

PREVALENCE OF VICTIMIZATION IN THE CYBER WORLD: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL IMPACT OF BULLYING ON YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying has become a widespread issue among youth, having a significant impact on their general well-being, social connections, and mental health in the digital age. This study explored the psychological and social impacts of cyberbullying on youth in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan, using Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as its theoretical framework. The research highlighted the interplay between victim experiences and their immediate and broader social milieu. The objectives include investigating the relationship between cyberbullying and increased melancholy, depression, and social isolation, as well as its association with retaliatory or criminal tendencies among victims. Hypotheses posit that cyberbullying leads to heightened anxiety, social isolation, and a propensity for revengeful behaviors. Convenience sampling was employed to gather data from 150 university students aged 20 to 27 via an online survey. Seventy-seven of these respondents were found to have been direct victims of cyberbullying. An online questionnaire was designed to collect data, and descriptive statistics were used for quantitative analysis. Important discoveries showed that the culprits were often unknown individuals, friends, or close acquaintances. Forms of cyberbullying included hostile remarks, ID hacking, and blackmailing, eventually led to significant mental wellbeing challenges such as anxiety, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), along with social repercussions like aggression, academic decline, strained interpersonal relation, and revengeful behavior. The study recommended the critical need for interventions at multiple levels, including awareness campaigns, enhancing trust between parents and children, and improving law enforcement responses. Social media platforms must implement stricter measures to address abusive behaviors.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Youth, Psychological impact, Social isolation, Mental health.

INTRODUCTION

Cybercrime has been emerged a massive worldwide concern in the modern and digital era, impacting not just individuals, but also organizations and governments. Cybercrime includes a wide range of illegal crimes pursued at digital networks, such as financial fraud, identity theft, hacking, cyberbullying, cyber terrorism, defamation, stalking. Among these, cyberbullying is particularly pernicious kind of cybercrime that has an immediate negative effect on people's social and mental health,

especially youth (Vadza, 2013). In Pakistan, cyberbullying carried out in many forms, such as non-consensual sharing of personal information or photographs, online harassment, blackmailing, trolling, and defamation etc. The issue is made worse by the anonymity of the internet, which lets offenders harass victims without worrying about facing instant repercussions from the law enforcement agencies and eventually make the victims feel socially disengaged, anxious, sad, and in severe cases victim

starts revengeful and suicidal thinking (Juvonen et al., 2003). The swift expansion of social networking sites in Pakistan has rendered the populace, especially the youth, more susceptible to cyberbullying. Social stigmas and lack of knowledge about digital rights and safety contribute to the underreporting of cyberbullying in Pakistan, despite the seriousness of the problem. Effectively tackling cyberbullying remains a difficulty despite the evolution of the legislative framework in the country. A major step in the fight against cybercrime and cyber terrorism has been taken with the enactment of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) in 2016, however awareness and funding issues have frequently hindered its implementation. In Pakistan, combating the cyber offences is the mandate of FIA, National Response Centre of Cyber Crime (NRC3). Thanvi (2024) demonstrated that in recent reforms by the caretaker government in March 2023 established National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) to replace FIA, NRC3 with the aim to have an independent body with specialized personnel which may improve the efficacy in solving cybercrime cases.

Psycho-Social Impact of Cyberbullying on Youth

Tracing back to past, bullying refers to act in an aggressive way towards an inferior or less dominant in order to threaten or tease him as a result of imbalance of power and such bullying usually happened in the schools or in neighborhood. With time the modus operandi of bullying has shifted to online medium via social media through different social networking sites like Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Tiktok where people bully other people either known or unknown to them (Ringrose, 2008). Cyberbullying is the intentional, constant, and aggressive behavior of a person or group using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) such social media, blog posts, online games, texting, email, and libelous private domains with the goal damaging someone's reputation and dignity (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Cyber bullying is an electronic offence and is punishable under the laws of the country i.e. PECA, 2016. Cyberbullying victimizations generally leads to depression, isolation, guilt, loneliness and different phobias and in more severe case leads to suicidal attempts and thoughts. With the advancement of ICT there are

different social networking sites which are easily accessible and where people are vulnerable to get victimized of bullying online. The dangerous aspect of cyber bullying is that most of the times victim get victimized through unknown and fake account which becomes difficult for the law enforcement agencies to trace that ID and offender (Greene, 2003).

There are different modes of bullying happening in the cyber world. Willard (2007) explained different forms of cyberbullying which includes; *Flaming* refers to sending insulting, obscene texts or emails about someone either directly to them or to an online community. *Cyber Harassment* is sending frequently threatening messages to the victim. *Denigration* is another form of online bullying where cyberbully sends false or harmful messages regarding victim to others. In *Masquerading* cyberbully sends or uploads damaging or threatening material about one individual to other people while posing as someone else. *Trickery and Outing* occur when a cyberbully persuades a victim, steals private and sensitive material from them, and uploads it online for public viewing while *Exclusion* refers to intentionally excluding someone from an online group for the purpose of embarrassment and stigmatization. Further, Watts et al. (2017) mentioned some other types of cyber bullying which includes, but not limited to Fraping, trolling, catfishing, memes, sexting and blackmailing.

Consequently, victims of cyberbullying experience externalizing issues including self-harm, suicidal thoughts and attempts, violence, vandalism, and substance use disorders, as well as internalizing issues like anxiety, sadness, and social disengagement (Elgar et al., 2014). Numerous mental health conditions, such as social maladjustment, violent and antisocial behavior, low victim self-esteem, psychosomatic diseases, diminished psychological security, elevated anxiety, emotional instability, and social anxiety are linked to cyberbullying. Its spread has an impact on people's ability to adjust psychologically, morally, socially and academically, all of which have an effect on society as a whole (Abu-Ghazaleh, 2010). Numerous researches have been done to show how cyberbullying affects victims psychologically. According to Yavuz & Eristi (2011), men make up the majority of victims of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying exposure is contingent upon a number

of factors, including age, curriculum, victim's usual websites, and level of online proficiency. According to Hynujoo's (2014) research, the majority of college students who fell prey to cyberbullying saw a decline in their ability to cope mentally with their new environment, a rise in social isolation, and insufficient mental and social support to cope with the bullies.

Beebe (2010) studied two hundred and two pupils of college in the US. The findings revealed that 50.7% of the sample's undergraduate students had experienced cyberbullying at least once while attending the college. At Selcuk University in Turkey, Dilmac (2009) found that 55.35% of the 666 students had experienced cyberbullying at some point in their lives.

According to Walker et al. (2011), in a study that included 131 students from seven undergraduate programs in the US, 11% of participants claimed to have experienced cyberbullying at their university. Among those, the most commonly used technologies were Facebook, cell phone and instant messaging (43%).

Pakistan is not an exception when it comes to cyberbullying victimization. Nowadays, people have access to gadgets, but many are not educated on how to use these devices responsibly. Those who engage in bullying often don't realize that they are committing a cyber-offense, and those who are victimized may not even know that they are being victimized. In this context, Batool et al. (2017) confirmed that bullying on social media influences victim on an emotional, intellectual, and social level. Social networking sites users deal with problems like picture theft, unpleasant messages, rumors, threats, and sexual harassment. Additionally, gender is a significant and crucial component in this context because research has shown that bullying is more common among men. However, compared to men, girls are more affected psychologically and academically by cyberbullying. Further, bullying negatively impacted social relationships and caused individuals to become isolated, increase aggression, leads to revenge, affects academics and social relation.

In another Pakistani study; Kanwal & Jami (2019) stated about that social impact of cyber bullying by reporting that family surveillance also increased after being bullied majorly in case of girls. They are not

allowed to meet with their friends and to contact via phones which leads towards social isolation and increased distrust among family members and friends. Sometimes victims are blamed after becoming victimization and restricts their activity which leads towards social stigmatization. Smith et al. (2004) also confirmed that majority of youth distance themselves from their friends as a result of hearing false information about them on social media sites. In another research Chughtai (2021) found that out of 200 youth from Lahore, Pakistan 57.5% used social networking sites and they stated that they always feel unsafe while using social media and after being bullied lost concentration in doing social activities, academic work and grades have also been affected. Further, they also started behaving in an aggressive manner with their peer group due to lack of personal insecurities and trust.

Cybercrime and specifically bullying is affecting people in many ways like disgracing them, violating their privacy, damaging dignity and reputation and eventually impact the emotional and social well-being of an individual. In this regard, prevention of the aforesaid offences are significant where government are responsible to combat such offences with the help of law enforcement agencies. In Pakistan, FIA is the main law enforcement body tasked with combating cybercrime. In FIA, there is a National Response Centre for Cyber Crime (NRC3) which provide services of computer forensics, mobile, audio/video forensics, network forensics in order to counter and prevent cyber-crime. FIA has further categorized cybercrime into different forms which includes, but not limited to hacking, identity theft, stalking, financial fraud, malicious software, electronic terrorism and cyber bullying. The mode of reporting cases of cyber offences including bullying to FIA is easy and online. There is an online complaint registration form on FIA website where the victim will provide details of the cyber bullying or any other cyber offences including victim name, father name, cell number, crime details and can even upload pictures as an evidence of the case which could be screenshots, recording, text messages etc. The FIA cybercrime wing operates under the PECA, 2016 which provides the legal framework for addressing various forms of cybercrime in Pakistan (Federal Investigation Agency, 2024). PECA, 2016 revealed different types of cyber offences and their

punishment to spread deterrence and prevent all types of cybercrimes. In this act offences like unauthorized access to information systems, unauthorized copying or transmission of data, interference with information system or data, electronic fraud, cyber Stalking and Terrorism, identity Theft, transmission of obscene content, spoofing, spamming, electronic forgery. Further, section 20 of this act is about cyber bullying and online harassment which prohibits the intentional public transmission of information through any digital means that harms, intimidates, threatens, or causes fear of injury to a person's reputation, privacy, or safety. It also covers spreading false information or creating fake electronic communications in someone else's name to damage their reputation or character. The punishment for cyber bullying includes imprisonment up to 3 years and fine which may extend to 3 million rupees or both.

In addition, there are some challenges to FIA in investigating cybercrime. In this context, Thanvi (2024) demonstrated the Sindh high court reservations regarding the performance of FIA, NRC3 in a case of Karachi. The court stated that the Investigation officers lack expertise and technical skills in investigating cybercrimes and questioned the educational qualifications and training of officers involved in such investigations. It was found that the officers lacked the necessary post-qualification experience in relevant fields like forensics, information security, and data recovery techniques. Further, there were drawbacks in the investigative mechanism, digital evidences were not properly analyzed and there was absence of investigation plan. The court revealed that the current personnel's did not meet the criteria specified in the Electronic Crime Investigation Rules, 2018 and there is a dire need of specialized trainings for the investigation officers working in FIA cybercrime wing. Grene (2003) stated other challenges such as unknown account, offenders are out of the country, uploaded content like obscene pictures and videos once uploaded can never be completely vanished by the lawful bodies. Further, other problem includes lack of awareness and education regarding the use of social media and sharing personal pictures and videos etc which makes a person vulnerable to get victimized on social networking accounts. Momand (2024) stated that the federal cabinet under the caretaker government had

approved the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) in March 2023 to replace FIA, NRC3. The FIA will be no longer serve as the designated investigation agency under the PECA, 2016 as the NCCIA established under Section 51 of the act. The main purpose behind this agency is to have an independent body and to work solely on cases related to cybercrimes which may improve the efficacy in solving the cases rapidly. Further, this agency will also hire specialized and professional personnel who have expertise in the field to enhance performance in preventing cybercrimes.

Theoretical Framework

Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner

The Ecological systems theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner, looks at how various environmental systems interact to influence youth's experiences and responses to cyberbullying, offering a thorough framework for comprehending the psycho-social effects on them. Bronfenbrenner identified five systems including the *microsystem* which refers to immediate environments to an individual like family and peers; *mesosystem* is pertaining to relationship and connectivity between these environments; *exosystem* meant that external influences that have an indirect impact on the person, like school, policy or parental work stress. Further, the *macrosystem* explores cultural and legal contexts, while the *chronosystem* examines the influence of time and changes over a person's life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). By applying the Ecological systems theory researchers may learn more about how social norms, peer relationships, school environment, family support, and technological advancements affect the psychological and emotional effects of cyberbullying by examining the interactions between these systems (Neal & Neal, 2013).

Application to Cyberbullying affects

Ettekal & Mahoney (2017) provided insights into how youth engage with activities, how other setting affects development in activities and the role of broader perspective of a variety of elements that affect the psycho-social life of an individual after being victimized. From *microsystem* it can be applied that how direct interactions within peer groups both online and face to face contribute to the emotional

and social impact of cyberbullying. For example, victims may experience increased feelings of depression and isolation if they have no supporting peer group. In addition, *mesosystem* examine how the victim's total experience is shaped by the interactions between various contexts, such as the relationship between the support system at home and the school environment. As an example, the detrimental effects of a hostile school environment may be lessened by a nurturing home environment. Further, *exosystem* take into account how outside variables, such as how bullying is portrayed in the media, school rules, or the accessibility of mental health facilities, affect young people's capacity to deal with cyberbullying. Moreover, *Macrosystem* examine the ways in which wider cultural and societal norms such as the acceptance of aggressive behavior in virtual spaces affect the incidence and consequences of cyberbullying. Lastly, *Chronosystem* analyze how the impact of cyberbullying evolves over time, considering both personal development and societal changes. For instance, changes in technology use and patterns among youth alter the experiences and impact of cyberbullying.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the relationship between youth experiences of cyberbullying and higher degrees of melancholy, depression, and social isolation.
2. To analyze the correlation between the prevalence of cyberbullying victimization among youth and their inclination to think criminally or act in retaliatory ways.

Research Hypotheses

Based on research objectives and literature review, some tentative hypotheses are formulated which have been posited:

H1: Youth who have experienced cyberbullying demonstrate elevated levels of anxiety and sadness.

H2: Youth social isolation is more likely to result from cyberbullying victimization than from more conventional types of bullying.

H3: Youth propensity to have criminal thoughts or revengeful behaviors is significantly correlated with the frequency of cyberbullying.

Research Methodology

Survey Method

This research work was focused to identify impact on the mental and social life of youth who have been victimized of cyber bullying via different social networking sites. The research endeavor employed quantitative approach and the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Further, the primary data collected was analyzed through the spreadsheets, SPSS and presented in tabular form. The Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner offering a thorough concept for comprehending the psycho-social effects on cyberbullying victim was considered as a theoretical framework for the research.

Universe and Population

The universe of this research work was the youth of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Therefore, students from different public and private sector universities of district Peshawar such as University of Peshawar, Qurtaba University, Islamia College University and Agriculture University Peshawar were sampled for data collection.

Sample technique and Size

The researcher selected respondents using convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique to achieve the objectives of the study. The aforesaid universities were selected as students belonging to different areas of the province have been enrolled in these universities. The data was collected from 150 respondents (100 boys and 50 girls) who have observed and experienced cyber bullying victimization and out of 150 respondents 77 respondents (53 boys and 24 girls) were those who were the real victims so further data was collected in this study from 77 youth to assess the nature of victimization and to know their psycho-social life after being victimized. The youth (respondents) age was ranging from 20 years to 27 years.

Measurement Tool and Data Collection Process

An online questionnaire was composed on Google forms and sent online via email and WhatsApp to the respondents for the collection of primary data. The questionnaire was sent online as all the respondents were active on social media and educated enough to fill the questionnaire successfully. The questionnaire

was close ended and questions were designed in English language in a way where the respondents could checked multiple responses in every question as per the demand of the nature of study and questions. Further, prompt questions were also the

part of questionnaire to make questions convenient for the respondents. Some operational definitions in the context of this study has been used in the questionnaire and literature which are presented in the table below:

Operational Definitions

Variables	Operational Definition
Cyber Bullying	Cyberbullying is the deliberate, persistent, and aggressive action by an individual or group aimed at causing harm others through the use of Information and Communication Technologies.
Psychological Impact	Anxiety, depression, Low self-esteem, Suicidal thoughts, PTSD, feel shame, regret, shocked, inferiority complex
Social Impact	Aggression, Violence, Academic decline, Social isolation, interpersonal relation, Revenge, Fear of family, Fear of victim blaming, distrust among friends, increased family surveillance,
Social Media	The use of social networking sites like Facebook, Whatsaap, Tiktok, Snapchat, Instagram etc.
Youth	In this study the Youth age ranging from 20-27 years were selected as respondents.

Presentation of Data and Discussion

Table No 1: Nature of Cyber Bullying and its Psycho-social Impact on youth observed in the society by respondents

S. No	Nature of Cyber Bullying observed in the society by respondents.	Frequency/ Percentage
1	Blackmailing	69 (46%)
2	Threatening	36 (24%)
3	Teasing	42 (28%)
4	Sexting	49 (32.6%)
5	ID Hacking	68 (45.3%)
6	Irrelevant Friend Request	32 (21.3%)
7	Stalking	38 (25.3%)
8	Unwanted Proposals	17 (11.3%)
9	Sending/Demanding nude pictures	34 (22.6 %)
10	Unwanted Contact	32 (21.3%)
11	Prank	25 (16.6%)
12	Abusive Comments	55 (36.6%)
13	Tagging in sexual content	23 (15.3%)
14	Taking screenshot of Pictures	34 (22.6%)
15	Leaking of Pictures and videos	55 (36.6%)
16	Threatening calls	27 (18%)
17	Roasting	27 (18%)
18	All of the above	22 (14. 6%)
S. No	Psycho-social Condition of Victims observed in society by respondents.	Frequency/Percentage

1	Anxious	50 (33.3%)
2	Nervous	75 (50%)
3	Isolated	39 (26%)
4	Stop talking with friends	36 (24%)
5	Suicidal Thinking	23 (15.3%)
6	Revenge	29 (19.3%)
7	Make friends limited	50 (33.3%)
8	All of the above	4 (2.6%)

Table No 2: Views about registration of Complaint

S. No	Have victims complained to FIA or other relevant agency?	Frequency/ Percentage	If yes, what was the response from FIA or other relevant agency?			
			No Action	Pending	Delay response	Total
1	Yes	49 (32.6%)	20 (41%)	8 (16%)	21 (43%)	49 (100%)
2	No	78 (52%)	-	-	-	-
3	I don't Know	23 (15.3%)	-	-	-	-

Cyberbullying is a global issue and Pakistan is not an exception. The modus operandi used in cyberbullying to target vulnerable individuals are influenced by the bully's social environment, intelligence, and educational background. Cyber bullying is characterized by specific patterns such as online blackmail, threatening texts, teasing, ID hacking, abusive comments, disclosure of the victim's personal information.

In this study, 150 youth attending universities were asked about different forms of cyberbullying they observed in the society. In this context, 69 (46%) respondents said they had seen victims of online blackmail, where the victim is in a relationship with a perpetrator who starts threatening that they have their leaked personal photos and videos in order to damage their reputation and social standing; if the demands are not fulfilled. Additionally, 68 (45.3%) people said that social networking site hacking is more frequent, where unrelated stuff is uploaded or bully concealed their identity under victims name and starts requesting money from vulnerable people. Nevertheless, 55 (36.6%) respondents stated that derogatory remarks on people's profiles and status are frequent, and that the release of pornographic images and videos these days is causing a chaotic situation among young people, impacting not only their mental health but also contaminating society and culture through such actions. In addition, 49 (32.6%) stated that other forms of bullying includes, but not limited to text messages that were superfluous and included sexually explicit images

and videos, requests for unwelcome friendships. There have also been reports of various types of cyberbullying, such as pranks, roasting, unsolicited propositions, etc.

Cyberbullying harms the victim's reputation, self-esteem and personal life. In response to a question about the mental state of the victim they had observed, 75 (50%) said that the victim appeared extremely anxious and worried; 50 (33.3%) discussed the victim's anxiety and the limitations of their peer group; and 39 (26%) said that the victim typically withdraws from social interactions and isolates themselves. Additionally, 29 (19.3%) respondents close friends who were bullied reported considering criminal activity to take revenge from the bully, while 23 (15.3%) reported that these victims also begin to start suicidal thinking because they felt powerless and have no other viable way to re-establish their social lives.

Government officials and law enforcement agencies must stop the threat of cyberbullying. It was asked from the participants that whether victims of cyberbullying they observed have registered complaint with the FIA or other relevant authorities. Out of 150 respondents, 78 (52%) unequivocally stated that they were unaware of any such victims filing complaints with relevant authorities. Meanwhile, 49 (32.6%) respondents confirmed that victims had reported incidents to the FIA and other bodies; however, they noted that the responses were often delayed, and in some cases, the authorities took

no action. This raises significant concerns regarding the effectiveness of measures to prevent cyberbullying and other online offenses.

Table No: 3 Cyber bullying Real Victims in this Research

S. No	Have your ever been victimized of cyber bullying	Frequency/ Percentage	If Yes, Who have Victimized You?				
			Friends	Colleagues	Cousins	Unknown	Others
1	Yes	77 (51.3%)	29 (37.6%)	4 (5.2%)	7 (9%)	33 (42.9%)	4 (5.2%)
2	No	60 (40%)	-	-	-	-	-
3	May Be	13 (8.6%)	4 (30.7%)	2 (15.3%)	1 (7.7%)	6 (46.1%)	-

Table No: 4 Nature of Cyber Bullying Victimization of Real Victims

S. No	Nature of cyberbullying victimization of real victims.	Frequency/Percentage
1	Blackmailing	22 (28.5%)
2	Threatening calls and messages	15 (19.4%)
3	Teasing	24 (31.1%)
4	Sexting	12 (15.5%)
5	ID Hacking	24 (31.1%)
6	Irrelevant Friend Request	29 (37.6%)
7	Stalking	16 (20.7%)
8	Unnecessary messages	29 (37.6%)
9	Unwanted Proposals	7 (9%)
10	Sending/Demanding nude pictures	5 (6.4%)
11	Unwanted Contact	18 (23.3%)
12	Prank	8 (10.3%)
13	Abusive Comments	29 (37.6%)
14	Taking screenshot of Pictures	8 (10.3%)
15	Leaking of Pictures and videos	8 (10.3%)
16	Roasting	9 (11.6%)

Table No: 5 Views about sharing of Victimization Cases with Others

Have you ever shared about being bullied with others?	Freq/Per	If yes, with whom have you shared?						If no, what was the reason?					Total
		Family				Friends	Cousin	A	B	C	D	E	
		Father	Mother	Sibling	Spouse								
Yes	56 (72.7%)	5 (8.9%)	6 (10.7%)	12 (21.4%)	1 (1.8%)	25 (44.6%)	7 (12.5%)	-	-	-	-	-	56 (100%)
No	21 (27.2%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	8 (38.1%)	3 (14.3%)	3 (14.3%)	4 (19%)	3 (14.3%)	21 (100%)

Denotation:

A: Fear of victim blaming

B: Trauma

C: Fear of family

D: Fear of restriction

E: I tried to overcome situation by myself

Table No 6: Psycho-social Condition of Cyberbullying Real victims Interviewed

S. No	Mental condition of real victims	Frequency/Percentage
1	Anxious	61 (79.2%)
2	Shocked	22 (28.6%)
3	Depression	16 (20.8%)
4	Low self esteem	11 (14.3%)
5	Anger	30 (39%)
6	Regret	13 (16.9%)
7	Suicidal Thought	3 (3.9%)
8	PTSD	16 (20.8%)
9	Feel shame	3 (3.9%)
10	Inferiority complex	7 (9%)
S. No	Social condition of real victims	Frequency/Percentage
1	Aggression	51 (66.2%)

2	Violence	15 (19.5%)
3	Academic decline	13 (16.9%)
4	Social isolation	12 (15.6%)
5	Revenge	12 (15.6%)
6	Fear of family/Victim blaming	38 (49.3%)
7	Distrust among friends	40 (52%)
8	Increased family surveillance	35 (45.4%)
9	Interpersonal relation	22 (28.6%)

Table No 7: Views about reporting of cases with FIA/Relevant Body from Real Victims

Did you report to Police or FIA after being bullied?	Freq/Per	If yes, what was the response?					If no, what were the reasons?						Total
		No response	Good response	Delay	Not satisfactory	Others	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Yes	23 (29.9%)	8 (34.7%)	2 (8.7%)	5 (21.7%)	4 (17.4%)	4 (17.4%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	23 (100%)
No	54 (70.1%)	-	-	-	-	-	11 (20.4%)	6 (11.1%)	8 (14.8%)	20 (37%)	3 (5.5%)	6 (11.1%)	54 (100%)

Denotation:

A: No idea where to complain
 C: No Confidence on Law
 E: It was my Mistake

B: Didn't know cyber bullying is a crime
 D: Fear of Privacy
 F: LEAs don't take cyber bullying as serious issue

The main objective of this study is to determine the social and psychological well-being of youth who have been the real victims of cyberbullying. Out of 150 respondents, 77 (51.3%) reported that they have been victimized of cyber bullying using social networking sites, 60 (40%) said they had never experienced victimization, and 13 (8.6%) mentioned that they might still be indirectly harmed without suffering severe repercussions. Therefore, the rest of the questions were applicable and asked from 77 (51.3%) respondents who have been victimized of cyberbullying to meet the objectives of the study.

When victims were asked about the perpetrators of their victimization, out of 77 respondents, 29 (37.6%) identified their close friends as the culprits, 4 (5.2%) mentioned colleagues, and 7 (9%) pointed to cousins. The majority, 33 (42.9%), reported being targeted by unknown individuals using concealed identities on social networking sites.

The 77 respondents who experienced victimization were further asked about the nature of the cyberbullying they encountered. Among them, 29 (37.6%) reported being subjected to hostile public remarks that negatively impacted their self-esteem, particularly within their close social circles. Additionally, other forms of bullying included receiving unsolicited messages seeking unwelcome relationships and irrelevant friend requests, both of which contributed to feelings of stress and anxiety. Besides, 24 (31.1%) respondents reported being victims of identity hacking, which sometimes leads to chaotic situations where the perpetrator demands money and uses the victim's identity to send and upload irrelevant or obscene content, with the intent to disgrace and defame the victim. Cyber blackmailing is one of the most severe forms of bullying, where the perpetrator threatens to release the victim's images, videos, or other private information after gaining access to their social media accounts or through an intimate relationship. In addition to cyber blackmail, other forms of cyberbullying identified in this study include cyber stalking (reported by 16 (20.7%) respondents), threatening calls and messages (reported by 15 (19.4%) respondents), roasting (reported by 9 (11.6%) respondents), pranks, screenshots of images (reported by 8 (10.3%) respondents).

The victim's first and most important course of action after being victimized is to discuss the situation with their parents, guardians, or any other responsible

individual who can help them by taking the necessary actions to calm them down and settle the matter.

In this context when the victim were asked that after being victimized; have they shared the incident with their family members or any other person? It was reported by 56 (72.7%) respondents that they had confided in someone. Out of 56 youth, 25 (44.6%) shared with friends, 24 (42.8%) shared with family (12 with siblings, 6 with mother, 5 with father and only 1 with spouse) and 7 (12.5%) with cousins. The responses regarding family reactions were varied. Nine respondents indicated that their family provided support, while three reported that their family became angry and asked them to change their cell phone. Seven respondents mentioned that their family became frightened, which led to their social isolation and withdrawal. Furthermore, an alarming finding was that 21 (27.2%) youth did not share their victimization with their family or others. When asked why, they reported fearing victim-blaming and being accused by their parents for the situation.

Additionally, 3 (14.3%) respondents disclosed that they had experienced trauma as a result of their dread of family, which ultimately prevented the children from sharing about their issues with parents. Furthermore, other 3 (14.3%) respondents stated that they had the willpower to manage the problem on their own, while 4 (19%) respondents expressed fear that their families had pressurized them to limit their social activities and peer group.

This study's primary goal was to investigate the direct effects of bullying on youth. In this case, the victims were questioned regarding their mental health following their ordeal. As a result, it was discovered that 61 (79.2%) people experienced anxiety, 30 (39%) expressed anger, and 16 (20.8%) expressed severe depression after trauma, which started to interfere with their daily activities, such as eating, socializing, and studying; 11 (14.3%) also showed that the bullying style had damaged their self-esteem and dignity, and 22 (28.6%) expressed that they were surprised and astonished.

In addition, 13 (16.9%) people expressed sorrow about their connection to the offender, and 16 (20.8%) said they were suffering from PTSD, which began to significantly impact their lives. It is clear that social activities are directly impacted by mental health as well.

In this context, they were enquired as to whether bullying negatively affects their social lives. Out of 77 respondents, 51 (66.2%) respondents reported that victimization made them aggressive, and that their initial reaction was to seek retribution from the offender. Fifteen of them engaged in violent behaviors, such as fighting and verbal abuse with their friends who were bullying them.

Besides, 12 (15.6%) respondents said they were socially alienated and sought retribution, while 38 (49.3%) said they were afraid of their family and they were held responsible for the victimization. Additionally, it was revealed that they were socially isolated, that their academic performance had declined, their families had begun to monitor them, and their interpersonal relationships had suffered as a result of this extreme strain. Moreover, majority of the respondents admitted that they hold themselves responsible for cyber victimization because of their weak interpersonal and vulnerable group dynamics. Preventing cyberbullying by reporting, case investigation, and deterrent while catching the perpetrator is a crucial step. When the real victims were asked if they had reported the case to the FIA or any other law enforcement agencies, 23 (29.9%) out of 77 said they had reported it to the FIA cyber-crime wing. Of these, 8 (34.7%) said they received no response, 2 (8.7%) said they received a good response, 5 (21.7%) said the FIA took too long to respond, and 4 (17.4%) respondents said the response was unsatisfactory. Whereas, 54 (70.1%) respondents claimed not to have reported their case to the FIA.

Upon being questioned about why they hadn't reported their case, 11 (20.4%) respondents said that they did not know where to file a complaint or that cyberbullying is illegal and requires reporting. Furthermore, 20 (37%) youth revealed that they feared their privacy and 8 (14.8%) lacked faith in the legal system. In addition, 3 (5.5%) victims blamed themselves for the abuse, while 6 (11.1%) claimed that because law enforcement agencies did not take cybercrimes seriously, therefore they did not file a complaint with the relevant authority.

Conclusion

This study highlighted the pervasiveness and complexity of cyberbullying, exposing its significant psychological and social impact on youth. Social difficulties, mental anguish, and a disturbance in their general well-being are all experienced by victims of cyberbullying. The fact that the offenders range from strangers to personal friends and family members emphasizes on the complication of the problem. Numerous victims claimed to have experienced nasty comments, public humiliation, ID theft, and even cyber blackmailing, all of which had a long-lasting impact on their mental and self-esteem. According to research findings, victims of cyberbullying frequently experience anxiety, despair, rage, post-traumatic stress disorder in extreme situations and suicidal thoughts too. These emotional reactions interfere with day-to-day activities, such as social interactions, interpersonal connections, and academic achievement.

Victims frequently experience feelings of guilt and responsibility, which make them feel even more alone and make it more difficult for them to get help or assistance. Socially, victims often have strained relationships, propensity to isolate themselves and leads to aggressive and criminal revengeful thoughts. Many people are reluctant to talk about their experiences with friends or family for fear of being misinterpreted and victim blaming. Youth who have been the real victims of cyberbullying in this study reported a range of reactions, from supportive interventions to angry or fearful reactions that emphasizes how important it is for families to give victims a secure and compassionate atmosphere. The research also draws attention to structural issues dealing with cyberbullying. Due to a lack of knowledge about reporting procedures, privacy concerns, and mistrust of authorities' response, a sizable portion of victims chose not to inform law enforcement of their experiences. Feedback from those who reported the incident was erratic, highlighting the need for increased institutional assistance and effectiveness in managing cybercrime situations. Based on the conclusion, the following measures are recommended to address and mitigate cyber victimization effectively.

- Conduct awareness efforts in communities and schools to inform young people about cyberbullying, its repercussions, and how to avoid it.
- Encourage candid dialogue between parents and children to foster trust and lessen victim-blaming anxiety.
- Strengthen law enforcement organizations to guarantee prompt and efficient handling of cybercrime cases.
- Simplify and promote cyberbullying reporting procedures so that victims can get assistance without worrying about privacy violations.
- Implement stricter regulations on social media platforms to prevent and address abusive behavior effectively.
- Encourage digital literacy in young people to equip them with the knowledge and abilities necessary to engage safely online and identify cyber threats.

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