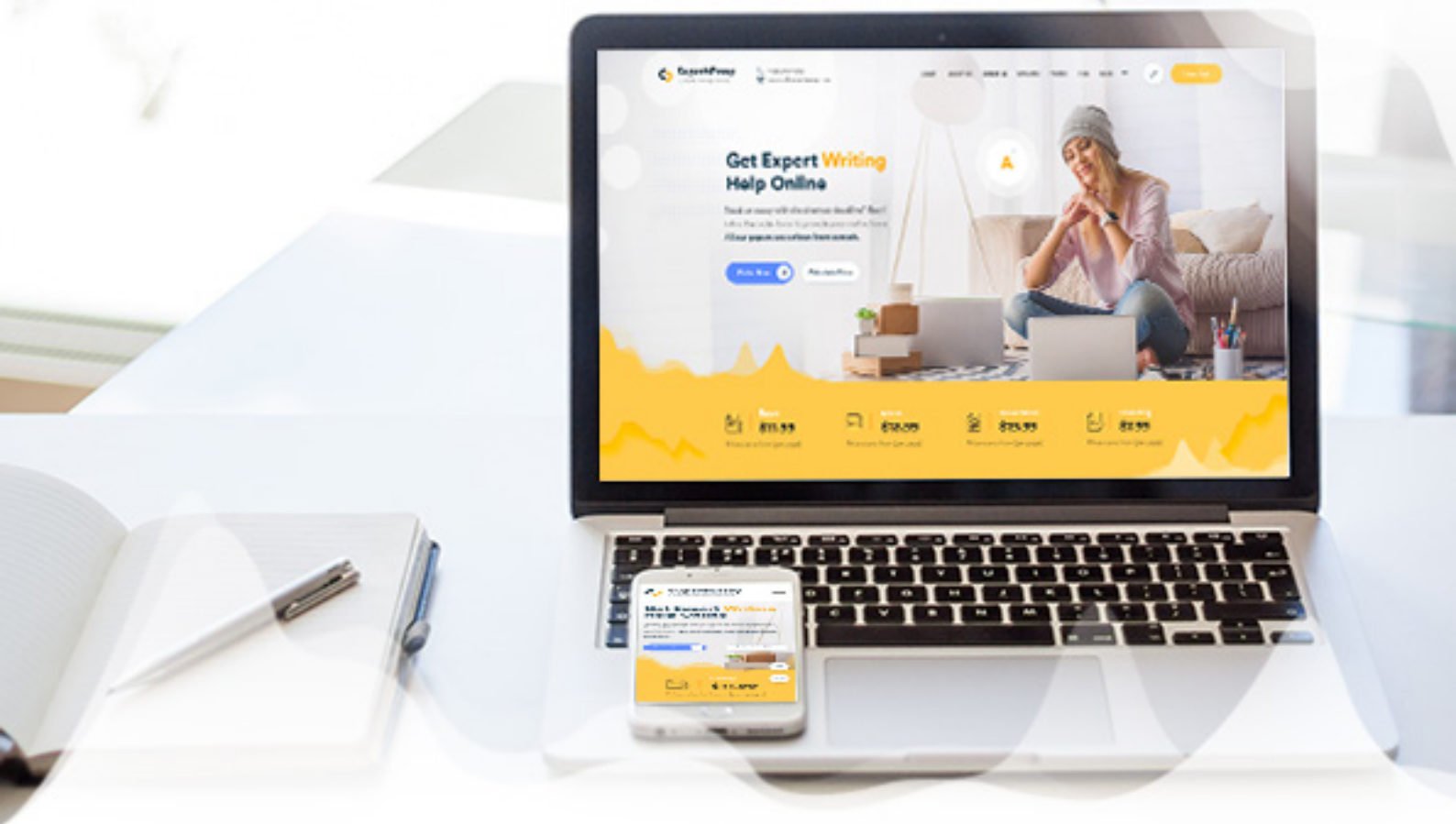


# Bullying 20 Years Ago vs. Now

---

Student's Name  
Institutional Affiliation



# Bullying 20 Years Ago vs. Now

## Introduction

---

Recently, a Channel 2 broadcasted an episode about bullying covering the tragic story of David-El Mizrahi from Israel who committed suicide at the age of fifteen. His Facebook profile was found open with shocking comments made by his fellow classmates. After long series of investigation, the two classmates who had harassed Mizrahi were declared clean. Even though they provoked him to commit suicide, weak anti-bullying laws and policies failed to prove their actions to be outside of the law (Lenkinski, 2012). Since the last few years, the number of such victims of cyber-bullying is increasing rapidly in the United States and most of the other developed countries. In another case, recently *AngryCommGuy* posted an image on Facebook, which showed a teen girl holding an iPod and a signboard notifying that her name is Hailey and due to misuse of social media, she is punished by her mother and as a punishment, she will be sell her iPod and donate the money to anti-bullying programs (Weir, 2014). Though at first place, it looks a fine example of punishing and disciplining bullies, humiliation and public shaming through the Internet can be categorized as a bullying as well. Bullying is identified in societies since many years. For example, 20 years ago, bullying was limited to a diploid relationship between a victim and bully and wasn't too harsh. However, with the rise of social networking, bullying has reached to unbearable humiliation and tensions. Both of the above examples give a glimpse of changing face of bullying in today's modern society. Various studies and reports are regularly highlighting the alarming risks and severe effects of such bullying on children and teenagers.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze bullying 20 years ago and now, also the paper will examine the prevalence, various causes, and consequences of

bullying. In addition, by means of scholarly research and studies, it will present some possible preventive measures to the issue.

## Bullying: Concept

---

“Bullying” as a concept is interchangeably used with “peer harassment,” and can be defined as aggressive actions made with the intention of harm, repeatedly executed by one or more individuals against another. Such acts can be verbal, psychological, physical, or indirect, such as social isolation or cyber, i.e. threatening or humiliating via social networks, texts, or websites (Sacks & Salem, 2008, p. 2).

The main difference between mere aggression and “bullying” is that bullying consists of repetitive acts of unequal power demonstration between a socially weaker victim and a socially stronger perpetrator. Therefore, in most of the cases, bullies target the students who are often highlighted in their surroundings due to perceived or actual differences, such as disability, obesity, sexual orientation, social class, or identity (Sacks & Salem, 2008, p. 2).

In recent years, the new form of bullying has raised with the advancement of technologies and discovery of social networking, which is known as “cyberbullying.” Cyberbullying is carried out by means of electronic technologies, such as mobile phones, text messages, social networking and emails. Such bullying causes significant negative impact on victims (Menesini et al., 2013, p. 1).

# Prevalence

---

Bullying is considered to be a significant issue in the United States. It is described as the most underrated and enduring issue in US schools by the National School Safety Center (NSSC). According to the studies, almost 10% of children are victimized to extreme bullying in the United States. In a recent national research on bullying, almost 30% of the students reported being involved in bullying either as a victim or perpetrator. The studies further stated that approximately 3,245,904 students reported victimization of bullying and 3,708,284 students admitted that they were involved in bullying (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005, p. 101). Bullying can be categorized as the most usual form of youth violence, which may further rise into extremely dangerous forms of antisocial character. According to the survey of the medical surgeons on youth violence, almost 30% to 40% of male and 15% to 30% of female students have committed a serious violent misdeed by age 17 (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005, p. 101-102).

In recent years, the rate of online victimization or cyberbullying has significantly increased. According to the American survey of 2007, cyber victims are 9 times more likely to involve in cyberbullying. The survey reported that 17% of participants were victims of cyberbullying and around 18% were perpetrators (Walrave & Heirman, 2011, p. 59-60). Recent research of MIOS stated that almost 34.2% of the students in the US had been a target of cyberbullying in 2011 while 21.2% admitted to have cyber bullied others (Walrave & Heirman, 2011, p. 65). Around 64.3% of cyber bullying victims had experienced the bullying more than once while 39.9% of students had perpetrated it at least once (Walrave & Heirman, 2011, p. 65). These staggering statistics present the growing rate of cyber bullying in the modern society.

# Bullying: Now and Then

---

## Compare and Contrast

Traditionally, bullying was only limited to one-on-one, i.e., between the bully, victim, and few witnesses. Therefore, the humiliation was only limited between certain number of people. Physical hurting, teasing, calling with humiliating names, isolating, threatening, asking for money, and spreading rumors, making racial comments and fun of disability, stealing belongings, or hurting someone's religious or cultural sentiments are some of the traditional ways of bullying (Menesini et al., 2013, p. 6). However, with the innovation of the Internet, social networking, and mobile technologies, the methods of bullying had changed in recent years. Though traditional bullying and cyberbullying are generally identical in terms of form, the methods and techniques differ significantly. Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying allows the bully to hide his or her identity behind the Internet. Such anonymity allows the offender to do harsher and crueler things compared to what is usual in traditional face-to-face bullying. With the advancement of new communication technologies like chat rooms, instant messengers and messaging on social networking sites allow teens to chat with each other in private for several hours. Moreover, applications like group messaging, forum, or chat rooms trigger the gossiping or humiliation of targeted individual. Anonymous blogging is another new communication technology which allows the person to post any information about someone without worrying about any repercussions (Donegan, 2012, p. 34-35). Cyberbullying causes severe psychological stress to the victim as he/she becomes a subject of humiliation in front of a mass number of people. Compare to traditional bullying, cyberbullying is more lethal and dangerous.

## Types of Bullying

Traditional and modern bullying usually only differs in the method and techniques, but their nature and intentions remain the same. Therefore, both

types of bullying can be classified into various categories depending on its nature and specific situation in which bullying is experienced. However, depending on its main characteristics and applied methods, bullying can be categorized as follows:

**Physical bullying.** Such type of bullying usually consists of the use of physical abuse. Physical bullying is mostly identified in schools, colleges, and other academic institutions (*The Different Types of Bullying*, 2013). Physical bullying usually involves hitting, regular punching or kicking, pushing, pulling, and constant physically hurting (Piflkin, 2002, p. 556). In most of the cases, the offender is physically stronger than the victim or other group members. The main motto of physical bullying is to prove superiority and long-lasting control over a victim (*The Different Types of Bullying*, 2013).

**Verbal bullying.** Verbal bullying involves the use of abusive words to execute an act of bullying. In such type of bullying, the bully usually tries to hurt the victim through a verbal taunting or teasing rather than physical means (*The Different Types of Bullying*, 2013). Such bullying consists of continuous teasing, use of verbal abuse, calling by hurtful or humiliating names, or regular insulting, etc. (Piflkin, 2002, p. 556-557). The verbal bullying might be based on the victim's appearance, intellect, lifestyle choices, ethnicity, or skin color. Most of the offenders of verbal bullying possess low self-esteem and attempt to bully others in order to raise their social reputation and get self-satisfaction (*The Different Types of Bullying*, 2013).

**Emotional bullying.** Emotional bullying is based on the attack on psychological and emotional level of victim, which is also called as relational aggression. It is mostly identified in relationships and teenagers whereby, an aggressor might make comments or act in such a way that it will distress or affect the emotional balance of the victim (*The Different Types of Bullying*, 2013). Emotional bullying may involve regular blackmailing or threat, spreading of rumors, isolating the

victim from community or certain activities, abandoning communication, making statements or comments which might hurt the person's sentiments, etc. (Piflkin, 2002, p. 556-557). Often such bullying is attempted to cause severe damage to the victim as psychologically broken victim is easily prone to suicide and other life-threatening acts (*The Different Types of Bullying*, 2013).

Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is totally based on the use of advanced communication technologies and the Internet for bullying the victim. Due to its effectiveness and option to hide the identity allow the bullies to bully their targets more severely (*The Different Types of Bullying*, 2013). Social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ allow the abuser great platform to bully their victims. On such sites, anyone can post any humiliating post, image, or video which can be accessible to large community affecting the victim very harshly. Websites like Juicy Campus, College ACB recently faced strict regulations due to the excessive abusive nature and usage for bullying by most of the youth (Donegan, 2012, p. 34-35). The forum with various harsh topics ranging from "Worst Hookup" to "Most Attractive", simply humiliate some victims (Donegan, 2012, p. 34-35). Moreover, cyberbullying is closely related to emotional bullying as it triggers various psychological disorders, or emotional imbalance in victim.

## Causes

The studies on values and morality suggest that the low levels of morality and insensitive nature towards the other provoke the aggressive nature among children. The causes of traditional and cyberbullying overlap with each other in terms of lack of guilt and moral values. For some of the bullies, bullying is the way of expressing their rebel attitude towards authority and rules, or withdrawal from social norms. Both, traditional and cyberbullying are the aftermath of high level of self-enhancement and low level of self-transcendence. The internet and advanced technologies have given immense power to show their dominance and ability to overpower others by

humiliating or bullying them. Therefore, cyberbullying often results in such temptation to overpower others (Menesini, Nocentini, & Camodeca, 2013, p. 5-6). Many researchers have found that cyber victims often become cyber bullies themselves in order to seek revenge on others (Walrave & Heirman, 2011, p. 61). Disturbed family background can be another cause of inclination towards bullying behavior. Studies have found that often bullies' parents are rejecting, hostile, and biased to their children. The dominant person or father figure in their homes is usually neglecting about their child's bullying nature. Discipline in such families is often inconsistent. However, extreme restrictions and oppressive parenting provoke rebellious and aggressive nature among the children, which often tend to exert their frustration and anger by bullying other weak peers. Domestic violence and disturbed relations also trigger bullying nature among children (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005, p. 103).

## Diagnosis

In order to identify the cases of bullies and prevent any potential risk, it is necessary to diagnose some certain characteristics of bullies and victims.

Characteristics of bullies. Though bullies may opt for traditional or modern bullying methods, most bullies possess identical characteristics. According to the study of the NSSC, bullies are highly destructive, aggressive, and dominant in nature (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005, p. 102). They tend to be impulsive, short-tempered, and show a low tolerance for any frustration. Usually, bullies are poor in processing social information and consider others as being antagonistic, even if they are not. Bullies are disliked by peers, however, they tend to be popular among other aggressive children. One research found that despite possessing aggressive nature, bullies reported more comfort in making friends than did other children. Further, some researchers have characterized bullies based on their peer social status, like popular aggressive and unpopular aggressive bullies. Popular aggressive bullies socialize more easily with other popular children. While unpopular aggressive bullies are usually neglected or



rejected by peers, and, hence, they might use aggression and violence as a mean to attract attention. Bullies show a positive attitude towards violence, brutality, and wickedness. They tend to lack a sense of empathy towards their victims. Addiction for drugs, cigarettes, or alcohol is often identified among bullies (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005, p. 102-103).

Characteristics of victims. In contrast to bullies, victims tend to be submissive or passive in nature. Often victims are physically weak, abnormal, or frail compare to bullies or peers; therefore, victims are usually unable to defend or protect themselves from abuse. Frequently, victims are diagnosed with mental disorders, such as anxiety, complex syndrome, or excessive pessimism (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005, p. 104). Victims are often unsuccessful in physical activities or sports. They tend to be more sensitive, quite, conservative, insecure, and cautious than other children. Victims of bully are usually poor in socialization and communication skills. Consequently, most of the bully-victims are isolated by others, have less or no friends, and are generally seen alone. Moreover, victims possess very low self-esteem. They consider themselves unattractive, failures, insignificant, and unintelligent. Due to such negative perceptions, in most cases victims are wrongly blamed for bullying. The academic performance of victims tends to be poor due to excessive external stress and abuse (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005, p. 103-104).

## Consequences of Bullying

---

Bullying causes significant impact on the victim's life. Victims of bullying become more anxious and fearful in the bullying environment. They often respond with avoiding acts, such as skipping school, becoming hyper, avoiding any company, etc. Victims fail to concentrate well in any activity affecting their

academic or career performance. According to research, about 90% of victims of bullying confirmed that they experienced decline in school grades (Piflkin, 2002, p. 560). According to Olweus, approximately 60% of victims are involved in at least one legal offense by the age of 24. According to this research, even 40% of ex-bullies are reported with 3 or more official crimes by the age of 24 (Piflkin, 2002, p. 560). Furthermore, other studies have found that consequences of traditional bullying and cyber bullying are almost similar, however, in some cases cyberbullying is considered to be more devastating. Due to cyberbullying, victims often experience more stress, humiliation, and negative thoughts. It may lead to severe chronic illnesses or mental disorders (Sticca & Perren, 2012, p. 2). The extreme consequence of bullying results in suicidal or violent revenge thoughts. According to the reports of a National Vital Statistics Report, suicide is the third leading cause of death among the youth of age 15 to 24 in the US (Donegan, 2012, p. 37).

## Anti-Bullying Laws and Policies

In the US, anti-bullying legislation is present only at the state level. There are no specific laws against bullying at the federal level. 49 states in the US have passed anti-bullying laws by 2013, obligating school administration and local education department to adopt anti-bullying policies (*Anti-Bullying Laws by State: An Introduction to US State Anti-Bullying Legislation*, 2014). Though anti-bullying laws are present in most of the states in the US, the definition, and description of behaviors which can be considered as bullying differ significantly in each state causing confusion and inconsistency about the offense of bullying. In most of the cases, the states leave the task of defining bullying behavior to local school administration or state department of education, which often have to interpret the suitable anti-bullying legislation (Limber & Small, 2003, p.

445-448). Despite lacking of anti-bullying laws, the federal government regularly funds for the policies against bullying and assists for bullying research and prevention programs. Currently, such anti-bullying public awareness campaigns as “Take a Stand, Lend a Hand”, “No Child Left Behind”, “Stop Bullying Now” are launched in the US (Limber & Small, 2003, p. 446).

## Treatment and Prevention

---

In order to control and prevent bullying, it is necessary to be acknowledged as a pervasive and significant issue. Various anti-bullying campaigns and school-based intervention programs are required to prevent the rate of bullying. Parents, students, and teachers should be well-informed about the causes and potential risks of bullying. Moreover, it is necessary to adopt strict policies and laws against bullying, which should be consistent in each state. Bullying is often related to a psychological issue. Effective counseling sessions and medical therapies can help the students to overcome the issue of bullying. It is important to handle the cases of bullying more carefully and sensitively as ignorance or mismanage can cause devastating effects on the lives of both, a victim and a bully (Piflkin, 2002, p. 560-561). Oleweus Bullying Prevention Program is one of the most widely recognized intervention programs against bullying (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005, p. 106). The program encourages the personality development of students and creates an environment that is filled with warmth, positive attitude, and active involvement of students (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005, p. 106). Such programs and anti-bullying policies should be more promoted.

# Conclusion

---

Bullying is one of the oldest social issues in society. With the advancement of technologies and modern inventions, bullying is becoming more severe and devastating. Various reports and research regularly highlight the serious consequences of bullying. The lack of effective policies and consistent laws against bullying is one of the biggest obstacles in tackling with the cases of bullying. In order to control and prevent the prevalence of bullying in society, it is important to spread awareness about lethal consequences of bullying and promote effective anti-bullying policies.



# References

- Donegan, R. (2012). Bullying and cyberbullying: History, statistics, law, prevention and analysis. *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications* (3.1), 33-42. Retrieved from <http://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/academics/communications/research/vol3no1/04DoneganEJSpring12.pdf>
- Lenkinski, O. J. (2012, February 27). Kids' wars: Bullying, now and then. Retrieved from <http://972mag.com/bullying-now-and-then/36554/>
- Limber, S. P., & Small, M. A. (2003, September 1). State laws and policies to address bullying in schools. *School Psychology Review* (32.3), 445-455. Retrieved from <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=bf863e48-4435-4a04-9baa-c02b792c25ae%40sessionmgr198&vid=4&hid=107>
- Menesini, E., Nocentini, A., & Camodeca, M. (2013, March 1). Morality, values, traditional bullying, and cyberbullying in adolescence. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, p. 15. Retrieved from <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=b39ef00b-9e1c-4e0c-9674-f3d17463f50f%40sessionmgr4005&vid=2&hid=4207>
- N.A. (2014). Anti-bullying laws by state: An introduction to US state anti-bullying legislation. *BRIM*. Retrieved from <https://antibullyingsoftware.com/bullying-laws-policies/anti-bullying-laws.html>
- N.A. (2013). The different types of bullying. *Types of Bullying*. Retrieved from <http://typesofbullying.org/>
- Pifflin, M. (2002, November 1). School bullying: Definition, types, related

factors, and strategies to prevent bullying problems. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, pp. 555-562. Retrieved from <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=37980355-9d27-4b5c-9f9c-2891115fb5ed%40sessionmgr4005&vid=2&hid=4207>

Sacks, J., & Salem, R. S. (2008, June). Victims without legal remedies: Why kids need schools to develop comprehensive anti-bullying policies. *Selected Works*. pp. 1-53. Retrieved from [http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=robert\\_salem](http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=robert_salem)

Smokowski, P. R., & Kopasz, K. H. (2005, April 1). Bullying in school: An overview of types, effects, family characteristics, and intervention strategies. *Children & Schools* (27.2), 101-110. Retrieved from <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=3ca7e8a9-b17d-4600-895f-bef21d107cb8%40sessionmgr4003&vid=2&hid=4207>

Walrave, M., & Heirman, W. (2011, January 1). Cyberbullying: Predicting victimization and perpetration. *Children & Society* (25), 59-72. Retrieved from <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=c611c7a7-0439-4fb1-a411-8ec563e4998b%40sessionmgr4001&vid=2&hid=4207>

Weir, S. B. (2014, January 6). Mom cybershames daughter for online bullying. Who's the bully now? *Yahoo Shine*. Retrieved from <https://shine.yahoo.com/parenting/mom-cyber-shames-daughter-online-bullying-39-bully-192100101.html>

Sticca, F., & Perren, S. (2012, November 14). Is cyberbullying worse than traditional bullying? Examining the differential roles of medium, publicity, and anonymity for the perceived severity of bullying. *J Youth Adolescence*, pp. 1-12. Retrieved from <http://ethicorum.com/wp-content/uploads/Is-Cyberbullying-Worse-than-Traditional-Bullying.pdf>