

# Coping Strategies for Cyberbullying by Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya

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## Abstract

*Use of social media has a significant influence on the behaviors of teenagers. Although nations around the world are aware of what occurs on websites like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and others, there has been evidence of cyberbullying on these platforms. This study was conducted among the teenagers attending secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya, to investigate the coping strategies used by adolescents in dealing with the effects of cyberbullying. The research used Ex –Post- Facto design. All of the adolescents in selected secondary schools between the ages of 13 and 18 made up the study population. The study used stratified random sampling techniques to select the sample of 318 adolescents. The study also used purposive sampling to select 5 School Principals and 5 Teacher-Counselors. Data was collected using a modified Cyberbullying Coping Questionnaire. Interview schedules were used to gather information from the Teacher-Counselors and School Principals on the quality of cyberbullying coping strategies. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 25 and presented using frequency tables and percentages. The results revealed that the coping mechanisms for cyberbullying involved team efforts from parents, teachers, and students. The study found that 58(18.2%) and 81(25.5%) would seek professional advice or report the matter to their parents, teachers or school principals. Additionally, the study found that there was age difference with those who blocked, deleted or informed the bully to stop his bullying behaviors. The study recommends that School Principals and parents should create a safe and healthy environment in both home and school. Further, the study recommends that schools to put in place surveillance strategies to support students who experience cyberbullying and to develop programmes to enhance psychological adjustment.*

**Keywords:** Cyber bullying, Coping Strategies, Cyber Bullies, Victims and Intervention.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Adolescent social interaction has evolved on a global scale. Many adolescents now, because of the development of the modern information technology are utilizing their mobile phones and laptops to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas in the comfort of their homes. However, the environments such as blog, twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and other social networking sites have now become platforms for cyberbullying. As a result, such bullying turns out to be an issue of concern particularly among the academia, parents, and teachers about the psychological health of teenagers. Hindujah and Patchin (2014) observed that the adolescents might use technology to harass, threaten, humiliate and or hassle their peers by using their phones and tablets to create web pages, videos and posting them in media platforms. Consequently, cyberbullying can have many detrimental repercussions including decreased academic performance, poor social skills, reduced self-worth, isolation, loneliness, depression, anxiety, truancy and suicide (Paolini, 2018). In Kenya Mathew, Kagwe and Tucholski (2019) found that 14% of the adolescents were cyber bullies while 23% were victims of cyber bullying. This research therefore, provides highlight on the coping strategies used by the adolescents in secondary schools to prevent and minimize cyberbullying.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the coping strategies used by adolescents to prevent and minimize cyberbullying in secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Cyber bullying Copying Strategies used by Adolescents in Secondary Schools**

In this study, coping strategies refers to specific plans or efforts both behavioral and psychological that the adolescents (victims) employ to tolerate, reduce or minimize cyberbullying. cyberbullying is not an issue to be tolerated as it terrifies, upsets, and bewilders those involved in it particularly adolescents. Most of them are frequently unaware of the motive behind their attack and do not know how to deal with it. However, preventing cyberbullying is a process that requires collective measures involving teachers, students and parents. To minimize or eradicate cyberbullying, these groups must work together. According to Cowie (2019), reporting bullying to someone is essential and the first step in finding a solution.

This indicates that the adolescents should not keep quiet if they are cyberbullied instead, they should tell someone about cyberbullying behaviors rather than suffering in silence. Del-Rey, Ortega-Ruiz & Casas (2019) observed that involvement in cyberbullying as a cyber-victim, cyber aggressor or cyber bully victim usually increase without intervention and diminish with intervention particularly of teachers and parents. This means that adolescents should be encouraged to report once they witness or are cyberbullied.

However, Jacobs, Vollink, Dehue and Lechner (2014); adolescents' coping mechanisms for cyberbullying are determined by their positive attitudes, knowledge of how to report it, awareness of it, strong social skills, mental health, level of supervision and positive social impact, and empathy. Nevertheless, Li (2010) conducted a research among five Canadian schools which established that, 39.4% of the victims kept it a secret and 42.5% took no action. This might have occurred because they did not think much of it or they believed that

little would actually change. In relation to gender and age Sittichai and Smith (2018) in Thailand attempted to analyze the cyberbullying coping strategies used by the adolescents aged 12 to 18.

The study demonstrated that, more girls (73.3%) than boys (56.5%) would block the bully messages or their identities. Inversely, more boys (31.3%) than girls (26.3%) would ask the bully to stop his bullying behaviors. This could indicate that the boys were more assertive than the girls and hence they had the power to command the bully to stop the bullying behavior. In relation to age, the study found that the older adolescents were willing to report their cyberbullying to someone (34.9%) either a parent or a teacher, 60.7% of the young and 73.5% of the older adolescents blocked the bully messages and identities. Conversely, the young opted to ask the bully to stop the bully perpetrating cyberbullying (29.1%) while ignore the bully (41.3%).

Additionally, Armstrong, Dubow and Domoff (2019) used years 11 – 15 to establish the coping strategies used by the adolescents in United States. The study found that problem solving, distractions, distancing, social support from family, adults and friends were the commonly used coping strategies. Specifically adolescents could ask for support from their friends, family members and teachers and others could keep off the problem by exercising. In relation to gender, the study found that females were more to distancing, distractions and problem solving than the male gender. This implied that the females preferred solution based strategies to confrontation.

Besides, Dennehy, Meaney, Cronin, and Arensman (2020) advised that interventions should focus on young people's emotional competence, mental health, and literacy as well as their ability to empower their support systems, such as their parents, peers, and teachers, to create an environment that encourages help-seeking. However, Kwan and Skonic (2013) suggested that, parents and teachers should coordinate their efforts to improve supervision by sharing information about their observations at home and at school. This would help them to understand that cyber bullying is harmful and unacceptable (Notar, Padgett, Roden, 2013) and thus they should adopt positive attitude towards victimization to enable them to move on with life instead of feeling disappointed.

A study by Frisen, Hasselblad and Holmqviist (2012) acknowledged that intervention of school personnel is one of the most frequent answers to minimizing cyberbullying. Therefore, policies that would help the school personnel in dealing with cyberbullying are necessary. In Africa, Chetty and Basson (2006) conducted a research on internet usage and exposure of pornographic materials to students in South Africa. The survey report showed that, educators needed to educate the children on dangers of internet use and safety, access parents through meetings and educate them on the knowledge of computers to control their children's internet use.

Further, the same study found that, the school might establish curricular activities to instill anti bullying attitude among the learners. Besides, Hills (2017) retaliated that some parents are not willing to help with the issue of cyber bullying because they spend too much time on their phones rather than spending time with their children, which makes it difficult for adolescents to feel comfortable approaching them and telling them they are being cyberbullied. Though Cilliers (2021) demonstrated that cyberbullying had not yet addressed within the various courses that the student had registered, 87.4% of participants had advocated raising students' knowledge of the need to lessen the severity of their behavior.

Scholtz, Turha and Johnston (2015) in addressing the issues of gender asserted that more males than females used different strategies to minimize cyberbullying. The study specified that 76% of the males compared to females (24%) blocked the cyberbully, 83% male gender unlike 17% of females changed the contact setting, and 69% of the males compared to females (31%) deleted the messages while more male (75%) than female (25%) stopped going online. This indicated that a higher percentage of the males used coping strategies more than did the females. In Nigeria, Olonode (2022) noted that a large number of internet users engage in cyberbullying without understanding the implications of their behavior.

However, Olanami, Agbaje and Adeyemi (2020) recommended for a preventive approach through the parents and the teachers in which they are to educate the students particularly the adolescents on the usage of internet. The study similarly endorsed for the removal of the computer privileges from the students and advised that both the bullies and the victims should seek counseling for their psychological healing. In adding, Okoiye et al. (2015) observed in Olonode (2022) that parents should teach the adolescents the importance of acquiring good qualities, discipline, and exercising good self-control. Additionally, the parents should keep an eye on their kids' online activity by listening on their conversations.

Along with providing children with guidance, they ought to teach the kids how to behave well in social interactions. On the other hand, schools should instill morality in their students since doing so will help them develop strong morals and capacity to interact well with others in the society. In Tanzania, Mwereke (2015) on a study on bullying behaviors, helping behaviors on academic performance of the pupils with disability established that parents and community should respond to the bullying of the pupils with disabilities. The study revealed that 96.06% accepted that there is need for schools with physically challenged pupils to have policies that protect the children. Nevertheless, the study negated that teachers have adequate training about bullying and how they respond to it.

Counseling services must also be put in place with regard to effects of bullying in order to improve the pupils' academic performance. In Kenya, Okoth (2014) did a study using descriptive survey design. The results showed that strengthening religious institutions to instill useful values and teacher-parent partnership were crucial in eradicating bullying behaviors in schools. Besides, Kamau (2016) on legal and regulatory framework governing cyber bullying and harassment in Kenya demonstrated that Kenya's legal framework lacks a specific legislation to combat cyber bullying and online harassment. However, he recommended both the children and the parents be given education as a measure to minimize cyberbullying. Nevertheless, Makori and Agufana (2020) in their research in higher in higher learning institutions particularly the public universities in Kenya highlighted that cyberbullying should be made illegal. The study noted that 73% of the participants recommended the schools to teach the parents on cyberbullying and how to help their children. Further, they should hold conferences to help or sensitize the young people on cyberbullying, and the police to investigate about cyberbullying.

The study also reported that, the young people should be encouraged to report and the schools to provide guidance and counseling to the cyberbullying victims while the institutions were urged to discourage free internet access to campus students. Further, Muli (2022) on bullying measures observed that, open communication is important in dealing with bullying. The study found that, there should be clear enforceable

rules, teachers to receive training on how to deal with bullying situations, involve the parent of the bully, teachers are encouraged to work on the students' resilience and lastly the students should get professional help. Despite these research, studies, more research on coping strategies used to minimize cyberbullying in schools need to be explored thus the current research was conducted to fill this gap.

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study used Survey and *Ex -Post -Facto* designs. The survey design was found appropriate because it enabled the researchers to describe the coping strategies used by adolescents to deal with cyberbullying in detail whereas *Ex- Post- Facto* design was used to model the study because cyberbullying manifestations had already occurred and it could not be controlled. Hence, to ascertain the countermeasures, a retrospective analysis of cyberbullying was carried out.

#### **3.2 Study Population**

The population of the study consisted of all (5200) secondary school students from the five selected schools, whose ages ranged from 13 to 18. This classification was prompted by the fact that adolescents are in a developmental stage in which they are more aggressive and socialize mostly with peers rather than their parents and significant others. Also, they might use online media to advance their social agenda, which might result in cyberbullying. The study specifically chose the 5 principals and the 5 teacher counselors from the 5 secondary schools. A professional counselor, a police officer, an IT expert, a former high school student who had graduated one year prior to the study and a parent were also chosen by the researchers based on their relevance to the study and used as focus group.

#### **3.3 Sampling Procedures**

The study used a sample size of 333 respondents. Among these, 318 were students selected using simple random sampling from the five secondary schools. Further the study used purposive sampling to select 5 school principals and 5 teacher counselors. The researchers also used purposive sampling to select 5 key informants for focus groups (a professional counselor, a police officer, an IT Expert, former high school former student and parent).

#### **3.4 Sources of Data**

The study used both primary data and secondary data sources. The primary data involved the data collected from the five selected secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya while the secondary data included the data from the journals, books, periodicals and books.

#### **3.5 Research Instruments**

Sticca, Machmutow, Stauber, Perren, Palladino, Nocentini, Menesini, Corcoran & Mc Guckin (2015) questionnaire was modified and used for this study. A Five Point Likert Scale ranging from strongly agree

to strongly disagree with items measuring coping strategies were modified and used to measure adolescents' coping strategies. The interview schedules and focus group guide contained items used to collect data regarding the coping strategies used for cyberbullying by adolescents in Nairobi County. The reliability of the instruments was (Cronchach Alpha)  $\alpha = .721$ .

### 3.6 Data Collection Techniques

The researchers collected both quantitative and qualitative raw data from the field. The researcher organized the qualitative data according to common themes based on the participants' experiences and perspectives. The information was broken down into specific variable of measure as spelt in the purpose of the study. The researchers skimmed and analyzed the qualitative data thematically in line with the research objective and presented in narrative forms. For the quantitative data, the researchers assigned codes and labels to common phrases for easier organization and tabulation. Through counts and tabulation, the researcher obtained frequencies from each identified phrases. On the other hand, the quantitative data employed descriptive statistics analysis involving aspects including percentages and frequencies. The analysis was done using SPSS.

## 4.0 Study Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Results of the Study

The findings as indicated in Table 1 revealed the results on the coping strategies used for cyberbullying in secondary schools. The study used percentages and frequencies to analyze the data.

TABLE 1:

*Descriptive Analysis for Cyberbullying Coping Strategies Used by Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya*

	1		2		3		4		5	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I usually seek professional advice or inform my parents, teachers or the principal	58	18.2	81	25.5	40	12.6	60	18.9	76	23
I always block/delete or tell the bully to stop the bullying behaviour	121	38.1	84	26.4	37	11.6	31	9.7	43	13.5
I usually think it is my fault and I accept the situation as it is because there is nothing I can do to stop bullying	22	6.9	32	.1	42	13.2	68	21.4	149	46.9

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I usually ignore the messages / pictures so that the bully would lose interest	112	35.2	87	27.4	37	11.6	31	9.7	51	16
I always retaliate by writing a mean and threatening messages to the bully	46	14.5	45	14.2	43	13.5	71	22.3	111	34.9
I usually go to someone who listens to me and comforts me or spend time with friends to take it out of my mind	109	34.3	91	28.6	30	9.4	31	9.7	56	17.6
I usually ask myself why this has happened to me	77	24.2	66	20.6	45	14.5	46	14.6	84	26.4

*Key G – Gender, %- Percentage, N - Frequency, 1- Strongly Agree, 2-Agree 3- Uncertain , 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree*

Based on the findings, most of the adolescents would ignore the bully messages or the picture in order to allow the bully time to lose interest. The results showed that 112(35.2%) and 87(27.4%) agreed with this option. Besides, two thirds of the adolescents 109 (34.3%) and 91(28.6%) decided to go to someone who would listen and comfort them. Particularly, most of the adolescents preferred to spend time with their friends who would help them take the effect of cyberbullying out of their mind. However, when the study compared the adolescents who contemplated within themselves the reasons why the encountered cyberbullying 77(24.2%) and 66(20.6%) with those who took a brave stance to block, delete or tell the bully to stop the bullying behaviors, the study found that high percentage of the adolescents would either tell the bully to stop the behavior or they would block or delete the bully message. Equally, the study found that, 68(21.4%) and 149(46.9%) disagreed with the thought that cyberbullying was their fault and thus they needed to accept the situation because there was nothing they could do to stop it from occurring. This indicated that the adolescents in Nairobi County were able to take action concerning the situation. The findings revealed that majority of the adolescents opted to retaliate by writing a mean and threatening messages to the bully.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis for Cyberbullying Coping Strategies Used by Adolescents in Secondary Schools by Gender

		1		2		3		4		5	
		Gender									
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I usually seek professional advice or inform my parents, teachers or the principal	M	33	17.2	50	26	24	12.5	40	20.8	45	23.4
	F	25	20.3	31	25.2	16	13	20	16.3	31	25.2
I always block/delete or tell the bully to stop the bullying behaviour	M	75	39.1	58	30.2	19	9.9	14	7.3	26	13.5
	F	46	37.1	26	21	18	14.5	17	13.7	17	13.7
I usually think it is my fault and I accept the situation as it is because there is nothing I can do to stop bullying	M	12	6.3	21	11.1	31	16.3	41	21.6	85	44.7
	F	10	8.1	11	8.9	11	8.9	27	22	64	52.2
I usually ignore the messages / pictures so that the bully would lose interest	M	72	37.3	53	27.5	20	10.4	16	8.3	32	16.6
	F	40	32	34	37.2	17	13.6	15	12	19	15.2
I always retaliate by writing a mean and threatening messages to the bully	M	31	16.1	34	17.6	23	11.9	44	22.8	61	31.6
	F	15	12.2	11	8.9	20	16.3	27	22	50	40.7
I usually go to someone who listens to me and comforts me or spend time with friends to take it out of my mind	M	70	36.5	55	28.6	16	8.3	16	8.3	35	18.2
	F	39	31.2	36	28.8	14	11.2	15	12.0	21	16.8
I usually ask myself why this has happened to me	M	43	22.3	34	17.6	29	15	32	16.6	55	28.5
	F	34	27.2	32	25.6	16	12.8	14	11.2	29	23.2

Key G – Gender, %- Percentage, N - Frequency, , 1- Strongly Agree, 2-Agree 3- Uncertain , 4- Disagree y, 5- Strongly disagree

As indicated in Table 2, the study revealed that ignoring the bully messages and pictures was the most common strategy used by the adolescents in Nairobi County. The results displayed that 72 (37.3%) and 53(27.5%) of the males and 40(32%) and 34(37.2%) of the females would ignore the messages and pictures. However, more females than males would use this method to make the bully lose interest. Besides, the findings



revealed that more than two third (40%) of the adolescents across gender either would seek professional advice or reported the matter to their parents, teachers or school principals after cyberbullying.

The study found that 33(17.2%) and 50(26%) of the males and 25(20.1%) and 31 (25.2%) of the females from strongly agreed to agreed would seek professional advice. It seems that high percentage of the adolescents would go to someone particularly a friend who would listen and comfort them. The study revealed that more males 70(36.5%) than females 39(31.2%) would go to friends. However, when the study compared the adolescents who reported the matter to the professionals or sought advice from the parents, teachers and principals with those who went to their friends for help, more than 60% compared to 40% of the adolescents would go to their friends.

This indicated that adolescents would feel comfortable spending time with their friends and confiding in them issues such as cyberbullying than they did with their parents or teachers. Besides, the study demonstrated that 75(39.1%) and 58(30.2%) of the males and 46(37.1%) and 26(21%) of the females would either block the bully messages, delete or would tell the bully to stop the bullying behavior. Surprisingly, the study displayed that two third of the adolescents across gender would ask why cyberbullying had happened to them. Table 1 showed that, 43(22.3% and 34(17.6%) of the males and 34(27.2%) and 32(25.6%) of the females would ask why they were being cyberbullied.

This indicated that the lacked self-efficacy and self-esteem to face the adversity. Consequently, they would turn inwards and perhaps begin to blame themselves for what had happened instead of acting. Surprisingly, the study revealed that, majority of the adolescents, retaliated by writing a mean and threatening messages to the bully. Lastly, the study found that, 41(21.6% and 85(44.7%) of the males and 27(22%) and 64(52.2%) did not think it was their fault. This implied they could have acted by either, reporting to someone, blocking or deleting the bully message, ignoring or telling the bully to stop the bullying behaviors.

## **4.2 Discussions of the Findings**

From findings, the descriptive statistics indicated the highest coping strategies used by the adolescents in Nairobi County were blocking the bully messages, deleting messages and telling the bully to stop his behaviors. The study found that, 121(38.1%) and 84(64.5%) blocked. Deleted or informed the bully to stop the behavior. In support of this, Sittichai and Smith (2018) indicated that the highest percentage of the adolescents blocked the messages and identities of the bullies. Additionally, current study, found that more male 75(39.1%) and 58(30.2%) than females 46(37.1%) and 26(21%) blocked the bully messages, deleted the messages or would tell the bully to stop the bullying behavior.

Unlike the current study, Sittichai and Smith (2018) found that more girls (73.3%) than boys (56.5%) used blocking. From the findings, the study established that, more than 40% of the adolescents would seek professional advice or school principal, a parent or a teacher. The study specified that, more females (20.3% and 25.2%) than males (17.2% and 26%) would seek professional advice or inform the parents, teachers and school principal about cyber victimization. These findings corroborates with Sittichai and Smith (2018) that 201(45.3%) of the boys and 410(67.9%) of the girls would tell someone, either a parent or a teacher. Additionally, Frisen, et al (2013) affirmed that, more girls than boys would report cyberbullying incidences

to parents, teachers or a friend. Explicitly 162(45.6%) of the girls and 112(33%) of the boys would tell a parent, 86(24.2%) of the girls and 54(15.9%) of the boys would tell a teacher while 15(4.2%) of the girls and three (0.9%) of the boys would tell a friend. Although most of the students in Frisen et al did preferred telling a teacher or apparent to telling a friend, the current study demonstrated that most (60%) of the adolescents opted to tell a friend who could listen, comfort or help them take the incidences out of their mind.

These finding found support from Lai, Mohaffyza, Lee and Salleh (2017) that, 264(56.2%) of the female and 206(43.8%) of the male would tell a friend. This implied that most of the adolescents valued to disclose their issues to friends and classmates. Branje (2018) observed that, parent child interactions during adolescence tend to be more conflicted and less warm. Consequently, most of them spend more time with their friends and very little time with their parents (Veenstra & Dijkstra, 2011). Therefore, the current study suggests that the school counselors should sensitize the adolescents on issues concerning cyberbullying so that they would help their friends whenever they face such issues.

According to Myers and Cowie (2019), telling someone about cyberbullying is crucial and the first step towards resolving the problem. This meant that, when the adolescents report the cyber bullying victimization to someone, it lessens the impact on the victim's psychological wellbeing. This could be the reason why 74(37%) of the adolescents in a study done by Abaido (2020) chose to tell someone and in particular a friend. Nevertheless, Del-Rey, et al (2019) observed that, the involvement in cyberbullying as cyber victims, cyberaggressors and cyberbully victims would increase without the intervention of the parents or teachers. A study conducted by Frisen, et al (2012) acknowledged the intervention of school personnel and parents as one of the most frequent answers to minimizing cyberbullying.

The implication of this is that, some adolescents believed that confiding in someone about their cyber bullying victimization would help them get out of the menace. For instance, Azam and Jasmin (2018) found that, (51.4%) of the adolescents suggested that, parents should communicate more with their children and should understand their issues, 50% felt that the schools should offer moral education, 31.6% reported that the school authorities should help. Additionally, 52.6% of the adolescents indicated that the teachers should be the best to help whenever the adolescents are involved in cyber bullying. Muia (2016) therefore, suggested the children, parents and teachers should be educated on measure to minimize cyberbullying and to offer proper support.

This could be done by defining cyberbullying, strengthening teacher parent partnerships, religious institutions, formulating strong school and national policies and training, students, teachers and parents how to identify cyberbullying as indicated in (Okoth, 2014 & Notar, et al, 2013). It seems two thirds (40%) of the adolescents in the current study would ask themselves why they were cyberbullied. The study suggests that they perhaps felt they held ineffective coping strategies or they had low self-confidence, low self-efficacy and low self-esteem to face the adversity. According to Jacobs et al (2014), the adolescents who have ineffective ways of coping with cyberbullying display low self-confidence, have low self-esteem low self-efficacy, poor decision-making usually isolate themselves from others.

The study suggests that such adolescents were likely to portray low self-esteem and depression. However, the current study found that only minority across the gender accepted cyberbullying as their fault and accepted

that there was nothing they could do to stop it. In contrary, the current study findings established that, in relation to gender, more males than females chose to retaliate to the bully messages. These results were comparable to Frisen, et al (2014) that 4(1.1%) of the girls and 6(1.8%) of the boys had online retaliation.

These results supported in Machackova et al (2013) who found that 92% of the participants retaliated to cyber bullying experience. Besides, more male than female in the current study would ignore the messages or the pictures sent by the bully so that the bully could lose interest. In line with this, Risen, et al (2014) found that 56(15.8%) of the girls and 61(18%) of the boys ignored the bully messages. The findings were comparable to Safaria (2016) that, 48 % of the adolescents ignored the bullying behaviors. Consistently, Abaido (2020) affirmed that 54(27%) of the adolescents did nothing while Machackova, et al (2013) found that 60% of the participants had ignored the messages and 68% ignored the harassment respectively.

Precisely, Parris et al (2012) in their research on high school students' perception of coping with cyberbullying quoted a 15-year-old male student that *"if you cannot calm down and express your ideas to stop the cyberbully then, just ignore"*. This implied that some of the best practices the adolescents would use to curb cyberbullying were just to ignore the harassment from the bully in order to get its effects out of their mind. From the current study findings, the results demonstrated that more than a quarter of the adolescent in the current study would retaliate by writing threatening messages to the bully. However, in reference to gender, the males were more aggressive in retaliating than the male gender.

According to Frisen, et al (2014) in Sweden found that more boys 14 (4.1%) than girls 13(3.7%) have confronted the bully in an online conversation. From the interview with the principals and teacher counselors concerning coping strategies the study reported that all the five principals and five teacher counselors referred the adolescents who had issues to the counseling department for counseling and follow up, they also indicated that they create awareness to the students about cyber bullying during class counseling sessions.

The teacher counselors on the other hand reported that they use peer counseling and motivation speakers to give the students information on cyberbullying. Agreeably, one of the teacher counselors reported that, *"We have initiated mentor- mentee program where the older students are to mentor the new comers. We also have teacher student mentorship every month. The school also conducts peer education once every term where the students are taught about peer pressure and use of technology including cyber bullying"*. From the focus discussion group the study found that the parents and teachers should have good rapport with the adolescents in order to help them report cyber bullying when it happens.

The schools needed to establish policies and create awareness about cyberbullying to the adolescents and parents. However, Jacobs et al (2014) advised that, to reduce victimization of cyberbullying and its effects, bullied adolescents need to improve their current coping strategies. For instance, they need to employ effective coping strategies that not only help them to mentally deal with cyberbullying but also contribute to the prevention and discontinuation of cyberbullying. This implied that, there was need to teach the adolescents both coping strategies and methods that will help to minimize cyberbullying.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The study concludes that, the most common cyberbullying coping strategies used by adolescents in the secondary schools in Nairobi County were, to ignore the bully messages in order to for them to lose interest, block or delete the bully messages or pictures, and ask the bully to stop the bullying behavior or tell someone who would listen to their story particularly a friend.

## **5.1 Recommendation of the Study**

The study recommends that School Principals and parents should create a safe and healthy environment in both home and school. Further, the study recommends that schools to put in place surveillance strategies to support students who experience cyberbullying and to develop programmes to enhance psychological adjustment. Further, the government through the ministry of education should provide both private and public schools with qualified counselors who are not teachers for easy confiding and growth support for the victims because when they feel they are not condemned, they too will accept themselves and will not retaliate. The schools through the government should create awareness to both the students and parents on cyberbullying and its effects on the psychological wellbeing of the adolescents.

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