

# Cyberbullying in US Mainstream Media

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The study provides a quantitative content and qualitative textual analysis of mainstream media coverage of cyberbullying in the United States. Cyberbullying is aggressive repetitive behavior that is not limited to, but typically takes place among school-aged children, using electronic technology, to convey a real or perceived power imbalance. In asking the normative question: whether present discussion of prevention policies rests merely on treating the symptoms, rather than root causes behind the problem, the study assumes a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach within dignity and humiliation studies framework. Do mainstream media outlets offer a critical discussion of legal and school-based remedies; and what might be the cultural and social factors behind cyberbullying, such as the acceptance of humiliation as a default state of affairs in the society? Using the concept of framing as media's selection of certain aspects of content over others, the study shows how causal and treatment responsibility for cyberbullying have been discussed in the media over the past six years. Comparisons are made between the print and TV coverage, and findings reveal that TV coverage focuses more on dramatic cyberbullying incidents than the print coverage, while attributing causal responsibility primarily to individuals involved in these incidents without substantive discussion of other factors and treatment policies. Framing literature in the field of communication shows that when coverage centers on individual incidents, attributing responsibility only to those involved rather than broader political, social and cultural factors, the audience is less capable to think of treatment responsibility in terms of policies and institutions, as well as social forces that are shaping the problem.

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