles online behaviour increases their victimisation while the DPT seeks to explain how deviant places can contribute to the victimisation of certain individuals.

3.2. DEVIANT PLACE THEORY

The DPT suggests that individuals become victims of crime when they are being exposed to dangerous places (Siegel, 2010:72). The dangerous places for the purpose of this study refer to the internet and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp. Individuals who engage in social networking sites which are not organised have a greater chance of being victimised online regardless of their own actions or lifestyle.

The DPT also stipulates that the more people visit dangerous places, the more likely they will be exposed to victimisation (Hindelang *et al.,* 1978:251; Li, 2007:439; and Siegel, 2010:72). The researcher argues that deviant places such as Facebook and WhatsApp are densely populated and unorganised, making it easier for the cyberbullies to victimise other users online. Personal victimisation is also linked to the amount of time an individual spends in dangerous places (Siegel, 2010:72), which in this research refers to online social networking sites. The DPT would suggest that taking precautions in the cyberspace is useless, because it is the space and not an individual's behaviour that influences the victimisation and the behaviour of the individual has little influence over cyberbullying (Siegel, 2010:72).

When applying the DPT to cyberbullying, people who post every detail of their life on the internet and social networks increase their exposure of becoming the victims of cyberbullying because such posts can attract cyberbullies, putting them at a higher risk of being victimised (Siegel, 2010:73). Behaviours such as posting naked pictures on the internet, checking in about an individual's whereabouts and also providing personal details about an individual's daily life can increase a person's chance of becoming a victim of cyberbullying (Scholtz, *et al.,* 2015:94). The greater the amount of time someone is exposed to social media life, the greater their chances of becoming the victims of online bullying (Li, 2007:439).

University students who tend to spend most of their time in a crowded place such as cyberspace are also at a higher risk of being victimised online, because they come to contact with cyberbullies most of the time, putting them at a higher risk as compared to those students who are not active users of the internet (Stark, 1987:897; and Li, 2007:439). The more someone visits a high crime area which in this regard is the internet and social networking sites, the more chances they are of becoming the victims of cyberbullying (Siegel, 2010:73). According to the DPT, when an individual makes use of cyber technology and takes part in cyber activities he or she is at risk to victimisation of cyberbullying (Li, 2007:439).

Stark (1987:896) and Li (2007:439) argue that certain places, especially those that are not well organised, encourage criminal activities to take place. For example, it is easy to cyberbully someone on Facebook as compared to physical bullying, because on Facebook they can bully someone and then later deactivate their account, living no proof that the bullying indeed occurred, also because social media and internet do not have mechanisms to prohibit individuals from engaging in cyberbullying.

Individuals post whatever they want to post online, at anytime, whether good or bad and this gives cyberbullies a chance to bully others (Stark, 1987:896; and Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:94). Criminals become attracted to areas where social norms and morals are broken down. For example, in cyberspaces there are different people with different morals and social norms, as such it is easier for bullies to bully others because not everyone defines cyberbullying the same way, and some people still bully others without even realising it. In cyberspaces there is no guiding rule that identifies certain acts as immoral, thus giving the bullies a chance to engage in immoral activities (Stark, 1987:893).

The DPT suggests that the likelihood of victimisation is associated with the habitual activities that individuals engage in, in their everyday lives. For example, students who spend most of their time on social networks are most likely to be victims of cyberbullying, this is because they open possible victimisation by being in the spaces where cyberbullying is most likely to take place (Levin & Lindesmith, 1937:15).

According to the DPT, taking part in cyber space opens doors for an individual to become a victim of cyberbullying and individuals are exposed to cyber victimisation when they are exposed to deviant places such as Facebook and E-mail. This is because online bullying can only be committed in a deviant place such as cyberspace, when individuals are in a deviant place; they are vulnerable to cyber victimisation.

Students who visit deviant places such as online chatrooms are at a risk of being bullied. Individuals who refuse to give out personal information to strangers on cyberspace reduce their risk of victimisation. Mullen *et al.* (2009:155) infer that cyberbullying is conducted in a secret approach, with anonymity as an attractive benefit to the bullies. Miller and Morris (2012:76) have the same opinion that the danger side of the internet is maintained through user anonymity, being in a deviant place such as Facebook with an anonymous account makes it easier for bullies to harass other users online because they know that catching them is going to be difficult, because of this students know that discovering them is going to be almost impossible and this increases the chances of students to bully other students online (Popovac & Leoschut, 2012:4).

The DPT states that to avoid cyberbullying students should not engage in cyberspaces where they come into close contact with cyberbullies, these cyberspaces can include the social networking sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, E-mails, YouTube, Mxit, MySpace (Li, 2007:439). Students often exit group chats on social networking sites that was created with the intention of sharing academic work, this is because they are avoiding being cyberbullied in such groups or even removed, resulting in them not having any information regarding their academical activities and thus leading to academic problems. Students who exit academic group chats are trying to avoid cyberbullying by not being in places where there are high risks of victimisation.

University students who remain in the group chat are at a risk of being cyberbullied however, they have an advantage of being educated as compared to those who exited because students who remain in the group chat will be more informed about the latest developments of their academic work and that will assist them to improve their academic performance. After exiting the group chats students rely on their classmates for updates regarding their schoolwork, which might not always be reliable. Those who are in the academic group chat tend to perform better at their academic activities than those who exited the group, this might be because in the group chat students might share ideas and motivation regarding their school work. In support to this statement, Gonzalez (1998:1) shares that sharing of ideas and motivation maintains a circular relationship with the level of information processing and improvement of academic performance of students.

According to the DPT, being in a deviant place like cyberspace is easy for students, this according to the DPT is because in cyberspace, the social networking sites are not expensive, are simple to access, are interactive and quick to download. According to Butler (2010:1), cyberbullying and harassment are increasing everyday, leaving young people exposed to victimisation. The DPT would urgue that the places where students spend most of their time in, which in this case can be online, exposes them to the dangers of being cyberbullied as victims of cyberbullying can be victimised as a result of getting involved in social networking sites.

Certain characterisctics put individuals at risk of being cyberbullied, such as posting pictures and daily status updates, especially the status updates that require individuals to engage in a debate such as updating about religion, soccer or even politics. To reduce the risks of being cyberbullied students should limit the time they spend on the internet, especially social networking sites (Li, 2007:439). According to the DPT, cyber bullies also visit deviant places such as WhatsApp to engage in their own personal dilemmas and not do what the social network site was intended for. Online bullies often use the opportunity presented by the social networks to engage in immoral behaviours such as avenging themselves for the traditional bullying by slandering the victim's character online just as the victim slandered theirs physically. Cyberbullies may also feel discriminated against or wronged in some way and engage in a process of harmful restoration (Stark,1987:904).

According to the DPT, engaging in cyberspace is a major factor that increases students' risk to cyberbullying as individuals who are on social networking sites are exposed to cyber victimisation. This is because the cyber space has online bullies that put the individuals at a higher risk of becoming victims as they come into contact with them whereas individuals who post their half naked pictures online are at a higher risk of experiencing sexual harassment from the online environment (Stark,1987:904). Persons spending most of their time on social networks are targets of online bullying; sexting occurs online and therefore any individual who is communicating with the opposite sex online is at a risk of sexual harassment such as sexting, therefore, the DPT urges that since cyberbullying takes place in cyberspace, it is rational to assume that if students limit the time they spend on cyberspace they will be less exposed to cyber harassment (Li, 2007:439).

The frequency of the internet use by the students predicts cyberbullying and cyber victimisation (Li, 2007:439). University students who are active users of the social networking sites have normalised sexting, for them sexting is a way of life. The internet and sexting practices have been reported to provide positive opportunities for students to discover and identify their sexuality as well as to experience cyber relationships; girls especially have been found to start online romantic relationships (Stark, 1987:903).

Research on adolescent internet use by Harris-Cik and Steyn, (2018:36) report that students use the internet to view sexually explicit material such as pornography as well as for learning and entertainment purposes in a deviant place such as the cyberspace. Students generally use the internet as a sex teaching tool because it allows for secrecy, and for adolescents it is a perfect deviant place to meet new people and engage in relational skills such as flirting (Harris-Cik & Steyn, 2018:36). Adolescents can sext with different identities they had viewed on the internet such as creating a sexual identity online with no shame of having to engage in physical contact with peers or adults.

3.3. ROUTINE ACTIVITIES THEORY

The RAT plays an important role in explaining cyberbullying. The RAT foundation is about how the daily routines of individuals expose them to cyberbullying, RAT stipulates that a person cannot suffer from cyberbullying or be a perpetrator of cyberbullying if there is an absence of an online lifestyle. People become the victims of cyberbullying when they make use of cyber technologies and engage in cyber activities which put them at a greater probability of being bullied online (Mesch, 2009:1). By taking part in some online activities as part of an individual's daily routine individuals put themselves at a risk of becoming the victims of cyberbullying because the cyberspace is dangerous.

The RAT suggests that victimisation is ally to the routine activities that individuals engage in on their daily lives (Davis, 2005:36; and Mesch, 2009:1). With reference to cyberbullying, individuals are more exposed to cyberbullying when they are frequently exposed to cyber technologies such as computers, internet, mobile phones and social networks. This is because cyberbullying can only be committed when there is the use of cyber technology. When individuals engage in such activities, without the necessary safety measures, they are exposed to cyberbullying. The RAT proposes that in order for anti-social acts to take place; three specific elements must be present. These elements, according to Cohen and Felson (1979:588) are discussed as follows:

3.3.1 Motivated offender

A motivated offender can be defined as any person who is motivated by something to engage in immoral activities. Be it rational or not, the offender's motive is personally well thought-out and should be acted on. In cyberbullying, online bullies are motivated by various reasons such as rejection, obsession or retaliation (Mullen *et al.,* 2009:154). This motivation encourages the offender to engage in online bullying.

3.3.2 Suitable target

Four elements determine the risk of an individual becoming a target of cyberbullying: value, physical visibility, accessibility and inertia. The cyberbully finds value in harassing their victims (Mesch, 2009:1). Visibility relates to the risk to be observed by potential criminals. In cyberbullying, often online visibility is when the offender can see when their victims are online for example in chat rooms. Accessibility involves the ease with which an offender can bully a target without attracting suspicion or attention. Cyberbullies are mostly intellectual when it comes to cyberbullying and can easily find and approach their victims in order to harass them, often remaining unknown due to the anonymity of cyberspace. Finally, inertia which refers to the effortlessness with which a target can be acquired. Cyberbullies can effortlessly get information about their victims due to factors such as careless disposal of personal details (Mesch, 2009:1).

3.3.3 Absence of capable guardian (Proctection)

The lack of capable guardianship may add to the chances of crime. There are many forms of guardianship such as police officers, security system or an alarm system. The theory proposes that the presence of a capable guardian may stop online victimisation but at the same time may displace crime. With regard to cyberbullying, guardianship may be in terms of protective software or responsible awareness of the dangers of cyber space to prevent possible victimisation. It should, however, be noted that even these protective measures may contribute to crime displacement especially when dealing with a motivated offender (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010:103).

The RAT attempts to show that high levels of crime and criminal activities are not only caused by macro changes such as poverty and unemployment rates, but are also caused by the routine activities that people take part in, in their daily life. The general routine or a person's character plays a crucial part in the definition of routine activities theory (Felson & Clarke, 1998:588).

The more a person is exposed to cyberspace on a daily basis, the higher the likelihood that a person will be cybervictimised. With the use of internet and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, adolescents are more likely to engage or experience cyberbullying because they spend most of their time on social networking sites which can put them at a higher risk of becoming the victims of online bullying, especially when they are active users and are most likely to post naked pictures (Tibbetts & Hemmens, 2010:103; and Scholtz *et al.,* 2015:94).

Marcum (2008:1) establishes that the more time people spent online chatting on social networking sites and sharing private information with the people they are chatting to, the more the chances of them becoming victims of cyberbullying and experiencing online harassment. With technology in a constant state of change, society is continuously changing their activity patterns to keep up (Marcum, 2008:2). According to Ybarra and Mitchell (2004:1311), the risk of becoming a cyber victim is more frequent when someone who is confident in their computer or internet skills accesses the internet frequently. Society has made technology part of everyday life and it has become a routine of people's daily lives to be on their cell phones, check the internet, and send E-mails and text messages to other individuals. These new routine activities may actually expose individuals to risks of cyberbullying. Youth who are online more often and use the internet for communicative purposes more than others, are more likely to become cyberbully victims (Mesch, 2009:1).

The RAT reveals that there has to be a connection of likely offenders, suitable targets and an absence of capable guardians for victimisation to occur. Firstly, the research by Ybarra and Mitchell (2004:1311) show that motivated bullies are present in cyberspace. Furthermore, victims who appear to be suitable targets are those individuals who spend more time online and use IM much more than non-victims.

The RAT states that since computers are available at higher institutions of learning, students then make it part of their routine activities to use the internet as part of their everyday lives, especially because at some campuses like UL a student does not need to go to the academic area to log in on the internet, they can simply do that in their rooms using either their personal computer or their mobile phone which they connect to the campus's Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi).

According to Li (2010:232), students at universities are attributed to the fact that they can easily get the computers which are connected to the internet at their institutions of learning; it is further noted that the increasingly number of the internet users by university students are resulting in their amplified exposure to online victimisation (Li, 2010:232).

3.4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The DPT and RAT are criminological theories which were used by the researcher to explain cyberbullying. The basic premise underlying the DPT is that certain places such as cyberspace put individuals at a higher risk of being victimised online. From the perspective of the DPT, the places that individuals spend their time are a critical factor that determines their risk of being victimised. According to the RAT, people's daily activities may naturally bring them into contact with cyberbullies or may increase the risk of crime that victims' experiences. The next chapter (Four) will look at the research design and methodology that the study employed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Stemming from paragraph 1.7 of chapter One of this study, the adopted research design and methodology is reintroduced in greater details. This study explored the exposure and effects of cyberbullying on students of UL. This chapter will present the research methodology, research design, area of the study, population, sampling method, research sample, data collection procedures, data collection instruments, data analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Research methodology refers to the manner, ways and techniques as well as the tools the researcher make use of to complete the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:74), thus referring to the research design, data collection and data analysis.

The exploration of the exposure and effects of cyberbullying on students at UL was achieved through qualitative methodology. Qualitative research approach can be conducted in the subjects' natural setting (De Vos, 2011:242). Qualitative research approach refers to a kind of primary research which the researcher collects and gathers first-hand information obtained directly from the participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994:10). In this study, data was collected from UL students who experienced cyberbullying.

4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH

This study was exploratory in nature, as the researcher aimed to gain insights on cyber bullying of the UL students (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:95). The qualitative research design is flexible, unique and develops throughout the research process. Therefore, there are no fixed steps that should be followed (Creswell, 1998:2). The researcher made an effort to gather as much of the true feelings, beliefs and ideals, experiences, thoughts and actions of the participants as possible, as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2006:1).

The researcher is a victim of cyberbullying herself and had experienced online bullying, thus she could relate to the experiences of her participants. Maybe as a result of this, participants seemed willing to share and discuss their experiences on a personal level during the interviews and focus groups.

4.3. SAMPLING METHOD AND PROCEDURES

A sample can be defined as part of the population group considered for actual inclusion in the study (Strydom, 2011:224), Maluleke (2014:59) and Maluleke (2016:22). The sample was drawn from the population consisting of UL students. The researcher employed a non-probability sampling, particularly the purposive sampling method.

4.3.1 Geographical area of the study

The UL is situated in the Limpopo province, South Africa. The UL is about 30 Kilometres (km) East of Polokwane city. The researcher was interested on this subject, since cyberbullying has become an increasingly common problem at tertiary institutions [UL incuded], the social media spheres have expanded and technology has advanced. The fruition of this study will bring a better understanding of the effects of social media on university students. The researcher identifies the use of social media as a new trend of committing cyberbullying in the university level. The researcher also identifies UL as a hub where social media is misused for cyberbullying activities. The researcher selected UL owing to personal expriece as a registered student from undergradiuate to postgraduate levels.

4.3.2 Targeted study population and sample

Delport and Roestenburg (2011:193) define a population as a set of entities in which all the measurements of interest to the researcher are represented. The targeted population for this study were UL registered undergraduate and postgraduate students; only 15 participants were sampled, during the semi-structured face-to-face interviews, data saturation was reached when interviewing participant number Eight (08) and 09.

During this process, it appeared that when interviewing participant 08; the researcher had already collected enough information to answer the study aim and all the research questions, the researcher felt that the data provided by the selected 09 participants for semi-structured face-to-face interviews was rich and very informative. This saturation was transferred to all selected participants, as they were having nothing to add on this subject, this was based on the study aim and research questions, as guided by the Interview Schedule Guide. Furthermore, the consulted literature reviews and theorentical frameworks supported this saturation.

As initial stated; 09 of the selected participants were interviewed through sem-structured face-to-face interviews and the other 06 formed part od the FGD in this study. To recruit the targeted participants; the researcher updated WhatsApp and Facebook statuses and asked all UL to form part of this study, more especially those who were victimised on cyberspace or who are currently facing the victimisation to kindly send private messages to the researcher, with a possibility of been interviewed. Less than 40 students sent messages of interest to the researcher, however, only 15 were strongly interested in sharing their expriences on this subject. This refers to the application of the non-probability: Purposive sampling, as only individuals with rich information came forward to form part of this study.

4.3.3 Sampling method and procedures

The sample of UL students were purposively selected in this study. For the non-probability: purposive sampling, the authority and influence of the researcher plays a significant role. In this way, the researcher chooses the participants based on a specific criteria best suited to the study (Strydom, 2011:232). The choice of purposive sampling was also fully based on the judgment of the researcher, in that the sample was composed of elements that contained most characteristics representative of the study population (Singleton, Straits, Straits & McAllister; 1988:153). This basis of purposive sampling is linked to criterion sampling because it entails selecting samples that meet some predetermined criterion of importance. The main function of criterion sampling is to ensure that all the cases involved are information-rich (Creswell, 2007:128).

The following characteristics were considered: participants were between the ages of 18-35, both males and females who had experienced the pain of cyberbullying were given an opportunity to participate in the study. At the time of conducting this study, all of the selected participants were registered students at UL for the 2018 academic year. The purposive sampling method was chosen because the researcher was interested only in students who experienced cyberbullying.

The sample of this study consisted of participants who had been victims of cyberbullying. Participants who took part in the study were between their late twenties and early thirties. They varied in gender and study level. Most of the participants were female and only few were males. The researcher targeted these participants with the purpose of drawing detailed information from their own personal experiences and perceptions about cyberbullying. The researcher structured the questions around the aims and objectives of the study specifically, to explore the incidences of cyberbullying among participants.

For the purpose of this study; 09 females and 06 males were sampled. The researcher managed to select all participants with adequate characteristics from the social media [Facebook and WhatsApp]. Sixteen (16) participants replied that they form part of the envisaged interviews. During the FGD and semi-structured face-to-face interviews; the researcher asked the selected participants why most participants were females and they answered that females were most likely to be the victims of cyberbullies and this was supported by the researchers' literature reviewed in this study.

4.3.4 Data collection methods

Data collection instruments are the tools that the researchers use to collect data. The researcher collected data through semi-structured face-to-face interviews and FGD, as they both gives the participants an opportunity to express their feelings and opinions and are also both useful in obtaining rich and detailed information, coupled with literature studies (Greeff, 2011:355), Maluleke (2020:210), Mokwena, Motsepe, Maluleke and Shandu (2020:16141) and Mokwena and Maluleke (2020:1648).

The semi-structured face-to-face interviewing is one of the most common methods of data collection used by researchers to inform them about social life. Face-to-face interviewing could thus be regarded as the universal mode of systemic enquiry (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995:1). The reason why individual face-to-face interviews were chosen is because the researcher wanted to get information on sensitive issues as well. Focus groups were also chosen to increase the validity of the study. During the face-to-face interview process 09 participants were given opportunity by the researcher to share their experiences. During FGD; 06 participants were present with the researcher sharing ideas together.

The semi-structured face-to-face interviews can be defined as a type of a data collection procedure that takes place physically through the process of information exchange, whereby the researcher asks the participant a question based on their experiences and the participant responds, it takes place between two people (De Vos, 2011:297). A focus group can be defined as a group of people who experienced the same problem who sit in the same room to share their experiences, ideas and also opinions regarding the phenomenon experienced. The interviewer in a focus group set up some rules and guidelines to be followed before commencing in data collection such as the length of the interview, confidentiality and also to remind the participants to stick to the topic (Greef, 2011:350).

As initial mentioned; the FGD with 06 participants took place at the UL at MBH student residence, where the researcher used to reside and the semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted in their residences. These venues were carefully chosen to match the participants' attendance number. The residence was easily accessible to all the selected participants and the researcher ensured that the room used was free from noise. The FGD took place on the 28th March 2018 and the semi-structured face-to-face interviews were held on the 05th of March 2018 to the 25th March 2018, they both took 30 minutes to an hour. The researcher asked all the participants to fill in their names and contact details on a paper and asked all the research participants to be actively involved in this study and to provide their respective personal experiences on this subject.

The researcher telephonically called all the research participants Two (02) days prior participation, they were reminded about the arranged meeting and be told about the time and venue of this meeting. The researcher also prepared a discussion quide prior meeting them, this was used to discuss and elicit the views of these participants. The researcher also considered the sensitivity of this research topic and made it clear to these participants that their participations was voluntary and they were not forced to take part and should participants feel they are not ready to participate or disclose any information on this subject theys should feel free to stop participating. The researcher also promised the participants that their personal information such as name and contact details will not be included in the completed research report.

This study will outline the procedures for collecting data that the researcher used, these include the presentation of oneself, the interview process, settings of interviews, procedures followed during the interview and the duration of the interview. These procedures were used to make sure that the research participants were comfortable with the researcher, to save time and to ensure that the research participants answered and understood the stated research questions.

4.3.4.1 The procedure for collecting data

The procedure for collecting data regarding the experience of cyberbullying that students were exposed to entailed the following:

- **Presentation of oneself**

The presentation of oneself is very important because it leaves a good or a bad impression on the participants and has great influence on the success or failure of the study. The researcher created a relaxed atmosphere for the participants to feel more comfortable. The full explanation of the research was done. The participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that the collected information would be kept strictly confidential (Greeff, 2011:355).

- **The interview process**

As mentioned earlier, semi-structured face-to-face interviews, FGD and literature review were used as a method of collecting data regarding the cyberbullying experiences that the research participants experienced. The setting of the interviews, procedures adhered to during the interviews and duration of the interviews will now be reviewed:

- **Setting of interviews**

Greeff (2011:350) postulates that interviews with participants should be arranged in advance. The researcher and participants agreed on the time and place where the interview process was to take place and the researcher later confirmed with the participants as well as to remind them about the interview. A quiet environment with no interruptions was selected. This was chosen based on privacy, comfort and easy accessibility. The setting arrangement was made in the best interest of the research participants.

- **Procedures followed during the interviews**

All the interviews and FGD was conducted in English as a method of establishing mutual communication and understanding between the researcher and the participants. The researcher clearly outlined what was meant by informed consent in terms of purpose, procedures, risks, rights, confidentiality, ethics and questions (Greeff, 2011:354).

- **Duration of the interviews**

The interviews took approximately thirty minutes to complete. However, some interviews took more than the expected time to end, some of the participants took more than 30 minutes to answer the interview questions whereas some finished answering their interview questions earlier than the expected time (Greeff, 2011: 354).

4.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As stipulated by Babbie and Mouton (2001:520), ethics is the practice of being compliant to the standards of conduct of a given profession. The following ethical considerations were kept in mind and implemented in this research study.

4.4.1 Permission to carry the study

The researcher obtained the permission to conduct the research study at UL Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) and was given a permission letter to collect data. The researcher informed the participants on the true nature and the purpose of the study at the beginning of the interview and focus group discussion through reading and the researcher explaining the informed consent letter, which granted permission to voluntarily take part in the study.

4.4.2 Informed consent

Barlow and Durand (2009:116) indicate that informed consent has to do with giving the research participants all the crucial information to help them with their decision to participate in the research study or not. It is more focused on the willingness of research subjects to participate in the study. Informed consent can only be achieved once the researcher gives participants full information of all the important elements of the research study (Wassenaar, 2006:73). The information given to the research participants must be in an understandable and logical language, the aims, methods and intended uses of the research must be patiently indicated.

Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004:73) declare that all the research participants must be given full information about the research that they will be engaging themselves in. Research participants have the right to know that their confidential and sensitive experiences will be protected. A complete letter of consent was drawn up and given to the participants involved in this study. The researcher made sure that each interview schedule had a letter of consent attached (Appendix A) to it. The purpose, procedures, risks and benefits of the study were made visible to each research participant.

4.4.3 Voluntary participation

Babbie (2008:67) suggests that all research participants should not be forced to take part in a research study. In this study, all participants were made aware of their individual right to choose not to participate. This choice was completely up to them and they were not made to feel forced in any way to take part in the study. Issues regarding ethical considerations and privacy of personal rights of students at the UL were protected. Since participation in the study was voluntary some students decided to withdraw at the last minute saying that they did not want to take part in the participation anymore. The researcher had to replace them with new members because participants have the right to choose whether they want to participate or not. The objectives of the study were explained and participants were assured that the information obtained during interviews would be kept confidential.

4.4.4 Discontinuance

The selected participants were also informed at the beginning that they had the right to discontinue the interview when they felt uncomfortable (Babbie, 2008:72).

4.4.5 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was guaranteed as the selected participants' names were not used in the reporting of the findings (Babbie, 2008:72).

4.5. METHODS TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

Guba (1981) (in Anney, 2014:275) discusses the four elements of trustworthiness in qualitative research approach by emphasising that each and every researcher should adhere to them when conducting a research study, whether the researcher is using a qualitative, quantitative or even a triangulation research method, the following questions should be applied and responded upon.

- How do we know that the findings of the research study are true and valid? (Truth value concern).

- How do we verify the applicability of the findings enquiry in other settings or with other research participants? (Application concern).

- How do we know if the findings would be repeated every time with the same research participants and the same perspective? (Consistency concern).

- How do we know if the findings come from the participants only and the researcher did not add his or her own information, and that the study was not subjective to prejudice, motivation or interest of the researcher? (Neutral concern).

Lincoln and Guba (1985:1) state that each and every research approach should use its own criteria of answering the above mentioned questions. For example, quantitative research design believes in only one reality and investigated findings are based on a single reality, while a qualitative research design believes in more than one reality. Furthermore, quantitative research design states that the knower and known are independent whereas qualitative research design states that the knower and known are not independent for answering the four mentioned questions proposed by Guba (1981:2) and because of that, Guba and Lincoln (1982:2) propose that internal validity should be put in place of credibility. Trustworthiness in a qualitative study is determined by four elements namely; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability and it is these are the four elements that reveal validity and reliability in qualitative research (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011:419). Qualitative researchers focus only on the dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability to guarantee trustworthiness (Anney, 2014:272).

4.5.1 Credibility

Credibility is the confidence and consistence of being trustworthy about the research findings. Credibility focuses on finding out whether the research findings are credible and truthful, credibility also pay attention on the original information given by the research participants and the interpretation of the participant's original analysis. Credibility is the alternative to internal validity, in which the goal is to demonstrate that the enquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the research participants have been accurately identified and described. Credibility is also involved in establishing that the results of the research are believable (Anney, 2014:276). To ensure credibility in this study, the researcher clearly linked the research findings with reality in order to demonstrate the truth of the study's findings.

4.5.2 Transferability

Transferability can be referred to as the 'degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings' (Anney, 2014:277). Transferability is the extent to which the person who reads the results of the data collected is able to generalise the findings of a study to his or her own perspective and tackle the core issue of how far a researcher may make claims for a general application of their theory (Anney, 2014:278). This was achieved when the researcher provided sufficient and adequate information, research context, processes and lastly the relationship between the researcher and the participants which enabled the researcher to decide how the findings may be transferred from one case to the other in this study.

4.5.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the 'stability of findings over time' (Bitsch, 2005:86). Dependability ensures that the research findings are consistent and could be repeated, it focuses on ensuring that the research participants evaluate the findings, the interpretation as well as the recommendations of the research study to ensure that they are in line with the data received from the informants of the study (Anney, 2014:278).

In this study; the researcher accounted for the ever-changing context within which research occurred. The researcher was also responsible for describing the changes that occurred in the setting and how these changes affected the research process.

4.5.4 Confirmability

Conformability captures the traditional concept of objectivity. It stresses the need to validate whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another (Anney, 2014:279). There are a number of strategies for enhancing confirmability. For this study, the researcher documented the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

In the process of analysing data, raw data is organised and/or manipulated in order to develop findings, conclusions and recommendations. It is the process of establishing order, formation and meaning to the mass of information gathered (De Vos, 2005a:333). Creswell (2003:190) clarifies that the function of data analysis is to make sense out of textual data. It involves preparing the data for analysis, examining the data collected and creating in-depth understanding. It is focused on finding a means to represent the data as well as making an interpretation of the data within a broader scope. The researcher gathered all the data collected and analysed it in such a way that it was easier for the reader to understand. Some participants gave the researcher complicated information, some of which were out of the topic, however, the researcher analysed the data and only took what was important.

Braun and Clarke (2006:82) identified the following 06 steps of Thematic Content Analysis, which the researcher followed:

4.7.1 Phase one: Familiarising with data

The researcher read the data collected many times that she became immersed in the findings while writing the important key results. Familiarising herself with data also helped the researcher to take out the information that is considered to be irrelevant (De Vos, 2005a:338). After gathering the collected data, the researcher took her time and read the records that were given to her, this was very helpful and necessary as some information was not related to the study. Therefore, such information was removed by the researcher, remaining only with the information that was related to this study.

The researcher also familiarised herself with the collected data to further understand the data. The researcher familiarised herself with the collected data by reading all the information that was given to her regarding the experience that the research participants suffered as a result of cyberbullying, this was vital for the researcher so that she could better understand the phenomenon of cyberbullying and how it affected individuals on a personal level. The researcher read the data that was on the interview paper for the first time after the research participants had answered all the questions that were on the interview paper. Then researcher typed all the collected data and saved it on her personal computer and then read the data once again.

4.7.2 Phase two: Generating initial codes

The second step which the researcher initiated was to generate the initial codes. To achieve this, the researcher identified preliminary codes and highlighted the part of the collected data that appreared to be more important and relating to the study research. The data collected was correctly labelled with a systematic approach that organises information in terms of dates, groups and interviewing identity information.

The researcher managed and organised the data collected from participants by typing all the given information in her own personal computer, this was to protect the information given. The date which data was collected was noted down, the data for the interwiews was stored on its own folder as was done for the data collected for focus groups.

4.7.2.1 Data corpus coding

The researcher recorded all the obtained information from the selected participants using the voice recorder and a notebook. The identified themes and challenges were highlighted with a red pen for transcribing.

4.7.2.2 Data extract coding

To achieve the data extract coding; the researcher took notes from the notebook and summarised it at the later stage. Only information deemed importaed were recorded according to the dates of sitting to identity interviewing information.

4.7.2.3 Data item coding

To achieve this; the researcher grouped the data collected through the conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews and FGD in separate folders.

4.7.3 Phase three: searching for themes

Creswell (1998:144) notes that during this phase, searching for themes begins by taking the qualitative text apart and looking for categories, themes and patterns. The above mentioned author suggests searching and identifying for 05 or 06 main themes and then a few subthemes underlying them. This will help to categorise data to make it easier for the researcher and the reader to understand and draw meaning from it. To achieve these, the researcher used themes and sub-themes to categorise the collected data.

De Vos (2005a:338) provides that coding data is the formal illustration of critical thinking. The researcher must apply some form of coding to the previously identified categories, themes and patterns. Coding can make up various manifestations such as abbreviations, bullets and shapes or numbers. To achieve this, the researcher used abbreviations throughout the study, bullets, and as well as numbering. The researcher also took into account that the codes were not fixed and could undergo many modifications when data was analysed.

4.7.4 Phase four: Reviewing themes

During this phase the researcher embarks on a journey to challenge understandings and find instability in the patterns while integrating them into larger constructs. The researcher also scrutinises the usefulness of data in connection to the original research questions (De Vos, 2005a:338). The researcher looked for patterns as well as contradictions when comparing the data collected in the present study to previously conducted research. Additionally, the researcher made a continuous effort to align the data collected to the research questions posed at the beginning of this study.

4.7.5 Phase five: defining and naming themes

As the researcher discovers categories and patterns in the data, an attempt should be made to test the patterns that appear to be plausible. The researcher should also seek other reasonable explanations for the data and then conclude with a depiction of the most plausible explanation (De Vos, 2005a:339). The researcher consulted various sources in the search for alternative explanations when analysing the data given by her research participants.

4.7.6 Phase six: Producing the report

During the final phase in the data analysis process, the researcher decided on a way to visually represent the findings and they were analysed in a form of a written report. This method of representation must incorporate all the findings of the researcher in a clear, logical and systematic way (De Vos, 2005a:339). The researcher decided to represent the findings of the analysis in written form.

4.8. SUMMARY OF THIS CHAPTER

This study employed an exploratory study. The study used a non-probability sampling, and in more particular purposive sampling to collect data. The research was conducted at UL where a total of 15 research participants were selected to take part in the research study. An interview and a focus group was used by the researcher to collect data from participants, 09 participants formed part of the semi-structured face-to-face interviews and the other 06 participants formed part of the FGD. The researcher made it clear from the onset that participation was voluntary and that participants had the rights to withdraw if they so wished. Names of the participants were anonymous and information was treated with confidentiality. Data collected was analysed using the following steps, familiarising with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report. The next chapter [Five] will be discussing the data presentation, analysis and interpresentation.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents data analysis, interpretations and findings of the research. It presents the analysed and interpreted data of students who have been cyberbullied at UL. The participants were given a chance to express their feelings, opinions and experiences regarding cyberbullying. The non-probability: purposive sampling technique was adopted to target students from UL who have been subjected to cyberbullying. Purposive sampling was chosen because the researcher was concerned only about students who possessed a certain characteristic and thus victims who experienced cyberbullying.

The information was collected from 15 undergraduate and postgraduate students, both males and females. The 09 of the selected participants were interviewed face-to-face and only 06 participants took part in the FGD. The researcher used a qualitative research method to collect data and then presented the data into themes and words that define them. The researcher went to these students' residences every afternoon around 17:00 from 05 March to 25 March 2018 to collect data.

In this chapter, the researcher will firstly present the forms of cybervictimisation which students have been exposed to, secondly the causes of cyberbullying will be discussed. This will be followed by the relationship between the cyberbully and the cybervictim, followed by the biographic information of the participants. The consequences of the cybervictimisation as experienced by the victims of cyberbullying, reasons why students are reluctant to report cyberbullying incidents and lastly preventative measures will be discussed. for ethcal considerations adherence; the demographical background and related cases of the 15 selected participants of this study were not discussed in details, as the researcher felt that was going to expose them to more cyberbullying. It was noted that they were not comfortable with the exposure associated with this practice, thus confidentiality was maintained as all costs.

The research partitipants were between the ages of 18-35 who were undergraduate and postgraduate registered students of the UL for the academic year 2018. As stated in the intial sections; 09 of them were females and 06 were males. Importantly; three (07) of them were enrolling for their undergraduate studies (First-Fourth levels of studies), while, the other 08 were doing postgraduate studies.

5.2. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL STUDY FINDINGS

5.2.1 Theme 1: The forms of victimisation which students are mostly exposed

The researcher uses this section to give a descriptive analysis of the participants' personal experiences of cyberbullying, in their own narratives. The results show that students at UL are subjected to Five (05) forms of cyber victimisations, namely; harassment, manipulation, cyberstalking, sexting and impersonation. This study found that some victims were subjected to multiple forms of cybervictimisation such as harassment, cyberstalking, sexting and also impersonation. Sexting was found to be the most prevalent amongst the study group and impersonation was found to be the least.

5.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Social network sites which participants use more often

When asked about the social networking sites which research participants used more often, the research participants indicated that they used Facebook, WhatsApp, Rate and Date, and MySpace. The research participants experienced cyberbullying through different social networking sites namely: Facebook, WhatsApp, Rate and Date and MySpace. However, it is clear from the findings by the researcher that Facebook was was the form of social networking site that was mostly used by cyberbullies to victimise other online users, followed by WhatsApp. These findings are supported by section 2.11, under sub-heading 2.11.2 of chapter Two of this study where (Blazer, 2012) finds that most victims of cyberbullying were harassed through the use of Facebook and WhatsApp.

Participants reported that they were engaging in social networking sites, 09 of the participants reported that they spend more time on Facebook because Facebook gives them the opportunity to share and post things they find difficult to talk about in real life and their Facebook friends offer them social support which they do not get in real interpersonal interactions. Four of the research participants reported that they enjoyed WhatsApp more because it offered them the privacy they needed and made it easier for them to interact and create new friendships. One study participant mentioned that she used MySpace because she finds it entertaining while another research participant reported spending more time on Rate and Date with the hope of finding true love online.

In chapter Two of this study, social networks were mentioned as possible risks of cyberbullying, this reads with section 2.3.9, (Harris-Cik & Steyn, 2018). The findings in the present study support this notion as social networks were identified as the main channels used in the process of cyberbullying by all the fifteen research participants, especially Facebook followed by WhatsApp and chatrooms.

These findings were also supported theoriticaly by the DPT on chapter three, referring to section 3.1.1 by Siegel (2010) who proposes that being in deviant places such as Facebook and WhatsApp put individuals at a higher risk of been cyberbullied. The RAT also supports this notion by stipulating that the routines of students who engage in social networking sites in their everyday lives also expose themselves to the dangers of the online environment, this concept is supported by chapter three of this study, in line with what was presented in section 3.1.2 by (Davis, 2005), stating that RAT also argues that students are exposed to cyberbullying when they are frequently exposed to cyber technologies such as computers, internet, mobile phones and social networks.

5.2.1.2 Sub- theme 2: Kinds of cyberbullying experienced by participants

Online bullying may take a wide range of forms including harassment, manipulation, cyberstalking, sexting and impersonation as already indicated in chapter Two of the present research study under paragraph 2.2 of chapter Two of this study (Bocij, 2004).

- **Harassment**

Some of the responses provided during interviews indicate that participants indeed experienced harassment. The following illustrations were made:

"Someone created a fake Facebook account to harass me by calling me names. He used to call me names such as 'whore' and 'sefebe' on Facebook, because I refused to date him. He then blocked me and said that he will unblock me when I agree to his proposal to date him. One day I updated my status message on Facebook about the derby soccer tournament between Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando pirates, everyone was commenting on my update in relation to my post and the bully commented that only bitches would update about soccer to seek men's attention. I ignored him and he continued to insult me until I decided to private message and asked what was going on and he said that he was angry that I give my Facebook friends my attention and ignored him, I was so confused. Fortunately, I logged in on my Facebook a week later and the bully had blocked me, I was so happy that I was not going to deal with a psycho on my Facebook anymore. A month and a few weeks later he sent me a friend request with a different name but the profile picture was still the same, it clicked in my mind that he changed names but still the same psycho and I blocked him." **(P1)**

"I remember when a website was created and everyone was calling me a home wrecker. The website was named #Bring back our men# and it was created by my boyfriend's ex-girlfriend; she then ganged with her friends to attack me. I even went to the Mokopane police station to open a case and that is when she stopped. It all started when my boyfriend and I decided to make it known on cyberspace that we were in a committed relationship, my boyfriend updated his status and then tagged me and that is when all hell broke loose. The ex-girlfriend created a website and started harassing me, it was too much for me because my family knew about the website and everyone closest to me was telling me about it, at first I decided not to check what was said about me but then I got so curious and checked the website and they things that were said about me were too deep, especially when I was accussed of using muthi on my boyfriend" **(P 9).**

"My ex boyfriend used to send me text messages harassing me and telling me how he won't leave me alone and that we better both die. Each and everyday I would wake up with a text message from my ex boyfriend promising me that I will not live to see the next day." **(P 13)**

Based on the findings by the researcher only three of the research participants were harassed on cyberspace. Section 2.2 under sub-heading 2.2.1 in Chapter Two of this study defines 'harassment' as a form of cyberbullying that involves frequently sending the victim terrible and intimidating messages, this was confirned by these researchers (Willard, 2006; Willard, 2007; Urbanski & Permuth, 2009; and Li, 2010). This definition was supported by the findings of the present research study as all the research participants responded that indeed they received awful messages from the cyberbullies.

- **Manipulation**

The following are shared illustration of what the victims experienced on social media:

"I was called stupid for refusing to hook my friend with a Facebook mutual friend; the mutual friend was not interested in my friend. It all started when my Facebook friend tagged me in their post, my friend saw the post on his timeline as I was tagged and added my Facebook friend. However, my Facebook friend did not accept his friendship request and that is when my friend started asking me a lot of questions about her and that I should arrange a meeting for them since I knew them both personally and when I refused he got mean and called me names, even said I was gay. I told him that I had no right to hook them up and he said I must at least get her to accept his friend request, I refused and now dude is not talking to me." **(P 2)**

"Our lecture asked our class-rep to create a WhatsApp or Facebook group where we would discuss all our academic activities, our class-rep is the admin of the WhatsApp group and therefore controls everything, one day I posted something in the group and she removed me. Until today, I only hear from my classmates what is needed from our lecturer. Sometimes she will post things that are not related to our school work such as pictures or songs and when we complain about it she tells us that she is the admin of the group and she can post anything, when other students post the same things she deletes them." **(P 11)**

"My friend is always putting me under a lot of pressure that I must give him one of my WhatsApp contact details, because he is interested to be in a romantic relationship with her. When I refused, he started to call me less of a man and manipulated me by calling me a fake friend. I don't even know what to do because my WhatsApp contact said I must not give anyone their number without their permission and when I try to explain this to my friend he accuses me of lying and that I never want to see him happy with anyone and that maybe I am interested in the girl and maybe that is why I do not want to give her number, for him giving out numbers is simple but for me it is not especially because the girl asked me not to give anyone her number." **(P 15)**

According to research by Willard (2006), in section 2.2 sub-heading 2.2.2 of chapter Two of this study, 'manipulation' occurs when one individual puts pressure on the next individual to do what they want. This notion was supported by the research findings when the research participants responded that they had been put under pressure and controlled online. Only three students experienced this form of cyberbullying.

- **Impersonation**

The following responses were shared:

"I forgot to log-out of the computer that I was using at computer lab and someone used my account to bully my Facebook friends, I then changed my passwords and then wrote a status message on my Facebook account explaining how someone was using my account. Some of my Facebook friends were extremely angry with me to the extent that they blocked me and some unfriended me, some Facebook friends found it hard to believe it was not me but some believed me and even encouraged me to log off next time and to change my password, some were feeling sorry for me, especially one guy who apparently experienced the same situation some years back." **(P 5)**

Based on the findings, impersonation was found to be the least form of cyberbullying that students from the UL experienced with only one participant who experienced it when the cyberbully used the participant's Facebook account without notifying them. In chapter Two of the present research study section 2.2 under sub-heading 2.2.3 paragraph 1, (Willard, 2006; and Li, 2010) explain that impersonation occurs when a computer or any other digital device such as a mobile phone is used to create fake profiles to bully others online.

- **Cyberstalking**

The following responses illustrations were shared:

"My boyfriend is always checking my whereabouts on Facebook and follows me wherever I am. I feel like I have a bodyguard, both online and offline. It is tiring and childish. I always bump into him when I go out with my friends, he says it is a coincidence but I know he is lying, he always waits for me to update my whereabouts online and he follows me. Since I have stopped updating we no longer meet by chance. Sometimes I just lie online and say I am at a particular place when am in fact home sleeping and he will go there and call to ask where I am and when I say I am home he says but your Facebook says that you are at a certain place and that is where he is at right now." **(P 1)**

"When I write status messages on my Facebook, he always replies to them through his status messages and not when he sees me in person. We are not even mutual friends. I wrote a status that I am craving for pizza and sprite and the following day my friend sent me a screenshot of his Facebook status that says only a poor, ugly and a retired return soldier would crave for a Pizza and sprite. I know he was refering to me because he always does it when I write a status and plus he is the only person who calls me a return soldier. His posts always depress me". **(P 9)**

"My brother is not friends with me on Facebook, but he knows all the things I say on Facebook, I had a little fight with my aunt and wrote about it on my Facebook and my brother called to say I should remove the status. I do not know how he sees my Facebook posts because I had blocked him, I tried to ask him once how he get to know everything that happens on my account yet we are not Facebook friends and he said that he has another account with a fake name and that is how he sees everything. I asked him about the details of the new account and he refused to tell me, I tried to check on my friends list but all the names that appeared I know them and there was no stranger Facebook friend." **(P 11)**

Based on the data collected, the researcher concludes that cyberstalking is the most dangerous form of cyberbullying because the act of cyberbullying can result in physical stalking as indicated by (**P1**), it also causes emotional and psychological effects on victims as reported by (**P9**). Three of the research participants reported that they had been cyberstalked. As indicated in chapter Two of the present research study section 2.2 under sub-heading 2.2.5 by (Willard, 2006; and Willard, 2007), cyberstalking takes place when the cyberbully frequently sends the victim unwanted text messages, instant messages or even E-mails which are full of threats and or irritation or follow them on cyberspace without notifying them first.

- **Sexting**

"I broke up with my baby daddy and all of a sudden my naked pictures were all over social networks. I felt so cheap and embarrassed. He made a promise that he will never share my naked pictures with anyone and I trusted him and that's why I had sent him the pictures. I cannot even look at my close male friends in the eyes right now because of embarrassment, the worst part is that some people even saved my pictures on their phones, I was so angry and called him to delete my pictures, which he did after at least four hours. However, the damage has already been done; people saw my naked pictures and am still embarrassed about it to this day." **(P 4)**

"I don't like it when my friend calls me names such as 'sexy babe' when we are chatting, or when he asks me to send him a sexy picture of myself. I asked him what he means by a sexy picture he replied that I should stop acting like a 5-year-old kid and sent him a picture of myself wearing a panty and a bra only, I told him that I do not sent my bra and panty pictures to people and he called me a jumble sale, I still do not know what a jumble sale mean to this day, but I refused to send him the picture anyways. I have seen a lot of 'sexy pictures' trending on the internet and I do not want to be a victim as well, people are cruel out there, one minute they are all nice to you and asking for your pictures and the next they are sharing it with all the internet users. I cannot take that risk." **(P 5)**

"I blocked him for sending me a picture of his penis. Such disrespect? Ai ngeke (hell no). Yes, we were flirting but I did not expect him to send me a penis picture, he should have at least asked me first if it was okay if I wanted to see his penis, not to just sent it out of the blue, I was so angry because my daughter was playing games with my phone when he sent me the picture, for a moment I wished I could die." **(P 10)**

"I always receive porn videos on my E-mail from someone I do not even know" **(P 13).**

Based on the study findings, sexting was found to be the most form of cyberbullying that students from UL experienced as compared to the other forms of cyberbullying. Sexting according to chapter Two of this study, referring to section 2.2, sub-heading 2.2.6, presents that sexting occurs when an individual sends another individual text messages, nude or semi nude pictures (Badenhorst, 2011). Four participants indicated that indeed they experienced cyberbullying through sexting, some research participants experienced sexting more than once. Sexting was also explained by the DPT as indicated in chapter Three of this study, section 3.1 under sub-heading 3.1.1 of this study that proposes that a student who engages in deviant places such as social networking sites are at a risk of falling victims of cyberbullying, especially students who post flirty posts and post naked pictures of themselves are at a risk of experiencing sexual harassment from cyberbullies.

5.2.1.3 Section deductions

Research in chapter Two of the present study indicates that social networking sites are frequently used in cyberbullying (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Haron & Yusof, 2010; Hill, 2010, and Johnson, *et al* 2016). The findings of the present research study support these findings as most of the research participants reported that they had been bullied online through the use of the social networking sites. Some of the social networking sites which students reported had been used to bully them online include Facebook and WhatsApp. One of the major findings on this study was that students experienced different forms of cyberbullying.

Some students experienced cyberbullying more than once whereas some were exposed to cyberbullying only once. Many students experienced cyberbullying through social networking sites such as Facebook and WhatsApp, whereas some students experienced cyberbullying through E-mail, SMS and phone calls.

5.2.2. Theme 2: Causes of cyberbullying

According to the collected data amongst the UL students, there are various causes of cyberbullying. Other causes of online bullying that students experienced including jealousy and entertainment will be discussed:

The following illustrations were made:

"I asked him why he had to post my naked picture on Facebook, he replied that his Facebook page was boring and he needed to spice things up, he was actually right because he got more than 1k (one thousand) comments on his post (which he never got since he joined Facebook). Some people were entertained, while others asked him to remove my picture because it was disturbing, while others were calling me names. He cropped the picture so that people do not notice it was me, but deep down I was hurt because I knew that the picture was mine." **(P 9)**

"She was jealous that I was dating her baby daddy and started posting status messages about how everyone should be on the lookout for me because I was a home-wrecker. She broke up with her baby daddy and now she is bitter because I am dating him. She will have to be strong because I won't leave him because of her jealousy. Facebook posts won't even shake me." **(P 11)**

"We had a physical fight which escalated into Facebook and WhatsApp." The fight started when I hugged his girlfriend who happens to be my crush, he came to me and started calling me names and that I was disrespecting him for holding his girlfriend in his presence. He insulted me and I insulted him back and he started pushing and poking me. Later when I got home his girlfriend called me to ask if I had seen the things he posted on Facebook and I said no because I do not have a face account and she send me screenshots of his Facebook and WhatsApp status messages were he was calling me a small boy and poor." **(P 3)**

"Heeeee wena, my experience is very painful because my own flesh and blood did this to me, my own blood sister. We had a fight at home and she went and posted about it on Facebook, the status said that: 'motho otlore thlorisha kamo gae kamo o duletse go dira bana ba bantshi, family ke masepa (which is translated as: 'I am suffering in my own home, whereas someone is busy making babies, family is rubbish), I cannot wait to move out. She wrote this status after our little fight at home, I told my mother about it and she said that she was paying her revenge because I said some hurtful things to her in the morning, my mother made her delete her status post." **(P 5)**

"Someone on Facebook called my culture witchcraft." **(P 6)**

Research participant 9 indicated that she was cyberbullied because of entertainment, this motivation attributed to cyberbullying is supported by research in chapter Two of the present research study in 2.3 in 2.3.2 paragraph one that asserts that bullies victimise others for their own entertainment (Antoniadou & Kokkinos, 2013). These findings were also theoretically supported by the DPT in Chapter three which states that some adolescents visit deviant places such as Facebook with the purpose of entertaining themselves and because bullies find entertainment in bullying others they often engage in cyberbullying.

Research participants 11 indicated that the bully was jealous. This finding is linked with chapter Two, 2.3.3 by Hoff and Mitchell (2009), who propose that jealousy is another reason why adolescents engage in cyberbullying. Research participant 3 responded that it started off as a physical fight and later escalated into cyberbullying, a finding supported by the presentation made in Chapter two of this study, Grabosky and Smith (1998:212) who state that cyberbullying is an extention of face-to-face bullying. Research participant 5 argues that her cyberbullying was a revenge act from her sister. Furthermore, chapter Two of this study, section 2.3 under section 2.3.1 indicates that adolescents often use the internet and social networking sites to avenge themselves by posting cruel status messages and sending harassing texts messages, this is further confrmed by (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). Participant 6 was cyberbullied because he belonged to another culture, a notion supported in Chapter two that reveals that culture can be a contributing factor to cyberbullying, also linked with 2.3.7 by Baraldo and Chetty (2018) who state that cyberbullying and culture are interrelated.

5.2.2.1 Section deductions

All of the research participants provided various reasons for their experiences of cyberbullying as unique to their personal occurrence. **P 1** reported that the cause for her victimisation was to entertain the Facebookers. **P 11** attributed the reasons for her victimisation to the cyber stalker's jealousy. **P 3 and 5** concurred that their cyber bullies were motivated by revenge. This motivation attributed to the cyber bully is supported by chapter Two of the present research study under sub-heading 2.3.1, in that the need for revenge often triggers the start of cyberbullying against the victim (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). The study **P 6** wrote that culture was the reason to her episode. From the data collected, it is clear that there are many causes of cyberbullying. It is vital to note that these causes are specific to each student's case, although common patterns may exist.

5.2.3 Theme 3: The relationship between the bully and the victim

The researcher asked participants to indicate whether or not they knew the cyberbully. The relationship between the bully and the victim range from family members, friend, boyfriend or ex boyfriend. Most participants (About 08) were victimised by their ex-boyfriends. Based on the collected data, five participants reported that their ex-boyfriends or people they are currently dating abused them online. Two of them reported that they were cyber victimised by the people they considered to be their friends, only one participant reported that they were bullied online by their family members. The other 07 participants did not answer this question, as they did not feel comfortable.

The following illustrations were shared by the participants:

"Yes, I have known the guy for seven years now; we played together when we were still kids and also went to the same high school. I dated him for a couple of weeks and we both decided to end the relationship because it was not working well. I thought we were cool and sorted it out as adults, but he went on Facebook to tarnish my name, calling me all nasty names you can think of, when I asked him why he had to do that he said that he wanted to break my heart the same way I broke his, I told him that he did not have to take our personal problems to social media, I had so much respect for him but after all the drama he caused I do not know if I will ever value him. He disrespected me and my family by doing what he did and for that I will never forgive or respect him ever again, he did try to communicate with me after the drama he caused and I promised to report him to the relevant people should he continue bothering me." **(P 7)**

"With my first incident it was my cousin, we had a little misunderstanding and she indirectly wrote a WhatsApp status message about me. We have a family group and we were discussing about what to wear on my aunt's 50th birthday party, I suggested that we wear simple, a printed T-shirt and black jeans and he said that was old-fashioned, he further wrote a status that 'she has class and if people wanted to wear T-shirt and jeans they will wear them but she will wear something better, and that she is not going to allow any witch to cramp her style'. I was so hurt because I knew obviously that the message was indirectly referring to me. With my second incident, it was my bitter ex, he could not deal with the fact that I moved on with someone better than him. He started sending me text messages calling me a gold-digger and claiming that I left him because he was not working and broke and because I did not feel the need to explain myself to him I ignored him, the more I ignored him the more he texted me." **(P 9)**

"Yes I know the bully like the palm of my hand. She bullied me online by creating a fake account using my pictures and personal information, from my name, nickname, surname, residential address, the school I attended, the school am currently attending, my boyfriend's name, my siblings name and the name of my son which she all used in her fake account. We used to be friends but not anymore, the fact that we used to be friends make it easier for her to create a fake account because she knew everything about me, including my personal details that she used to create the account." **(P 12)**

"My previous partner abused me both off and online. Online he would send me harassing messages and offline he would swear at me in front of my friends. I blocked him from all my social networking sites and avoided him by all means physically." **(P13)**

"I was surprised to see my naked pictures online after we broke up. When I asked him about it, he denied that he was the one who posted it online. I know it was him, I only send him those pictures and nobody else. I do not know what he was trying to achieve, but it destroyed me. It took me months to regain back my self confidence. What hurt me even the most is that my pictures will forever be online, unless he deletes them which I doubt he will, I do not even know what to do anymore, one day my kids will grow up and see mommy's naked pictures online. I did try to report them on the moderators but they never got back to me, talking about this even makes me emotional." **(P 14)**

"She is my friend; the only friend I have known all my life. I do not know what got into her. But we are fine now, we talked it through. It all started when a mutual friend posted a status which led us into an urgument, we had different opinions about the status and that is how the bullying started, I do not remember clearly but I think the status had to do with religion and I jokingly said something about her religion which hurt her feelings. It was never my intentions to hurt her, I was just trying to be funny, which backfired and then she private message through an inbox and started to insult me. She was even threatening to write a status message and expose me by sharing all my secrets. I had to let her win the argument for the sake of peace because I could not bear to see her hurt like that, I do not know why she took it personal because social media is for fun, no one takes anything personal there". **(P 15)**

"My ex boyfriend was crushed when I got married and started attacking me through phone calls. He even harassed my husband, sometimes he would call me late at night and keep quiet, affected my marriage because my husband suspected that I was still seeing him behind his back. Sometimes he would call me using a private number and breathe heavingly or even make some weird noises, I do not know what his intentions were but he scared me. One day he called my husband and confessed that he was the one calling me because the aim was to break us up because he was still in love with me, my husband promised to take him to court if he does not stop, however the harassment did not stop as I continued getting calls, worse than before this until my husband and I both decided to change our phone numbers." **(P1)**

Based on the collected data, the researcher can conclude by saying that most victims of cyberbullying are victimised by people they know, especially people they had a romantic relationship with such as a previous partner. These findings are supported by chapter Two of this study section 2.4, sub-heading 2.4.2 by Bocij (2004:72). Two of the research participants were bullied by people they considered to be their friends and this was maintained in chapter Two of this study, under section 2.4.1 Feinberg and Roney (2010) who found that both males and females were more likely to be victimised by their friends. One research participant was bullied by a family member.

The DPT and RAT also supports the notion that students who are active users on cyberspace are at a risk of being bullied online as already stipulated in chapter Three of this study. According to the two identified theories, being online everyday is a risky behaviour, this is because the online environment is a deviant place and bullies can easily obtain the victim's information and trace their activities. These routine activities that students take part in invade the victims' privacy in that their every online move is monitored, from their personal details which the online environment requires them to update before getting an account to the profile pictures and daily status updates, this put students at a higher risk of being victimised onlineby using the same information that they have updated.

5.2.3.1 Section deductions

All the research participants reported that they know their cyber bully and had shared some sort of a relationship with him or her, such as a friend, ex boyfriend, boyfriend and a family member **(Study Ps 1, 7, 9, 12, 13, 15 and 14).** According to the collected data, it is evident that most of the research participants' **(Ps 7, 9, 13, 14 and 1)** relationship with their cyber bully falls under the category of boyfriend or ex boyfriend, which is the most victimised category. The findings of the collected data are supported by literature in paragraph 2.4.2 of chapter Two of this study (Pathé, 2002), who propose that victims of cyberbullying are often known by their victims personally while some shared a romantic affair with the victim.

5.2.4 Theme 4: The consequences of cyberbullying on victims

The negative effects of online bullying are varied. Most participants explained that they felt sad, lonely and ashamed. Some participants reported that they experienced serious psychological problems such as low self-esteem, loss of confidence, depression and even developed suicidal thoughts. Some were having difficulty in sleeping, feeling helpless and lost concentration in their school work. The research report divides the possible effects of cyberbullying on victims into three themes; suicidal risk, psychological and academic effects.

5.2.4.1 Psychological effects of cyberbullying

The researcher asked the research participants whether or not they have experienced any psychological effects from the online harassment. In order to make the participants understand what the researcher meant by this, the researcher listed the following examples as indicators of psychological effects: stress, depression, anxiety, guilt, helplessness, suicidal behaviour or fear. Some of the participants provided the following responses during the interview regarding the psychological problems they experienced:

"I am worried about my parents finding out about the sex videos that my ex-boyfriend posted online. At some point, I even attempted suicide because the pressure was too much for me." **(P 2)**

"I feel lonely. My friends turned their backs on me, my family hate me. I have no one to talk to." **(P 3)**

"The text messages I receive from my boyfriend depress me. Every morning and before I sleep, I receive his threatening messages. I am even thinking of changing my phone numbers. Everytime my phone beeps am afraid of checking it because I do not want him to ruin my day with his aggressive messages am scared for my life and I do not know what to do anymore." **(P 4)**

"I always have nightmares about the penis he sends me." **(P 5)**

"The fact that my boyfriend is cyberstalking me is stressing me to hell. I want my freedom back, now I can't do anything without thinking that he might be watching me, every move I make he knows about it. I am even afraid of having small talks with my male friends because he accuses me of cheating everytime he sees me with a male person, this day I do not even go out anymore, I just stay at home and be bored because I do not want to be followed like I am a baby." **(P 6)**

"I've lost my self-esteem. I am always locking myself in the room so that nobody sees me after everything my best friend wrote about me on WhatsApp. I confided in her as a friend, I did not expect her to tell the whole world about my secrets." **(P 8)**

"I hate my life. I do not enjoy the life I am living now, because of the naked pictures of me that was posted on Facebook and WhatsApp by someone I trusted. Now everywhere I go people are giving me funny looks and gossip about me. People even call me 'social media porn-star'; they don't call me by my name anymore." **(P 9)**

"*I experienced a lot of stress and humiliation."* **(P 11)**

From the illustrations above the researcher notes that every participant who experienced cyberbullying was emotionally and psychologically affected. One participant was even crying when she shared her experience with the researcher while some participants showed anger and regretful emotions **(P 9)**. Research indicates that cyberbullying has the potential to cause psychological and emotional effects on the victims involved as noted by the researchers (Feinberg & Roney, 2010; and Johnson, *et al.,* 2016) in chapter Two of this study, section 2.5, sub-heading 2.5.2 who argue that indeed cyberbullying has psychological consequences. Some research findings by researchers; Hinduja and Patchin (2010a); Feinberg and Roney (2010:2) as well as Johnson *etal.* (2016) indicate that students experienced suicide and suicidal thoughts and these findings were supported by the findings discussed in Chapter two, section 2.5, sub-heading 2.5.1 by researchers; Hinduja and Patchin (2010a:209); Feinberg and Roney, (2010:2) and Johnson *et al.,* (2016:2).

5.2.4.2 Academic effects of cyberbullying

The research participants were asked to indicate any academic effects induced by the cyberbullying behaviour. The researcher provided the following possible indicators of academic effects: marks downgrading and poor academic perfomance as a result of cyberbullying. Furthermore, the research participants were requested to provide details for their answers. The following comments were made:

"I no longer perform well at school because I am always stressed about who created the fake account in my name. Who hate me that much?" **(P 10)**

"Poor concentration, I would say was one of the effects and challenges". *I remember when I was studying for my exams and he texted me, I had to stop studying and cry myself to sleep. I even failed the examination."* **(P 11)**

"I deleted the WhatsApp group that was created for all our academic purposes in order to avoid her indirect messages when we were in the group. She would always indirectly insult me and I got annoyed and exited the group." **(P 12)**

"I cannot fully concentrate on my research proposal and my academic performance has also decreased." **(P 13)**

"Sometimes I do not even attend my classes because the bully and are in the same class. I get really annoyed when I see her, I am afraid I might do something that I might regret, so to avoid troubles, I keep my distance and avoid places where they also go." **(P 14)**

Based on the collected data, the researcher can conclude that cyberbullying does not only have emotional and psychological consequences but also has a negative impact on the learning process of students as it creates an atmosphere that hampers learning. These findings are supported by Popovac and Leoschut, (2012) in chapter Two of this study, section 2.5, sub-heading 2.5.3 who argue that many students reported that they experienced an increase in academic problems, including low commitment to academic work and truancy.

5.2.4.3 Section deductions

Cyberbullying has many different negative effects as discovered throughout the present research study. Research indicates that cyber victimisation has the potential to cause psychological effects on the victims involved (Bocij, 2004). The large majority of the study participants **(Ps 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 & 11)** confirmed that they experienced psychological effects from their cyberbullying victimisation. These effects ranged from loneliness, depression, nightmares, stress, low self-esteem, hatred, humiliation and in some cases even suicidal attempt. Some research participants reported experiencing some academic effects prompted by their victimisation. These effects include poor performance at academic activities, poor concentration and truancy. It can be concluded from the findings that cyberbullying has negative consequence and needs to be prevented as it impacts the lives of students.

5.2.5 Theme 5: profile of typical victims [Biographic information of the identified victims]

The aim of this section is to present the victim's personal information which inludes their age, gender and educational level. The reason for this is to better understand the experiences of victims in detail. The profile of typical victims aims at determining the possible connection between age, gender and educational level to their individual victimisation process. It is important to note that the research participants were asked to give their demographic information based on the time cyberbullying took place.

This section of the study focuses on the interpretation and analysis of the data collected from the face-to-face interviews and focus group between the fifteen research participants and the researcher. The main theme and sub-themes, as discussed in chapter Two, section 2.6 of this study are looked at in collaboration with the findings in each sub-theme and evaluated in terms of current literature.

5.6.1 Sub-theme 1: Age of the victim

The age range of participants was from 18 to 35 years. The most victimised group of individuals were between the ages of 18 to 23 with seven victims, the second victimised group were between the ages of 24 to 29 with five victims. The third group was between the ages of 30 and 35 with only three victims, this was the least victimised group. According to the findings, the most victimised group was the group with ages of 18-23 and the least victimised was participants above 35 years of age.

Based on the collected data, all the research participants fall in the younger age group of victim categories, this finding is supported by literature review by Tokunaga, (2010) in chapter Two, section 2.6.1, who argues that younger people are more prone to cyberbullying as compared to older people.

5.6.2 Sub-theme 2: Gender of the victims

The aim of this question was to establish the gender of the victims. The 06 of the victims were males and 09 were females. With regard to gender, female research participants were more victimised online as compared to men. This is supported by the study conducted by these researchers, (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004; Li, 2007:439; Willard, 2007; and Slonje & Smith, 2008). The notion that females are mostly victims of cyberbullying as compared to males is supported by section 2.6.2 of chapter Two of this study which states that females are more vulnerable to online bullying as compared to males.

The findings from the study conducted by the researcher support the notion that women are more vulnerable to cyber victimisation than men. Participants in the current study who took part in the semi-structured face-to-face interviews and FGD all agreed that females are more victimised on cyberspace than males are, while males are slightly more prone to perpetrating online bullying. Based on this collected data it is evident that females were more victimised online as compared to males.

5.6.3 Sub-theme 3: Level of study at University of Limpopo

The aim of this question was to establish the educational level of the victims. Three participants were first entering students, four were under graduates (two were in their second level of study and two in their third level) while eight were honours students. Based on the evidence provided, it is clear that post graduate students were the most victimised students. This notion is supported by chapter Two of this study (Li, 2007).

5.6.4 Section deductions

In conclusion, the researcher notes that the demographic factors such as the age, gender and level of study of participants are the greatest contributors to students becoming the victims of cyberbullying. Students are often victimised online because of their age, gender and the level of study and these demographic factors put them at a greater risk of cyberbullying. All the students at tertiary institutions are at a risk of online bullying, but those who are vulnerable because of their age, gender and the level of study are more likely to be targeted.

5.2.7 Theme 6: Students' reluctance to take the necessary steps against cyberbullying

When the researcher asked the students why they were reluctant to take the necessary steps against cyberbullying the following illustrations were shared:

"I will never report cyberbullying to the police or anyone ever again because they are not doing anything to stop it; the last time I went to the police station; they did not do anything about it. They just encouraged the bully to stop bullying me online, but the bullying never stopped. In fact, it got even worse; I even deactivated my Facebook account to avoid it." **(P 4)**

"What difference would it make? A cyberbully will always be a cyberbully. Reporting is just a waste of time, no one takes it serious. I rather deal with it on how I see fit, but reporting is not something that I will do, the police officers have more important cases to work on and will not waste their time, energy and state resources looking at my minor case." **(P 11)**

According to the study conducted by Feinberg and Roney (2010:2) as presented in section 2.7, sub-heading 2.7.4 of chapter Two of this study, students were reluctanct to report being cyberbullied to their parents or educators because they believe that nothing will change by reporting to anyone. Students felt that the bullying will still go on even if they reported; this was supported by the findings by the researcher when engaging with the research participants.

"She was my friend; I cannot report her to anyone. I still love her regardless of what she did, I hope she realise how much she hurt me and apologise or at least tell me her reasons because I am willing to forgive her and move forward." **(P 9)**

"I fear that if I report the matter to anyone the bullying would get even worse. I fear that the bully might even attack me on the street because he is a well known gangster in my village. I don't want to risk my life; I will rather keep it to myself. Not even my parents know that I am a victim of bullying." **(P 8)**

"I feel like it was my fault. I did not intend to cause any harm by commenting on her enemy's Facebook status and complimenting her, but she took it to heart and now think I am a bad friend. If I knew it will hurt her in any way, I would never have commented or even accepted the enemy's friend request. Now I might lose a friend because of Facebook." **(P 10)**

"No, I don't think I will ever report the bully. I am over it, I am not really offended and besides the bully is someone I know. I don't want to create bad blood anymore between us. When he is ready to talk and to tell me what is wrong, we will talk about it." **(P 13)**

"I did not report it because I did not feel like it posed any danger to my physical wellbeing, I personally know the person who threatened me on cyberspace and I know for sure they do not mean it. I mean nobody takes what happens online serious. We all are just on social media to have fun and that's it. Just because someone said they going to kill me online do not mean they really mean it, especially when I know him and he knows me. Nobody plans to hurt or kill a person infront of a billion people; obviously that was just a joke. If they wanted to kill me for real they would have done it secretly, people should just learn to have fun online and not take anything serious, life is too short to be taking anything too serious." **(P 15)**

Based on the collected data some of the reasons provided for not reporting the cyberbullying were attributed to the fact that the victimised person personally knew the perpetrator and this made it difficult for the victim to report him or her. The findings that individuals hardly report the incidences of cyberbullying because they know them reads in chapter Two of the current research study section 2.7, sub-headings 2.7.2 and 2.7.6 by Ybarra and Mitchell (2004).

"The last time I got involved in some sort of cyberbullying, my parents grounded me. All my devices were taken away from me, including my cell phone and laptop. My parents are too strict. I cannot afford for my laptop to be taken away, especially now that exams are around the corner. I am using the laptop to study." **(P 12)**

"I do not see myself reporting the incident because I am scared that my father will take my smart phone and give me a phone without the internet or even stop me from engaging in other social networking sites like he did with my younger sister, the internet is my life and I cannot do without. My father did warn me that if I do not study and focus more on my phone, or if I engage in any immoral behaviour he will take the phone he bought me and that is why I am scared. I do not even wish for him to find out about the bullying, I even asked my cousin who witnessed all the online bullying not to mention anything to him, I am the victim but I know that is not how he is going to view it, he will most probably take the phone to proctect me from becoming the victim but to live without a phone will hurt me more than experiencing the online bullying, I can't handle what happens on cyberspace." **(P 8)**

Feinberg and Roney (2010) shares in chapter Two of this study that some adolescents do not report the online bullying to the relevant stakeholders because they fear that their access to internet might be limited or that their phones or devices will be taken away, this notion was supported by the findings by the researcher that indeed adolescents do not report because they are scared that they might lose their mobile phones and computers.

5.2.5.4 Section deductions

Based on the above findings, the researcher can conclude that the victims of cyberbullying do not report the bullying incident to the relevant stakeholders. This is because they believe that the support system available to the victims of cyberbullying may not be helpful, some feared that the bullying might become worse, other participants reported that they can not report their friends as that will destroy the relationship whereas others were afraid that their phones and computers will be taken away as they expose their victimisation.

5.2.8 Theme 7: Measures which can be taken to resolve the problem of cyberbullying

Research participants were asked about measures they think can be taken in order to resolve cyberbullying. The research participants provided the researcher with many different answers as to the methods that can be employed to prevent online bullying. The results from the data indicate that participants are of the opinion that cyberbullying can be resolved if the government can provide educational resources that contribute to public's awareness of what constitutes to cyberbullying. The government can also pay more attention to the seriousness of cyberbullying and cybervictimisation and also what defines cyberbullying because many people are victims of cyberbullying and they are not even aware of it. Some participants reported that they think it can be resolved if government can take the matter seriously when reporting the act of cyberbullying to the police.

5.2.8.1 Sub-theme 1: Awareness campaigns to prevent cyberbullying

The following responses were shared:

"Public awareness and education will stop people from bullying us, maybe the public are not aware that online bullying is an offence and the victim has the legal right to report it to the relevant stakeholders. Cyberbullying is serious and not everyone is aware of that, we see it everyday on social media and if we do not make people aware of it now people are still going to get hurt. I also think that the awareness campaigns should start at schools first and then around the communities, this can be done by bill boards which discourage cyberbullying. People are being bullied online and they do not even know it because cyberbullying is normalised, we need to break the normalisation because harassing a person cannot be normal or tolerated in our lifetime." **(P 4)**

"I think online campaigns against cyberbullying can help to reduce cyberbullying, this is a great strategy because bullies are found online, and so they ought to read the campaigns online, social networking sites should announce before your account become active that if you are found bullying others or if they report that you are bullying other users your account should be deactivated, I think that will be much helpful because people bully us and they know that nothing will be done to them, especially on WhatsApp." **(P 11)**

"I think someone can just teach people about the dangers of cyberbullying. Many people lost their lives already, the university can organise a lecture hall and those who are negatively affected by cyberbullying can share their experiences and then maybe people can see that online bullying is serious." **(P 6)**

According to the comments made, adolescents do not know what cyberbullying is and therefore suggest that for this reason awareness campaigns be done in order to educate people about cyberbullying. Section 2.12 of chapter Two of this study supports these comments made that certainly awareness campaigns will be of great help in preventing online bullying (Williams, & Guerra, 2007)

5.2.8.2 Sub-theme 2: Cyberbullying should be taken serious to resolve it as a problem

"Well it can be resolved if the government can take the matter into consideration when we report it, the police officers should take the matter seriously. Perpetrators should also be arrested like any other illegal activity." **(P 8)**

Schneider (2010:1) describes crime prevention as the anticipation and recognition of a crime risk. This is linked with section 2.12 in chapter Two of this study that reveals that cyberbullying preventative measures should be implemented and followed in order to prevent cyberbullying. Bullying preventative programmes will help minimise cyberbullying and the opportunities it presents (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014). Students also need to be given assurance that their experiences will be taken seriously should they report and that they will be offered support (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014).

5.2.8.3 Sub-theme 3: students should avoid social networks

"By blocking all the social networking sites or else only chatting with people you know and trust, and blocking each and every person you do not want him or her to contact you to avoid being cyberstalked." **(P 14)**

With reference to the DPT as presented in section 3.1, sub-heading 3.1.1 of chapter Three of this study individuals who are active users of social networking sites are exposed to cyberbullying as compared to those who are not active as in social networking sites individuals reveal information that can be used by the cyberbullies, which can put them at a risk of being cyberbullied, as indicated by (Siegel, 2006). For instance, many people use their full name or where they live as part of their user name. This provides a cyberbully an opportunity of finding out more information about a potential victim which can later be used to bully them.

The DPT discourages users to go deep into their personal lives on social networking sites, arguing that the online environment is not a suitable place to write an autobiography or every detail of a person's daily life. This theory encourages users to be very careful when sharing personal information online because it might lead them to becoming victims of cyberbullying. Additionally, it advises users of social networking sites to be careful of who is allowed into their circle of online friends. Users are not aware of how much information they post on the internet, leaving trails or important information for cyberbullies. Cyberbullies use E-mail addresses, phone numbers, street addresses or even IM to bully their victims, by using the same information that the victims provided themselves. Chapter Three of this study, subheading 3.1.1 argues that offensive and recognisable photos on online profiles increase individuals' vulnerability to cyberbullying, as indicated by Scholtz *et al.* (2015).

5.2.8.4 Section deductions

In conclusion, it is the responsibility of all South African internet users to protect themselves against cyberbullying as well as to know how to deal with it if it does occur. This can be achieved through awareness and educational campaigns aimed at informing the cyber community of online bullying. According to Hinduja and Patchin (2014), section 2.12 of chapter Two of this study, awareness is recognised as one of the most vital areas that can reduce cyberbullying and traditional bullying. Educating students about the safety measures is also effective in prevention of cyberbullying. Parents may play a vital role by educating their children to behave in an appropriate manner online and not to harass others. They can also offer support to their children who experienced cyberbullying (Feinberg & Roney, 2010; and Hinduja & Patchin, 2014).

6. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Based on the findings of the collected data, age is indeed a determining factor that exposes students to the victimisation online and as supported by the literarure review of the present study, the participants of this study were between the ages of 18 and 35. The findings on the present study showed that gender has an impact on the reported incidents of cyberbullying, with females more prone to cyberbullying as compared to males. Students at higher level in the institutions were also found to be more victimised on cyber space, the present study noted that the data collected were indeed concurrent to the literature review on chapter Two of this study. Students experienced various forms of cyberbullying including harassment, manipulation, cyberstalking, sexting and impersonation. Of all the forms of cyberbullying that UL students experienced, sexting was found to be the most prevalent while on the other hand, impersonation was found to be the least prevalent.

The findings showed that participants were in most cases cyberbullied by someone they know and not a stranger. Participants suffered serious psychological problems such as stress, depression, loneliness and low self-eesteem, some of the participants suffered from suicidial behaviours, whilst other students reported that they were academically affected. The RAT argues that the daily routines of individuals put individuals at a likelihood of experiencing deviant behaviour, and the DPT argues that cyber space is a deviant place and therefore puts students at a high risk of being cyberbullied. Most participants mentioned that they thought cyberbullying could be resolved if the state can provide education and public awareness about cyberbullying. Students also offered their own preventative measures that they believed would prevent cyberbullying or minimise the risks of being victimised online. The next chapter [Six] will focus on the summary, conclusion and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with data analysis of this study. This chapter highlights summary, conclusion and recommendations for this study. The findings are based on the responses by students at UL.

6.2. SUMMARY OF THIS STUDY

This study was conducted at the UL, Turfloop Campus on 15 participants who experienced cyberbullying. From the 15 participants, 09 were interviewed through semi-structured face-to-face and the other 06 took part in the FGD. All these inteviews followed a semi-structured technique. Qualitative research approach was adopted. Non-probability: purposive sampling was used to select participants of this study, with the collected data analysed using the narrative thematic form (Thematic Content Analysis).

6.2.1 Summary of major study findings

The results of this provided valuable insights into the cyberbullying experiences of a sample of UL students. The most noteworthy findings were as follows:

- Age, gender and the level of study were determing factors that put students at a higher risk of being victimised at UL.
- Students at UL experienced various forms of cyberbullying which are harassment, manipulation, cyberstalking, sexting and impersonation.
- Students were mosly victimised by someone they knew such as a friend, only one was victimised by a stranger.
- Females were most likely to become victims of cyberbullying; males were most likely to become bullies.

- Social networks like Facebook and WhatsApp are the highest contributors of cybervictimisation.
- Victims of cyberbullying suffered psychological effects such as loneliness, depression, nightmares, stress, low-self esteem, humiliation, embarassment, suicidal behaviours such as suicidal attempts and academic consequences such as poor academic performance, poor concentration and truancy.
- Research participants reported that educational and awareness campaigns will be helpful in tackling cyberbullying.

The purpose of the present research study was to explore the exposure and effects of cyberbullying of students at the UL. The findings indicate that there are various factors that increased the likelihood of cyberbullying; such factors include age, gender and the level of study. Baed on the findings students at the UL were exposed to many forms of cyberbullying such as harassment, manipulation, cyberstalking, sexting and impersonation. The findings also show that victims of online bullying were less likely to be victimised by a stranger. Females were mostly victimised and males were mostly cyberbullers. According to the findings, social networks played a major role in cyberbullying. The findings of the research study indicate that cyberbullying has negative consequences on the victims. Research participants reported that awareness campaigns could be useful in preventing cyberbullying.

6.3. STUDY OVERALL CONCLUSION

Cyberbullying is a complex phenomenon which is dangerous and harmful and causes negative consequences to the well being and development of both the cyberbullies as well as the cybervictims. From the information provided by the participants in the study, it is evident that students at the UL experience various forms of cyberbullying. Students experience cyberbullying from people they have or had a close relationship with such as a friend and others experienced cyberbullying from strangers, which often has a negative effect on them.

It is the responsibility of all internet users, especially those using the social networking sites to protect themselves against cyberbullies as well as to know how to deal with it if it does occur. This can only be achieved through awareness and educational campaigns aimed at informing the cyber community of cyberbullying.

6.4. STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends that:

The findings of this study are that adolescents are openly affected by cyberbullying at some point in their lives. Therefore, it makes sense to extend and apply improved conflict resolution. This improved conflict resolution can include the mediation between the cyberbully and the victim, awareness and educational campaigns to educate youth instead of disciplinary methods that may only serve to further alienate those who are likely to have many societal and behavioural problems. As a result of the research findings, some practical interventions by the researcher are proposed.

- Education and awareness campaigns and support be provided to all the internet users through the media, for example: newspapers and also on social networking sites. The researcher also recommends a need for provision of information that directly targets cyberbullies and cybervictims.

- The researcher recommends the need for a policy to cater for cybebulling at UL. The university management must put into practice the policies that will be enforced and further appropriate consequences relating to cyberbullying should be in existence. The university Deans, Directors and Head of Departments (HoDs) should also incorporate cyberbullying into all their relevant school policies to protect potential victims [Students] of cyberbullying.

- It is also important to offer support to the victims of cyberbullying such as counseling at UL, to ensure that victims receive emotional support.

- The researcher also encourages the internet users to respect and not harass one another on cyberspace, this can be achieved by allowing students to ask for permissions before posting anything about each other on cyberspace, they should respect and protect each other against the harm to be caused by this practice, the consequences of online victimisations should be prioritised by university students; they should avoid posting their real particulars like names, surnames, addresses and phone numbers or any other confidential information publicly.

  They should also avoid putting each other in a vulnerable space or compromising positions in relation to posting of degrading comments. The UL social media pages should be checked before sharing the contents, this can help in avoiding strangers to get access to information not meant for them or to place unfavourable comments. The researcher also encourages users to not retaliate/revenge should they find themselves becoming victims of cyberbullying.

- Cyberbullies like any other person who committed immoral behaviour should be punished by the UL management, while working closely with relevant stakeholders, this problem should be identified and addressed. The UL should incorporate cyberbullying into all relevant institution policies and investigate all reports of cyberbullying and then report to the local SAPS, with a clear message of deterrence, this will send a strong message to all alleged victimisers that this practice is not tolerated and potential victims of cyberbullying can be protected by the institution. If the cyberbullies are found quilty, they should face fines, expulsion or given a criminal record or placed in the correctional supervision.

- The researcher urges readers to be knowledgeable about computers as they are unintentionally allowing themselves to fall victims of cyberbullying.

- The researcher recommends cyberbullying programmes that will encourage the victims of cyberbullying to confide in the relevant stakeholders such as the local SAPS meners. Such programmes can include anti-bullying campaigns, seminars and awareness sessions, to be held monthly at UL to emphasise a strong message that 'cyberbullying is an immoral behavior that can be punishable by the law and it is not be accepted at the university level, as it consists of serious consequences.'

The UL can also update and implement the 'Code of Conduct' [If available] frequently on cyberbulling to effectively respond to cases of this kind, this will brig new methods on how to best deal with this scourge and highlight future measures. University students shouls be also be allowed to anonymously and confidentially report this practice using advised UL reporting online and physical portals.

6.5. FUTURE RESEARCH STUDIES

The present researcher suggests that the future research studies should not only focus on the university students but also the youth of South Africa as a whole in order to tackle and come up with the the core roots of cyberbullying amongst the adolescents of South Africa, in order propose suitable preventative methods. The researcher also recommends that other factors such as religion and psychological disorders be investigated.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER USED DURING DATA COLLECTION

RESEARCH TOPIC: AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPOSURE AND EFFECTS OF CYBERBULLYING ON STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

Dear Participant

My name is Bethania Mahlodi MMamorobela. I am a criminology Masters' student at the University of Limpopo (UL), and I am conducting research on "**AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPOSURE AND EFFECTS OF CYBERBULLYING ON STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO.**" This study is about exploring the types of cyberbullying that students are exposed to on social media, the consequences of such bullying as well as preventive measures.

The research is voluntary and therefore you are not forced to take part in it, and confidentiality will also be maintained. Thus, the information given will not be disclosed to anyone. Your name and other unique identifying features such as address, place and profession will not be attached to the data. Numbers instead of names will be used to identify participants. Also should you decide to participate in this research you are free to discontinue the participation at any time without being required to offer an explanation. Essentially, your co-operation will assist me in reaching my aim.

Please note the following:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 45 minutes.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded using the following equipment:

Audio equipment / Voice record **(Mark with X)**

Willing	Not willing

I can be contacted at: 0725785155 / **201100706mb@gmail.com**

Should you require further clarity you can contact my supervisor Ms O.R. Chabalala on this number 015 268 2746 or Email her at: olinda.chabalala@ul.ac.za or the Co-supervisor Prof Dr W Maluleke at 015 268 4881, Email: witness.maluleke@ul.ac.za.

You can also Contact the Research Office:

Tel: (015) 268 4029 or Fax: (015) 268 2306

DECLARATION

 I……………………………………………………………………………… (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project; I consent to participating in this research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

                                        DATE

…………………………..   …………………………

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE GUIDE

RESEARCH TOPIC: EXPOSURE AND EFFECTS OF CYBERBULLYING ON STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1.1 Age:………………………

1.2 Gender:………………………

1.3 Level of study:………………………

2. THE FORMS OF VICTIMISATION PARTICIPANTS EXPOSED TO THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

2.1 Which social network do you use more often?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

2.2 Have you experienced any kind/s of cyberbullying?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

2.3 Please share your encounter with the cyberbully?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

2.5 What was the content of the message?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTICIPANT AND THE BULLY

3.1 What is the relationship, if any, between you and the bully?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. THE CONSEQUENCES OF CYBERBULLYING

4.1 How did the victimisation affect you personally and academically?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

5. THE PROFILE OF A TYPICAL VICTIM?

5.1 Why do you think you were the suitable target for the victimisation?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

6. STUDENTS' RELUCTANCE TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS AGAINST CYBERBULLYING

6.1 After coming into contact with the cyberbully, did you do something about it?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

7. CAUSES OF CYBERBULLYING

7.1 What do you think caused the victimisation?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. MEASURES THAT CAN BE TAKEN TO PREVENT CYBERBULLYING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

8.1 What do you think caused you to become the victim of cyberbullying?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

8.2 Please explain what should be done to deal with cyberbullies on social networks.

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

RESEARCH TOPIC: EXPOSURE AND EFFECTS OF CYBERBULLYING ON STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

 FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. THE FORMS OF VICTIMISATION PARTICIPANTS EXPOSED TO THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

1.1 Which social network do you use more often?

1.2 Have you experienced any kind/s of cyberbullying?

1.3 Please share your encounter with the cyberbully?

1.4 What was the content of the message?

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTICIPANT AND THE BULLY

2.1 What is the relationship, if any, between you and the bully?

3. THE CONSEQUENCES OF CYBERBULLYING

3.1 How did the victimisation affect you personally and academically?

4. THE PROFILE OF A TYPICAL VICTIM

4.1 Why do you think you were the suitable target for the victimisation?

5. STUDENTS' RELUCTANCE TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS AGAINST CYBERBULLYING

5.1 After coming into contact with the cyberbully, did you do something about it?

6. CAUSES OF CYBERBULLYING

6.1 What do you think caused the victimisation?

7. MEASURES TO PREVENT CYBERBULLYING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

7.1 What do you think caused you to become the victim of cyberbullying?

7.2 Please explain what should be done to deal with cyberbullies on social networks.

Thank you for taking part in this discussion

APPENDIX D: LANGUAGE EDITORIAL LETTER

University of Limpopo
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727,
South Africa Tel:_015 268 2502
Email:valery.mashiane@ul.ac.za

18 February 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH REPORT EDITING

This serves as proof and confirmation that the research report for a study entitled: "**An exploration of the exposure and effects of cyberbullying on students at the University of Limpopo**" by **Mahlodi Bethania Mamorobela**, student number 201100706, has been edited by me and that unless further changes have been effected after me, I am content that all grammatical and technical errors of this report have been eliminated.

Yours Faithfully

Mrs M. V. Mashiane
(Editor)

Finding solutions for Africa

APPENDIX E: UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO ETHICAL CLEARANCE

University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 10 July 2020

PROJECT NUMBER   TREC/20/2018:PG –Renewed: 10 July 2020

PROJECT:

Title: An exploration of the exposure and effects of Cyberbullying on students
                      at the University of Limpopo.

Researcher: MB Mamorobela

Supervisor: Ms OR Chabalala

Co-Supervisors: Dr W Maluleke

School: Social Sciences

Degree: Master of Arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice

PROF P MASOKO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics
Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

Note:
i)   This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned
        date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one
        month before lapse of this period.
ii)   Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the
        researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for
        Amendment form.
iii)   PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Finding solutions for Africa

APPENDIX F: TURNITIN REPORT

AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPOSURE AND EFFECTS OF CYBERBULLYING ON STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

ORIGINALITY REPORT

14%	10%	2%	11%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	www.readbag.com Internet Source	1%
2	Submitted to University of Johannsburg Student Paper	1%
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