Aggression in Cyber Sphere: A Qualitative Study to Explore Saudi Arabian Social Media

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Introduction

Cyber aggression came about as a result of advances in information communication technology and the aggressive usage of the technology in real life. Nowadays, cyber aggression can take on many forms and faces.

The effect generated from cyber aggression is intended to be social, emotional, and psychological more than physical; however, a number of researchers admitted that these effects could lead to physical aggression (e.g. pushing), violence (e.g. fighting), and crimes (e.g. homicide or suicide).

(Cook, Williams, Guerra, & Tuthill, 2007; Dooley, Pyzalski & Cross, 2009; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Hinduja & Patchin, 2014; Zweig, Dank, Lachman, & Yahner, 2013)

Introduction

Traditional aggression could be transferred to the digital world and present similar or worse psychological impacts.

(Cook, Williams, Guerra, & Tuthill, 2007; Dooley, Pyzalski & Cross, 2009; Ito et al., 2010; Zweig, Dank, Lachman, & Yahner, 2013)

Cyber aggression is not well investigated across cultures.

(Al-Zahrani, 2015)

Problem Statement

The number of Internet users in Saudi Arabia increased from 1 million to 20 million in recent years.

(CITC, 2014)

Monitoring of Internet traffic and full control of all interactions is impossible.

(Al-Jabre, 2013; The Social Clinic, 2015)

Cyber aggression could be generated by the uncontrolled interactions.

(Al-Jabre, 2013)

Problem Statement

The analysis of collected quantitative data from 500 participants indicated that more than 70% of the participants in Saudi Arabia answered that they have never seen or heard about cyberbullying.

With this high percentage, Saudi Arabia ranked with the lowest awareness about cyber aggression among the selected 24 countries in Ipsos study.

(Ipsos Global @dvisor, 2011)

Purpose of the Research

To explore the concept of cyber aggression in Saudi Arabia.

To find factors that could explain the level of cyber aggression in Saudi Arabia.

Research Question

What factors could explain cyber aggression in Saudi Arabian social media?

Research Method

The data collection methodology was intended to collect qualitative and descriptive data.

Conducted 14 in-depth interviews with Saudi male and female Students who use social media applications.

Recorded in-depth interviews transcribed into texts.

All created transcripts were analyzed by using content analysis (Colaizzi's Method).

(Colaizzi, 1978)

Research Results

Research Results

A Proposed Cyber Aggression Model

Discussion & Conclusions

What factors could explain cyber aggression in Saudi Arabian social media?

Lack of understanding was found with the highest number of extracted significant statements (*Cyberbullying:36%, Cyberstalking: 22%, total statements: 78 statements*).

Social media users have a very limited understanding about cyber aggression, which make social media an unsafe domain for most social media users in Saudi Arabia.

Discussion & Conclusions

The research showed that participants choose to use social media without understanding cyberbullying and cyberstalking.

The majority of participants considered cyberbullying acts as childish, which could indicate that Saudi society does not give higher attention to many cyber aggressive acts.

Lack of support and help was another factor with a high number of extracted significant statements (8%, 23%, 29 statements).

Limitations of the Research

A larger sample could provide more generalizable factors that could comprehensively explain cyber aggression.

Participants of this research represent the educated and tolerated society of Saudi Arabia. More diverse samples are required to assure the generalizability of the findings.

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