2019

Teacher Awareness and Perceptions of Social Media Use and Cyberbullying in Belize

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Recommended Citation

Teacher Awareness and Perceptions of Social Media Use and Cyberbullying in

Belize

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

In

Clinical Psychology

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

July 2019

Abstract

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Intro: Cyberbullying and other problems related to social media are growing concerns across the world with increased access to technology at home and in schools. Several studies have suggested that although instances of cyberbullying have increased in schools, teachers and other school staff members lack awareness of and training in identifying and preventing instances of it from occurring. The current study investigates school staff member awareness and perceptions of social media use and cyberbullying across two districts in Belize.

Methods: A written 47-question survey regarding social media use and awareness and perceptions of cyberbullying was given to voluntary participants across primary and secondary schools in Belize.

Results: A total of 39 participants responded with 15 males and 24 female respondents. Results indicated that teachers were "neutral" to whether cyberbullying was a problem in their school and majority of participants indicated they had never encountered an instance of cyberbullying. Almost all participants had never received training regarding handing cyberbullying, but many participants indicated they thought school districts should train staff in recognizing and treating instances of cyberbullying.

Discussion: The results of the current study provide preliminary information regarding social media use and cyberbullying instances in Belizean schools. Teachers are lacking

understanding, recognizing, and preventing cyberbullying instances in their schools and this should be addressed further in future research.

Keywords: cyberbullying, bullying, social media, website, teacher

July 9, 2019

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This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student's committee.

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Introduction

Cyberbullying is becoming a growing concern across the world with the

advancement and increased access to technology in schools. Anywhere from 10-42% of

students report being cyberbullied (Kasahara, Houlihan, & Estrada, 2019; Macaulay,

Betts, Stiller, & Kellezi, 2018). Although it is difficult to estimate exact prevalence rates

of cyberbullying as it varies throughout much of the world, one study estimated that

students aged 8-18 years old spend at last 7 hours a week on social media (Macaulay et

al., 2018). With 7 hours a week being the minimum time spent on social media, it is

assumed that this percentage is likely to increase as technology continues to become a

larger part of the daily lives of students. This could be amplified as technology use in the

classroom also continues to increase (Marees & Petermann, 2012). In addition to the

reports of being cyberbullied, studies conducted in the US and Britain have found that 1

in 5 students are involved in cyberbullying in some way, whether that be as a perpetrator,

victim, or bystander (Macaulay et al., 2018). Furthermore, studies report a range from

50% to 90% of students' as witnesses of instances of cyberbullying on social media and

close to 20% being fearful to attend school due to what they saw online (Sezer, Yilmaz, &

Yilmaz, 2015; Strobel, 2016). With an abundance of research reporting cyberbullying as a

concern, it is important that teachers begin to understand how to intervene or prevent it in

their schools, but first, teachers must understand what cyberbullying is.

Cyberbullying versus Traditional Bullying

Before a formal definition of cyberbullying is stated, it is important to discuss the similarities and differences between traditional bullying and cyberbullying. Several studies have mixed perceptions about distinguishing between the two types of bullying, and many perceive cyberbullying as a type of traditional bullying (Bauman, 2015; Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009; Grumm & Hein, 2012; Van Marees & Petermann, 2012). A few similarities that exist between the two forms of bullying include a repetition of harmful behaviors, power imbalance and aggression towards another individual (Eden, Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2013; Marees & Petermann, 2012; Redmond, Lock, & Smart, 2018). One study even suggests that traditional bullying may be a precursor to cyberbullying, but there is not enough clear evidence to support this claim (Grumm & Hein, 2012). Though several similarities exist between the two forms of bullying (e.g., imbalance of power), these differences manifest themselves in different ways.

For example, the power imbalance seen in traditional bullying is different from that observed in cyberbullying because the power held in traditional bullying is typically reliant on the perpetrator's physical characteristics, popularity and proximity, whereas with cyberbullying, these attributes do not matter (Bauman, 2015). In addition, the aggression seen in traditional bullying typically takes the form of physical or verbal aggression, whereas in cyberbullying, aggression towards the victim takes a more indirect form of embarrassing or harassing others through technological domains (Macaulay, Betts, Stiller, & Kellezi, 2018; Marees & Petermann, 2012; Murphy, 2014; Redmond et al., 2018). Anonymity and accessibility are two additional differences when contrasting traditional bullying from cyberbullying. Because cyberbullies can remain anonymous,

they may be less reserved in what they say or do when compared to bullying in-person. Anonymity also has the potential to put more emotional distress on victims, because they are unaware of who the cyberbully is and where they are (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009; Murphy, 2014; Von Marees & Petermann, 2012). Furthermore, cyberbullying is far more accessible for many when compared to traditional bullying. If the perpetrator has access to a cell phone, computer, tablet, or another electronic domain, they can cyber-follow their victims to any place and during any time of the day (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009; Von Marees & Petermann, 2012). The two most prominent differences between traditional bullying and cyberbullying is the use of technological devices and the absence of a physical presence (Grumm & Hein, 2012). This makes cyberbullying less apparent to observers and it requires an additional level of understanding, because it is not always evident.

Cyberbullying Defined

All definitions of cyberbullying agree that there exists a power imbalance, aggression, negative actions that are typically repeated, the actions cause harm to the victim, and the actions are carried out by using technological domains (Eden et al., 2013; Macaulay et al., 2018; Marees & Petermann, 2012; Redmond et al., 2018; Sabella, 2009). Individuals engage in cyberbullying using technological sources such as websites, cellphones, email, chat rooms, rating websites, and several other forms of technology to intentionally harm others (Marees & Petermann, 2012; Murphy, 2014; Sabella, 2009; Sezer et al., 2015). Research suggests that one of the most appealing aspects of cyberbullying to perpetrators is that it is possible to remain anonymous through creating fake profiles, email addresses, or usernames to block their true identity (Bauman, 2015;

Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009; Murphy, 2014). Likewise, some platforms such as kik® have anonymity as a feature of the platform. However, some studies suggest that many cyber victims are aware of their cyberbully, potentially arising from conflicts deriving from peer groups at their school (Macaulay et al., 2018). Whether a cyber victim is aware of their perpetrator or not, cyberbullying can have detrimental effects in school settings for both perpetrators and victims involved.

Cyberbullying Impacting School Performance

Students that are perpetrators and victims of cyberbullying may experience various impacts on their performance in academic settings. Research has indicated that like traditional bullying, cyberbullying can affect students' performance in schools, their motivation to learn, and increase absence due to fear and embarrassment of what has been posted on social media sites (Eden et al., 2013; Murphy, 2014; Strobel, 2016). One study mentioned that cyber-harassment may also result in emotional problems and difficulties focusing in the classroom (Beran, Rinaldi, Bickham, & Rich, 2012). Changes in student behavior and motivation in the classroom can affect teachers as well, as these students may suffer in their daily task performance at school and potentially fall behind in the learning process (Eden et al., 2013). For these reasons, it is important that teachers and students become aware and knowledgeable about the impacts cyberbullying may have while on school grounds and in the classroom (Strobel, 2019).

Teacher Perceptions/Awareness of Cyberbullying in Schools

Teacher awareness and perceptions of cyberbullying is an area in need of research and continued expansion. Several studies have suggested that teachers are aware of cyberbullying and perceive it to be a problem at their schools, but most teachers lack the

training and knowledge required to address the problem (Cassidy, Brown, & Jackson, 2012; Eden et al., 2013; Macaulay et al., 2018). Studies have also indicated that teachers want to receive more training to increase their knowledge regarding social media platforms, to increase ability to address cyberbullying instances, to give input and assistance to develop and implement school-wide policies to address cyberbullying, and to help their students and their schools perform better in a changing environment (Cassidy et al., 2012; Macaulay et al., 2018; Redmond et al., 2018; Von Marees & Petermann, 2012).

One study conducted in Israel found that up to 86% of teachers wanted their schools to develop a policy regarding cyberbullying, along with implementation of school-wide activities to address the issue (Eden et al., 2013). In addition, the same study found that almost 50% of teachers did not feel confident in addressing cyberbullying at their schools and nearly 70% wanted to learn more about cyberbullying in order to confront and prevent instances of it (Eden et al., 2013). Another study, conducted in two large secondary schools in Canada, found that over half of teachers were "concerned" or "extremely concerned" about cyberbullying in their schools and more than 80% of the teachers determined prevention strategies as being "important" or "extremely important" to implement in schools. However, there were no prevention strategies or policies regarding cyberbullying in place currently (Cassidy et al., 2012). Furthermore, a systematic review of 20 studies across the world regarding teacher perceptions and awareness determined that more than half of pre-service teachers believed their college program did not educate them in how to handle instances of cyberbullying and in addition, up to 80% of teachers wanted to learn more about cyberbullying. Of this

sample, only about half of the participants had prior training in handling cyberbullying and over 90% of teachers wanted to receive further training and education in handling it (Macaulay et al., 2018). The Matrix Table depicts findings from several studies across the world regarding teacher perceptions and awareness of cyberbullying.

Study	Purpose	Sample	Design	Main Findings
Cassidy et al., 2012	Assessed whether teachers believed cyberbullying was a problem in schools, their familiarity with it, policies in place, and suggestions for prevention.	17 educators in Canada across two secondary schools	Qualitative; interviews (16 semi-structured open questions); quantitative; three closed Likert style questions	• Educators most familiar with email and cell phone technology • Cyberbullying identified as problematic in schools • No specific cyberbullying policies in schools • Majority believed preventing cyberbullying was important
DeSmet et al., 2015	To assess how secondary school educators manage cyberbullying instances and how their perceptions impact their actions.	451 secondary school teachers in a region (omitted)	Quantitative; online survey; based on Handling Bullying Questionnaire (Bauman et al., 2008)	• Four clusters of educators identified; referrers (65%), disengaged (14%), concerned (12%), and 'use all means' (9%) • Educators more often used recommended forms of handling cyberbullying compared to non-recommended forms
Eden et al., 2013	To determine teacher perceptions, beliefs and concerns regarding cyberbullying and how types of teachers handle cyberbullying differently.	328 teachers in elementary, middle, or high schools in Israel	Quantitative; online survey; adapted from School Cyberbullying for preservice teachers (Li, 2008)	• Teachers were more concerned about cyberbullying if they were affected by it • Not confident in ability to manage cyberbullying instances • Believe cyberbullying to be an important issue that needs further study and discussion • Teachers who worked with younger children expressed more concern for the issue
Green et al., 2017	Address who school staff	888 school staff in New	Quantitative; online survey based and	• More teachers believed traditional bullying

believe is responsible in addressing instances of cyberbullying.	Zealand schools	adapted on Cross et al., (2009), Li (2008), and Rigby (1997).	was a concern in comparison to cyberbullying • Teachers reported high concerns of cyberbullying in their school • Disagreement on teacher roles in dealing with cyberbullying instances
Murphy, 2015	"Explore teachers' concerns, confidence levels, beliefs, and preparations on cyberbullying prevention and intervention."	231 preservice teachers enrolled in P-12 teacher education program at the University of Alabama.	Quantitative; used 'Survey on School Cyberbullying for Preservice Teachers' (Li, 2008); pre- and post-test	• Participants did not feel prepared, concerned, or confident in ability to handle cyberbullying instances • Participants did not believe cyberbullying was a problem in schools • Further training and education about cyberbullying is needed to prepare pre-service teachers
Redmond et al., 2018	Investigate pre-service teacher's awareness and perceptions of cyberbullying	61 pre-service teachers attending a regional university in Australia	Qualitative approach used; online discussion posts; online scenarios; used the Cyberbullying Conceptual Framework	• Teachers have difficulty detecting instances of cyberbullying • Many participants believed cyberbullying to be a problem in schools and the need for further training and awareness programs
Sezer et al., 2015	Determine teacher awareness of cyberbullying and precautions that can be taken to prevent cyberbullying instances.	184 teachers working at different schools across Turkey in 2012-2013	Quantitative survey method; used 'Sensibility Scale on Cyber Bullying', developed by Tanrikulu et al, 2013	• Teachers have a moderate awareness of cyberbullying, with male teachers having a higher awareness than female teachers • Teachers who use more technology have a higher awareness of cyberbullying
Stauffer et al., 2012	Examine the beliefs and attitudes of teachers regarding cyberbullying.	66 teachers working at an urban high school in the Western region of the US	Quantitative/qualitative online Qualtrics survey; Likert-scale type questions	• Most participants indicated that cyberbullying has long-lasting negative effects on students • Many participants do not feel it is their duty to inform anyone of

- cyberbullying besides school administrators
- Most participants agreed that parental involvement and warning about consequences were the most important in preventing cyberbullying

Of the studies discussed (see Matrix Table), teachers are concerned about cyberbullying in their schools, but teachers are lacking training and education necessary to intervene and prevent cyberbullying instances from occurring. If teachers and other school staff members can recognize, intervene, and provide preventative strategies when cyberbullying occurs, they can work together to create a school climate in which cyberbullying instances are no longer acceptable (Strobel, 2016). In addition to school staff members having an awareness and understanding of cyberbullying, it is also important that teachers recognize how students are using technology and ways in which it can be used to harm others.

Teacher Familiarity with Technology

There is no doubt that there exists a generational gap in technology education between teachers and students (Cassidy et al., 2012). In fact, as technology changes and becomes more prevalent, so does the gap in familiarity with technology, with teachers falling further behind students in knowledge of new technology and its uses. This gap in technology can lead to inadequate supervision at school and/or home, which potentially enables students to involve themselves in inappropriate acts online, including cyberbullying (Cassidy et al., 2012). Additionally, if teachers are unfamiliar with certain aspects of technology or social media used by students, students are less likely to

approach teachers or staff members for help if they find themselves in a cyberbullying situation (Kasahara et al., 2019). In fact, one study in the US discovered that up to 90% of students aged 12-17 did not seek help from an adult about cyberbullying instances (Kasahara et al., 2019). In addition to the technology gap, social media usage may look very different for teachers than it does for students. Teachers who lack computer self-efficacy may struggle to provide help or intervene if a student approaches them with a cyberbullying instance due to a lack of confidence (Strobel, 2016). Even if teachers have a solid understanding of cyberbullying and feel comfortable helping students out in those instances, another topic of concern is the fact that very few schools have training or prevention techniques in their policies that are specific to cyberbullying (Cassidy et al., 2012; Grumm & Hein, 2012: Macaulay et al., 2018; Murphy, 2014; Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012).

Teacher and Staff Member Training and Prevention

Few studies have investigated whether teachers and staff members have received appropriate training and prevention training in cyberbullying (Macaulay et al., 2018; Murphy, 2014; Sezer et al., 2015). A study done across almost 1,600 schools in the US found that less than 5% of pre-service teachers' state curriculums included information on cyber education. The same study noted that 75% of teachers did not feel comfortable having conversations regarding cyberbullying and under 30% felt they could help a student in a cyberbullying instance (Murphy, 2014). Another study conducted with pre-service teachers found that up to 60% of participants did not believe their educational program prepared them to deal with instances of cyberbullying. In addition, in a sample of almost 900 teachers, only about 50% of teachers had attended a training program on

preventing cyberbullying (Macaulay et al., 2018). Results from these studies predominantly done in the USA suggest that many teachers are not being trained in addressing instances of cyberbullying and prevention in their educational program. There is a need for further understanding of how teachers approach these problems at a global level. Educational programs should ensure curriculum covers cyberbullying and training should be made available for current teachers who lack knowledge and awareness of cyberbullying.

Student Concerns with Cyberbullying

The lack of training and awareness school staff members have regarding cyberbullying is concerning for students in schools globally because educators need to be aware of what goes on in their classrooms and schools. An educator's ultimate goal should be to create a welcoming and safe environment for all students, but this is not always the case, especially if teachers do not feel it is their place to intervene (Cassidy et al., 2012).

A study conducted by Kasahara et al. (2019) looked specifically into student use of various technology domains in Belizean schools, along with cyberbullying. Results of the study indicated that over 60% of students thought that cyberbullying was a problem in their schools and knew someone who had been bullied on social media. In addition, 66% of students knew someone who had bullied others through online domains and 15% of students reported being cyberbullied themselves through a social media website. When the students were asked how they would respond to cyberbullying situations, a majority of them indicated that they would either "ignore it, report it, or block the individual." In support of these findings, other studies have found that due to lack of trust in school

faculty, fear of escalation of the event, and fear of electronic devices being confiscated, students are less likely to approach school staff members for help when instances of cyberbullying occur and rather seek out other ways in handling the cyberbullying situation (Macaulay et al., 2018; Murphy, 2014; Strobel, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Previous research has established that teacher knowledge, awareness of and training in handling and preventing cyberbullying is lacking and is a concern in schools worldwide (Cassidy et al., 2012; Eden et al., 2013; Macaulay et al., 2018). In addition, studies have shown that although teachers' may be aware of cyberbullying and find it concerning, they are lacking a complete understanding of what cyberbullying is and how it is affecting their students (Macaulay et al., 2018; Murphy, 2014). Even if teachers do show concern about it, many do not believe that it is their problem to address and would rather leave it for the parents to deal with, or simply hope the situation works itself out. Cyberbullying is different from traditional bullying in that teachers do not typically see physical evidence of it. This is a universal aspect of cyberbullying, which may make it more likely to go unchallenged in schools across the world.

Gayle, Hampton, and Morris (2016) in their book noted the rapidly changing young male social culture in urban Belize and its role in the proliferation of violence in Belize. Advances in technology and communication capacity is like pouring gasoline on what Gayle et al. (2016) call a rapidly spreading "brush fire." For cyberbullying concerns in Belize specifically, Kasahara et al.'s (2019) research has identified Belize schools as having a problem with cyberbullying, but there have been no studies to our

knowledge that have investigated Belize teachers and staff member awareness and perceptions of cyberbullying.

Based off Kasahara et al. (2019), students in Belizean schools indicated that over half (62%) believed that cyberbullying was a problem in their school(s) and 15% of these students indicated they had been cyberbullied on a social media site before. In addition, most students accessed Facebook daily (75%). With the students' high usage of social media and their belief that cyberbullying is a problem in their schools, it is crucial to know and address how teachers and other staff members view aberrant social media use, cyberbullying, and how they believe schools in Belize should try to prevent or remediate it.

There are several purposes to the current study. Regarding social media usage, the researchers want to know teacher (a) familiarity with social media and student use of social media. In addition, the researchers sought to obtain information regarding teacher (b) awareness of cyberbullying, (c) whether they view cyberbullying as a problem at their school, and (d) whether they have received training on how to address and/or prevent cyberbullying instances. Lastly, we want to know (e) whether their school has specific policies regarding social media use or cyberbullying. The current study hoped to address the following research questions: (1) How familiar are teachers with social media and student use of social media?; (2) Are teachers aware of cyberbullying? (3) Do teachers perceive cyberbullying as a problem in their classroom/school?; (4) Have teachers ever received training on recognizing, addressing and/or preventing cyberbullying instances?; and (5) Does their school have specific policies regarding social media use or cyberbullying?.

Method

As noted by the Ministry of Education (2011-2012), there are 570 schools in
Belize, 59 of which are public secondary schools. Because of the greater likelihood of
children's exposure to social media at this age, those teachers working with these
children in secondary schools are the focus of this study. In Belize, secondary education
is divided into four *forms*. Completion of these class levels would then allow for the
potential of moving into the *tertiary* education system (analogous to junior college in the
USA). According to Naslund-Hadley, Alonzo, and Martin (2013), only 45% of the
secondary-aged children in Belize go on to secondary education. They also note the cost
of an education at this level to a family as being in excess of $4000 BZE, which is a
significant portion of a typical Belize family budget. Achieving adequate training for
teachers, and equity in opportunity for education within Belize has been a noted difficulty
(Curry, L. Sabina, K. Sabina, Mania-Singer, & Richardson, 2018). This study focused on
the level of concern regarding an emerging problem (social media abuse), and the level of
training teachers have to deal with this emerging problem.

Setting

The current study took place in secondary schools across the six districts of
Belize. The researchers received completed surveys from the districts of Toledo and
Belize, with the majority of responses coming from the Toledo district. Because we did
not ask specific questions regarding which schools teachers came from, we are unsure of
how many schools were involved, however, there are 59 secondary schools across the six
districts of Belize, including both public and private.

Participants

Participants were recruited for this study if they were a teacher, counselor, administrator, or staff member at one of the secondary schools across the six districts of Belize. The current study wanted responses from a diverse group of participants in schools to see if there were differences among positions held in Belizean schools and their perceptions and awareness of cyberbullying and social media use. However, majority (89.7%) of participants in this study were teachers at public Belizean schools (97.4%). In addition, the research sample consisted of 41% males and 59% females. The majority of the respondents were teachers at public schools in the district of Toledo, who taught mostly 1st or 3rd form.

Recruitment Process

The recruitment process was conducted during a staff meeting at various schools. The director of counseling and a principal at one of the larger schools were involved in the recruitment process. During the meeting, the director of counseling introduced the study, the purpose of the study, what types of questions would be asked, and allowed teachers and other staff members to voluntarily be a part of the study. Those who volunteered to participate in the study were provided a packet that contained two copies of the consent form, one to keep and one to send back to the researchers at Minnesota State University, Mankato, along with a paper copy of the survey to complete. Participants were given the opportunity to complete and turn in the survey during the staff meeting.

Survey

Data and items from Kasahara et al., (2019) and Murphy (2014) influenced the construction of the survey. The survey included 47 questions regarding social media use

and awareness and perceptions of cyberbullying. Questions asked were in several

formats, including ranking items, yes or no, rating items on a 5-point scale, check all that

apply, and a few qualitative questions. The original survey is located in Appendix A. The

researchers anticipated receiving 150 completed surveys and received 42 completed

surveys from staff members.

Results

Surveys received from Belize were inputted into a statistics software program

called *IBM SPSS®*. If a participant did not complete at least 90% of the survey, they were

excluded from the analysis. The data presented below was determined by frequency data

to obtain percentages.

Social Media Sites

Whatsapp® was the most familiar app to teachers, with 71.8% of teachers stating

they were "very familiar" with the application. Facebook was the next application that

staff members were most familiar with, with over 50% stating they were "very familiar"

with the application. However, Twitter, Snapchat, and kik were the most unfamiliar

applications with a range from 50%-92.3% claiming they had "never used" the

application before. See Table 1 for additional information.

Table 1

Teacher and Administrator Familiarity with Social Media Applications and Websites

Site/App	Very Familiar	Familiar	Sometimes Use	Seldom Use	Never Use
Whatsapp	71.8%	15.4%	0%	12.8%	0%
Facebook	53.8%	25.6%	10.3%	5.1%	5.1%
Instagram	23.1%	7.7%	2.6%	15.4%	51.3%
Snapchat	5.1%	2.6%	7.7%	7.7%	76.9%
KiK	5.1%	2.6%	0%	0%	92.3%

Site/App	Very Familiar	Familiar	Sometimes Use	Seldom Use	Never Use
Twitter	2.6%	2.6%	2.6%	7.7%	84.6%

Of the teachers and administrators surveyed, 82.1% believed that students used social media sites "very often" or "often". Teachers perceived that students used Facebook the most (69.2%), followed by Instagram (43.6%), Snapchat (33.3%), and Whatsapp (33.3%). Twitter was reported mostly as a "seldom used" application (33.3%) and Kik Messenger was reported mostly as "never used" (35.9%). An important element to note is that there was an error in the survey that affected the response rate for the WhatsApp portion of the question. Due to this, responses were received from only about half the participants for this item. This could have skewed our data and the current percentages for WhatsApp may not be representative of actual perceived use.

Additionally, teachers and administrators reported that students use their smartphones most often (87.2%) for web access in comparison to computers and iPads/tablets. For the number of times per day that teachers saw students use a smart phone, computer, and iPad tablet, teachers reported that they saw students accessing their smartphone 6 or more times per day (33.3%), followed by a computer three times per day (25.6%), and lastly, accessing an iPad or tablet once per day most commonly (30.8%). These findings are consistent with the finding that teachers perceived students using their smartphones most often for web access in comparison to other devices. See table 2 for further clarification.

Table 2

Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of Student Social Media Usage

Site/App	Very Familiar	Familiar	Sometimes Use	Seldom Use	Never Use
Facebook	69.2%	17.9%	5.1%	7.7%	0%
Instagram	43.6%	33.3%	2.6%	12.8%	5.1%
Snapchat	33.3%	30.8%	15.4%	7.7%	7.7%
Whatsapp	33.3%	7.7%	2.6%	5.1%	5.1%
KiK	10.3%	12.8%	10.3%	20.5%	35.9%
Twitter	7.7%	15.4%	17.9%	33.3%	12.8%

Cyberbullying Awareness and Perceptions

Over half of respondents (51.3%) answered that they were "neutral" of the fact that cyberbullying was a problem in their school. Additionally, only 30% of the participants agreed that cyberbullying was a problem in their school. However, though many teachers showed "neutral" concern for cyberbullying in their schools, over 50% indicated they "agreed" that students were affected by cyberbullying and 46.2% indicated they "agreed" that they were concerned of the negative effects on students from cyberbullying. Approximately 75% of teachers had never encountered an instance of cyberbullying, however 41% indicated they "strongly agreed" that they were able to recognize when an instance of cyberbullying occurred. See Table 3 for further information.

Table 3

Teacher Opinions of Cyberbullying

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cyberbullying is a problem in my school.	2.6%	30.8%	51.3%	12.8%	2.6%
It is my opinion that children are affected by cyberbullying.	33.3%	56.4%	10.3%	0%	0%

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am concerned about the negative effects on children of cyberbullying	38.5%	46.2%	12.8%	2.6%	0%
I am confident in my ability to recognize the occurrence of cyberbullying.	41.0%	33.3%	23.1%	2.6%	0%

When asked if cyberbullying was most likely to occur before school, after school, during break times, and during class times, majority (87.2%) of staff members responded that cyberbullying would most likely occur after school, followed by during break times (79.5%).

Need for Training

Almost 100% of teachers had never received specific training for addressing or preventing instances of school bullying or cyberbullying. Although there existed a lack of training, 92.3% of respondents indicated they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that school districts should train staff regarding recognizing, intervening, and preventing cyberbullying instances. In agreement, majority of teachers and administrators also indicated that they thought students needed more guidance on how to appropriately use and interact with others on social media, but majority did not think it should be the school's responsibility to do so (87.2%).

Policies for Social Media in School

Most respondents indicated that social media use by staff members was not a problem in their school (79.5%). In line with these results, participants reported that majority of their schools did not have a social media policy for staff members (87.2%). However, 51.3% of teachers and administrators indicated that student use of social media was a problem in their school, but majority of participants reported that they did not have

a social media policy for students at their school (69.2%). All respondents (100%) "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that schools should have or develop policies on cyberbullying, but majority also stated "no" when asked if schools should discuss with students how to appropriately interact with others on social media (87.2%).

Discussion

There were several research questions posed by the current study and most of them were able to be answered with the results. First, teacher and administrator familiarity with social media and student use of social media. Results determined that teachers and administrators themselves were most familiar with WhatsApp and Facebook. Similarity, our participants perceived students as using Facebook most often, followed by Instagram. Teachers believed that student use their smartphones to access the web most often when compared to computers and iPads/tablets. This finding is consistent with Kasahara et al. (2019), with discovering that up to 67% of students had access to smartphones in surveying students from schools in Belize. In addition, students reportedly are seen using their smartphones most often, being on them an average of six times or more per day. This finding seemingly supports the results from Macaulay et al., (2018) that reported children accessing social media sites at least 7 hours per week on average globally. However, this study did not obtain information on specific duration of student's being on their devices.

The second question addressed if teachers and administrators were aware of cyberbullying occurring in their school(s) and if they perceived it to be a problem. Almost 75% of our participants reported never encountering an instance of cyberbullying, over half felt "neutral" about cyberbullying being a problem in their school, and only

30% believed it was a problem in their school. These results are concerning, given the fact that 15% of students sampled across the districts in Belize reported being cyberbullied on a social media site, over 60% of students knew a friend that had been cyberbullied, and over 60% of students believed that cyberbullying was a problem in their school (Kasahara et al., 2019). The inconsistencies between our findings suggest that school staff member and student awareness and perceptions of cyberbullying across the same school districts are not aligned.

Furthermore, the study sought to obtain information regarding if teachers and administrators had received any training on recognizing, addressing and/or preventing instances of cyberbullying in their schools. Almost all our participants indicated they had never received specific training on school bullying or cyberbullying. In fact, only one participant answered having been trained in cyberbullying and only two participants indicated they had training in school bullying overall. This lack of training in cyberbullying has been reported in previous research, with many preservice teachers indicating their programs had not prepared them to manage instances of cyberbullying and less than 5% of teachers indicating cyber education was in their curriculum (Macaulay et al., 2018; Murphy, 2014). Though participants reported a lack of training in cyberbullying management and prevention, a majority agreed that school districts should train staff in recognizing and intervening with cyberbullying instances and believed students need more guidance on how to interact safely and appropriately on social media websites. These findings are consistent with other studies, stressing the need for training programs for teachers, administrators, and other school staff members (Macaulay et al., 2018; Murphy, 2014; Sezer et al., 2018).

Lastly, the study asked participants if they had any specific policies in place regarding social media use for staff and students and cyberbullying. Most participants reported not having a policy for staff social media use, but over half stated they had a social media policy for student use in school. Participants were almost equally split in whether they believed social media use by students was a problem in their school or not and most participants believed it should not be the school's responsibility to discuss with students how to appropriately interact with others online. However, many staff members believed that schools should develop policies on cyberbullying. This finding is interesting since most respondents indicated they were "neutral" about cyberbullying being a problem in their schools, because if they do not perceive cyberbullying as an immediate problem in schools, why would they want to push to create policies to address it?

Implications for Future Research and Conclusion

The results of the current study can be beneficial to those working in schools across the six districts of Belize and can provide several implications for future research. The current results determined what social media applications teachers are most familiar with, so it would be interesting to follow-up with a survey of what applications students use most often. In doing this, teachers could identify what applications their students use and could familiarize themselves with them in order to provide better supervision and/or assistance in a cyberbullying instance. Furthermore, the disagreement between students and teachers perceptions of cyberbullying as a problem in their schools could help promote the need for training and development of policies in identifying and preventing cyberbullying instances in their schools. Lastly, the majority of teachers had never receiving training in cyberbullying but believed their school(s) should provide it. This

finding could lead to the development of a training program to ensure teachers are able to recognize, address, and prevent cyberbullying instances from occurring in their school. In addition to benefiting schools and raising awareness of social media and cyberbullying concerns across the districts of Belize, the results of this study can provide important implications for future studies done in South America and globally.

Future research should re-evaluate the survey used to ensure it is a valid instrument. The survey should also include a question to address whether school staff members would attend trainings on cyberbullying identification, intervention, and prevention. This question would be important because it could lead to the development of a training program for all school staff members across each district in Belize, if it is found that staff members would be interested to attend. Additionally, it would be important to consider a different sampling procedure. Convenience sampling provided a preliminary analysis of teacher awareness and perceptions of social media use and cyberbullying in Belizean schools, but we cannot conclude that these results will generalize across the entire population. It would also be beneficial to have a more diverse group of participants. Though we sought out for teachers, administrators, counselors, and staff members, many of our participants ended up being teachers. Obtaining the perceptions of counselors, administrators, and other school staff members could provide more diverse data to further comparisons between staff members.

In the future, it would be interesting to see how staff member perceptions and awareness of cyberbullying change before and after going through a training for identifying, intervening, and preventing instances of cyberbullying. We would be curious to know whether attending training for cyberbullying is beneficial for staff members and

whether it helps them recognize instances of cyberbullying that they may have missed prior to being trained.

In conclusion, this was the first study to our knowledge that addressed teacher perceptions and awareness of social media use and cyberbullying in Belizean schools. The current study also provides important information pertaining to contradictions seen between student and staff perceptions and awareness of social media use and cyberbullying in their schools. Cyberbullying was identified as a problem by students in Belizean schools in previous research and now is the time for teachers and staff members to seek training to address and prevent it and develop policies in their districts to acknowledge it before it continues to grow as a concern.

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Appendix A

Demographics
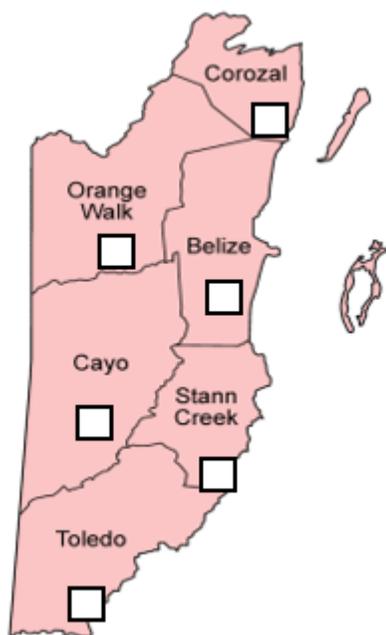
<<<<< Check (√) the district your school is in.

Grade level you specifically teach or work

with:_____

    Is your school considered private or public?

Private [ ] Public [ ] Other [ ]

explain_____

    Are you: Male [ ]   Female [ ]

Your Job is: Teacher [ ]   Staff [ ]

    Administrator [ ]   Counselor [ ]

Familiarity with Social Media Sites

For the following questions, please circle one answer:

How familiar are you with the following social media sites/apps?

- Facebook: Very Familiar Familiar Somewhat Use Seldom Use Never Use
- Instagram: Very Familiar Familiar Sometimes Use Seldom Use Never Use
- Twitter: Very Familiar Familiar Sometimes Use Seldom Use Never Use
- Snapchat: Very Familiar Familiar Sometimes Use Seldom Use Never Use
- kik: Very Familiar Familiar Sometimes Use Seldom Use Never Use
- Whatsapp: Very Familiar Familiar Sometimes Use Seldom Use Never Use
- Other_____ Very Familiar Familiar Sometimes Use Seldom Use Never Use

For the following questions, please check one answer (Check √)

Do you make new friends using these sites or apps? [ ] Yes
[ ] No

Do you communicate with people at work using these sites or apps? [ ] Yes
[ ] No

Student Use of Social Media
For the following questions, please circle one answer:
Based on your observation, how often do students use social media?
Very Often Often Sometimes Rarely Never

Based on your observation, how often do students use these forms of social media?

- Facebook: Very Often Often Sometimes Rarely Never
- Instagram: Very Often Often Sometimes Rarely Never
- Twitter: Very Often Often Sometimes Rarely Never
- Snapchat: Very Often Often Sometimes Rarely Never
- kik: Very Often Often Sometimes Rarely Never
- Whatsapp:

- Other_____   Very Often   Often   Sometimes   Rarely
  Never

Usage

For the following questions, please check one answer (Check √)

Based on your observations, which web access device do most students use?

[ ] Smart phone [ ] Computer [ ] iPad/tablet device

How many times in a day do you see students using the following devices?

- Smart phone: [ ] 1   [ ] 2   [ ] 3   [ ] 4   [ ] 5 [ ]
  6 or more
- Computer: [ ] 1   [ ] 2   [ ] 3   [ ] 4   [ ] 5 [ ]
  6 or more
- iPad/tablet device: [ ] 1   [ ] 2   [ ] 3   [ ] 4   [ ] 5 [ ]
  6 or more

Preferences

For the following questions, please check all that apply (Check √)

Mark which social media characteristics you believe students find most appealing.

- _____Anonymity (e.g., kik)
- _____Camera Usage (e.g., SnapChat)
- _____Networking Capabilities (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp)
- _____Picture/Video Blog (e.g., Instagram, Tumblr, YouTube, Pinterest)
- _____Literary Blog (WordPress, Blogger)

Mark the reasons you believe students use social media.

- _____Learning
- _____Interaction
- _____Personal Expression
- _____Escape
- _____To Entertain
- _____To Belong to Group

Based on your experience and observation, what is social media most used for?

[ ] Picture sharing   [ ] Video chat   [ ] Confession site   [ ] News feed   [ ]
Event sharing

[ ] Text based conversations   [ ] Life updates   [ ] General gossip

Which of the following do you believe students use when communicating online with friends?

[ ] Picture sharing   [ ] Video chat   [ ] Confession site   [ ] News feed   [ ]
Event sharing

[ ] Text based conversations   [ ] Status updates   [ ] General gossip

Social Media Image

For the following questions, please check one answer (Check √)

Does your school have a social media policy for staff? [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Does your school have a social media policy for students? [ ] Yes   [ ] No

In your opinion, is social media use by staff a problem at your school?   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

In your opinion, is social media use by students a problem at your school? [ ] Yes   [ ] No

In your opinion, who is most likely to use social media? Boys [ ]   Girls [ ]

In your opinion, who is most likely to bully others using social media? Boys [ ]   Girls [ ]

Violence and Bullying

For the following questions, please circle one answer

I am confident in my ability to recognize the occurrence of cyberbullying.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly
Disagree

Cyberbullying is a problem in my school.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly
Disagree

It is my opinion that children are affected by cyberbullying.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly
Disagree

I am concerned about the negative effects on children of cyberbullying.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly
Disagree

I feel confident in my ability to manage cyberbullying amongst children I work with at my
school.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly
Disagree

When I am aware of cyberbullying, I feel it is my responsibility to do something to end it.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly
Disagree

Schools should have or develop policies on cyberbullying.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

School districts should train staff regarding recognizing and treating cyberbullying.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Schools should periodically survey students to see how common cyberbullying is.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Schools should discuss cyberbullying, its effects and its warning signs with parents.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Schools should offer training on cyberbullying to families of their students.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

It is best to ignore instances of bullying when it happens in school because confronting it is disruptive.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

For the following questions, please check one answer (Check √)

Instances of bullying are most likely to occur before school?   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Instances of bullying are most likely to occur after school?   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Instances of bullying are most likely to occur during break times?   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Instances of bullying are most likely to occur during class times?   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Instances of bullying are most likely to occur when an adult is not present? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Instances of bullying are most likely to occur on school grounds?   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Have you experienced being bullied while on a social media site? [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Do you have a friend or colleague that has been bullied while on a social media site?   [ ] Yes   [ ] No

Need for Training

For the following questions, please check one answer (Check √)

Does your school discuss with students how to appropriately interact with others on social media?

[ ] Yes   [ ] No

If yes, explain

_____

_____

___.

Does your school discuss with students protecting their privacy on the internet?

[ ] Yes   [ ] No

If yes, explain

_____

_____

___.

Do you think students need more guidance on how to appropriately use social media?

[ ] Yes   [ ] No

If yes, should parents or teachers be responsible for this additional teaching and guidance?

_____

____.

Have you ever encountered an instance of cyberbullying?

[ ] Yes   [ ] No

If yes, how did you address the situation

_____

____

_____

___.

Have you had any specific training regarding recognizing or intervening with school bullying?

[ ] Yes   [ ] No

If yes, explain

_____

_____

___.

Have you had any specific training regarding recognizing or intervening with cyberbullying?

[ ] Yes   [ ] No

If yes, explain

_____

_____