Cyber-bullying Portayals in the News Media

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CYBER-BULLYING PORTRAYALS IN THE NEWS MEDIA

Mary Alexander · SOCL 205 · Social Deviance

**SUMMARY**
The news media is a significant source of public opinions about a vast array of topics in society. The goal of the present research is to provide both a quantitative and qualitative understanding of the ways in which newspaper articles discuss the deviant phenomenon of cyber-bullying among middle school students in the United States. While researches have examined the characteristics of perpetrators and victims, impacts of cyber-bullying on both the victims and offenders, the development and application of law and the development of programs to stem cyber-bullying, studies examining the portrayal of cyber-bullying by news media outlets are rare.

**DATA SPECIFICATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FORMAT</td>
<td>News Articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
<td>Cyber-bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME PERIOD</td>
<td>1994-Present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**METHODOLOGY**
A meta-analysis was conducted in LexisNexis with the above specifications. The original search generated 1,962 results; after specifying deletions of duplicate articles, 1,807 remained. The final count after deleting irrelevant articles by hand was 1,275. Once every sixth article was pulled for the random sampling, 128 remained for thematic analysis.

**TRENDS IN MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF CYBER-BULLYING**

**DISCUSSION**
While some themes were predictable in that no study about cyber-bullying would be complete without them (i.e. suicide, prevention programs, school districts), some emergent themes were not so typical. Sexting, for example, was mentioned quite frequently, as well as the jurisdiction schools have over activities that occur off-campus. While there are some concepts that are almost always directly tied to cyberbullying, the news does not always cover the same angles.

**REFERENCES**

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*Data from various sources, including LexisNexis.*