

Chapter 4

Gender Differences and Cyberbullying Towards Faculty Members in Higher Education

Wanda Cassidy, Margaret Jackson and Chantal Faucher

4.1 Introduction

The ubiquity of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the personal and professional lives of university faculty members has been valuable; however, these advances have also resulted in an increased opportunity for negative behaviours, such as cyberbullying. The phenomenon of cyberbullying has come to the fore in the past decade, although we typically associate the term with youthful behaviour and not with adults. Cyberbullying research has been aimed at children and youth of middle school and high school age (see Cassidy et al. 2013, for a comprehensive review of this literature). The earlier ostensible consensus definition of cyberbullying suggested it was another form of traditionally defined bullying: ‘an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself’ (Smith et al. 2008, p. 376). In this rapidly evolving field of inquiry, researchers increasingly are providing nuances with respect to what intent, repetition, and power imbalance signify in the context of cyberbullying as well as evaluating the impacts of anonymity and the hypothetically limitless audience for the bullying (Dooley et al. 2009; Grigg 2010; Kowalski et al. 2012; Menesini 2012;

W. Cassidy (✉)

Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive,
Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6, Canada
e-mail: cassidy@sfu.ca

M. Jackson

School of Criminology, Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive,
Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6, Canada
e-mail: margarej@sfu.ca

C. Faucher

Centre for Education, Law and Society, Simon Fraser University,
250-13450 - 102 Avenue, Surrey, BC V3T 0A3, Canada
e-mail: cfaucher@sfu.ca

Nocentini et al. 2010; Patchin and Hinduja 2012; Smith 2012; Vandebosch and Van Cleemput 2009; von Marées and Petermann 2012). This understanding has led us to adopt a broader definition of cyberbullying: Through ICT media, cyberbullying uses language or images to defame, threaten, harass, bully, exclude, discriminate, demean, humiliate, stalk, disclose personal information, or contain offensive, vulgar, or derogatory comments with an intent to harm or hurt the recipient.

Cyberbullying at the postsecondary level has not been a priority of this emerging research area. For those who have investigated cyberbullying at universities, the focus primarily has been on undergraduate students' experiences (Beran et al. 2012; Dilmaç 2009; Finn 2004; Molluzzo and Lawler 2012; Schenk and Fremouw 2012; Turan et al. 2011; Walker et al. 2011; Wankel and Wankel 2012; Wensley and Campbell 2012; Zhang et al. 2010). Relatively little attention has been paid to the experiences of university faculty members or other teaching personnel. The emerging scholarship on cyberbullying in the workplace (Baruch 2005; D'Cruz and Noronha 2013; McQuade et al. 2009; Piotrowski 2012; Privitera and Campbell 2009), however, provides some parallels to the cyberbullying of university personnel. Further, some connections have been drawn between cyberbullying in the K-12 sector, universities, workplaces, and beyond (Bauman 2011, 2012; Englander 2008; McKay et al. 2008; McQuade et al. 2009).

We see cyberbullying against faculty members and other teaching personnel in universities along this lifespan continuum. Cyberbullying in universities is distinctively situated as a bridge between bullying in schools and in the workplace (Cowie et al. 2013; McKay et al. 2008). Several continuities have been highlighted, such as the persistence of roles, victim, bully, bully-victim (Bauman 2011; Beran et al. 2012), and the similar impacts reported at both the school and workplace levels (Baruch 2005; Beran et al. 2012; Cassidy et al. 2013).

Individual and contextual factors influence cyberbullying behaviours that take place in schools and workplaces (see Jones and Scott 2012). The theoretical framing of cyberbullying in terms of power is particularly relevant in the context of higher education. Cyberbullying also relates to incivility in the classroom and workplace. It has been pointed out that lower level mistreatments can escalate into more severe forms of harassment and even violence (Cortina et al. 2001; Wildermuth and Davis 2012). Our contextual understanding of incivility and harassment in universities as workplaces is premised on an awareness of the power imbalances that exist between university students and faculty members or other teaching personnel as well as between colleagues.

This chapter examines online survey data from 331 university faculty members and other teaching personnel (including teaching assistants, tutor markers, instructors, lecturers, and student advisors) from four Canadian universities. The purpose of the survey was to determine the nature, extent, and impacts of cyberbullying experienced by faculty members as well as their opinions about the problem and possible solutions.

4.2 Literature Review

4.2.1 *Cyberbullying Correlates*

The view of cyberbullying in higher education as a part of a behavioural continuum suggests that knowledge regarding cyberbullying in other realms (K-12, workplace) can inform and assist in theoretically framing this study. However, the nature of interpersonal relationships and interactions that exists between faculty and students as well as between colleagues in the specific context of higher education suggests that attention also be given to power imbalances that are at play and how these may present in the form of cyberbullying.

The research literature on the correlates of cyberbullying relate primarily to youth; however, the perspective of cyberbullying throughout the lifespan (Bauman 2012; McKay et al. 2008; McQuade et al. 2009) suggests that an awareness of known correlates may assist us in our examination of cyberbullying towards university faculty members. For example, research on youth indicates that heavy ICT usage may increase risk of exposure to cyberbullying (Smith 2012; Vandebosch and Van Cleemput 2009; von Marées and Petermann 2012; Yilmaz 2011).

Gender is one of the most examined correlates. Some work suggests that females are more likely to experience cyberbullying than traditional face-to-face bullying (Dooley et al. 2009; Jackson et al. 2009; Kowalski et al. 2012; Li 2005). Moreover, the online environment has given rise to new forms of sexual and gender harassment, such as ‘sexting’, ‘morphing’, ‘virtual rape’, and ‘revenge porn’, to which women are particularly vulnerable (Cassidy et al. 2012; CCSO Cybercrime Working Group 2013; Halder and Jaishankar 2009; Hinduja and Patchin 2012; Shariff and Gouin 2005). Indeed, according to Halder and Jaishankar (2009), women are the second most vulnerable group online, after children.

We have come to understand bullying as stemming from a power and control imbalance between the bully and the victim (Olweus 1993), and the same may be said of cyberbullying. However, the power differential in cyberbullying may be attributable to different sources; for example, ease with technology, number of viewers, potential anonymity of the perpetrator, and 24/7 access to the victim online (Dooley et al. 2009; Nocentini et al. 2010; Shariff and Gouin 2005; Vandebosch and Van Cleemput 2009; von Marées and Petermann, 2012). The hierarchical nature of universities may suggest one straightforward interpretation of power imbalances between senior and junior colleagues and between professors and students. However, in the context of higher education, a number of variables such as status, position, role, authority, gender, ethnicity, and age have an impact in shaping the relative and perceived power of individuals, whether in faculty–student relationships or in relationships between colleagues. The significance of these power differentials allows us to situate the analysis of cyberbullying within the Power and Control Model (Pence and Paymar 1993), where the abuser uses such tactics as intimidation, threats, harmful language, social standing, exclusion, harassment, and technology to exert control over the victim (see also Faucher et al. 2014).

4.2.2 *Cyberbullying in Higher Education*

The cyberbullying experienced by faculty members has not been well examined within the research literature. To date, we are aware of only three studies specifically documenting cyberbullying against faculty (Blizard 2014; Minor et al. 2013; Vance 2010), two of which were restricted to online learning environments. We also found some research on online misbehaviour, which refers to cyberbullying experienced by faculty members, but within the context of online incivility (Clark et al. 2012; Jones and Scott 2012; Wildermuth and Davis 2012). Cyberbullying in universities appears to be conveyed primarily through e-mail (Martin and Olson 2011; McKay et al. 2008). However, scholarship on workplace bullying suggests: 'bullying on the e-mail system appears to be at the same level as other communication modes used to conduct bullying and negative outcomes of bullying exist irrespectively to the media of communication' (Baruch 2005, p. 366). Websites such as Rate My Professor, YouTube pranks, Facebook, gossip and confession websites, and defamatory online profiles have also received attention as formats for the cyberbullying of professors (see, for example, Binns 2007; Browne 2014; Daniloff 2009; Martin and Olson 2011).

Blizard (2014) surveyed 36 instructors and conducted in-depth interviews with four members from this group at a Canadian university. She found e-mail or faculty polling sites were the main formats employed to target faculty members, many of whom experienced a wide range of negative effects, some of which were severe and long lasting.

Minor and colleagues (2013) surveyed 68 online instructors at a large online American university. About a third of their respondents reported that they had been cyberbullied by students. Of those who were targeted, about a third reported the matter to their direct supervisor. The majority did not know what resources were available or felt that there were no resources available to help them should they encounter cyberbullying from students. Concerns which impeded respondents in reporting instances of cyberbullying included: fear of impacting further teaching opportunities; fear of decreasing student retention rates; embarrassment; fear of not being supported by the supervisor; and time requirements for adequately addressing the issue.

Vance (2010) surveyed 225 students and 56 faculty respondents engaged in online learning environments. Cyber-harassment (the term he uses) in online learning occurred at least once for 12% of students and 39% of faculty respondents, and more than once for 2% of students and 16% of faculty. Older faculty and students and those who had been involved in more than 20 online courses (primarily faculty members) reported higher rates of cyber-harassment. The most common types of cyber-harassment experienced were e-mail and flaming (online verbal abuse). The majority of those targeted did not report the incident(s), citing reasons such as: doubt that authorities could help, not thinking it was an offence, not knowing where to report, and fear of retaliation.

Jones and Scott (2012) examined factors related to the sociocultural context of the university classroom that may be conducive to incivility and cyberbullying among students. Although the cyberbullying in this case was not against faculty members, it raises a number of relevant issues. Considerations such as perceived power

imbalances, perceived lack of consequences to cyberbullying, frustration and dissatisfaction, and motivations such as higher grades were contributors to cyberbullying.

Wildermuth and Davis (2012) reviewed the literature regarding students' uncivil electronic discourse aimed at faculty members. The authors contend that student incivility has increased due to specific aspects of online interactions (such as perceived anonymity, asynchronicity, lack of nonverbal cues, greater potential for misinterpretations), broader trends in declining civility and changing definitions of politeness, and the informal nature of higher education coupled with students' sense of entitlement and consumerist attitudes towards their education. Student incivility, as a result, can lead to faculty stress, decreased morale, cynicism, disengagement, lower standards, and violence.

4.2.3 Academic Entitlement, Incivility, and Harassment in Higher Education

The literature on academic entitlement, classroom incivility, and harassment can also aid in our understanding of the issue of cyberbullying towards faculty members in higher education. Academic entitlement refers to 'expectations of high rewards for modest effort, expectations of special consideration and accommodation by teachers when it comes to grades, and impatience and anger when their expectations and perceived needs are not met' (Greenberger et al. 2008, p. 1194). There is a body of work documenting an increase in academic entitlement among higher education students in recent years (Boswell 2012; Chowning and Campbell 2009; Ciani et al. 2008; Greenberger et al. 2008; Kopp and Finney 2013). Academic entitlement has also been associated with student incivility (Chowning and Campbell 2009; Kopp and Finney 2013). Morrissette (2001, p. 1) has defined incivility as:

the intentional behaviour of students to disrupt and interfere with the teaching and learning process of others. This behaviour can range from students who dominate and foster tension in the classroom to students who attend classes unprepared, are passively rude, or unwilling to participate in the learning process.

Student incivility towards faculty members is a form of contrapower harassment, which occurs when a person with presumably less power bullies someone with more power (DeSouza 2011; Lampman 2012). This incivility can occur in the classroom, outside of the classroom, as well as online (Bjorklund and Rehling 2011; Boice 1996; DeSouza 2011; Meyers et al. 2006). Young, female, low-status, and minority faculty members appear to face a greater risk of exposure to incivility both in terms of frequency and severity of the behaviours (DeSouza 2011; Knepp 2012; Lampman 2012; Rowland 2009; Twale and De Luca 2008).

Aside from the individualistic traits of perpetrators, we should also consider some broader contextual factors linked to our education system that encourage and perpetuate academic entitlement and incivility in higher education. E-mail access to professors has created, rightly or wrongly, an impression of constant availability to students and has lessened the formality of student–faculty exchanges due to the

casual nature of online modes of communication (Greenberger et al. 2008; Wildermuth and Davis 2012). More generally, online communication creates a sense of anonymity, a disconnect with the potential negative consequences of our words and actions, an absence of nonverbal cues available in in-person communication, and asynchronicity in exchanges, all of which play a part in uncivil online exchanges and cyberbullying (DeSouza 2011; Kowalski et al. 2012; Smith and Slonje 2010; Tokunaga 2010; Topcu and Erdur-Baker 2012; Wildermuth and Davis 2012). Furthermore, certain characteristics of the university classroom, such as large class size and impersonal instructor–student relationships may also add to the feeling of anonymity and the behaviours it engenders (Jones and Scott 2012; Knepp 2012). Additionally, students who adopt consumerist attitudes towards education may believe they are entitled to good grades in exchange for paying tuition. Such beliefs then may feed the academic entitlement attitudes related to student incivility (Knepp 2012; Morrissette 2001; Rowland 2009). Academic entitlement and consumerist attitudes may unsettle the perceived power imbalance between students and the faculty members who are seen as exerting control over their grades (see Blizard 2014).

Incivility and cyberbullying are not unidirectional. Less has been said about the misbehaviour of faculty towards students or colleagues than about misbehaviour targeting faculty members. Although faculty cyberbullying of students was not a focus of our study, we did investigate cyberbullying by colleagues and we found no literature directly related to this topic. However, adopting the same theoretical frame as above, we did note some work on faculty incivility and workplace bullying to consider. For example, Twale and De Luca's (2008) work on faculty incivility links university governance structures, committees, hierarchy, and bureaucracy to this problem. They also argued that the entry of previously excluded groups such as women and minorities and the growing corporate culture are precipitating factors of the academic bully culture.

Civility, both online and offline, and countering the problematic behaviours of cyberbullying and incivility are educational as well as societal challenges. However, incivility and workplace bullying also seriously impact the victim as well as the university culture as a whole. A wide array of effects are reported such as: trauma; distress; psychosomatic symptoms; student and/or faculty disengagement; unwarranted negative faculty evaluations and increased fear over job security; lowering of standards, including unwarranted grade inflation; low morale; high stress; cynicism; decreased motivation; and in rare instances the culmination into physical violence, homicide, and suicidal thoughts (Blizard 2014; Boice 1996; Ciani et al. 2008; DeSouza 2011; Lampman 2012; Wildermuth and Davis 2012).

4.3 Methods

This chapter reports on findings from sections of a broader study of cyberbullying at the university level, which includes a policy scan, student and faculty surveys, student focus groups, faculty interviews, and policymaker interviews at four Canadian

universities. Two of the universities are in British Columbia, one in the Prairies, and one in Atlantic Canada. Here, we are reporting on the findings from the faculty surveys from the four participating universities. An online survey, using Fluid Surveys, was disseminated through various mailing lists to gain maximum exposure. The survey included 111 items, which included both closed and open-ended questions related to demographics, ICT usage patterns, experiences of cyberbullying from students or colleagues, solutions, and their opinions about the phenomenon. The surveys were anonymous and no identifiers were used. Three hundred and thirty-one faculty members completed the surveys, during the period September 2012 to February 2014.

Cyberbullying was defined at the outset of the survey as: ‘Cyberbullying uses language that can defame, threaten, harass, bully, exclude, discriminate, demean, humiliate, stalk, disclose personal information, or contain offensive, vulgar or derogatory comments. Cyberbullying is intended to harm or hurt the recipient’. Respondents were then provided with a list of examples of cyberbullying, including the medium used, and asked to comment about their experiences over the past 12 months; for example, receiving nasty, mean, rude, vulgar, hurtful, or harassing e-mail or text messages; having terrible, derogatory, sexist, racist or homophobic things written about you online; someone posting an embarrassing photo or video of you online; someone pretending to be you online; and being deliberately excluded from an online group or chat.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Respondents’ Profile

Background Professors constituted the largest group of respondents (45%), followed by teaching assistants or tutor markers (18%), instructors (14%), student advisors and others with teaching-related positions (12%), and lecturers (9%). Participants varied in terms of teaching experience, level of employment security, and type of interaction with students and colleagues. Each participant, however, was involved in a teaching role and had a degree of power or control over students at the university. Our analysis of these different groups of teaching personnel indicates that there were no statistically significant quantitative differences between them as far as experiences of cyberbullying by students or by colleagues were concerned; therefore, we have grouped them together in this analysis.

The faculty members who responded to the survey were drawn from many different faculties in each of the universities. Of those who responded, 31% were from Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, 15% from the Faculty of Education, and 13% each from the Faculties of Science and of Health. The remaining 28% came from Applied Sciences, Business, Kinesiology, Law, Medicine/Dentistry, Preparation and Extension courses, and administrative units. Survey respondents were

predominantly female (68%), Caucasian (84%), identified English as their first language (81%), and were born in Canada (70%). Forty-seven percent of respondents had been working at the university for 5 years or less, while 48% of respondents had tenure or a permanent position; these percentages were approximately equally divided between female and male respondents. The age profiles were also similar for male and female respondents.

As the responses came in, it became apparent that gender, however, would be an issue worth examining. Data from the Council of Canadian Academies (2012) indicate that, for the academic year 2008–2009, 32.6% of all faculty members in Canada were women, with the percentage at three of the four participating universities between 32 and 39% (pp. 194–195). Data on our fourth university was not provided in the Council report; however, sources within the institution suggest a higher proportion of female faculty at 54%. Nonetheless, these percentages are much lower than the 68% of female respondents to the survey.

Survey respondents were also asked whether they would volunteer to participate in a one-on-one interview on solutions to the problem of cyberbullying. Almost all volunteers were women. It should also be noted that the female respondents to the online student survey, reported elsewhere (Faucher et al. 2014), outnumbered male respondents three to one. Women appear to have a greater interest in, or willingness to engage with, this topic than do men.

Female respondents also showed a higher level of concern about the problem of cyberbullying at university. On a five-point scale from extremely concerned to not concerned at all, 84% of females indicated that they were extremely concerned or somewhat concerned about the problem compared to only 54% of males. Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of preventing cyberbullying and of encouraging and teaching respectful online communications among the various competing priorities at the university. Here again, gendered perspectives surfaced as 86% of females versus 72% of males felt it was extremely or somewhat important to prevent cyberbullying, while 98% of females versus 84% of males felt it was extremely or somewhat important to encourage and teach respectful online communications. This greater level of concern about the issue may have contributed to the gender discrepancies in response rates noted above.

4.4.2 Faculty Members' Experiences with Cyberbullying

Prevalence and Background Characteristics Table 4.1 provides the rates of cyberbullying victimization by gender as reported by respondents.

Overall, 25% of faculty respondents had experienced cyberbullying either from students (15%) and/or from colleagues (12%) in the last 12 months. A small number, only ten individuals, had experienced cyberbullying from both students and colleagues. Female faculty members were targeted more often by both students and colleagues. While the percentage of female faculty members targeted by students was only slightly higher than their male counterparts (16% vs. 13%), almost twice as many female faculty members than males were targeted by colleagues (14% vs. 8%).

Table 4.1 Prevalence of faculty cyberbullying victimization by gender

Victims of cyberbullying	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
Overall (in last 12 months)	18	27	25
By students at the university	13	16	15
By a colleague	8	14	12

Table 4.2 identifies some of the background characteristics of those faculty members who had experienced cyberbullying.

As noted in this table, professors and those with tenure or a permanent position experienced more cyberbullying overall from both students and colleagues (31%) compared to sessional instructors (26%), teaching assistants and tutor markers (18%), and those without tenure (19%). Those in less permanent and less senior positions, however, experienced much more cyberbullying from students than from colleagues. Faculty members who self-identified as being from a visible minority experienced slightly more cyberbullying than those who identified as Caucasian (27% vs. 24%), with most of the cyberbullying coming from students (19%) rather than colleagues (12%). Similarly, those for whom English is not a first language were targeted more often by students (17%) than by colleagues (12%).

ICT usage variables bore some relationship to cyberbullying. Faculty members who spent over 6 hours each day online for their professional activities and/or over 6 hours for their personal activities experienced more cyberbullying from students than from colleagues. No correlations, however, could be found between ICT usage and cyberbullying by colleagues. Although 71% of faculty respondents had

Table 4.2 Percentage of respondents with different background variables who have been cyberbullied (CB)

Respondents	CB by student (%)	CB by colleague (%)	CB by either (%)
Overall (in last 12 months)	15	12	25
... who have tenure/a permanent position	18	18	31
... who do not have tenure/a permanent position	12	8	19
... who are teaching assistants or tutor markers	15	5	18
... who are sessional instructors	17	11	26
... who are professors	18	18	31
... for whom English is not 1st language	17	12	23
... who are on Facebook	15	11	24
... who identify as Caucasian	14	13	24
... who identify as part of a visible minority group	19	12	27
... who have their own blog	17	13	28
... who have their own website	18	14	28
... who spend 6+ hours online/day for professional activity	19	11	26
... who spend 3+ hours online/day for personal activity	17	11	26
... who spend 6+ hours online/day for personal activity	32	5	32

a Facebook page, they were no more likely than non-Facebook users to experience cyberbullying by students or by colleagues. Further, having their own blog or their own website also did not appear to be correlated with cyberbullying by students or by colleagues.

Form of Technology Used E-mail was, by far, the most common vehicle used to cyberbully (reported by 74% of those targeted by students and 78% of those targeted by colleagues). Forty-two percent of respondents noted being targeted by students on a professor-rating website, with 28% indicating course-related sites, blogs, forums, or chatrooms. Only 10% of respondents targeted by colleagues indicated that this had occurred on Facebook or other similar social media sites.

Reasons for Being Cyberbullied ‘Teaching-related reasons’ was noted as the most common reason (78% of the time) for being cyberbullied by students; that is, a grade they assigned a student, their teaching style, something they said to a student or in class, their course content, organization, deadlines, schedule, or assignments. Next was their ‘position or role at the university’ (36%). Female respondents also identified their gender as a reason for being cyberbullied by students, although none of the male respondents gave this reason. Among those respondents who explained why they had been cyberbullied by students, gender ranked third after the two most common explanations cited above. In most cases, the cyberbullying was carried out by a student or students known by their victims.

Respondents who were cyberbullied by colleagues most often cited ‘work-related reasons’ for being targeted (80%): a professional difference of opinion, competition between university colleagues, professional jealousy, their professional status, and an attempt to establish power and control. They also noted their position or role at the university (49%), gender (17%), and age (17%). In all but one of the cases, the cyberbullying was carried out by a colleague or colleagues that the faculty respondent knew.

Perceived Intent and Impacts of Cyberbullying When asked about what they perceived as the intent of students’ cyberbullying against them, the most frequently cited descriptors were: insulting (70%), demanding (52%), demeaning, belittling, derogatory (50%), spreading rumours (40%), harassing (36%), and rude or vulgar (30%). In terms of impacts, those reported with the greatest frequency were: It affected their ability to do their work, including productivity, loss of confidence, and concentration problems (64%); it affected their relationships with students and/or university colleagues (62%); feeling that their emotional security or physical safety was threatened (34%); mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and emotional outbursts (30%); they felt like quitting their job at the university (30%); and physical health issues, including headaches, stomach problems, nausea, heart palpitations or chest pain, and sweating (28%). The majority (64%) did something to try to stop the cyberbullying from students, but less than half of them felt that it had worked.

Respondents described the intent behind the cyberbullying they experienced from colleagues in ways similar to the cyberbullying from students: insulting (73%), demeaning, belittling, derogatory (59%), harassing (46%), spreading rumours (39%), and demanding (37%). They also added other intents: meant to

exclude them (29%), threatening (29%), and humiliating or embarrassing (29%). Many felt that it affected their ability to do their work (73%), made them feel like quitting their jobs (49%), affected their relationships with students and/or university colleagues (49%) and/or their relationships outside of the university (39%), and made them feel that their emotional security or physical safety was threatened (46%). Some also experienced mental health issues (39%), and/or physical health issues (29%) as a result. The majority (66.7%) said they tried to do something to stop the cyberbullying by colleagues, but again less than half of them felt that it had worked.

Seeking Help Most targeted faculty members told someone about their experiences, although they were more likely to tell someone if the perpetrator was a colleague (73% told) rather than a student (58% told). Women were much more likely to tell someone than were men. Victims mainly told their colleagues, partners, and/or friends. Few reported the incident to their superiors or to others who might have assisted them in an official capacity (for example, university administration, counselling services, union/faculty association, human rights office, or campus security). Those who did report the cyberbullying to authorities were almost exclusively women.

4.4.3 Opinions About Cyberbullying at University

General Opinions We put a list of statements to the respondents and asked them to rate their agreement with each of them on a scale ranging from: strongly disagree, disagree somewhat, neutral (neither agree nor disagree), agree somewhat, strongly agree, or don't know. For the purposes of simplifying the analysis, the two 'agree' responses were collapsed into a single category, as were the two 'disagree' responses. The strongest level of agreement came from the following two statements: 'I would like to help create a more kind and respectful online world' (66% agree); and 'I would report cyberbullying if I could do it anonymously' (42%).

The strongest disagreement came from the following statements: 'Cyberbullying can't hurt you; it is just words in virtual space' (85% disagree); 'I have the right to say anything I want online because of freedom of expression' (78% disagree); 'Cyberbullying is a normal part of the online world; it can't be stopped' (64% disagree); 'Solutions to cyberbullying lie with youth as they are more techno-savvy' (54% disagree).

Differences in Opinions Between Victims and Non-victims Faculty members who had experienced cyberbullying differed in their responses to some of the opinions posed. For example, victims were less likely than non-victims to disagree with the statement that 'Cyberbullying is a normal part of the online world; it can't be stopped' (51% of victims disagreed compared to 64% overall). Further, those who had been victimized by colleagues were more likely than non-victims to agree with the same statement (22% agreed compared to 12% overall). This disparity may reflect the victims' feelings of frustration when trying to stop the cyberbullying

they were experiencing. Faculty members who had been cyberbullied by students were also more inclined to agree with the statement that ‘Students are less likely to bully online if they are happy with their university life/course grades’ (36% vs. 25% overall).

Relationship Between Opinions and Gender Males and females held similar opinions on many of the non-policy-related opinion questions. For example, both males and females generally agreed that they would like to help create a more kind and respectful online world and had similar responses to the statements that ‘it is the university’s responsibility to stop or prevent online bullying’, and that ‘they would report cyberbullying if they could do it anonymously’. Both males and females overwhelmingly disagreed with the statements: ‘Cyberbullying can’t hurt you; it’s just words in virtual space’ and ‘I have the right to say anything I want online because of freedom of expression’. Male and female respondents generally disagreed with the statement ‘Cyberbullying is a normal part of the online world; it can’t be stopped’, although female respondents were more likely to disagree (69% female, 52% male).

4.4.4 Opinions About University Policies

Statements related to university policies elicited much more ambivalence and uncertainty from the respondents; these included statements about student conduct, harassment, and bullying, as well as awareness of these policies, their clarity, enforcement, and effectiveness.

Table 4.3 illustrates the lack of consensus among faculty respondents on these points.

Table 4.3 Respondents’ levels of agreement with opinion statements about cyberbullying

Opinion statements	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Don’t know (% ^a)
Faculty members are aware of the university policies and procedures on student conduct, harassment and bullying	40	17	21	11
University policies and procedures on student conduct, harassment and bullying are clear on prohibited behaviour/sanctions	27	22	23	17
Policies and procedures on student conduct, harassment and bullying are enforced at this university	18	25	18	29
Policies and procedures on student conduct, harassment and bullying are effective at this university	20	25	12	31
Faculty members can access support services if they are victims of cyberbullying at this university	10	21	31	28

^a Row percentages do not total 100% as the missing data are not shown. Approximately 10% of respondents did not answer the opinion section near the end of the survey

Only 23% of respondents said that their university policies and procedures on student conduct, harassment, and bullying were clear, with 27% indicating strong disagreement with this statement and 17% answering that they did not know the answer to this question. Nearly a third of respondents did not know if the policies were enforced or if the policies were effective. Further, in most cases, faculty members chose ‘neutral’ or ‘don’t know’ rather than agreeing or disagreeing with the statements about the policies. Almost 50% of respondents, for example, chose ‘neutral’ or ‘don’t know’ when asked about policy enforcement, effectiveness, and accessing support services, if victimized by cyberbullying.

Overall, their responses indicate that many are either unaware of what policies are in place or what support services are provided, or do not believe they are communicated effectively or enforced. Further, since most victims did not report their experiences with cyberbullying to an administrator at the university (discussed above), it is unlikely that they had any direct experience with whether the policies were clear, effective, or enforced, thus contributing to the wide range of responses across the agree/disagree scale.

Policy Responses and Gender Female faculty were more likely than male faculty to disagree that the policies are clear (29% of females disagreed vs. 22% of males), enforced (21% vs. 12%), and effective (24% vs. 11%). About 28% of respondents did not know if victims of cyberbullying at the university would be able to access support services, and of those respondents who believed support would not be accessible, 14% were women and only 2% men.

Relationship Between Policy Opinions and Victimization Experience There were obvious differences in opinions between victims and non-victims in relation to university policies. Table 4.4 compares the responses from the full sample with those who were victimized by students and by colleagues.

Table 4.4 Comparison of disagreement rates on opinion statements based on cyberbullying experience(s)

Opinion statements	Total (% disagree)	Cyberbullied by students (% disagree)	Cyberbullied by colleagues (% disagree)
Faculty members are aware of the university policies and procedures on student conduct, harassment and bullying	40	38	44
University policies and procedures on student conduct, harassment and bullying are clear on prohibited behaviour/sanctions	27	34	39
Policies and procedures on student conduct, harassment and bullying are enforced at this university	18	38	29
Policies and procedures on student conduct, harassment and bullying are effective at this university	20	42	29
Faculty members can access support services if they are victims of cyberbullying at this university	10	28	27

These findings suggested that those who had been victims of cyberbullying had a far more negative view of the university policies and their capacity to adequately address cyberbullying situations. Faculty members who had been victimized by students were particularly concerned that the university policies were not clear, not effective, and not enforced. The questions that were asked of participants in this section only addressed policies relating to student conduct and not conduct by colleagues, as we did not anticipate the relatively high percentage of faculty members who had been cyberbullied by colleagues. Even so, faculty members who had been cyberbullied by colleagues were much more critical of relevant university policies than the total sample of participants. Respondents who had been cyberbullied by students and/or by colleagues also showed a higher level of disagreement regarding access to support services if victimized.

4.4.5 Opinions About Solutions to Cyberbullying at University

Respondents were provided with a list of 15 suggested solutions to cyberbullying at the university level and asked to rank their top five choices. The top three choices overall for faculty respondents were:

1. Develop a more respectful university culture where kind behaviour is modelled by all.
2. Engage the university community in developing a strong university anti-cyberbullying policy.
3. Provide counselling/support services for cyberbullied victims.

Each of these three solutions was ranked among the top five by more than half of the respondents, as were suspending or expelling students who engage in cyberbullying, organizing workshops on cyberbullying and its effects, and creating an anonymous phone-in line for reporting cyberbullying. These rankings were generally agreed upon by both male and female faculty members indicating overall support for a multipronged approach to countering cyberbullying: strengthening policy, modelling respectful behaviour, educating the university community about the problems of cyberbullying, strengthening reporting procedures and victim services, and also dealing strongly with perpetrators.

Gender Differences Some gender differences were evident. Women showed slightly stronger support for dealing harshly with offenders, including involving the police if necessary or expelling students from the university. Male faculty were somewhat more favourable to the provision of counselling/support services to both cyberbullies and their targets, ranking counselling for victims as the top solution overall. Men were less favourable to proactive approaches such as the creation of workshops on cyberbullying or establishing prevention as a priority at the university. Likewise, male faculty were more likely than women to support taking a step back from the problem and employing dispute resolution approaches between concerned parties or letting students take charge of this issue.

4.5 Discussion and Conclusion

These survey findings highlight the pervasiveness of ICT in university life, which has increased the potential of being negatively targeted or cyberbullied. Twenty-five percent of faculty members across four Canadian universities have been victims of cyberbullying at the university in 12 months preceding the administration of the surveys. Fifteen percent were targeted by students and 12% by colleagues. These numbers point to the need for universities to make the prevention and curtailment of cyberbullying a priority, just as it is in schools at the lower levels.

4.5.1 *Gender Differences*

The gender differences found throughout the survey are the most striking findings to report. This was also the case in our study of student-to-student cyberbullying at the university level (see Faucher et al. 2014). Female faculty, including those in permanent and non-permanent positions, and at both the senior and junior levels, are more likely to be targeted than male faculty members. Both students and colleagues target women faculty more often than they do men.

Female faculty responded to the surveys in far greater numbers than men and almost exclusively women volunteered to be interviewed. Women faculty were more engaged with the problem and expressed a greater level of concern for the potential impacts on them personally as well as professionally. Male respondents tended to have a more hands-off attitude to the problem, as demonstrated by their higher level of agreement with statements such as cyberbullying is normal, it is not the university's responsibility to stop or prevent it, and that students should take charge of the issue and work out their own solutions. Female faculty members, on the other hand, wanted cyberbullying to become more of a priority issue on campus as well as wanting administrators to develop more effective policies and to deal more harshly with offenders, including the possibilities of involvement with the police or expulsion of the offender from the university. Female faculty were less confident than male respondents about the efficacy of current university policies related to cyberbullying as well as the availability of support services for victims.

Female faculty targeted by cyberbullies report a greater range of negative impacts on their professional and personal lives than do men. The fact that nearly three quarters of victims of cyberbullying by students and nearly all of the respondents who reported being cyberbullied by a colleague reported that the cyberbullying came from someone they knew reflects negatively on the work culture of the university. This finding is not specific to these universities, however, as female faculty members have been found to be more vulnerable in other studies as well (DeSouza 2011; Knepp 2012; Lampman 2012; Rowland 2009; Twale and De Luca 2008).

Female victims said the messages they received were insulting, demanding, belittling/demeaning, and/or harassing, and that it affected their ability to work, their mental health, and their relationships inside and/or outside the university, with one quarter wanting to quit. Although women were more likely than men to tell someone about being a target of cyberbullying, they tended to tell a colleague, partner, or friend that they had been targeted rather than an administrator at the university. Of those who did try to stop the cyberbullying, less than half said that their efforts were successful.

4.5.2 *Power Imbalances*

Many of the findings emerging from the gender differences are consistent with the Power and Control Model explanation mentioned earlier (Pence and Paymar 1993). The Power and Control Model allows us to describe cyberbullying as a form of abuse whereby one party attempts to exert control over the other. Gender is clearly a key factor at play in the Power and Control Model dynamic for cyberbullying at the university level. Female faculty members reported that they were most often targeted for work-related reasons, including professional jealousy, status, competitiveness, or to establish power and control. Finally, age was also a factor of significance in cyberbullying between colleagues, one which typically may reflect imbalances in power and control.

There are also indications that racial minority status or speaking English as a second language might make a faculty member more vulnerable to be cyberbullied. These findings, along with gender and age, suggest that a rights-based or *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* lens could be used to analyse the relationship between the marginality a faculty member experiences, and his or her vulnerability to being cyberbullied. It is important to more thoroughly investigate factors such as age, race, ethnicity and language in future studies.

Since tenure and rank did not impact the amount of cyberbullying experienced by faculty members, it may be that a broader understanding of power is needed. Perceived power in the university context may not be uniquely tied to the academic hierarchy. Academic entitlement and consumerist attitudes to education may also lead to power imbalances in favour of the students. The vast majority of faculty who experienced cyberbullying by students attributed the abuse to teaching-related reasons. Academically entitled students may believe they are justified in reacting in a demanding, insulting, or harassing manner when they are dissatisfied with the content or outcomes of their education.

The literature on cyberbullying in the K-12 sector suggests that anonymity may confer power to cyberbullies and leave targets feeling powerless. The same may be true within the higher education context, although anonymity may not wield the same power at this level. Faculty members knew most of the students and all of the colleagues who targeted them. It appears that students still sent harassing, demeaning, and derogatory messages to their instructors, even when their names were

attached to the message. Similarly, colleagues did not try to hide their identity when sending a hurtful e-mail to a colleague. There appear to be other factors at work here that need further investigation.

In conclusion, this study raises the issue of cyberbullying of faculty at university and the need for university administrators to develop effective and transparent policies that address the problem and to communicate these policies within the university community. More attention also needs to be given to services for victims. The workplace environment is not a healthy one for those at the receiving end of cyberbullying by students and colleagues. Women faculty members are particularly vulnerable. Much of the cyberbullying is taking place under the radar of administrators since faculty are unlikely to communicate their experiences to those in charge, unless they can be assured that appropriate actions will be taken to help the victim and deal effectively with the perpetrator.

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