THE IMPACT OF CYBERBULLYING: DRUG CONSUMPTION AS A COPING MECHANISM FOR LEBANESE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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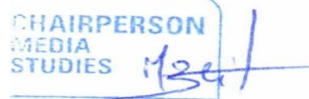Dr. Jessica R. El-Khoury _____ Supervisor, Chair

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Table of Contents

Table of Illustration

Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine the influence of cyberbullying on various coping mechanisms such as drug abuse and depression among a sample of 251 Lebanese students, aged 17 to 31, and are enrolled in universities across the country. Using a quantitative method and guided by the transactional model for stress and coping theory, a link to a survey was electronically sent to the respondents through different social media platforms. Results show that some respondents are aware of the consequences behind cyberbullying, specifically the extreme ones (such as alcohol or drug addiction as well as suicide).

Also, large favoritism is placed on talking to a friend, while there is not much encouragement to seek out a professional therapist, and a mid-way consideration to speak out to the parents is present. Furthermore, between committing suicide and taking drugs, respondents are more likely to take drugs to cope with cyberbullying victimization. In addition, gender is not a differentiating factor when it comes to the likelihood of taking drugs to cope with cyberbullying, and the factor of depression is always a possibility from cyberbullying as is the possibility of taking drugs to cope with it. Finally, more attention should be emphasized on the NGO dealing with cyberbullying present in Lebanon and the positive impact it can have on aiding the victims, and possibly diminishing the cyberbullying phenomenon in the country.

The Impact of Cyberbullying: Drug Consumption as a Coping Mechanism for Lebanese University Students

I.   Introduction

Throughout our lives, we come in contact with many different situations, phenomena, problems and issues that we deal with in an almost habitual manner. One recurring phenomenon that we deal with is the phenomenon known as bullying. Bullying is defined as repeated, intentional aggression, perpetrated by a more powerful individual or group against a less powerful victim (Shetgiri, 2013). One type of bullying that has gained increasing attention over the last few years in both popular press and in academic circles is cyber bullying. Traditional bullying is commonly divided into physical (e.g., hitting, kicking), verbal (e.g., teasing, threatening), and indirect (e.g., social exclusion, false gossips, spreading rumors) bullying **.**There are core elements regarding cyberbullying when compared with traditional physical, verbal, or indirect bullying.   Many scholars and researchers have provided their own definition for this digital violence mechanism. Diane Sawyer, American television journalist was cited in the book Cyber *bullying in the Digital Age (2009),* in reference to her ABC primetime news segment, stating that cyberbullying is an "emotional wilding." Cyberbullying is defined as the "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). But even this simple description in words cannot sufficiently define the greater meanings that this term encompasses. Through its many types and methods including flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation and cyber stalking, (Ross, 2006, p. 46) cyberbullying has escalated itself to the rank of being one of the most vindictive means of torment and distant harm present in our world.

Statistical analyses done by the Megan Meier Foundation in 2015 on cyberbullying revealed that, adolescent girls are more likely to have encountered/experienced cyberbullying in their lifetime at a rate of 40.6% compared to adolescent boys at 28.2% (Patchin, 2015). But this doesn't mean that both genders aren't targeted since the means in which cyberbullying is conducted varies between each; girls are more likely to post mean comments online while boys are more likely to post hurtful pictures or videos online (Patchin, 2015). Research by the Nation-Wide Children's Organization (2015) indicated that the weight factor which is a key point of attack by bullies is also highly targeted by cyberbullies. Among the adolescents who are overweight, 61% of them have received cruel or embarrassing posts online and 59% have received mean texts, emails or instant messages (Anderson, Bresnahan, & Musatics, 2014). This shows further how many people end up having mental issues due to their weight and having to deal with the flaws pointed out by the bully from behind the screen of a laptop, phone, tablet etc.

According to Patchin (2015) in a study conducted utilizing a random sample of 457 students aged 11 to 15 from one school in the Midwestern United States (US), of the 34% of the students in the study reported being cyberbullied during their lifetime, 15% of those cyberbullied also reported cyberbullying others in their lifetime (Patchin, 2015); This shows how damaging this phenomenon's effects truly are in the long run on the victim and on others as well. This means that many people who have been cyberbullied and been subjected to harm have the possibility of cyberbullying others, possibly as a result of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying also results in several negative outcomes on those bullied, including the reduction of self-esteem, the increase/rise in the levels of depression as well as the large increase of the feeling of powerlessness within the bullied victim (Anderson, Bresnahan, & Musatics, 2014).

 Several negative drawbacks and outcomes have been frequently associated with being a victim of cyberbullying. Some outcomes are mild such as depression, anxiety, isolation, and selfdoubt and some are more serious and include anorexic symptoms, alcohol consumption, and even suicidal ideations. But one factor in particular that has not gotten its fair share of attention, underwent minor studies and research, and raised debatable opinions is the outcome of resorting to drugs. As known in general, drugs are used for medical purposes (a disease or a symptom) and are usually prescribed by doctors and specialists. Drugs have also been used as coping mechanisms to deal with grief, depression, anger, rage, and in many cases simply as a means to fit in in one's social peer group. The drug consumption sometimes ends up leading to uncontrollable addiction, losing sight of purpose and in extreme cases leading to death. While some academic studies examined the relationship between cyber bullying victimization and substance abuse as an influence in the global region including those of Luk, Wang, and Simons-Morton (2010) in the United States, Gámez-Guadix, Orue, and Calvete, (2013) in Spain, but none have examined the influence that cyberbullying has on substance abuse in Lebanon.

 It should be noted that there is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Lebanon that aims to raise awareness about how serious of an issue bullying is and works on ways spread to awareness about this subject in order to prevent bullying. The NGO is named *No Label;* it is located in the capital Beirut, and had started in 2014 as a Facebook page in response to a Google research that showed limited results with regards to bullying awareness and the available/utilized prevention resources within the region. Since registering in 2015 *No Label* has shed light on the lack of soft skills in both educational programs as well as lifestyles. Therefore, the services provided and activities that engaged schools aimed for fun and interaction, and were based on innovation. They also aimed at building character, and educating the individuals and helping them to become less

hostile, leading to the diminishing of the actual bullying happening as a result. But despite the presence of an NGO, bullying is still an issue that may result in incidents happening on a daily basis in schools from someone pushing his/her classmate, to throwing them in the trash (which may be in some extreme cases or most cases for that matter) or the typical "took my lunch money routine."

To many people, especially parents, cyberbullying is not as important as it seems, is over exaggerated, and handling it is as simple as stepping away from the situation, turning off the laptop screen/exiting the conversation on the messenger, or just zoning out; however, that does not help the damages already done. It is far more serious, a lot riskier, and requires a whole lot more attention than this. The fact that parents of many of these youngsters did not grow up with cellular phones and in-room computers, whereas these technologies are prevalent in the lives of the adolescents, accounts, in part, for the gap between parents and children in understanding both the uses and risks of the Internet.

Hence, relying on the transactional model of stress and coping theory, this thesis seeks to study the influence of cyberbullying on drug abuse on Lebanese subjects, both male and female, aged between 17-30 years of age. Through the course of this thesis, the aim is to assess and identify the means through how potential victims rank the severity of a cyberbullying threat they face, find out the different means through which they do cope with a stressor they encounter, as well as assess the extent to which these victims know about the different coping mechanisms and varying options available at their disposal. Further, this thesis will seek to identify which of the coping mechanisms, mainly suicide or drugs would be the most likely chosen option to cope with cyberbullying victimization.

With regards to the structure of the thesis, it will be presented as follows:

Section II will detail the literature review, presenting the definition of cyberbullying and the different variables related to cyberbullying, as well as previous studies related to the cyberbullying phenomenon and the related variables.

Section III will detail the theoretical framework, introducing the theory used for this research, its various elements, the concepts related to it, as well the different studies done in which the theory was utilized.

Section IV will tackle the methodology section of the research. This includes presenting the course of action taken to solve the problems presented. Further, it will also present the data gathering method selected, and the reason for the research design used, as well as defining the variables in terms of how they will be measured and specifying how the data will be generated and analyzed.

Section V will focus on the findings and analysis, followed by the limitations, further suggestions and conclusion.

II.   Literature Review

This section details the literature review available on cyberbullying. It first starts with a definition of the term cyberbullying, and then it deals with the different possible outcomes and/or influences caused by and related to cyberbullying.

Definition of Cyberbullying

A multitude of scholars (Hoff & Mitchell, 2008; Kowalski & Witte, 2006; Raj, 2010; Perren, Dooley, Shaw & Cross, 2010) have shown interest in the phenomenon of cyberbullying, in terms

of the motives behind it, the causes for it, and more specifically, the drawbacks and side effects that result from it. Al-Hachimi (2014) cites Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell, and Tippett (2008), to define cyberbullying as "the distorted and inappropriate use of electronic means, such as the internet and mobile phones, to repeatedly attack a person, usually defenseless, in order to hurt him/ her and cause damage to his/her reputation" (p. 1). According to Hinduja and Patchin, (2010) cyberbullying is defined as the "willful and repeated harm inflicted through computers, cell phones and other electronic devices." This definition aligns itself with the four main elements of bullying and they are: "a physical, verbal, or psychological attack or intimidation, an actual or perceived power imbalance between the perpetrator(s) or victim(s), intent to cause fear, and/or harm to the victim, [and] it is repeated and produces the desired effect," (Shetgiri, 2013, p. 2). However, cyberbullying is different from traditional bullying as victims of cyberbullying may or may not know the identity of their bully and cyberbullying can happen at any time.

The potential causes of cyberbullying were investigated through a study conducted by Hoff and Mitchell (2008), on a sample of 351 first year and second year undergraduate students, enrolled in a public university. Surveys that were handed out to those students contained closedended answer choices, scaled responses, and open-ended questions. The results showed that cyberbullying usually results from relational problems. This includes a case of a breakup where cyberbullying is then used as a form of retribution; the person who got hurt from the breakup would then send offensive, threatening, and humiliating messages or posts through a form of media to get back at that other. Moreover, getting rejected when a person is targeting romance and being met with a friendship instead by that significant other would lead to the rejected person using cyber bullying to express envy and/or sorrow at that other. In addition, the study pointed out that cyberbullying also developed as a result of intolerance and/or prejudice

towards a particular religion or gender. Finally, cyberbullying may develop or arise in the case

where a group of people team up on a person in order to isolate/cast that person out of that group.

"It's not the fact of just getting hurt...people get hurt in accidents. It's the fact that someone

made a choice to intentionally hurt you" (Akwagyiram, 2005, p. 114).

The aforementioned studies that were conducted across the globe utilized various

methods in an attempt to test, clarify and produce concrete judgments on cyberbullying and its

relation to and possible influence on a number of issues or variables such as depression, suicide,

substance abuse and other mental health issues. Each one of these variables will be defined and

explored in-depth through the scholarly literature:

- We will first look at depression. According to a study published by the Mayo Clinic

    on February 2018, depression "is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of

    sadness and loss of interest." According to the National Institute of Mental Health

    (2019), "depression is a common but serious mood disorder. It causes severe

    symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as

    sleeping, eating, or working."

- As for suicide, according to Nock, Borges, Bromet, Cha, Kessler, and Lee (2008)

    suicide is defined as "the act of intentionally ending one's own life." Also, according

    to Nock, et al. (2008), the suicidal thoughts and behaviors can be divided and/or

    classified according to three different categories: The first being suicidal ideations

    which refers to generated ideas and/or thoughts to partake in some action to end one's

    life. At this point, the person has begun giving a considerable amount of thought

    regarding ending his/her life. This would then escalate to the second category being

    the suicide plan, which refers to formulating a method or the means in which will end

his/her life through. When the person has reached this stage, it would lead to the third and final category which is suicidal attempt, which refers to the actual engagement in potentially self-injurious behavior in which there is some intent to die. At this point, there is almost no going back, the person has hit rock bottom, doesn't see any hope, and wants the "suffering" to end. According to Klonsky, May, and Saffer (2016), suicide is defined as "death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with an intent to die as a result of the behavior" (p. 3).

- Mental health or being functional is a "state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (Galderisi, Heinz, Kastrup, Beezhold, and Sartorius, 2015, p. 1). Cyberbullied individuals suffer when it comes to their mental health. The traits found most frequently in cyberbullied individual include having certain behavioral difficulties such as hyperactivity or trouble paying attention, suffering from emotional issues, and having peer problems.

- Substance abuse, according to the World Health Organization (n.d.) substance abuse refers to the harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances, including alcohol and illicit drugs. A second definition is provided by the Health Aging Organization (2012), where the terms "drug abuse" or "substance abuse" are defined as the use of chemical substances that lead to an increased risk of problems and an inability to control the use of the substance.

With all the definitions and information briefly stated, the next section will expand on each term, showing different studies conducted on cyberbullying and each of those variables and the relationship between both.

Cyberbullying and Depression

Cyberbullying is often associated, correlated, and intertwined with the term depression, usually as a potential outcome resulting from being cyberbullied (Låftman, Modin, & Östberg, 2013).

Symptoms occurring from cyberbullying are at times clinically diagnosed as situational depression since they occur after traumatization and are usually short-term (Cirino, 2017). People with situational depression might suffer from sadness, hopelessness, regular crying, as well as constant worry and feeling anxious or stressed out (Cirino, 2017). Also, avoidance of social interaction and situations as well as developing thoughts or even attempting suicide can result from this depressive state. Thus, cyberbullying can lead to situational depression and/or victims can experience some and/or all the symptoms.

When people are subjected to cyberbullying, the threats, humiliating posts, photos, and degrading accusations perpetrated continuously over a long period of time may lead them to developing feelings of sadness, generating self-doubt, resorting to isolation, and eventually

developing depression (Dombeck, 2015) While the extent and/or level of depression would in fact vary from one person to another, "adolescents who are targeted via cyberbullying report increased depressive affect, anxiety, loneliness, suicidal behavior, and somatic symptoms" (Nixon, 2014, p. 1).

Kowalski and Witte (2006) sought to "assess the emotional toll that is associated with cyberbullying" (p. 114). Through their study, they questioned the experience of the cyberbullying victims themselves and its outcomes. From their findings, Kowalski and Witte (2006) found that those who had been cyberbullied generated strong feelings of "sadness, depression, hurt, confusion, and helplessness, and often considered the possibility of committing suicide as a result of the overlapping depression" (p. 114). This can justify how excessive tormenting, humiliation, and degradation can ultimately damage the person on the receiving end.

Raj (2010) sought to "examine the relationship between bullying and depression among teenagers" (p. 1) utilizing a sample of 242 teenagers, made up of 119 males and 123 females aged between 13 and 17 years, from selected schools in Selangor, Malaysia. The results of the study showed a positive correlation between the two variables, significant difference in gender in relation to the bullying victimization, and a non-significant difference in gender and relation to depression. This shows us that regardless of the gender being subjected to bullying, the issue of depression is still a result and/or outcome to be expected in the long run.

Perren, Dooley, Shaw and Cross (2010) researched the connection between digital tormenting and conventional harassing and how this affiliation identifies with burdensome indications in both Australia and Switzerland. For this examination, an example of 1320 understudies from Australia and 374 understudies from Switzerland were chosen. These two groups were then asked to fill out a questionnaire concerning cyber and traditional bullying. The results indicated that both

traditional and cyberbullying victims mentioned having developing more depressive symptoms than bullies and children who were not involved or subjected to cyberbullying victimization. Furthermore, cyberbullying victims had indicated having a much higher level of depressive symptoms were found even when control for traditional bullying victimization involvement was present.

Almenayes (2017) conducted a study on 1400 Kuwaiti students, attending a public university whose name was not specified. Taking gender and age as moderating factors, he explored the effect of cyberbullying on depression. He noted three significant findings in the process. First, females were found to be more prone to depression than males, indicating gender as a predictor of depression. Second, older age groups were less subject to depression than younger groups, making age a negative predictor of depression. Third, the results showed no significant interaction effect between gender and cyberbullying victimization. However, a significant interaction effect between the variables of age and cyberbullying victimization was present, where the older subjects were more likely to suffer from greater depression when exposed or subjected to cyberbullying victimization than the younger aged ones.

Depression can also be considered a facilitating factor leading to alcohol consumption, drug abuse, isolation, and even suicide. This shows that depression does not just limit itself as the resulting effect of cyberbullying, and thus, requires the utmost attention, no matter what level of severity of depression is diagnosed.

Finally, a sample of 845 adolescents were observed as they participated in a study analyzing the chronological and reciprocal relationships between being a victim of cyber bullying and three complications faced during adolescence: depressive symptoms, usage of substance, as well as problematic internet use. This was done at two different periods of time (T1 and T2, which were measured 6 months apart) (Gámez-Guadix, Orue, Smith, & Calvete, 2013). Results from their

study showed that bullying victimization observed at time one had predicted depressive symptoms and problematic internet use when observed six months after the initial study (GámezGuadix, Orue, Smith, & Calvete, 2013). Also, a larger prediction of substance abuse developed at T1 had led to prediction of higher victimization at the time of T2. But the results also reported that this vice-versa relationship was not fully significant. This stresses on the need to perform a more elaborate study to assess the true nature of this relationship.

A study was conducted by Heino and Frojd (2011) to test the correlation between bullying and clinical depression. Results show that not only do victims displays an increased risk of developing depression, but the bully subjecting that victim also has the same increased risk as well. Victimization resulting from bullying can also influence the victim becoming the bully. In either case, situation depression can result. These facts show how dangerous depression truly is, and how much of an influencing factor it can be in pushing towards bullying and resulting from bullying (as means of coping) as well.

Cyberbullying and Suicide

Cyberbullying is associated with generating thoughts of suicide. Like any other form of torment, a breaking point will eventually be reached, be it from anger, stress, depression, or ultimately the loss of hope. At that point, the victim of the cyberbullying may decide to end his/her life and commit suicide. A recently used term regarding this issue is *cyberbullicide*, a term which refers to "suicide directly or indirectly influenced by online aggression" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, p. 2). This term can aid in specifically describing this potential outcome as well as emphasizing the idea stated earlier regarding the breaking point being reached by the victim. Furthermore, according to Fekkes, Pipjers and Verloove-Vanhorick (2005), bullying victimization often leads to emotional distress for the young people who lived through and survived the suicide attempt. This demonstrates that a back-lashing effect behind cyberbullying exists; this effect stems

from the experience itself and that can go on for a lengthy if not a permanent period of time. In addition, bullying is not considered a part of regular development, and coming in contact with bullying is known to be harmful and can lead to the increase of suicidal ideation and behavioral risk in youth (Kim & Leventhal, 2008), even though it does not single handedly result in committing suicide.

Different studies done in relation to cyberbullying and suicidal ideations showed the potential possibility of suicide resulting from cyberbullying in a broad sense. But in regards to the results generated, different outcomes did in fact stand out, such as if a particular gender or a specific age group had a larger potential of committing suicide than other age groups or the opposing gender. Hinduja and Patchin (2010), cited a study conducted by Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Marttunen et al. (1999) who sought to assess and identify the possible relation between bullying, being a victim of bullying, depression and developing suicidal ideations for both males and females. Results generated from the surveys showed that amongst the boys who were frequently subjected to bullying at a minimum rate of once per week, 4% had reported/displayed severe suicidal ideations compared to 1% for boys who were not bullied. Also, of the participants who claimed that they had subjected others to bullying at a minimum rate of once per week, 8% of the boys and 8% of the girls displayed severe suicidal ideation compared to those who were not. This shows that even the people who administer bullying on helpless others, and subjected their peers to violence and torment, may have been bullied by people before them, struggled from berating parents, and have contemplated suicide in their own rights.

A similar study conducted by van der Wal, de Wit and Hirasing (2003) in the Netherlands utilized a sample of 4721 students from a primary school. Through administering surveys, the study aimed at acquiring information with regards to the experiences of those who had been bullied in comparison to those who had not. Results derived show that approximately 13% of the boys who

had been directly bullied and 18% of the boys who had been indirectly bullied suffered from suicidal ideations. Indirect bullying can occur in many different scenarios. Examples of indirect bullying include when someone is being mocked for their sexual orientation, cultural and religious beliefs, or their socio-economics status. It can even be a simpler day-by-day example where someone is being denied sitting on a table in the cafeteria at lunch on purpose or partaking in a group activity just because the offender "can", these may be considered harmless, but they are still placed under the banner of what is known as bullying, even if in an indirect manner. As for direct bullying, examples include children and/or adolescents engaging and/or subjecting others to verbal attacks and insults, physical assaults (such as someone pushing their classmate in the playground, stuffing them in a locker, throwing them into a trash bin, purposely tripping them while they're running etc.). For many people, this is considered an act of humor, getting attention, and somehow asserting their dominance on others just because "they're bigger in size", the accent of whom they're bullying "is weird", or "they dress funny". But for others, this is a direct form of offense, humiliation, and ultimately disrespect. The ramifications in the long run for this type of bullying may range from mild to potentially life threatening, depending on the person being bullied, how it affects them, and how they cope with it.

 A more elaborately based longitudinal study on this specific topic was conducted by Klomek, et al. (2008). The study focused on the relation between bullying behavior and suicidal intentions. Results of the longitudinal study showed that at the stage of youth, people who have been subjected to bullying frequently at the age of eight years old had a larger possibility of killing themselves at the age of eighteen compared to those who were not. It should be noted that this was the first longitudinal study conducted regarding this particular topic. So, while the results generated small percentages in terms of those who were bullied from both males and females, this result should

still be considered on a larger scale. There exists a possibility of these numbers increasing in the far or near future and thus reaching a larger number of people.

Hinduja and Patchin, (2010) who sought to investigate the relationship between the two variables of cyberbullying and suicidal ideations found that there was an increased likelihood that those victimized would develop suicidal ideations as a result. The term bullying was defined as an "aggressive behavior or intentional ''harm doing'' by one person or a group, generally carried out repeatedly and over time, and which involves a power differential" (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla et al., 2001, p. 206). This study sought to see where the offenders and receivers of both traditional and cyberbullying stand with regards to suicidal ideations. Through focusing on both the role of the offender and that of the receiver of cyberbullying victimization and utilizing insights obtained from a large sample of 1963 middle school students who were mainly subjected targets through both being bullied and bullying others, results indicated that the youth who had been victims or offenders of traditional and more importantly here cyberbullying tend to have higher suicidal ideations than the people who had not been offenders or victims of cyberbullying. Further, victims of bullying showed a clearer suicidal behavioral intention than an offender in the bullying process.

Cyber Bullying and Mental Health Problems

Mental health conditions may be exacerbated by cyberbullying. Being subjected to continuous threats, torment, and abuse and especially disrespect, as previously mentioned, could result in large amount of damage over time. Bullying can cause mental health problems and/or young people may experience bullying because of their mental health issues (Fekkes, Pipjers & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005). Children and teens who were victims of bullying have been consistently found to be at higher risk for internalizing problems such as anxiety, somatic problems, isolation and low-self-esteem (Wolkw. Lereya, 2015).

Landstedt and Patterson (2014) investigated the abuse of both cyber and traditional

bullying in the real-life perspective, and the associations that these two types of bullying have with the issue of mental health among Swedish boys and girls. Through conducting a cross-sectional web-based study on a sample of 1214 students aged between 13-16 years in Northern Sweden, results showed that "cyberbullying can be seen and considered as an extension of real-life bullying, and that cyberbullying seems to be particularly negative for mental health" (p. 393). A study titled "Cyberbullying: a review of the literature on harassment through the Internet and other electronic means" conducted by Kiriakidis and Kavoura (2010), no gender patterns were utilized when exposed to the different types of bullying. This shows that gender does not in fact play a significant role in cyberbullying victimization, but nonetheless the occurrence is evident and can have varying impacts for males and females.

Another study was conducted by Goebert, Else, Matsu, Chung-Do, and Chang (2010) to examine the relationship between cyber bullying and mental health problems among a multi ethnic sample of 677 high school students. A mixed methods approach was utilized in this particular study. The method started with a focus group that would assist in developing the survey questions and the actual survey was handed out afterwards. The focus was placed on the violence among the Pacific Islander and the Asian Youth. Results generated showed that:

> more than one in two youth (56.1%) had been targeted as victims of cyberbullying in the last year. Also, Filipino and Samoan youth involved were more likely to report feeling badly about themselves as a result of cyberbullying. Goebert, Else, Matsu, & Chang, (2011, p. 1282-1286).

In addition, the phenomenon of cyberbullying was widespread, and seemed to possess dreadful consequences for the Pacific Islanders and the Asian youth as well.

One of the many issues/problems found under the banner of mental health is the issue of self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to an individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to

which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). A study was conducted by Patchin (2010) in an attempt to test the relationship between cyber bullying and self-esteem. Utilizing a sample of over 30 middle schools in one of the largest districts of the United States of America, the study showed that both the victims and offenders of cyberbullying tended to possess a significantly lower levels of self-esteem compared to people who had not been subjected to or committed cyberbullying on others.

 Patchin and Hinduja (2010) also conducted a study related to the influence of self-esteem, whereby a random sample of school students was selected to fill out a survey regarding the use of the internet, and potential experiences they encountered with cyberbullying. Results generated from the study showed that the students who had reported experiencing cyberbullying, as offenders or victims possessed a lower level of self-esteem in comparison to those who had reported no experience with cyberbullying.

Another relation that should be emphasized is the relation between cyberbullying and physical health problems. According to Morris (2014), from the article by the American Society for the Positive Care of Children (ASPCC for short) titled "Physical effects of bullying" Bullying can lead to several physical health problems. First, they include developing constant headaches, due to tension developed in the areas of the neck and forehead from stress out of worrying. Second, bullying can lead to developing muscle pain as well. The tense effect from being bullied leads to contraction of the muscles and pain in the back and limbs, as well as damage done to the muscle fibers as well. Third, the stress and damage from being bullied may lead to a shift of the victim's weight, either leading to loss or increase of fat, directly resulting from the affected appetite (stress eating or lack of eating as a result). Lastly, a dangerous physical health damage resulting from being bullied is a direct link to possible heart disease. The continued ongoing stress can lead to an increase in blood pressure and also may increase inflammation (which would in turn increase the

likelihood of developing heart disease). Adding to that harassment (from bullying) may lead to possibly unhealthy behaviors (such as alcohol consumption as well as fattening food consumption), which would in turn damage the blood vessels.

A study conducted by Goshe (2016) to test the prevalence of mental and physical health consequences of cyberbullying among young adults, utilizing a sample of university students (18 years and older) in England. The physical health outcome was investigated via Pearson's correlation coefficient. The results showed that with increase severity of cyberbullying there were higher levels of alcohol consumption, greater sleep disturbance, and a higher report of adverse health symptoms.

Furthermore, according Kowalski and Limber (2012) quoted Fekkes et al. (2006), "bullied children were more likely than non-bullied peers to develop stomach pain, sleep problems, headaches, tension, bedwetting, fatigue, and poor appetite after having been bullied" (p. 14). This can indicate that there is a link between damaging outcomes in physical health and being subjected to cyberbullying victimization. Thus, this is another sign to pay more attention to such awkward occurrences, as it may be a bigger disaster waiting to happen if not dealt with directly and timely.

Cyberbullying and Substance Abuse

The possible relation between cyber bullying and substance abuse and how cyberbullying may lead to substance abuse is the main objective of our study. Teens who are cyberbullied are more likely than their peers who are not to develop symptoms of substance abuse. Cyber bullying has been considered, to a certain extent, an influencer, and has seemingly resulted in its victims taking substances, from alcohol, to marijuana, to medically prescribed medicine. Kuntsche and Gmel (2004) conducted a study on a sample of 3861 students enrolled in 8th and 9th grade classes in Switzerland to investigate "adolescents according to risky single occasional drinking

(RSOD) and their level/extent of social integration" (p. 1). According to Kuntsche and Gmel (2004), risky single occasional drinkers or in other words those who drink tended to possess a higher level of violence compared to the solitary RSODs. In addition, the solitary RSODs tend to be even less satisfied than the latter and have a higher level of depression. Furthermore, the solitary RSODS reported a more frequent rate of bullying victimization. This result shows the need to address the motives behind those who drink at such an age, the factors involved in their depressive state, and the extent to which they would need assistance/guidance although they may not ask for it.

Sullivan et al. (2006) showed through a study on a sample of 276 African-Americans enrolled in the 8th grade and attending the urban public school system that both physical and relational victimization were related to alcohol and marijuana use, physical victimization was also reported to be related to both physical and relational aggression as well as delinquency behavior; relational aggression had also been reported to provide a contribution to the process of concurrently predicting these behaviors.

Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Ybarra (2007), conducted a study, aiming to explore "the relationship between online and offline forms of victimization and the variables of depressive symptomatology, delinquency and substance abuse" (p. 314). The study utilized a national sample of 1501 youth internet users, aged between 10 and 17 years old. Results of the study showed that 57% of the respondents had reported some form of offline victimization including sexual abuse, 23% reported some form of online victimization including harassment, and basically all types of both online and offline victimization had each been independently related to the three variables depressive symptomology, delinquency, and substance abuse.

Moreover, Luk, Wang, and Simons-Morton (2010) conducted a study which sought to see the relationship between the variables of cyberbullying victimization and substance abuse among both

males and females. In this study, the role of depression as a mediator was discussed, in order to assess the role that depression plays in the cyberbullying effect process. The issues of depression, substance abuse and victimization were each measured respectively through a questionnaire. The results generated from this study showed that victimization was in fact positively associated with substance abuse in both males and females. A further mediation analysis conducted showed that the variable of depression mediated the association between victimization and substance abuse in females only. This was not the case for the male subjects though.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Gámez-Guadix, Orue, Smith, and Calvete, (2013) investigated the relationship between being a victim of cyberbullying victimization and its association with what could be considered frequent and expected complications encountered/faced during adolescence. These problems included substance abuse, depressive symptoms, as well as problematic usage of the internet. The motives behind conducting this study were many. First, the prevalence rates of depressive disorders increase between the ages of 15 and 18 years of age (Gámez-Guadix, et. al., 2013) as well as the intake of substances increasing dramatically, reaching a prevalence rate of up to 70% at the age of 15. Moreover, although multiple studies focused on the cross-sectional relationships between cyberbullying victimization and depression as well as cyberbullying victimization and substance abuse, few studies had assessed longitudinal relationships and/or associations between these variables; this means that a few studies had focused on the variables and how they relate in a consistent manner over a prolonged period of time. Also, since no previous studies had assessed the bidirectional relationships, this made it difficult to state whether the variable of depression was considered as an antecedent or a resulting consequence of cyberbullying victimization (Kaltiala-Heino, Fröjd, & Marttunen 2010).

Locally, the issue of drugs in Lebanon yield limited results. A report titled "The National

Report on Drugs Situation in Lebanon," done by the Ministry of Public Health in December of 2017 showed that "Limited data is available on drug prevalence among the general population." In 2003, the prevalence of lifetime drug use among people who were aged between 18-44 years was 0.6% (Karam et al., 2008). According to the Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association (MENHARA) (2015), the number of people who had injected drugs in the greater Beirut region alone was estimated to be about 3,144 people.

In 2005, the prevalence of lifetime drug use (utilizing drugs such as cocaine, marijuana, heroin, ecstasy, injections) among 5115 students aged between 13 to 15 years old was 3.5%. It should be noted that male students (5.6%) were in fact significantly more than that of the female students (1.5%) in terms of reporting drug use. While in 2011, the prevalence of lifetime drug use among 2,286 students aged 13 to 15 years increased to 4.6% in comparison to the rate of 2005. Also, the male students (6.3%) were more likely to use marijuana compared to female students (1%). It should also be noted that according to Global School Health Survey (GHS) (2011), public school students (2.7%) were less likely to report lifetime marijuana use than private school students.

Figure 1: Number of persons arrested in detention center for drug use (2011-2016)

In 2016, there are 108% more persons arrested
for drug use compared to 2011 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of persons arrested in detention centers for drug use (2011-2016)

Data source: MOIM 2016a

The chart above presents the number of people who have been arrested in detention centers for the use of drugs between 2011 and 2016.

The data of the chart is also detailed in the table below:

Table 1: Number of persons arrested in detention center for drug use by age category (20112016)

Age Group	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	% Change
< 18 years	33	39	46	80	63	110	+233%
18-25 years	796	847	952	985	976	1385	+74%
26-35 years	585	928	1033	1114	1175	1521	+160%
> 36 years	348	435	641	530	567	653	+88%

Data source: MOIM, 2016a

According to the table above, there is a 233% reported increase in the number of people who have been arrested for drug use, of which are below 18 years of age. On average, approximately 80% are young adults between 18 and 35 years. This is an immense red line form of alert on the dangerous impact drugs have had on the youth of Lebanon, and this huge increase implies the need for control and educating the youth in colleges and schools.

In relation to gender differences, the table below shows the variation of gender and drug use arrest in Lebanon between the years of 2011 and 2016.

Table 2: Number of persons arrested in detention center for drug use by sex (2011-2016)

Table 2: Number of persons arrested in detention centers for drug use by sex (2011-2016)

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	% Change
♀	62	77	76	97	64	78	+26%
♂	1700	2172	2596	2612	2717	3591	+111%

Data source: MOIM, 2016a

This table shows that there is a 111% reported increase in the number of males who have been arrested for drugs in the year 2016 in comparison to 2011. While an increase of 26% was for females who had been arrested for drug use in 2016 compared to 2011. This can show that in

Lebanon, despite that males are more likely to be subjected to drug use than females and therefore arrested, it doesn't diminish the fact that both genders are partaking in drug use and at a young age facing serious consequences. Both face the dangers of drug abuse (e.g., criminal acts, fights, arrest), especially addiction which can also lead to depression, where drugs become a coping mechanism; also, the possibility of ending one's life from overdosing. Thus, these findings serve as a greater need for analysis and a wake-up call to start educating males and females alike on the danger of drugs, the ease of addiction, and encouraging those addicted to go for rehabilitation, speaking to a specialist for therapy. Moreover, in many cases, cyberbullying (as previously mentioned) can lead to taking drugs as a coping mechanism. Hence, while educating people about the potential negative outcomes, they can be made aware of the positive and/or alternative coping mechanisms such as socializing, exercising, meditation, etc.

 Furthermore, there have been recently (from year 2018) initiatives in Lebanon aside from MENHARA and drug rehabilitation centers that advocate for such substance causes that cater directly to suicide and cyberbullying. The first suicide prevention hotline was created in 2018 for those seeking help.

Also, in 2015 an NGO specifically dealing with cyberbullying titled *No Label* was launched to spread awareness and figure out preventative measures to stop bullying.

But the fact is, most people are not aware of these initiatives nor do they know of other types of initiatives such as parent meetings, awareness seminars for minimal and advanced parts, and school clubs have been developed and encouraged by *No Label*

III.   Theoretical Framework

This section deals with the theoretical framework of this research, identifies the theory chosen for this particular study, and discusses the elements that constitute it. It includes its various concepts, the core assumptions and tenants with regard to the transactional model for stress and coping theory, as well as exploring the previous studies that have already validated it.

Introducing the Theory

The Transactional Model for Stress and Coping Theory was first developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1986). It is used as a framework for evaluating the processes of coping and dealing with stressful events.

> Stressful experiences are construed as person-environment transactions. These transactions depend on the impact of the external stressor. This is mediated by firstly the person's appraisal of the stressor and secondly on the social and cultural resources at his or her disposal ("The Transactional Model," 2016).

> The core statements and assumptions of this theory are that when a person usually comes in contact with or is subjected to a particular stressor or a stressful experience, the first possible course of action to be taken is to assess the potential threat. This is usually known as the *primary appraisal.* When facing that stressor, the person would then assess his coping options, as well as the resources available. This is known as *secondary appraisal* (Cohen, 1984). When the person is dealing with the stressor, there are two mechanisms or strategies that are used to facilitate the emotional as well as the functional effect of these different appraisals. These two mechanisms are known as *coping efforts* (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and they include emotional regulation and problem management. When these mechanisms are used, they would then lead to specific resulting *outcomes,* which are the coping outcomes to compensate and deal with the issue.

Primary Appraisal: refers to the person's judgment regarding the significance of a particular event as being stressful, positive, controllable, challenging, benign, or relevant. Two basic primary appraisals are the perception of susceptibility (weakness) of the threat and the perception of severity of the threat. According to the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TMSC), the appraisal of a personal risk and the severity of the threat developed by a person would then prompt him/her to exert efforts in order to cope with the encountered stressor.

With cyberbullying, a person being bullied is most likely to have one of the two primary appraisals where they may consider that someone is in fact presenting a real threat, would most likely refer to either keeping the stress in and not speaking to anyone for a while, or considering it as may be playing around and joking and thus ignore and act accordingly - presenting the stressor as not that harmful and dangerous or impactful. However, in most cyberbullying cases, the first type has been the most likely to occur. when a person gets bullied, it is usually for a lengthy period of time, leading to disturbance within the person, influencing them to believe what is being said to them, and thus become increasingly susceptible to being depressed and/or angry and/or bitter. Hence weighing the options will also depend on the situation and the person him/herself. **Secondary Appraisal**: Focuses on the coping resources and options and what a person can do when placed in that particular situation. This is in contrast to the primary appraisal, which emphasizes and focuses on the features of the stressor itself. In the case of cyberbullying, a particular scenario presented would make the person consider what to do differently. For example, when a person has been body shamed through pictures posted about them online or threats placed against them, they would consider for example going to the person in charge (a parent an authority etc.) or keeping it in to avoid the threat as well. In a case of simple mockery, they could tell the bully off and stand up to that bully, or also potentially ignore that bully for the long run.

Coping: Coping refers to "responses that are experienced as voluntary, under the individual's control, and involving conscious effort" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, pp. 166-185). As mentioned above, the emotional and functional effects resulting from the primary and secondary appraisals are mediated and/or facilitated by actual coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). These strategies include problem management and emotional regulation. *Problem management strategies* are aimed at altering the stressful situation a person finds himself/herself in. *Emotional regulation* aims at changing how a person thinks and/or feels about the stressful situation. This includes seeking out special support, venting feelings to someone about the matter as well as going into denial in regards to what's going on, and fighting against the actual truth (Health Behavior and Health Education. (n.d.).

 Furthermore, it is believed that the problem management strategy is most adaptable in situations where the stressor is changeable, while the emotional regulation strategy is most adaptable in situations where the stressor is in fact unchangeable. In addition, according to Carver et al. (1993), empirical studies that were conducted in an attempt to see when the person would engage with the stressor, showed that when the stressor is a major threat, the victim is more likely to resort to discouraging coping mechanisms (Taylor et al., 1992). Such mechanisms include resorting to avoidance, both physically (meaning distancing themselves from the stressor) and cognitively (meaning not thinking about it). This attention shift may allow individuals to diminish their initial distress by avoiding thoughts and feelings about the stressor (Suls & Fletcher, 1985). These coping responses in relation to victim of cyberbullying would as mentioned before depend on the person, the severity of his case, and the extent of emotional damage sustained by that bully of any sorts tit may be.

 Outcomes: Refers to the means in which a person will react to the particular stressor after first coming in contact with the stressor, and weighing in as well as considering the options and

resources at their disposal to see the proper strategy to utilize and then deciding on the intended course of action. A person who has been bullied for a long time and has been suffering from possible depression and isolation, may contemplate outcomes at a more extreme rate such as consuming alcohol, resorting to substance abuse, and even potentially committing suicide to end it all. As stated before, the rate of bullying, the personality of the victim, how they react, the actual bullying subjected on them and the length of the bullying actually happening will all play a big role in the overall outcome. Adding to it the availability of assistance (if the victim goes and/or asks for it or not) and its stage can serve as a potential outcome or push towards an outcome as well.

Application of Theory

This section details the application of the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping Theory. It presents previous studies done where the theory itself and the concepts that comprise it was applied, as. this section will present the research questions/hypotheses to be investigated in this thesis. Studies presented in this section, though not directly related to the topic of this thesis, are, nonetheless, important in two ways, first they utilize the same theory, and they present different potential outcomes that may result from being subjected to cyberbullying victimization other than consuming drugs to cope with depression. Thereby showing the different potential outcomes to cyberbullying victimization.

Balabanis, Mitchell, Bruce and Riefler (2012) sought to study and test how visually impaired consumers would cope in the marketplace engagement within the United Kingdom. A sample of 645 blind and partially sighted people that was collected by the Royal National Institute of Blind People was utilized for this study. Through visiting the subjects at their respective place of residence and orally administering the questionnaire to them, this study was able to identify how social support provided by family and friends as well as the extent to which one possesses high

self-esteem impacts the level of engagement in the marketplace done by someone who possesses those disabilities. Here, the disabilities include those who are fully blind, those with vision impairment, and those with other possible problems with their eyes.

A study was conducted by Connor-Smith, Compas, Wadsworth, Thomson and Satlzman (2000) in an attempt to identify the ways in which adolescents and children would respond to stress. For this study, three samples were selected. The first sample was composed of first- or second-year university students. The second sample was composed of high school students (both of the two samples were located in New England). The third sample was composed of adolescents as well as parents who are trying to cope with abdominal pain. The quantitative method of administering a questionnaire was utilized. The questionnaire was titled "The Responses to Stress

Questionnaire (RSQ)", and it "reflected the conceptual model which [was] comprised of conscious intentional attempts that lead to subconscious responses regarding stressful events as well as situations" (pp. 976-992.). The components of the RSQ were examined across four different areas in terms of stress.

The results derived from the study showed that from the perspective/standpoint of the coping theory, there was a correlation between the variables of primary control (which included problem solving and emotional regulation) and secondary control (which included positive thinking as well as acceptance). However, when being involuntarily exposed to stress, a correlation existed between intrusive engagement (intrusive arousal as well as impulsive action) here being suddenly exposed to the stress and involuntary disengagement (attempting to avoid getting involved) and cognitive interference (referring to in this case the inability of thinking properly or assessing things as needed as a result of being upset and/or shocked from what is occurring, as well as becoming emotionally numb).

A third study was conducted by Anita DeLonglis and Suzan Hotlzman (2005), in order to assess "the role of stress, social support, and personality in the coping processes." For this study, a sample of married couples within step families was utilized. Through heavily utilizing the daily process methodology, in which monitoring of the subject's actions and viewing the occurrence of stress and coping in a real life timing applies, the results derived showed that the specific nature possessed by the stressor, degrees of satisfaction and disappointment produced with support, range of coping done by others, and the personality of the person and their significant other would be the determining factor in the levels as well as the means of coping done. This means that when considering how the person would cope with the resulting situation, he/she finds him/herself in, every single one of these factors must be weighed with the others. A person with a large rate of disappointment and a weak personality would act differently than someone who has a tough personality and would try to face off with the bully.

Hence, considering all this, this research utilizes the conceptual model of stress and coping theory due to the fact that it directly relates to the subject of interest, cyberbullying victims and consequential outcomes. According to Dombeck (2015), When a person has been traumatized from being subjected to cyber bullying, he/she develops stress, and in most cases ends up developing depression. In this case, he/she would usually go through the following concepts which have been mentioned: first comes the primary appraisal, when the person comes in contact with the stressor/stressful situation and the depression accompanying it in this case. Then, the different coping strategies would be utilized, be it emotionally handling it, finding a solution to the problem, or resorting to disengaging strategies.

The disengaging strategies include attempting to avoid contact with any means which would re-trigger the cyberbullying process all over again: the online devices and not thinking about what

had happened. Then, the resulting outcome comes, in which the actual coping occurs. This could be through one of the many outcomes mentioned earlier in the literature review section of this research paper, committing suicide, consuming alcohol, isolation, or the primary focus of this: resorting to drugs.

Through this particular study, the primary aim will be attempting to answer the following research questions and proving the hypotheses.

RQ 1: How do victims of cyberbullying rank the level of severity of the cyberbullying threat?

RQ 2: What are the different ways victims of cyberbullying cope with cyberbullying as a stressor?

RQ 3: What coping mechanism (suicide, drugs) is most likely to be chosen to cope with cyber bullying victimization?

RQ 4: What are the outcomes generated in reaction to the stressor of cyberbullying?

RQ 5: Are the victims of cyberbullying aware of the different options and coping resources available to them in Lebanon?

H1: Those who get depressed from cyberbullying victimization may tend to take drugs. H2: Males subjected to cyberbullying victimization are more likely to take drugs as a coping

mechanism than females.

IV.   Methodology

This section will discuss the actions that would be taken to investigate the research problem stated at the end of the preceding part, including the method of gathering data and the rationale of the design choice, and data collection method. Further, this section will define the study's variables in terms of how they will be measured, and how the data will be generated and analyzed.

Research Design

The chosen research method that will make the gathering of data and potential inquiries with regards to the issue of cyberbullying as well as the possible influence it has on the intake of drugs

is the quantitative survey method specifically a descriptive survey. The reason for this is to describe the relationship and associations made between the cyberbullying, substance abuse, stressors and coping. The literature review has helped identify what was covered with regards to the phenomenon known as cyberbullying and its different influences and potential coping mechanisms resorted to by the victims. The literature also described, through survey design, the relationship and associations made between cyberbullying, stressors, and coping; the survey would therefore be a suitable method for this thesis.

Adding to that, the method of surveys is an inexpensive method, for it helps to gather an immense amount of data from the sample group of choice at a minimal cost and it has no geographic limitations as sending the link online is as simple as a click of a button, letting the person regardless of where he/she is at the moment to participate in the study. (Wimmer & Dominick, 2009).

Furthermore, it should be noted that the studies mentioned above such as the studies done by Connor-Smith, Compas, Wadsworth, Thomson and Satlzman (2000), and by Balabanis, Mitchell, Bruce and Riefler (2012), use the coping theory and the survey method to gather the needed data and obtain the results in the process.

Add to that, the internet survey has no time constraints, as the respondent can complete the survey when he/she is able to without not being forced to cut from his time at work/school/family or other obligations to fill that survey.

In explaining the means of putting the questions of the survey together, the aim was to go from general to specific in a sense to get the respondents slowly intrigued in the topic at hand (so they can assess where they stand on the topic). Thus, going forth with the demographic information, and identifying the internet habits as well as the social media habits to know the impact of the internet on the lives of respondents (and how to link that with cyberbullying), and then slowly

introducing the cyberbullying topic. By giving the respondents an assessment of their character, (meaning here how they act in tough situations, are they confrontational for example) then giving them scenarios where if they were subjected to bullying, what is the likelihood of doing an action, a particular form of behavior, or thinking in a manner.

Sample

The questionnaire was filled out by a purposive sample of 251 respondents consisting of students (40.8% males and 58.8% females), enrolled at Notre Dame University-Louaize as well as students enrolled at other universities and schools in Lebanon.

The age group selected was 17 to 30 years of age ($M = 21.62$, $SD = 2.604$). This age group was selected due to the fact that a majority of the previous studies done had focused on almost the same age range, presenting to a certain extent how likely this age group is prone to cyberbullying victimization.

It should be noted that despite choosing this age group, this does not mean that younger age groups are less susceptible to cyberbullying and its dangers, on the contrary they have a higher chance of vulnerability. A reference can be the Momo Hoax challenge, which was a social media challenge spread on Facebook, and caused younger kids to do crazy challenges including inflicting violent attacks, inducing self-harm and even committing suicide. The last danger was one that came to reality, an actual result for a 12-year-old child in Buenos Aires Argentina as noted by the NDTV newsletter. This is further proof of how cyberbullying and/or peer pressure is a subject of great danger with immense risk factors that have the potential to reach everyone.

The reason for choosing a purposive sample is to select the population on the basis of specific criteria. These criteria are selecting those who have been subjected to or have subjected others to cyberbullying; to ensure this screening questions were included.

Procedure

A link to the survey was sent to the respondents electronically via e-mail and the researcher's social media platforms. The survey was available from the first of March till the 5th of April. The respondents were presented with multiple screener questions, in order for the researcher to differentiate between those cyberbullied and those who have not been victims. First, participants had to voluntarily consent to participating in the study.

Variables

The variables which were under study were cyberbullying victimization, severity, coping mechanisms, resources, and outcomes as part of the concepts underlining the theory, and specifically drug abuse and depression as coping strategies. First, conceptual definitions were provided followed by their operational definitions.

Cyberbullying Victimization: This variable refers to being subjected to cyberbullying itself, including humiliating posts or comments, and threatening/demeaning messages. Cyberbullying victimization was first measured by asking participants to define cyberbullying through an open-ended response. Then they were asked to fill out how often they think it happens.

Following, participants were asked a direct question asking if they have ever been cyberbullied. This was then followed up with allowing them to describe their experience or what exactly happened and then the age at which they recalled being cyberbullied. Then, they were presented with a series of statements denoting their actions, from 1 = very unlikely to 5 = very likely, once subjected to cyberbullying such as "ignore this occurrence and like it did not happen" and "isolate myself from my social media platform to avoid further embarrassments." To understand what type of cyberbullying encountered, statements measured from never to always were listed which asked participants to specify if they had to deal with embarrassing pictures, false rumors, and/or accessing their account.

Transactional Model for Stress and Coping Theory Concepts: Participants were asked to rank the level of severity of cyberbullying and whether they see it as a potential threat in life. Presented with this type of stressor (e.g., cyberbullying), answers would indicate whether respondents cope or are willing to get help. The participants ranked statements related to the problem management and emotional regulations they attempt the most. Severity of cyberbullying was measured first by asking participants if they are aware of the consequences of cyberbullying. If so, then they were asked to specify the consequences. Participants were also asked to answer coping mechanism statements. Seven statements were used to measure coping all of which were measured from 1 refining to highly unlikely to 5 highly likely. The statements included ways of coping such as taking antidepressants, isolating themselves from everyone, seeking parents and/or friends' advice, resort to alcohol, contemplate suicide and seek professional help. These statements also indicated if participants were aware of resources (e.g., therapist). Also, their actual behavior and outcome was assessed by asking the participants to specify if they developed sudden temper tantrums, if they experienced excessive and/or lack of sleep, acting reckless, or even considered that there is no reason worth living.

Drug Abuse: This variable refers to the habitual process of taking or consuming illegal drugs, usually reaching the point of not being able to stop consumption, and going to extreme levels to attain the drugs. Participants were asked how unlikely to likely they were to use drugs to cope with the cyberbullying. Then they were asked directly if they would consider taking drugs as a means of coping if subjected to cyberbullying in which they had to choose yes or no.

Depression: Depression refers to mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. It affects how a person feels, thinks and behaves and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems (Mayo Clinic, 2018). Depression was measured using seven statements measured using a Likert-type scale from 1 = highly unlikely to 5 = highly likely. The

statements included "if developing depression from cyberbullying would you attend group therapy sessions," "consume alcohol," and "isolate myself from social media (α = .749, M = 2.08, SD = .918).

Media Use and Traits: Participants were asked questions related to their media usage especially the time spent on social media. In addition, questions related to the person's personality were asked to determine if he/she has a strong or weak personality, and whether they ever bullied others.

V.   Results and Discussion

RQ1: Severity of Cyberbullying Threat

In assessing the consequences of bullying, overall, 68.4% of the respondents who had filled out the survey reported yes to being aware of the consequences, while 31.6% had reported no. On the other hand, out of the 80.7% of the respondents who had been cyberbullied only 19.3% were not sure of the consequences. 21.5% of participants had specified depression as one of the consequences, and 34% said suicide. These numbers can be seen as alarming, showing that many people are aware and consider an extreme measure/consequence of cyberbullying as depression and suicide, which may highlight the true dangerous nature and outcome of this phenomenon. Some may possibly go for suicide directly, without seeking out some other means to handle and cope with being cyberbullied. Also, this should create a red alert of paying extra attention to any sign of cyberbullying and not take it lightly like a simple phase, a child's play routine of growing up, or a non-risky non alerting thing happening. Other consequences mentioned included mental health, resorting to alcohol consumption, self-doubt, and isolation.

According to Nixon (2014), being aware of the cyberbullying occurrence and more so the consequences (primary appraisal) of it relate to the theory in that it can to a large part aid in knowing what proper course of action needs to be taken and/or resources available (secondary

appraisal) to prevent it from escalating to more serious and extreme outcomes in the long run (such as suicide, depression, drug abuse etc.). this belief is in line with what was discussed in the literature review,

In addition, respondents have pinpointed (through open-ended responses) the negative consequences of cyberbullying (e.g., traumatization (2%) of which directly stated the word "trauma", anxiety(5.6%), feeling powerful and then feeling hateful (0.8% highlighting the severity of such a threat to be possible suicide or leading to suicide (22.8%) as stated by the respondents as "other consequences", addiction(1.2% said the word addiction), while 3.2% stated drug/substance abuse, and 0.8% said substance/drug consumption.. According to Gledenning et al., (2018) a negative association existed between cyberbullying victimization and self-harm or the presence of suicidal behaviors. This was also combined with mental health problems. This can relate back to the theoretical framework as the different emotional or functional effects of coping can become direct outcomes of the cyberbullying victimization, where one would commit suicide, take drugs, and isolate oneself as a means of coping with the anger or depression developed.

RQ2: Coping with Cyberbullying as a Stressor

72.5% of those who filled out the survey were highly unlikely to take anti-depressants to cope, also 54.1% were highly unlikely to isolate themselves from everyone. Moreover, 76.6% of the total respondents were highly unlikely to contemplate suicide, and 70.5% would not resort to consuming alcohol.

However, 41.0% were likely to follow recommendations of friends to deal with the problem, likewise, 31.1% would seek their parents for advice on coping. Similarly, 20.5% and 20.9% were likely and very likely to seek professional help such as a therapist. While most of the respondents would seek friends, family or therapist, 36.5% are very unlikely to call authorities, deactivate their social media accounts, forget what happened and/or seek revenge.

The table below shows likelihood to use one of the coping mechanisms for cyberbullying as a stressor:

Table 3: Likelihood of choosing coping mechanism for cyberbullying

Coping Mechanism:	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely
Anti-depressants	72.5	15.6	7.4	3.3	1.2
Isolate self	54.1	28.7	8.6	3.7	4.9
Suicide	76.6	11.9	5.3	3.3	2.9
Consume alcohol	70.5	10.2	11.5	6.6	1.2
Professional help(therapist)	17.2	13.5	27.9	20.5	20.9
Advice from friends	7.4	9.0	37.7	41.0	4.9
Advice from parents	13.1	16.0	23.4	31.1	16.4
Other mechanisms	36.5	8.2	34.4	7.8	13.1

Similar results were seen for only those who have been cyberbullied before (23.4% of the participants). For instance, 77.2% of the victims were highly unlikely to take anti-depressants to

cope, 54.4% were also highly unlikely to isolate themselves from everyone, 71.9% would not commit suicide, 68.4% would not resort to alcohol consumption, and 36.8% are very unlikely to resort to other coping mechanisms (e.g., deactivate accounts, taking revenge).

Moreover, only 12.3% (likely) and 15.8% (very likely) of the victimized respondents claimed to seek professional help such as a therapist, 29.8% and 14.0% would seek their parents' advice, but 45.6% and 5.3% were likely and very likely, respectively, to take recommendations from their friends. In both cases, the participants who have been cyberbullied are more likely to seek out a friend more than any other coping strategy.

The table below shows coping mechanism for cyberbullying by actual victims as a stressor.

Table 4: Likelihood of choosing coping mechanism for cyberbullying (for actually bullied)

Coping Mechanism:	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely
Anti-depressants	77.2	10.5	5.3	5.3	1.8
Isolate self	54.4	26.3	10.5	8.8	-
Suicide	71.9	5.3	14.0	3.5	5.3
Consume alcohol	68.4	8.8	15.8	5.3	1.8
Professional help(therapist)	26.3	12.3	33.3	12.3	15.8
Advice from friends	8.8	5.3	35.1	45.6	5.3

Advice from parents	21.1	14.0	21.1	29.8	14.0
Other mechanisms	36.8	3.5	40.4	7	12.3

Note: all numbers are shown in percentage for the total number of participants who have been cyberbullied.

Results above indicated that the majority of participants seek out friend's help followed by consulting parents to deal with the bullying, to help with the ongoing bullying situation. As noted by Navarro, Yubero, and Larrañaga (2018), victims from cyberbullying find difficulty in getting friends, however once found, their selective situations strengthen the role of friendship and its importance. What is meant is that when a cyberbully victim does trust someone and confide in them, the impact of that friendship will be much stronger, in terms of how quickly the victim would trust that person and consider him a "go-to" guy/girl for. Further, a study done by Cardoos and Hinshaw (2011) to assess what influence would the factor of friendship have on bullying showed that having friends around can help in decreasing the chances of suffering from bullying, even if it is a select few which have the strongest of impact (and give the victim temporary relief to a certain extent).

Moreover, according to the article by Pope (2008), a lot of cyberbully victims would not favor telling their parents, fearing losing access to the internet altogether, and fearing they may not understand and get more trouble than aid from their parents. As noted in the table above, a considerable number of respondents would be open to speaking out about being bullied to their parents. This can be explained first in that Lebanon is based on a collective society, which means that social units, especially the family unit, are a priority to the Lebanese people that belong to

them. Therefore, opening up about victimization to one's family members is more likely to occur in Lebanon compared to countries and cultures abroad that are individualistic.

A second explanation for this is that some parents would not always judge their kids for telling them that they had been called a bad word, body shamed, or humiliated by their peers for a word they said, a certain aspect of their appearance, or a certain habit they possess.

This can relate back to the theory as going about and telling someone can be an appraisal to deal with the stressor - the victimization. Also, it can be interpreted from the results that while a small portion of individuals would resort to alcohol, take anti-depressants, and possibly end their life through suicide, it is a segment that must not be overlooked

Furthermore, approximately 26% of participants would consider going to a therapist to solve the problem. This percentage shows that professional help is not the number one option considered to cope with cyberbullying victimization. This is in contrast with the literature review which emphasizes the role played by psychologists, counselors and social workers.

Johnson (2011), for instance, emphasizes the role a counselor plays in the case of cyberbullying. Emphasis was placed for both the perpetrator as well as the victim, with goals being placed to help the victim with the trauma received, as well as aiding the perpetrator to improve esteem, which would in turn probably diminish the likelihood of his/her bullying occurring any time soon.

In addition, as noted by Louie (n.d.) in the online MSW programs, dire importance should be placed on social workers as well. Through identifying and educating the students on cyberbullying, its impact, consequences, and most importantly encouraging the role of counselors to provide emotional support and being there for the victims so they can have their voices heard when they need to.

Furthermore, according to Paolini (2018), counselors can play an important role such as the school counselors in helping both the perpetrators as well as the victims of cyberbullying by taking a strength based approach, aiding them in acquiring soft skills as well social emotional learning, empowering the students, and assisting them ultimately in regaining control and setting realistic goals ahead of them to get them back on track.

Many Lebanese people would not be so open to talk to a professional (a therapist). One possible explanation is the stigma associated with seeing a therapist in Lebanon. Usually the thought that circulates about vising psychiatrists is that the person is "mentally unstable" or "crazy." One's pride is also another explanation which relates to the stigma; people are raised to handle such problems (e.g., "man up"). Thus, the reaction by peers may be more catastrophic than the bullying (and in itself is bullying) causing more harm than the initial state. This can largely explain where Lebanese people stand in term of perceiving therapists, psychiatrists, and most form of professional help for mental and psychological issues face. This then creates an opportunity to change the negative connotations associated with such professionals, positive images can be emphasized through different media platforms.

RQ3: Suicide or Drugs as Most Chosen Coping Mechanism

In assessing which of the two coping mechanisms (either committing suicide or taking drugs) is most likely to be chosen to cope with cyberbullying victimization, a comparison was done of the results of all the individuals who have filled out the survey.

As previously mentioned, 34% of respondents indicated that suicide is one of the severe consequences of cyberbullying and are aware of this dangerous outcome, however 6.2% would actually choose suicide as a coping mechanism in which they would partake in; 88.5% of the

respondents would not contemplate suicide, the rest were neutral. When asked if they would take drugs, 87.7% said no, while 12.3% said yes.

Hence, in comparing the two options from the statistical analysis for coping, more respondents chose taking drugs over contemplating suicide to cope with cyberbullying victimization; however, the 6.2% who would contemplate suicide is not a small number given the complexity of the action taken.

The table below shows the number of respondents who would use drugs and contemplate suicide as a coping mechanism.

Table 5: Suicide vs Drugs as a coping mechanism

Coping Mechanism/ Answer	Contemplate Suicide	Take drugs to cope
Yes	6.2%	12.3%
No	88.5%	87.7%
Neutral	5.3%	0.0%

In relation to the participants who have been cyberbullied, results similarly indicated that the vast majority of respondents (77.2%) would not think of suicide as an option, yet for 8.8% this is an option. Likewise, 71.9% would not take drugs, while 14.0% would. From the difference in percentages it shows higher numbers for victimized respondents choosing drugs than suicide. Again, though, 8.8% is an outcome that should be considered seriously.

Furthermore, the results show that although a very small number of respondents, (or at least not all stages of cyberbullying victimization) mentioned that victimization would lead to

immediate loss of hope, and potentially ending one's life, but that does not rule out its occurrence (with the 5.6% that said likely, and 12.0% who were neutral).

These results of the likelihood of considering no reason is worth living are mirrored in the below table.

Table 6: Likelihood of considering no reason is worth living

	Highly Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Highly Likely
Consider no reason is worth living (immediate loss of hope)	62.7%	16.3%	12.0%	5.6%	3.4%

According to Nixon (2014), involvement with cyberbullying victimization does in fact lead to an immediate loss of hope, which can then possibly lead to suicidal ideations.

This can relate to the theory in terms of an outcome being to commit suicide from loss of hope generated from being victimized. This highlights the importance of monitoring this serious issue, and the need for media to continuously show (e.g., through reports, shows, programs, campaigns) the real danger behind cyberbullying victimization.

Also, a grave finding in this study is the number of people 69.0% being highly unlikely and 15.9% unlikely, who do want to end their life from being cyberbullied but would not take the time to tell their peers and loved ones about their problem. Therefore; awareness has to be spread as to what are the leading suicide signs and what are steps that family, friends and/or colleagues can look for.

Knowing the signs can perhaps save lives. Some people would not go about to let others know about their desire to end their lives; This can be seen in the case of the 13 year old named

Megan Meier, who committed suicide without leaving a note (Dailymail, 2007) and the case of the female student who was subjected to cyberbullying at the hands of four students wrote a goodbye note thanking them for all the pain before committing suicide(Warren, 2014) This relates back to the theory where committing suicide can be seen as the outcome from developed harm and possible depression; i.e., the victim finds it the only way it to end the hurt. Taking drugs will be discussed further below.

RQ4: Outcomes Generated in Reaction to the Stressor of Cyberbullying

Many of the cyberbully victims have reacted adversely to the stressor of being cyberbullied for a lengthy period of time. This led to an outcome of the victims bullying others like they had been before. In broad terms, this simply means that for no reason, a victim of cyberbullying became a bully himself. But going into more specific details shows that different situations where bullying was inflicted on others by the victim shows varying reasons and/or motives.

4.4% of the total respondents claimed a reason for bullying others is to let out built up frustrations, 11% claimed it was a means of payback for being in the same situation before, 4.4% to cope with loneliness, 2.2% did it out of jealousy as they believed that actions from a distance can be less damaging from their part compared to a face to face confrontation would have done. In addition, 26.4% of the respondents claimed they cyberbullied as they thought it was funny, meant to be a joke. Finally, 51.6% of the respondents claimed they had other reasons that pushed them to bully others.

The numbers stated about reasons for cyberbullying others are presented in a table below:

Table 7: Reasons for cyberbullying others

	Let out built up frustrations	Means of payback	Cope with loneliness	Out of jealousy	Meant as a joke	Other reasons

Reasons for cyberbullying others	4.4%	11%	4.4%	2.2%	26.4%	51.6%

14.5% of respondents who were cyberbullied claimed that they were also perpetrators of cyberbullying; 85.5% have noted no to doing so. In terms of stating the rea sons behind their actions, 4.2% of the respondents claimed they cyberbullied to let out built up frustrations, 16.7% said as a mean of payback for being bullied in the same manner before, 8.3% out of jealousy, believing actions at a distance can be less damaging from their part than a face to face confrontation, 20.8% because its funny (meant as a form of a joke). Finally, 50% had other reasons for cyberbullying others. These reasons included taking revenge on someone, and doing it because they knew how it felt. This can show us that the danger of being cyberbullied can be in taking that subjected harm, and dishing it out on others in a similar manner. Thus, the pain of what one has gone through becomes "a tool to make others feel my pain." is more of a reason to educate people on why this is wrong, and should not be encouraged as a tool of "giving people a taste of your own medicine."

These results above are also presented in the two tables below. The first table portrays the percentage of cyberbullying victims who also became perpetrators of cyberbullying. The second table indicates the reasons for cyberbullying victims to become bullies. **Table 8: Victims who also have cyberbullied others**

	Yes	No
Victim who are also perpetrators of cyberbullying	14.5%	85.5%

Table 9: Reasons for victims cyberbullying others

	Let out built up frustrations	Meant as a form of a joke	Means of payback	Out of jealousy	Other reasons

Reasons for victims cyberbullying others	4.2	20.8%	16.7%	8.3%	50%

Results show that cyberbullying is initially done because it seems funny and not to potentially harm anyone or as a form of payback. This is an interesting result since cyberbullying, which is a serious offense, has been considered to a certain extent as a form of humor, something to be done when bored to pass the time.

Other respondents bullied people to suppress anger. In reference to the General Strain Theory, which was developed by Robert Agnew (1992) bullying, in this case, can be considered as means of coping with the anger or the subjected harm respondents deal with or face. The theory premises that subjects would react to various stressors via unhealthy coping mechanisms such as crime. Here crime does not mean exactly stealing. Rather, as stated by Agnew (2006): Crime may be a method for reducing or escaping from strains (e.g., stealing the money you desire, running away from abusive parents), seeking revenge against those who inflict strains or related targets (e.g., assaulting the peers who abuse you), or alleviating the negative emotions that result from strains (e.g., through illicit drug use) (p. 101-123).
Hence, bullying someone can be to suppress built up frustrations and anger.

However, respondents claiming that they would cyberbully others as a means of payback and/or it is entertaining sounds alarming. This perhaps indicates that it is acceptable (to a certain extent) because it is not as damaging as face to face bullying; the distance gives a sense of protection and veil of ignorance to the on-the-spot direct response and emotional reaction. According to Rao, Bansal, and Chandran (2018), cyberbullying is more anonymous and safer due it to being a distanced course of action, avoiding self-harm and getting their desired result, payback, or enjoyment.

RQ5: Victims of Cyberbullying Awareness of the Different Options and Coping Resources

In assessing to what extent are the respondents' aware of the different options and coping resources available to them within Lebanon, friends and family were the responses with the highest percentages. As seen in the survey, the role a friend is significant. Also, despite the hesitation (shown by the 14.9 % highly likelihood of going to their parents in the table of RQ2), to a large part family (here being parents) are also a known source for coping. As seen in the table in RQ2, 29.1% are likely to follow their parents' advice, and may consider them a go-to resource where they may not be the subject of more accusation, torment, or scolding when going up to tell them what happened.

Furthermore, despite the presence of a therapist and many knowing that this option is available, the mentality and nature of the Lebanese culture would push this as a last resort (as noted before the belief that going to a therapist/psychiatrist is when a person seems "crazy"). There is a need to change that mentality, and raise awareness of the importance behind going to a therapist. The reason for this is that the therapist may truly have the well-studied solutions to help the victim in getting through a potential life-threatening dilemma and/or damaging situation even if short-term or trauma based.

Also, people should be made aware of the presence of NGOs, which have not been given enough emphasis, importance. or attention on their role in aiding cyberbully victims, helping decrease suicide rates, or rehabilitating drug users. NGOs like *No Label*, which seeks to fight against cyberbullying in Lebanon. *No Label* strives to encourage activities such as awareness sessions (for both beginner and advanced), educator trainings where the teachers are engaged to learn how to maintain a nice and inclusive environment on the school campus and parent

meetups, where the parents will be empowered with knowledge in regards to specific subjects that can help in raising powerful and resilient children, and push them away from bullying in the process. Also, *No Label* encourages the start of a *No Label* student club program to create a sense of belonging within the school and enrich the ties between the students.

The NGO is not just a name in the record books, and it is always ready to answer any distress no matter how simple or "silly" it may seem by others. Drugs, alcohol, and ending lives are not the only known coping mechanisms, and there are much more available options at a victim's disposal before reaching that extreme level altogether.

More seminars in schools and universities should be held, more campaigns should be done online on social media platforms (especially with the importance of social media in the lives of almost everyone) and more encouragement should be done to let people know that there is someone there to hear them out.

H1a: Those who get depressed from cyberbullying tend to take drugs

In the above hypothesis, the two variables that are being tested are being depressed versus taking drugs. To answer this hypothesis only answers from the respondents who had been cyberbullied were computed. Chi-square test analysis showed a significant statistical association between those who were depressed versus those who were not depressed in taking drugs ($X^2 =$ value, $p < .05$). Out of those who had been cyberbullied, 37.5% claimed that they got depressed from their victimization. When asked if they would consider taking drugs to cope with cyberbullying, 10.5% reported yes to taking drugs and 17.5% reported no to taking drugs. While on the other hand, 62.5% claimed they did not get depressed from cyberbullying. **H1b: Participants who take drugs as a result of cyberbullying victimization are more likely to be depressed**.

In this case, we also have two variables. The first being taking drugs as a result of cyberbullying victimization, the second being developing depression (which is here the dependent variable, being influenced by the intake of drugs, and the categorical variable)

Of the 149 respondents who were asked if developing depression from cyberbullying would lead them to taking drugs to cope to with the built-up depression, 71.8% would not take drugs, 15.5% would; 12.8% were neutral. Of 244 respondents who were asked if subjected to cyberbullying victimization, would they consider taking drugs, 12.3% said yes, and 87.7% said no. An independent t-test was conducted and results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between those who took drugs (M =2.91, SD =1.006) and those who did not take drugs (M =2.08, SD =0.792) and depression build-up (t (7.983) = 2.040, p > .05). This might indicate that depression isn't always impacted by drug abuse.

H1a and b

These results of the above hypotheses relate to the studies conducted by Nixon (2014), Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Ybarra (2007). Nixon's (2014) revealed that victims of cyberbullying tend to show higher levels of depression and substance use. Similarly, Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Ybarra (2007) focused on the relationship between online as well as offline victimization, along with "depressive symptomatology, delinquency, as well as substance abuse" in which they found that almost all types of online and offline victimization were related to depressive symptomatology, delinquency behavior, and substance abuse. Hence, as seen with the results of this study and in accordance to previous studies, drugs and depression are associated. Both of these mechanisms have grave consequences to the person who experiences them and for that reason greater attention to this topic should be given.

The results are aligned with the components of the transactional model of stress and coping theory in a sense that when individuals are subjected to cyberbullying, they have a

possible outcome of developing depression, and thus they may take drugs to cope with it (e.g., outcome and the coping components).

Results generated indicate that while depression is not always an end result from cyberbullying victimization, yet its occurrence necessitates taking it into consideration when discussing cyberbullying and dealing with cyberbullying victims.

According to Wang, Nansel and Ianotti (2010), studies showed that school students (in this case being the 6th to 10th graders) have a higher chance of developing depression when subjected to cyberbullying victimization.

Furthermore, according to Delerme (2017), more than 30,000 suicide deaths occur in the United States each year. Delerme remarks that bullying leads to an increase in feelings of isolation, and hopelessness, both of which can be tied to depression and possible suicide.

suicide may be an outcome of cyberbullying, which could have escalated from feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, and isolation

Results generated also show in the case of coping with depression, people may not choose to remove the cause of that depression including, the deactivation of their social media accounts where bullying may be occurring, hence the problem may be perceived as small, but have a more damaging effect if not pushed to be dealt with. Choosing to ignore or avoid the problem, victims of cyberbullying may be leading themselves into a denial that would further compound the consequences of the problem. Selkie, Kota, Chan, and Moreno (2015), showed that there was an association between involvement in cyberbullying and depression or drinking problems. According to Hoge, Bickham, and Cantor (2017), the usage of social media does in fact link to depression and/or depressive symptoms. Also, social comparisons done on social media have led to increase in these depressive symptoms.

Adolescents who resort to social media to avoid anxiety and negative emotion; are not likely to deactivate their social media accounts if cyberbullied. Their reliance on social media platforms to communicate and interact, makes these platforms the source of both comfort and distress. Hence, they become both the solution and the problem. This would the abandonment of the platform difficult leading them to ignore the stressful situation caused on these platforms. Their appraisal strategies, then, involve denial of the problem as of the situation causing their distress did not happen. All of which can go back to the need to confront and solve the matter, and not just ignore it when subjected to such factors due to the high intensity and impact of the appraisals (e.g., taking drugs, isolating self) if executed. Granted, the majority of the participants are not likely to do partake in negative actions as those mentioned above if subjected to cyberbullying, however as stated some did claim that they would do so and that percentage even if small requires attention and need for effective solutions.

Furthermore, when dealing with depressed victims from cyberbullying, it is not always as easy to possibly go about and have them open up to others in a group session, such as an addict talk session; this perhaps is also indicated in the results with the majority favoring discussions with friends as opposed to family or professionals (where group therapy can occur).

As noted by an article from the Addiction Resource titled "Substance Abuse and Bullying: Interconnection and Consequences (n.d.), those who have been bullied at school have a larger likelihood of abusing drugs as well as alcohol. A second study also noted in the same article from Addiction Resource carried out by Ohio State University showed that a percentage of middle school bullies (11.4%) had used cannabis (marijuana). As the results indicated, participants are slightly more likely to take drugs than to contemplate suicide, yet the possibility is present.

Also, while a small possible few may consume alcohol or resort to taking drugs (As seen in the Hypothesis H1a and H1b), that small possibility should not be taken lightly, as it could

become a potentially dangerous and much larger possibility in future if the problem was not attended to. Even if a small portion of victims do take drugs or alcohol to cope with depression, it should not be underestimated, meaning a solution to the bullying, someone to hear the victim out, and monitoring them if awkward signs show up should be part of action plans. Especially the signs to watch out for as parents and/or friends should be publicized and well known because participants are likely to go to friends and parents as part of their appraisals for coping as well as coping.

H2: Males who have been victims of cyberbullying are more likely to take drugs as a coping mechanism than females.

Of the respondents who had admitted to being victims of cyberbullying, 42.1% were males, and 57.9% were females. Of the 42.1% males, approximately 5.3% said yes to taking drugs as means of coping if subjected to cyberbullying, and 36.8% said they won't take drugs. Of the 57.9% females, 8.8% said yes to taking drugs as means of coping if subjected to cyberbullying victimization and 49.1% said no to taking drugs. Overall, 14% of the victimized participants would take drugs as a means of coping with cyberbullying. An independent t-test indicated that there wasn't a significant statistical difference between the two groups, therefore the hypothesis was rejected.

Table 10: Gender of Cyberbully Victims

	Males	Females
Gender of cyberbully victims	42.1%	57.9

Table 11:Taking Drugs as a Coping Mechanism

	Yes, I would take drugs as a means of coping.	No, I would not take drugs as a means of coping.
Males	5.3%	36.8%
Females	8.8%	49.1%

It was hypothesized that males are more likely than females to partake in drugs. As noted in the article titled "The National Report on Drugs Situation in Lebanon," in 2005 male students (5.6%) were in fact significantly more than that of the female students (1.5%) in terms of reporting drug use. While in 2011 male students (6.3%) were more likely to use marijuana compared to female students (1%). This can further show how; some actions more or less are in fact accepted for males compared to females.

However, it was not the case in reference to the subject studied. a study done by Luk, Wang, and Simons-Morton (2010) showed that victimization is indeed associated with substance abuse in both males and females; more or less equally, a finding mirrored in this study as well. According to Scheff (2014), many of the victims of cyberbullying do in fact develop symptoms of depression, which would lead to the tendency of substance abuse to deal with the resulting damage inflicted on them compared to those who have not been victimized. As seen in the results of this study, males and females who have been victims of cyberbullying similarly in numbers resort to drugs as a coping mechanism. This way of coping with the stressor becomes a dangerous outcome; one which requires intervention. Taking drugs for cyberbullying victimization is not favorable as it does not deal with the problem and may lead to undesirable consequences. The small percentage portion that would consider taking drugs should not be overlooked or ignored given that their percentage is somewhat considerable 12.3%.

VI.   Limitations

There are several limitations to this thesis. First of all, the length of the survey for many was an issue, as it took time to fill out. Another issue occurred for answering options related to the question of which online social media platform the respondents preferred. When a respondent was asked to rank the most used social media platform from 1 to 5, due to the Google

Forms setting, respondents were unable to rank two of the platforms (for example WhatsApp and Instagram both as 1), This posed a problem for all the respondents when filling out the survey. Also, not being able to pick "none" as the social media platform used was an issue for some of the respondents, as there were some who do not use any social media platform, or do not use one particular social media platform such as Snapchat for example. Thus, for the aforementioned reasons, specific social media platform usage was not noted in the study, however the majority of the respondents indicated that they use at least two or more of the social media platforms listed on the survey (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Twitter).

Regardless of which social media platform used there always exists a possibility of being cyberbullied. Be it through a message sent to you, a comment made on a picture or body text you shared or posted, a direct attack through a group chat or blog, or even as simple as a comment placed on a happy birthday you posted on a friends account. In every social media platform, which is connecting you to the world, a possibility exists to be subjected to cyberbullying victimization.

This is why equal importance should be given to every single platform as well as attention placed on monitoring each, considering the negative aspects on each equally, and if different respondents have different preferences (such as WhatsApp and Facebook over the others for example).

A third limitation was that a large number of people in the study claimed that they were not cyberbullied, or were not aware if they had been cyberbullied. Hence, many did not agree to partake in filling out the survey or just wrote they hadn't been cyberbullied and stopped there.

Fourth, the use of an online electronic survey itself to gather the data can be a limitation. This is considered to a certain extent a limitation as it is not possible to monitor the behavior of

the respondent, or to fully ensure that the survey was filled out as needed - the absence of the researcher to clarify information. Although, questions were straightforward.

Fifth, there is scarce information about the subject in Lebanon, hence the limitation in the amount of previous studies done on cyberbullying in Lebanon. Despite the presence of an NGO, more academic studies need be done on this topic and its impact on the Lebanese youth. Such studies can also act as awareness for educators, the government, and organizations.

Lastly, this study did not focus on physical health issues associated to and/or caused by the stressors of cyberbullying. The impact of cyberbullying impacts the physical health of the victims and is as important as the mental factors discussed. The stress and potential heart diseases, headaches, muscle pain, sudden and inappropriate weight gain or loss all present visible threats to the victim, all of which can lead to contemplating suicide, situation depression, and substance abuse (making the association seem like a chain reaction). Thus, future studies should be done on this in equal importance to the mental health impacted by cyberbullying victimization.

VII.   Conclusion and Further Suggestions

Respondents are largely aware of cyberbullying occurring and its constant likelihood; however, the majority of respondents have reported that they have not been victims of cyberbullying. Those who have been victims of cyberbullying form a considerable number. Their experiences should be better examined and understood to help future victims. The survey conducted for this thesis showed that not all respondents were sure of whether or not they were being bullied. At times, even when respondents were aware of the bullying, they either ignored it

or hid it.

Furthermore, the results showed that bullying is an action that is not related to age as a factor, and does not limit itself from occurring to anyone. Also, results showed that it does not happen just one time, but can occur multiple times and could possibly have a larger damage with continuous occurrence. This emphasizes the need to understand how severe of a threat cyberbullying really is to people (e.g., emotional distress) and to know the resources (e.g., therapists) available for getting the appropriate help. Respondents mentioned that were, not likely to go to authorities when cyberbullied; this indicates a need to create awareness campaigns that show how, where and to whom (NGOs ex *No Label*) cyberbullying can be reported Aside, from cyberbullying NGOs, a suicide prevention hotline (e.g., 1564) is also active in Lebanon 24/7 for those who contemplate the thought.

Subjected to Cyberbullying and Actions

Results generated showed that respondents did not deny/ignore cyberbullying when they were exposed to it. Also, reporting what has happened to someone seemed to be a more reliable course of action for many. Yet a small percentage of participants who may not report or get help indicates that this issue needs to be communicated more effectively so that anyone who gets bullied can feel comfortable seeking help rather than feel helpless or shamed by the action. According to Pappas (2010), many of the students at schools who have been subjected to cyberbullying have chosen to stay silent as the belief is that speaking out would not help. This coincides with the theory of stress and coping in the sense that the victim appraises speaking out and sees that no resources are present to help in this situation, aside from the help of parents and friends. In other words, respondents wouldn't speak or reach out for professional help. Hence why the respondents were only 28.1% likely to speak with a professional and the rest 38.6% unlikely, and 33.3%. neutral which perhaps indicates a sort of hesitation to do so.

Add to that, as seen by the testimonies according to Pace Center Against Bullying in their article titled "Reason's Teens Don't Tell" (n.d.), people would avoid telling what happened for fear of being punished, for the issue being too personal to discuss, fearing the peer pressure of being a snitch, avoiding a greater disaster from subjecting the bully to trouble, developing preconceived thoughts of not being understood or listened to. Relating this back to the theory of stress and coping, isolation and closing out from everyone is one of the appraisals that turns into an outcome – one of silence and greater build-up of hurt.

Results generated also indicated that those who may have been tormented and cyberbullied on social media (24.6%) would not find this situation as a reason to distance themselves from social media platforms, even at the expense of continued torment and bullying being handed out to them.

As noted in the article by get cybersafe titled "Dealing with Cyberbullying by Shutting the Computer? Not a Solution" (2014), a large part of the students had made the social media and their computer a major part of their lives since they use computer and devices for communication, studies, trend seeking/setting, playing games, or entertaining themselves as well. Hence, they would not consider it as enough of a motive to get away from the computer and just log off. This can be related to the theory as the appraisal here is to ignore like nothing happened and just continue, and not see it a as a motive to step away from the device or deactivating their social media accounts.

Furthermore, to many the possibly typical actions of being bullied (such as having rumors posted, their account being accessed without them knowing etc.) have not happened to them as much and as often. But that does not mean that it cannot happen to them or others around them. Hence, it should not be overlooked (the minority who have stated sometimes, rarely, or always) nor should that be taken lightly. It is necessary to raise awareness about cyberbullying, how to deal with a bully, and how to act fast before the situation gets out of hand and escalates

According to Antoniadou and Kokkinos (2013), while most studies conducted have in fact shown that cyberbullying is becoming common, but little information is in fact provided about its occurrence. Thus, this can relate to how few people have not reported cyberbullying, presenting a possibility of them not actually knowing that cyberbullying has occurred to them and more details are required about this phenomenon.

Behavior

Results showed the possibility of getting triggered from undeserving situations and childish arguments, from worked up stress resulting from cyberbullying victimization. The percentages for those who got triggered from undeserving situations and childish arguments are in the table as follows:

Table 12:Likelihood of developing temper tantrums over simplest of arguments

	Highly Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Highly Likely
Develop sudden temper tantrums over the simplest of arguments	31.9%	21.6%	22.8%	19.4%	4.3%

According to the digital literacy article titled "Cyberbullying" (2013), which stressed on how tests conducted showed that a large percentage (being here that 41% of social media using teens) had experienced a negative outcome (being here face to face arguments with friends or parents, as well as fights with classmates and trouble at school) resulting from interaction done on a social networking site. This can be in line with the results presented, showing the severity of cyberbullying. This can also be in line and relates to the theoretical framework, as this can be an outcome resulting from cyberbullying and the interaction done on a social networking site

respectively. Also, there exists a potential of lack of sleep or excessive sleep from possible over thinking. "Sleeping it off" to get a better perspective on things, or as stated excessive overthinking preventing your sleep to find out how to solve the problem. According to the article by digital literacy titled "Cyberbullying" (2013), signs of potential online bullying do in fact include a dose of excess or lack of sleep per the person being bullied. This can justify further why this potential exists per the respondents. This lack of sleep caused by the cyberbullying victimization and over thinking may lead to different states of depression.

A possibility of depression may exist (leading to potentially taking anti-depressants) from cyberbullying victimization, while a majority would rather avoid medicinal solutions, but the presence of even a small percentage of those who would take anti-depressants, or sleeping pills (hinting at the lack of sleep being a possible outcome from cyberbullying itself) would stress on the need to shed further light on this matter in particular, especially that some people might not take prescription drugs as instructed, which could lead to bigger problems emotionally and socially.

As noted in the article by Shope (2016) from the Anthony Louis Center, cyberbullying victimization leads to the victims showing traits of emotional distress, inability to fully concentrate, interruption of sleep, fear for one's own safety, and misunderstanding for one's social behavior. All of these which would lead to the victim possibly resorting to substance abuse can show how in fact this issue should not be taken lightly or ignored (despite the result generated by my study showing a small portion only resorting or considering going for it

Furthermore, according to Keenan and Cohen (2017), cyberbullying's impact does lead to higher rates of depression and anxiety, reduced feeling of self-worth, difficulty in sleeping as well. It is connected to substance abuse in a sense that a connection is in fact found between age, cyberbullying, and substance abuse: Being a victim to cyberbullying at a younger age can lead to

possible substance abuse in the later years of one's life. In addition, the analysis presented is further supported through an article posted by the Amethyst Recovery Center, in which victims of bullying are much more likely to abuse different types of substances than those who haven't been bullied. This also relates back to the theory in a sense that distress and all other symptoms mentioned above, which can be considered as appraisals leading to coping using substances.

Coping

As noted in the *Science Daily News* (2018), research showed that children and young people who are under the age of 25 are twice as likely to inflict self-harm on themselves, and possible have suicidal tendencies. This is in line with the analysis which shows that even if it's a portion, it should in fact be taken as serious as any large group of individuals. This may turn into a large group in the long run as well.

This idea is supported even further as according to Hinduja and Patchin (2010), a study conducted showed the stronger connection/link between cyberbullying victims and/or offenders and developing ideas related to suicidal ideations compared to those who have not been cyberbullied respectively.

Also, according to Kehr (n.d.), there are emotionally devastating consequences associated with cyberbullying victimization, which would include developing possible suicidal ideations as a result. These studies can all relate to how immensely dangerous anything related to cyberbullying can be, and the possible damage caused by it is not limited and should not be taken lightly at all. This can be connected to the theory as it presents different outcomes from being cyberbullied the worst being committing suicide at one point, as well as developing depression from it in the long run.

As a conclusion, the issue of cyberbullying victimization is in fact a rapidly growing and expanding problem. With all the studies done on cyberbullying on the different aspects and influences that cyberbullying has on depression, mental health, suicide and substance abuse, this study sheds light on the importance of the relation between cyberbullying and taking drugs to cope with depression. This all draws more attention to the true danger of depression first and the ongoing danger of substance abuse, impacting all ages and either gender regardless. The fact that on a local level, insufficient studies were done on this matter (my topic in particular), this should be a wakeup call to go about and give this more attention, conduct more studies and educate everyone of cyberbullying and taking drugs to cope with depression much greatly.

More seminars should be done on raising awareness for these two matters. Everyone should be educated on cyberbullying from the very start. The simplest of signs (such as oversleep/lack of sleep, isolation etc.) should be a warning just to pay more attention, as well as a nudge to the people having these symptoms and those surrounding them almost daily (the parents, siblings, close friends) to communicate with them more. Adding to that, more workshops should be help so people can begin to realize if they are being bullied how to act, if they begin having symptoms of depression who to go to, and why it is okay as well as important to open up to a counselor, sibling, or parent regarding this matter.

On top of that, it is a must to raise awareness on the presence of an NGO in Lebanon that deals with cyberbullying within schools, universities, and households as well. This can aid in getting more effective studies done on a local sense as well as an international sense. By contacting *No Label,* and holding different gatherings at every university in Lebanon as well as in every school across the country (both private and public schools), and having workshops with the students, all this effort can start pushing people to make a difference. Also, by referencing

this entire study on cyberbullying and how it is the first in Lebanon, it can possibly push others to be inspired to do more studies on this for projects, research papers and even thesis publications in the future. Hence, this paper can be the first step to advocate for awareness in schools on the danger of cyberbullying as well as drugs, raise them to the top of the priority list in the country, and potentially begin the shift for deleting this phenomenon or at least controlling it.

Also, as noted in the literature review, it is a must to consider all age groups as prone to cyberbullying. With the advances in technology in the new generations where anyone can have a cellphone, work on a laptop, and be connected through WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. Thus, as previously mentioned, this group (pre-teens) may be more prone to the serious risks, as they may not get a joke as such, may get a teasing comment as direct form of attack, and thus may be influenced by it in a quick and largely damaging way as a result. The young vulnerable individuals should be monitored early on, and be encouraged to open up when faced with either simple or complicated issues. Cyberbullying can be viewed as an enemy to many, however one that can be prevented and at the very least its consequences minimized through proper media awareness initiatives, primary education, and prioritized by the Ministry of Public Health and Education. With that being said and all the data presented above, time for change is now and is a must.

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Young victims of cyberbullying twice as likely to attempt suicide and self-harm, study finds.

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https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/04/180419130923.htm **Appendix:**

Questionnaire

This study is about cyberbullying and its impact on people. Your participation is valuable in order to understand this issue in Lebanon. Your participation is voluntary and you will remain anonymous through the study. Your responses will be confidential and strictly used for academic purposes. Thank you in advance for your time!

Pressing next indicates that you voluntarily consent to filling out this survey.

1. Gender
    a. Male
    b. Female

2. Age: _____

3. How many hours do you spend using the internet each day?
    a. Less than one hour

     b. One hour
     c. Two hours
     d. Three hours
     e. More than four hours
     f. Other: _____

4. how much time do you spent using social media platforms?
   a. Less than one hour
   b. One hour
   c. Two hours
   d. Three hours
   e. More than four hours
   f. I don't use social media

5. Which social ____ media platforms do you use the most? (rank in order of most to least used)   a. ☐ Facebook
   b. Twitter
   c. Instagram
   d. Snapchat
   e. WhatsApp Messenger ☐
   f. Other (specify) _____ ☐

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6. On a scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree rate the below statements.
   I lack personal courage
   I lack will power
   I tend to go along with other people's choices
   I am active in making choices on my own
   I stand up tall for who I am

7. Which of the following would describe you?
   o Confrontational
   o Non-Confrontational

8. When faced with a difficult situation, what is the most likely action you would take? o Conform o Retreat o Surrender o Accept o Innovate

9. How would you understand Cyber Bullying (Check all that apply) o When someone gets bullied online

   o Sending threatening messages to someone online

o   Spreading false rumors about someone online

o   Using someone's phone to get them into trouble intentionally

o   When someone pretends to be another person online

o   All of the above

o   None of the above

10. What else do you think is cyberbullying? (Kindly specify)

[ ]

11. How often do you think Cyberbullying happens?
     o   It happens all the time o It happens sometimes
     o   It hardly ever happens

12. Have you ever been cyberbullied? (if your answer is no, or not sure, skip questions 8 and 9)
     a.   Yes
     b.   No
     c.   Not sure

If yes, describe your experience:

[ ]

13. At what age do you recall being cyber bullied? _____

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14. Indicate below what actions would you do if subjected to cyber bullying

If subjected to cyberbullying, I am most likely to	Highly Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Highly Likely
1	Report this issue to someone					
2	Ignore this occurrence and act like it never happened each time it does					
3	Isolate myself from any social media platform to avoid further torment					
4	Other (specify)					

15. What would make you to choose one of the actions stated above more likely than the other?
    a. I feel more comfortable with this action compared to others
    b. This method is more effective to deal with the built-up depression
    c. Other (specify): _____

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16. Have you ever had an embarrassing picture of you shared via email or posted on a website by someone without your approval?
    a. Never
    b. Rarely
    c. Sometimes
    d. Very Often
    e. Always

17. Has anyone ever posted false rumors about you online without you actually knowing? a. Never
    b. Rarely
    c. Sometimes
    d. Very Often
    e. Always

18. Has anyone ever accessed your account using your credentials without your knowledge

(if your answer is "never" skip question 15)
    a. Never
    b. Rarely
    c. Sometimes
    d. Very Often
    e. Always

19. If it has been done, did they post anything through your account on your behalf? a. Yes
    b. No

20. Rate the below statements from highly unlikely to highly likely you are do one of the following actions in regards to "If subjected to cyberbullying, I am likely to...."

If subjected to cyberbullying, I am most likely to	1. Highly Unlikely	2. Unlikely	3. Neutral	4 Likely	5. Highly Likely
A	Take anti-depressants to cope					
B	Isolate myself from everyone					
C	Follow recommendations of my friends to deal with the problem					
D	Seek my parents for advice on how to cope with the issue					
E	Contemplate suicide					
F	Resort to alcohol consumption					
G	Seek professional help (therapist)					
H	Other (Specify)					

21. What makes you choose one course of action from the listed above over the other?
    a. This action is more helpful than the rest to resort my issue

b. This action is the easiest to take compared to the other courses of action
c. Other: _____

22. Rate the below statements from highly unlikely to highly likely you are do one of the following actions in regards to "If subjected to cyberbullying, I am likely to...."

If subjected to cyberbullying, I am likely to	Highly Unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Highly Likely
1	Develop sudden temper tantrums over the simplest of arguments					
2	Going through excessive					
	Having lack of sleep					
3	Act in a reckless manner					
4	Consider that no reason is worth living					
5	Visit or call people to say goodbye????					

23. Place an {X} next to the appropriate item in each column, ranging from highly unlikely (1) to highly likely (5) in your opinion regarding the likelihood of you taking a medication to deal with cyberbullying

To deal with cyberbullying, I am likely to take a medication that is:	1 Highly Unlikely	2 Unlikely	3 Neutral	4 Likely	5 Highly Likely
A	Recommended by a friend					
B	Prescribed by a medical professional					
C	Encouraged by your parents					

D	Seen in a commercial or some news medium					
E	I would not take a medication					

24. If you would take a medication, what kind of medication would it be?
    a. Anti-Depressant
    b. Sleeping Pills
    c. Other: _____

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25. Would you consider taking drugs as a means of coping if subjected to cyberbullying? a. Yes
    b. No

26. Did you develop depression as a result of being subjected to cyberbullying? (if no skip question 23)
    a. Yes
    b. No

27. Rate the below statements from highly unlikely to highly likely you are do one of the following actions in regards to "If developing depression from cyberbullying, I am likely to...."

If developing depression from cyberbullying,	1 Highly Unlikely	2 Unlikely	3 Neutral	4 Likely	5 Highly Likely
1	Attend a group therapy session					
2	Isolate myself from a social media perspective separate these two Deactivate all social media accounts)					
3	Take drugs as a means of coping with built up depression					

4	Consume alcohol					
5	Overeat in an attempt to cope with built-in depression					
6	Other (please specify): _____					

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28. Have you ever cyber bullied anyone? (if no skip question 26)
     a. Yes
     b. No

29. If yes, why have you engaged in cyberbullying?
     a. To let out built up frustrations
     b. As a mean of payback for being bullied in the same manner before.
     c. To cope with loneliness
     d. Out of jealousy Believing actions at a distance can be less damaging from my part than a face to face confrontation
     e. Because it is funny (a form of a joke)
     f. Other: _____

30. Would you consider drug abuse to be a contributing factor to committing cyberbullying on others?
     a. Yes
     b. No

31. Are you aware of the consequences that result from cyberbullying others? (if no stop here)
     a. Yes
     b. No

32. If yes, what are the consequences:

     _____