



## Survey Results on Cyberbullying in Hong Kong

Project master by Dr. Shirley Yeung, Associate Vice President of UNESCO HK Association

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### Background

The concepts of sustainable development (SD) have been highly debated subjects and are of great importance for the future, especially in the higher education sector where students are being prepared to face the world's impending challenges and where they are expected to develop themselves personally and professionally in a sustainable manner. Szitar (2014) argues that community development is related to sustainability which needs to have stakeholder collaboration, linking up changes with sustainability, and adopting interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches in teaching. Pinho et al. (2015) also stated that university education not only enables professional growth, but also promotes *development on a personal level* (p. 162). Additionally, they highlighted that contextualisation is crucial in university education, including creating a variety of contexts for students to learn *how to perceive the world, how to handle adverse situations, how to experience practical content, and how to create professional networks via extracurricular activities complementary to their studies.*

In fact, Gedzune (2013), Gedzune and Gedzune (2012) and Pohl et al. (2010) also argue that *teacher training and engagement through reflection, active research and co-production of sustainability-related research are needed to understand the importance of a broader and interrelated perspective on issues surrounding sustainable development for the future.* As early as 2005, Kitagawa examined the role of universities in a knowledgeable society in light of the *emergence of new research and learning systems, conditioned by forces of both globalisation and regionalisation with the impacts of these new relationships perceived in four principal dimensions: economy, human resources, governance and community.*

Based on SDG 4, Quality Education, it is expected that there is a need of qualified teachers and transformative ways of knowledge transfer under COVID-19. *Through conducting survey (from July to December, 2021 by Zonta Club of Hong Kong East on mutual concerned issues, for example, the present situation of cyberbullying and bullying on students aged 10 to 21), stakeholders, for example, students, teachers, parents, social workers, psychologists, IT security experts and policy making parties are expected to be engaged to realise the situation and to take preventive actions to tackle cyberbullying/ bullying cases on young people with on-going tailor-made training on cybersecurity to make behaviour change and improve the well-being of students.*

### Respondent Information – Total Number of Respondents, Gender and Age Groups

A survey on student cyberbullying was conducted in Hong Kong from July to December 2021 by Zonta Club of Hong Kong East. There are a total **561** respondents (aged from 10 to above 21 years old studying from primary 3 to secondary 6) who did the survey, **244 (43.49%) of them were male**



and 317 (56.51%) were female. In this survey, we would like to see the different perspectives from students on cyberbullying and bullying issues with suggested solutions for implementation.

For the age group, 43.14% respondents aged 13-15 followed 40.46% aged 10-12 and only 1.07% aged under 10 years old. For grade level, 51.87% respondents studied Secondary1-Secondary2 followed by 30.48% studied in Secondary3-Secondary4 and only 5.7% studied at Primary3-Primary6.

### Perception of Cyberbullying

More than 93.32% of respondents have heard cyberbullying. The top three areas (with multiple answers) have been rated by respondents are considered as cyberbullying:

1. When some students bully another student on the internet. (96.68%)
2. When you send unfriendly the messages or pics to another student. (87.08%)
3. When you call another student with inappropriate name online. (83.95%)

The lowest percentage (65.31) for the statement is: When you pretend to be another student online.

### Chance Come Across Cyberbullying

For the statement of “Have you been cyber-bullied”, the percentage of “Yes” is 16.67%, the percentage of “No” is 58.14%, and there are 25.19% said “No sure”. This opens up a learning opportunity for primary and secondary students about the definition of cyberbullying and bullying through ongoing dialogue with teachers, parents, social workers and experts in cybersecurity, for example, relevant workshop on cyberbullying/ bullying cases to make students realise their rights and actions for self-protection.

### Reactions on being Cyberbullied

For the ways to get over cyberbullied experiences (multiple answers), the highest percentage (over 30%) for the top 3 statements are:

1. Never respond (56.42%)
2. Block offending users (39.91%)
3. Screenshot the case to report (32.57%)



### Frequency of Cyberbullying

For the frequency on the occurrence of cyberbullying, there is 40.45% responded that it happens all the time and only 1.83% responded that it never happens. Moreover, there is 62.73% of respondents replied that cyberbullying is annoying.

Hence, it is assumed the suggested structure curriculum and training on cyberbullying/ bullying with emotion sustainability and harmony in peer relationship have to be supported by the government with reference of good practices from not only Hong Kong, but also Asian countries to enhance the quality of futures of education and talent development.

### Issues related to Cyberbullying

For other kinds of bullying besides cyberbullying, the followings are the top ranked examples (over 30%):

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|--|----------|
| 1. Called by friends by particular names to make fun | (48.87)  |
| 2. Being insulted                                    | (47.42%) |
| 3. No experience of other kinds of being bullied     | (30.93%) |

### Source of Help for Cyberbullying

For the solutions, similar to Q9) get over cyberbullied experiences (multiple answers), the highest percentage (over 30%) for the top 3 statements are of which students preferred to talk to parents in the situation of besides cyberbullying:

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|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Block offending users         | (58.19%) |
| 2. Screenshot the case to report | (57.35%) |
| 3. Talk to parents               | (57.14%) |

### Can Schools and Family Manage Cyberbullying?

For cyberbullying experiences that respondents mentioned to parents/ teachers and the reasons of not telling parents are:

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|---|----------|
| 1. Lack of trusts in parents                                | (33.80%) |
| 2. Parents don't understand the importance of being bullied | (31.48%) |
| 3. Family relationship is not good                          | (20.83%) |



Not telling **Teachers** are:

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|--|----------|
| 1. Lack of trusts in teachers                                | (43.81%) |
| 2. Teachers don't pay much attention to students             | (30.48%) |
| 3. Teacher-student relationship is not very good             | (22.86%) |
| 4. Teachers don't understand the importance of being bullied | (17.14%) |

Based on the above findings, it is recommended to have training and workshop for parents and teachers on the ways to build and gain trust from students on cyberbullying and bullying. Trust and relationship building may be a regular discussion area in Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

For the solutions to help parents/ teachers tackle bullying (multiple answers), the top 3 statements (30%+) are:

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|--|----------|
| 1. Social workers share solutions to successfully resolve bullying | (55.34%) |
| 2. Put 'bullying' issues in the curriculum                         | (44.66%) |
| 3. Holding a sharing session                                       | (33.98%) |

### **Follow-up Actions - What else needs to be done?**

Based on the survey results, the key suggestions mentioned by respondents are listed as below:

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|--|----------|
| 1. Educate teachers how to be alert to students' emotional changes about the use of digital technologies | (69.28%) |
| 2. Educate parents how to set privacy setting high   | (56.63%) |
| 3. Suggest government to adopt policies to protect children  | (54.02%) |
| 4. "Big sister"/ "Big brother" program to share good practice  | (41.97%) |

Based on the above findings, it is time to design a structure curriculum and training to parents/ teachers/ students on the possible solutions to tackle cyberbullying and bullying through formal and informal education. And stakeholders (e.g., social workers, family counsellors, emotion therapists, technology experts...etc.) who have expertise on handling these issues can be invited to share their experiences.

### **Cybersecurity Protection**

Based on the survey results, literature has been reviewed for possible solutions to be implemented. The following proposed methods are worth to be considered with collaboration from cybersecurity experts, psychologists and social workers.



1. The identity of information provider needs to be protected without releasing any private information;
2. A platform with cyberbullying reporting and blocking functions are expected; and
3. A cyberbullying/ bullying awareness programme needs to be designed for students, teachers, parents, and social workers for self-protection so as to reduce undesirable physical, mental and emotional impacts, for example, loss of sleep, feeling upset and embarrassed, and losing interest in study or doing things that students are passionate.

### **Conclusion**

In this survey, we can see that there are different perspectives on cyberbullying/ bullying. For the proposed solutions, it is worthwhile for educators, parents, policy-makers and NGOs to consider as **cyberbullying and bullying affect the wellbeing of students**. It is expected to have ongoing dialogue and research on the impacts of technology in relation to the quality of relationship building among peers, the quality of family and teacher/ student relationship for emotion sustainability, trust-building, respect / harmony enhancement, and the quality of teaching and learning indirectly.