Overcoming Cyberbullying in Childhood: Children as Digital Leaders

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Abstract: Cyberbulling in childhood may damage learning and development of children in their life. Being aware of cyberbulling and developing societal strategies in protecting cyberbulling are very crucial to set secure learning and development context for the children. It is significant to create atmosphere on leadership of own their learning in digital arena through trainning. This study aims to reflect the experiences and perceptions of experts in order to set strategies for the future as a result of national project on cyberbulling and children as digital leaders in school culture and even in society. The study has qualitative nature which case study approach was employed. The research process is conducted upon workshop with 17 volunteer participants from the experts who are the representatives from various associations. The self-reports are employed as data collection and thematic analysis was done. The findings revealed that trainings on being digital leaders, e-transformation, creating online learning platforms for counseling, game-based learning and film making as public spot in media need to be basic strategies in order to overcome cyberbulling for children as digital leaders in societal level. Further to this, tolerance education and conflict resolution courses and programs need to be included to the curricula.

1 INTRODUCTION

The ongoing advancement and innovative changes in technology provide a more comfortable and happier life for people. However, these changes indicate that "crime concept" will take a different form in the future and this, already, has become a serious concern for all countries (Akcil, et al., 2016). In the e-transformation system which resulted from the rapid development of computing and internet is shaping norms and ethic values at a maximum level from education to trade, from state and private sectors, and from entertainment to shopping. The advantages of this fast development have caused unbalanced changes, threats and dangers in social and technological aspects. "Crime concept", which used to shape according to the values of certain periods in the past, has already begun to shape itself in a different way parallel to today's advanced technology. Information Technology (IT) has pulled down the borders among countries and has become an international issue through internet and computer webs. In this respect, fighting IT crimes is possible through worldwide collaboration. Otherwise, success in this conflict resolution seems almost impossible (Campbell, 2005). In a broader sense, IT crimes, individual or international illegal use of technology or organizational computing systems have harmful effects on other worldwide systems. To commit an IT crime, one needs to use technology, computers, credit-cards, telephones, post-machines or an electronic tool (Francine, et al., 2008; Kowalski, et al., 2014).

The widespread distribution of illegal CDs has reached absolutely high rates. The value of illegal CDs confiscated in operations is the evidence of this truth. It is a fact that people prefer such products because of their low costs. It should not be ignored that any unauthorized sellers or buyers are equally committing a crime. On the one hand, such illegal products (CDs) are far from being safe and any problems faced while using them cannot be complained about and on the other, they harm computers and technological appliances and such problems cannot be solved. IT crimes emerging from IT concept are becoming widely known and

common day by day. Such crimes have become an international issue rather than a national one. In order to overcome this problem, maximum care and collaborative measures should be taken on international contracts on "IT Crimes".

Together with the hardship experienced during growth and other problems originating from social environment, a child's negative experience related to social norms is inevitable, which a combination of such factors leads a child to commit crimes (Li, 2007). It has been noted that family, friends, school environment, and free time have significant role in a child's illegal behavior. It is widely known that changes in developing countries in their traditional structure are affecting children mostly in a negative way and it is emphasized that firstly the state and then the family have great responsibility in taking measures to put an end to this issue. It is also a need that all inconveniences should be eradicated and the family be protected by law. Families should be educated through seminars. It is also suggested that potential areas for crime commitment should be defined and centers should be provided for children to spend their free time, in which developed collaboration shopping. The advantages of this fast development have caused unbalanced changes, threats and dangers in social and technological aspects. "Crime concept", which used to shape according to the values of certain periods in the past, has already begun to shape itself in a different way parallel to today's advanced technology. Information Technology (IT) has pulled down the borders among countries and has become an international issue through internet and computer webs. In this respect, fighting IT crimes is possible through worldwide collaboration. Otherwise, success in this conflict resolution seems almost between families and school is of crucial importance (Vandebosh, Vam Cleemput, K., 2008).

Another important factor noted in the studies carried out is the process in which a child seeks his/her identity. At this stage, the social environment and relationships with friends are the specifying factors and if a child cannot develop positive relationships, he/she is bound to commit crimes. In communities where technology and e-transformation exist, schools are supposed to be the safe and strategic approach (Aksal, 2015; Gazi, 2016). In this respect, in order to fight possible crimes in informatics, the child, the users of technology and electronic tools should be sensitive and family and community members should be educated through seminars and conferences. In addition, necessary

arrangements and detailed crime concepts are needed in criminal law (Mishna, et al., 2009).

This study aims at specifying future strategies. While doing so, experts' views from a workshop on "Children as Digital Leaders for overcoming cyber-bullying" were referred to. In the content of the research, communal development and future strategies were detected under the following questions;

1. How do experts perceive cyber-bullying side effects in childhood?

2. What could be the strategies to grow up children as digital leaders?

3. What are the strategies to set plans for the future?

2 METHODOLOGY

This research is part of the project on cyberbulling and children as digital leaders. The project is the social responsibility project in order to increase the awareness of cyberbulling and ability on how to be digital leaders for the ownership of learning and professional development. The research has qualitative nature.

2.1 Research Design and Approach

This research project stands on qualitative research patterns which experiences and perceptions of field experts are examined to set policy and strategies on overcoming cyberbulling for children as digital leaders. Upon collaboration and action learning process among volunteer participants, interpretations and thoughts put emphasis on consensus for policy development in societal level. With an interpretive framework, patterns are examined in relation to experiences (Creswell, 2003).

The case study approach was also employed to examine the particular issue in relation this inductive process. In this respect, workshop was organized to discuss, set situation and develop strategies upon cyberbulling in childhood as part of the social responsibility project.

2.2 Participants and Data Collection Process

17 volunteer experts from various associations and related ministries become part of the workshop and the project. The three seminars including theoretical framework on cyberbulling; sociological and

educational damages of cyberbulling; secure schools, tolerance education were delivered to group of experts and focus group was done to discuss issue in democratic context. Self-reports are used to investigate the experiences and perceptions of the experts in order to further set policy and strategies. The qualitative data were coded and analysed upon thematic analysis (Denzin, Lincoln, 2003; Miles, Huberman, 1994).

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

At the end of this study, in the light of experts' views from the workshop under the project related to "Overcoming cyber-bullying In Childhood; Children as Digital Leaders", future strategies as well as social development were set.

A. A behavior harming individuals or a group via IT has been explained as "cyber-bullying". Ten experts have noted the following answers to a question to do with experiencing "cyber-bullying" in individuals' life.

-I had such a culture-related experience in a social web before, which harmed my personal rights
-It is widely known in every part of the society
-I have never experienced
-I witnessed expressions by his playmates in my son's website
-I have not experienced it, but my friend's 13 year-old daughter did. She had long-lasting psychological problems. One of her friends copied her picture and opened an imaginary account where there were writings which did not belong to the girl
-Not for children, but for women
-Yes, we had problems at school. Children blackmailed each other by sending naked pictures. The sender was from a problem family. Mostly children from such families are caught in such traps
-I haven't experience, but witnessed inappropriate pictures shared or used for blackmail on the internet

When the findings are considered, it is clear that mostly adults and especially women are the targets in cyber-bullying. It is hoped that all what has been experienced may lead to effective steps for put an end to such misbehaviors.

B. 17 experts have responded the questions in detail related to preventing "cyber-bullying"

and protecting children from committing IT crimes as follows:

-Lack of safe communication and"cyber-bulling" regulations"
-Lack of communal awareness and family education"
-Unconscious use of technology. Lack of sites approved by families for their children"
-Environmental factors. Children should be assured that "cyber-bullying" does not help at all
-Children should be banned from excess use of technology
-Children can be banned or punished
-As long as there isn't social or face to face communication, such problems will never come to an end. Avoiding IT crimes is totally bound to environmental education. That is, they should be educated by parents, teachers, and the community. Environmental modeling misleads children
-There are many unhappy children around. This is mainly because; children are not led by the family to have responsibilities
-The education system does not take forming individual behaviors seriously, but stick to memorization. It has an imposing role
-There aren't any limitations for the children
-Negative modeling by parents and the environment
-The education given to a child encouraged to commit a crime or the level of culture of the environment are all supporting factors for "cyber-bullying". A well prepared program for the children will prevent them from "cyber-bullying" or being "cyber-bullied
-The use of IT positively and for good reasons should be taught firstly by parents and then by educational institutions
-The basic reason of the problem lies in a child's criminal age and lack of sanctions for the determiner
- Internet should be banned, the target individual for "cyber-bullying" should be specified in advance
-Lack of education for young girls and women and male threat for immorality put them in target position for "cyber-bullying".
-Families should be well informed in this respect
-Families should have responsibilities for their children's uncontrolled use of the internet. School children should be strictly controlled by the staff

-Use of technology should be limited. Families and teachers should be informed on this issue so that they can educate their children"

-Since identification is not specified when "cyber-bullying", it is easier to be merciless and bold. One likes to have supporters and become the leader of that event. There isn't any face to-face communication. Therefore, legal measures should be taken.

C. 16 participants responded as follows to the question "What can be done to deal with childhood cyber-bullying and what urgent measures can be taken?"

-Parent-school" legal and communication institutions should carry out what is required and the media should be guided well"

-Attempts for family awareness should be started

-Improper sites for children should be blocked

-Lack of meaningful activities to keep children away from technological tools. Providing more social activities will stop children from sparing time o "cyber-bullying

-Keeping children away from communication tools and guiding to spare more time to playing games

-The internet should be used for beneficial activities, imaginary media should stick to rules, there should be "0" tolerance, informing individuals, and specifying legal measures in case of failing to obey the rules and regulations

-Conferences, seminars, and educational mobilization should be organized to make people aware of effective use of the media and teach them what to use the internet for

-Materials addressing the child's age and level of education should be provided

-People should be informed

-Ignorance on the subject-matter should be minimized

-People disobeying rules should be penalized. There should be security measures on the internet

-Sanctions are needed. There should be limitations on the internet

-A research should be done to identify the situation and decide on the measures to be taken

-Families should know everything about their child's friends. Children should not be allowed to use mobile phones excessively and should be provided with social activities that will keep them away from the internet

-Education should be given on how to use technology, families should always observe their

children and in case of any misbehavior, they should ask for help from an expert

-Legal sanctions are necessary

The findings noted that, in order to prevent "cyber-bullying" and raise awareness, children should be led to experience autonomous learning. It is a crucial need to educate children to use the correct technology and the internet. Raising children willing to learn and having the ability to be leaders in technology will add to protect the structure of education and the community. It is required that the findings are taken into account by the institutions involved and new social strategies are. We start life as children and become adults experiencing different relationships all way through. Childhood has its own psycho-social and physical changes. Children experiencing this ambiguity and lacking necessary sources face some problems. Such children who cannot distinguish between good and bad are bound to face outdoor dangers, which are mostly witnessed in developing cities and city centers.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Lack of family affection and care as well as attention and emotional misuse are reasons that push the child to exhibit illegal behaviors that turn into limiting factors in life. In order to provide safe environments for children, all the involved should be made aware of "cyber-bullying" and measures to prevent such misbehaviors should be taken.

Meanwhile, educational activities should be doubled by the family and school. The most important of all is that steps should be taken to direct children, as digital leaders, to use technology properly in learning and social environments (Aksal, 2015).

Within a frame of preventing cyberbulling, it is very significant to diffuse tolerance and conflict resolution skills within the school culture for enriching communication between teachers, learners and the families in order to support security and learning of the children.

Besides the preventions on those cyberbulling in childhood, there is intensified need to empower curriculum and school activities as regards the game based learning and films through technology enhanced instruction in order to diffuse the awareness and internalization of tolerance and conflict resolution strategies for the welfare of the society.

Cyberbulling in childhood causes challenge and side effects on learning and development of children in their life. Being aware of cyberbulling and developing societal strategies for cyberbulling are very crucial to set secure schools and the future. Creating atmosphere on leadership of own learning in digital arena could be supported with seminars and training (Gazi, 2016).

Trainings on being digital leaders, e-transformation, creating online learning platforms for counselling, game-based learning and film making as public spot in media need to be basic strategies in order to overcome cyberbulling for children as digital leaders in societal level.

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