

The Online Predator:

Cyberbullies as the Hunters of the Online World

Abstract: Seeking out prey, laying traps, targeting the ‘weak’, and being proud of their ‘latest kill’ are some of the behaviours that are often associated with hunters. However, through this research, it can be argued there is a new type of *predator* that society, mainly youth, ought to consider – the cyberbully. Cyberbullies are a distinct subculture associated with the youth phenomenon of cyberbullying. Through this research, cyberbullying is constructed as a deviant youth internet phenomenon that emerges and affects youth as a result of increased usage and reliance on social media platforms, technology, and the Internet. As a result of a qualitative popular film analysis, using the tools of textual and thematic analysis, various metaphors are constructed that allow a reconceptualising of the term ‘cyberbully’ in order to better understand the behaviours, activities, and characteristics of such youth who fall into this subculture. As a result, it is argued that cyberbullies are the hunters of the online world, as they use a set of specific tactics to target their victims online. This research explores a new way to construct an understanding of those classified as cyberbullies and explores the characteristics they exude to lead to a better understanding of how to conceptualize cyberbullies and their behaviours, which can, in turn, lead to more effective policies and approaches to addressing cyberbullying behaviour.

Keywords: cyberbullying, youth culture, deviancy, cyberbullies, social media, online predator