

CYBERBULLYING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS; HOW DO PEERS SUPPORT IN RECOVERING FROM MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

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Abstract

This study aimed to find out how much friends, parents, and teachers affected the cyberbullying behaviors of teenagers research was planned to Analysis the “Effect of Cyber bullying among University Students, how do peers support in recovering from mental health problems”. To explore research questions, data were collected from a random sample of approximately 200 students. A self made questionnaire was used by the researcher. That questionnaire was divided in 4 sub-scales. Total statements in questionnaire were 32. Despite of these 32 statements, 8 demographics was also asked in questionnaire,(Gender, age, department, programme, mental and physical health and use of social networking sites,). Demographic factors were used to compare results. Data was collected randomly. After collection of all data, each questionnaire was given a code. After coding, data was entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0. Then frequency and percentage towards each item was calculated to find out awareness about cyber bullying in university students. At the end findings, discussion, conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

Keywords: Cyber bullying, Parents support, Mental Health

1. Introduction

Bullying is one of the most critical problems faced by societies worldwide. The policymakers have been calling for effective social and political policies or strategies to cope with the growing problem of bullying. The effects of bullying have given birth to numerous issues such as mental issues.

Difficulties, pressure, sadness, antisocial behaviour, and in rare circumstances, suicidal thoughts. Such proof has so far been observed in the common forms of bullying known as classic bullying. Cyberbullying is a term used to describe bullying that occurs online after the development of internet technology and social media networking sites. When it comes to professional activities, technology has significantly changed how much human suffering there is. When used, it has also brought about some changes and benefits. Cyberbullying has been associated with a range of serious mental health implications, including anxiety, depression, drug usage, stress, and sleep deprivation.(Goebert et al., 2011).

Adolescents now overuse technology and the internet in this day and age of technical advancements and digital breakthroughs. Youth now frequently spend their free time on the internet and online browsing due to the widespread availability of cyber technology. Even more, it is seen as their preferred form of leisure time and provides them with a way to connect with others. This leads to young people engaging in harmful activities in addition to networking, entertainment, and knowledge-seeking.(Griffiths & Wood, 2000).

The internet is used for a wide range of activities, including searching for information, surfing, and socializing. While the widespread usage of the internet has aided in the support and advancement of traditional technologies, it has also provided a platform for the development of novel ideas in a variety of fields, including education (Sun & Chen, 2016).

According to definitions of bullying, it is a purposeful act that is committed repeatedly against a person who is unable to protect themselves (Olweus,1999). Bullying has a

variety of negative psychological, behavioral, and physical effects on victims, including an elevated risk of depression, psychosis, migraines, stomachaches, and behaviors connected to suicide (Gini et al., 2012).

The percentage of persons experiencing online bullying increased from 19 percent to 34 percent between 2007 and 2016 (Patchin & Hinduja, 2016), despite the fact that the majority of earlier study has concentrated on face-to-face bullying (Smith & Tokunaga, 2013). Cyberbullying is a phenomena that is described as "an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of interaction, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself" (Smith et al., 2008, p. 376).

Depression and anxiety symptoms have been linked to cyberbullying (Aoyama et al., 2011). In fact, it has been claimed that victims of cyberbullying are affected more adversely than those of traditional bullying (Cénat et al., 2014). The uncontrollable nature of social media, the longevity of content published on these platforms, a greater audience, and the degree to which it is challenging to get away from online bullies are all contributing factors to this assumption (Slonje et al., 2013).

According to Campbell et al. (2012), victims of cyberbullying experience noticeably more social difficulties as well as higher levels of despair and anxiety than do victims of traditional bullying, which is consistent with this theory. Consequently, it is important to comprehend the impacts of cyberbullying as well as the traits of those who become victims and the elements that mitigate its effects. There has been much less research on the role of families in preventing cyberbullying and its effects than there has been on schools and the peer environment (Bradshaw, 2014).

Cyberbullying is a highly significant problem that not only affects the victims but also the bully, the bully's family, and others who see incidents of cyberbullying. However, it comes down to the fact that the victim of cyberbullying may suffer from a variety of emotional problems that have a negative impact on their social and academic functioning as well as their general mental health. You might not have encountered cyberbullying personally as parents today. It may be difficult to comprehend how a few words on a computer screen may cause such anguish.(Hindja & Patchin, 2007).

This study investigated the relationship between teen cyberbullying victimization and mental health and substance use issues, as well as whether this relationship is influenced by family interaction and communication. The current study investigates the characteristics of persons who report experiencing cyberbullying victimization and the potential protective effects of secure attachment, perceived familial and peer support, and effective coping mechanisms.

By acting as a valuable source of coping mechanisms for young people, social support acts as a buffer in stressful circumstances. (Newman et al., 2005) Cyberbullying involvement on a regular basis might be considered a chronic stressors. As a result, both emotional and practical social assistance can be valuable tools for individuals who experience bullying by providing support when it occurs as well as by assisting in the prevention of bullying at an early stage (Rothon et al., 2011). For instance, it has been demonstrated that more family support can prevent adolescents from becoming online bullies and victims (Fanti et al., 2012).

The best coping mechanism for adolescents who are being cyberbullied is, according to them, notifying a buddy about the bullying scenario (Price & Dalglish, 2010).

Parents provide the majority of support for younger children, but as they approach and enter puberty, the responsibility of parents might decrease and be replaced by friend support, which can then take on a greater and more significant meaning (Marini et al., 2006). Children who have experienced cyberbullying have been found to more frequently turn to friends for help than to other forms (Slonje & Smith, 2008). Importantly, it has been demonstrated that asking for help from parents, friends, or teachers is one of the most widely employed coping mechanisms among teenagers who have experienced cyberbullying.

By initially investigating the connection between cyberbullying and numerous mental health and substance use issues in adolescents, this study addressed gaps in the literature. To evaluate the particular relationship between cyberbullying and health, we took into account individual differences in participation in traditional (face-to-face) bullying. This study explores how cyberbullying affects university students' psychological and mental health. Identification of the victims of cyberbullying and a critical assessment of their emotional states and mental health are the main goals of this inquiry in order to offer the victims of cyberbullying a practical and realistic intervention to stop it. In this study, the investigation is conducted using a quantitative descriptive method. In this study, 200 students took part, and a questionnaire was one of the tools employed. Cyberbullying in universities are causing unimaginable problems to students, parents and to educational institutions. Unfortunately little has been done to help those victims who are continuously trapped in the name of modernization and digitization. Researcher agree that the stressful impact of bullying is escalating with the rapid expansion of technological advancement. Many students who are victims of cyber bullies suffer silently; they are reluctant to complain to the authorities or their parents owing to the social stigma attached to the victims of bullies. As such parents, teachers and institutional authorities have to be on the lookout for such occurrences. (Susan, 2011).

2. Statement of the Problem

Cyberbullying is on the rise due to the introduction of technology, social media, and unrestricted access to online services. Since we are unaware of the predators sitting behind the screens, it wouldn't be incorrect to suggest that online places are getting increasingly dangerous. Actual harm to mental health is being done by the peak of cyberbullying. Due to their vulnerability as members of society and their frequent usage of online spaces, teenagers are the most frequent victims of this. Due of its open and unrestrained nature, it is distressing. Cyberbullying can be characterized in a variety of ways, but generally speaking, it occurs when someone purposefully sends cruel messages and photographs, spreads rumors about you, threatens or blackmails you, hacks your social media, or poses as you. Persistent and possibly intended to terrify the victim, it is something. The offender may be well-known or not at all (Nixon, 2014).

Emotional discomfort, sadness, anxiety, and suicide thoughts are all possible outcomes of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is pervasive among youth and has been largely ignored. It has major potential implications. To lessen and prevent cyberbullying, a comprehensive strategy is required. Programs offered by educational institutions, families,

friends, and the community that foster wholesome interactions and encourage responsible technology use show potential for eliminating cyberbullying.

3. Objectives of the Study

Following are the research objectives guide the exploration of study;

1. To explore the cyber bullying among university students and how its effect on mental health
2. To explore how peers support in recovering from mental health problems after the effect of cyberbullying

3. Research Questions

Following are the research questions guide the exploration of the study;

1. How university students are effected by cyber bullying?
2. How university students are supported by their parents in recovering from mental health problem?
3. How university students are supported by their peers in recovering from mental health problem?
4. What is the understanding of cyber bullied students about effectiveness of support from family and peer in recovering mental health problems?

5. Significance of the Study

The results of this study shed light on how cyberbullying effects on mental health. Cyberbullying is a significant issue among young people, having the biggest effects on substance abuse and suicide attempts. The primary goal of study on this topic should, therefore, be to prevent cyberbullying behaviour in order to minimize harm to victims as much as feasible. Such prevention must originate in the home, classroom, or community. In creating and implementing preventative programme, where fostering positive family relationships is crucial, we also know that psychology may be a big assistance (Law et al., 2010). The results of this study will be useful to parents so they can set up and supervise their child' social networking accounts. The symptoms and indicators of cyberbullying should also be known to parents. Teenagers may cease using electronic devices for communication or feel uneasy when using them, have trouble falling or staying asleep, show signs of moodiness or irritability, talk about killing themselves or the Parents will be able to monitor changes in children's patterns by having regular conversations about technology use.

This study will also help the government in their efforts to collaborate with parents to prevent and address cyberbullying incidents. They can also teach the students about the law and cyber ethics (Willard, 2007). The government, universities, and professors are all interested in finding out how they may help students and provide them a chance to get rid of cyberbullying from their lives, and/or withdraw from routine activities.

6. Research Methodology

The use of quantitative and descriptive research methodology to assess the influence of peer and parental support in coping with mental health issues caused by cyberbullying. Quantitative research techniques involve the systematic analysis of events and their interactions using numbers and everything that can be measured. With the goal of explaining, predicting, and controlling a phenomenon, it is used to respond to queries about relationships within quantifiable variables (Leedy, 1993).

7. Population

This study was conducted at public university. The students of various academic disciplines at public University serve as the study's sample population for this investigation.

8. Sampling

In order to obtain a sample that was typical of the youth in this situation, researcher used simple random sampling (SRS). The purest and simplest probability sampling technique is known as simple random sampling (also known as random sampling or method of chances). It is also the most widely used technique for selecting a sample from the population for a variety of objectives.

9. Research Instrument and Data collection tool

The instrument used in this study was self made questionnaire that serve vital purposes. For the purpose of this study, questionnaire was used as a tool to gather data in order to better understand the instances of cyberbullying. A self made questionnaire was created and utilized to learn more about how students experienced and understood support from peers and parents in dealing with mental health issues brought on by cyberbullying. There were only a few options available, scaled responses, and closed-ended questions.

10. Data analysis

For the purpose of data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The reliability test was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and the results of the Alpha Cronbach value were satisfactory for this research study.

Table 1

Means score of over all factors

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Effect of cyberbullying	200	37.3900	3.75344
Parent support	200	29.9600	4.39602
Peer support	200	30.0500	4.49092
Effectiveness of parents and peers support	200	25.3550	3.12535

Table 1 shows the difference of factors wise mean scores. The factor wise mean score of effect of cyberbullying 37.39, parents support 29.96, peers support 30.05, and effectiveness of parents and peer support is 25.35. The score shows that effect of cyberbullying on mental health have high mean as compared to the other factors.

Independent sample T-test on factors

The Independent Sample t-Test analyses the means of two independent groups to see if there is statistical support that the related population means are statistically substantially different.

Table 2

T-test on effect of cyberbullying on mental health gender wise

Gender	N	Mean	df	t-value	Sig
Female	121	37.5702	198	.840	.704
Male	79	37.1139			

Table 4.44 indicates that t-value (.840) is not significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female effect of cyberbullying on mental health.

Table 3

T-test on parent support gender wise

Gender	N	Mean	df	t-value	Sig
Female	121	30.8182	198	3.51	.524
Male	79	28.6456			

Table 3 indicates that t-value (3.51) is not significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female on parents support. The value of mean score of female is greater than male.

Table 4

T-test on peers support gender wise

Gender	N	Mean	df	t-value	Sig
Female	121	29.9091	198	-.548	.483
Male	79	30.2658			

Table 4 indicates that t-value (-.548) is not significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female on peer support. The value of mean score of male is greater than female.

Table 5

T-test on effectiveness of parents peers support gender wise

Gender	N	Mean	df	t-value	Sig
Female	121	25.8099	198	2.584	.016
Male	79	24.6582			

Table 5 indicates that t-value (2.58) is not significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female on effectiveness of parents and peer support. The value of mean score of male is greater than female.

Correlation of factors

Table 6

Pearson r for relationship between effect of cyberbullying ,Parent support, Peer support, effectiveness of parents and peers support

Variables	N	r- value	Sig.
Effect of cyberbullying	200	0.1	0.000
Parent support	200	0.203	0.000
Peer support	200	0.181	0.000
Effectiveness of parents and peers support	200	0.246	0.000

Table 6 shows Pearson r value for effect of cyberbullying on mental health was (0.1) that is significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Cohen (1998) suggested that if Pearson r value lies between $r = 0.10$ to $r = 0.29$ range it shows weak relationship. So, it was concluded that there exists a significant weak positive relationship with other factors. Pearson r value for parents support was (0.20) that is significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Cohen (1998) suggested that if Pearson r value lies between $r = 0.10$ to $r = 0.29$ range it shows weak relationship. So, it was concluded that there exists a significant weak positive relationship between other factors of cyberbullying.

Pearson r value for peer support was (0.18) that is significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Cohen (1998) suggested that if Pearson r value lies between $r = 0.10$ to $r = 0.29$ range it shows weak relationship. So, it was concluded that there exists a significant weak positive relationship between other factors.

11. Discussion

The most significant effects of cyberbullying on self confidence and suicide attempts are among university students, where it is a widespread problem with potentially devastating mental health consequences. Our study, which demonstrated widespread acceptability of cyberbullying among youth and indicated it was an expectation of graduation, also showed this pervasiveness. In addition, because it happens frequently and youth are more likely to discuss it with friends than with parents or teachers, behavioral norms are reinforced. Only one in three teens who experienced cyberbullying spoke to their parents about it. Teenagers may be reluctant to discuss this with their parents because they don't want them to limit their access to the internet and mobile devices. Similar a study conducted by Baker & Helm (2010) that cyberbullying is biggest problem in our society and cyberbullying leads towards suicide attempt.

The results supported by the study "Examination of associations between informal help-seeking behavior, social support, and adolescent psychosocial outcomes" conducted by Heerde & Hemphill (2018) by indicating previous results that how family characteristics, such as perceived parental and peer support deal with emotion regulation, affected the incidence of cyberbullying and the victims' experiences of it. For both cyberbullying perpetration and cybervictimization, the perception of support from friends acts as a safeguard. When it comes to being a victim of cyberbullying, perceived family support is a protective factor, but healthy family cohesion protects against being a bully personally.

A previously study conducted by Steinberg and Silk (2002) on Parenting adolescents supported our results that support from friends is a preventative measure against cyberbullying. In addition to directly increasing the likelihood of becoming a cyberbully, poor perceived peer support also had an indirect impact on cyberbullying through problems with emotion regulation, such as problems controlling impulsive behaviour and understanding emotions.

12. Recommendations

According to this study, university students are not safe to the negative consequences of cyberbullying. To stop cyberbullying, university administrations should take action. The emotional and psychological stress that cyberbullying victims experience will

unavoidably affect their academics. Schools, educators, and parents must understand that the internet may be dangerous, and they must take concrete action to protect the victims.

The following steps are needed to protect students from becoming victims of cyber criminals:

1. Identify cyberbullying issues at the university and have a discussion about the issue with the students and their parents. The most effective and visible strategy for parents to help their child stop bullying at institute is to improve the way they treat their child at home.
2. The university should establish an internet safety group to keep an eye on online activity. Students should be aware that institutions offer a safe environment for both intrapersonal and interpersonal growth to take place. In order for all the children to have a chance to embrace a good experience, it is critical for the leaders to recognize the nature of victimization as well as the long term consequences of such bullying act. Despite the fact most students learn to cope with incidents of cyberbullying, some children continue to play the role of peer victimization throughout the institution, when teasing and other types of bullying are likely to be more prevalent than in grades.
3. Create anti-bullying rules that cover lessons on online harassment. Establish guidelines for ethical technology use. The majority of institutions should take an initiatives to deal with bullying use a multi-faced approach.
4. Every institution should be encouraged to set up some sort of peer support structure, perhaps with the assistance of educators, parents, school psychologists, and other experts. Get students, teachers and parents to sign a pledge to report cases of cyber bullying. Develop educational programme around awareness for young people, parents/carers and schools.
5. Provide instruction that brings children and their families together to improve communication with online media. Inform young people on appropriate behaviour in internet settings.
6. Encourage young people to report cyberbullying instances to other young people who may be able to influence attitudes and serve as a source of support for young people.
7. Create policies that emphasise the need for young people to develop values of kindness and care in a holistic manner.

13. References

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