



CYBER BULLYING AWARENESS AMONG STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITIES IN SINDH

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ABSTRACT

The problem of cyber bullying has prevalence throughout the world. This issue has occurred with development of the technologies. The activity carried on the platform of digital devices like computers and cell phones. The common means for cyber bullying are the social media activities. Social media are now an essential part of the everyday life of youngsters. They stay updated and connected to the world while using social media and consequently they face some kind of cyber bullying activities. The focus of this study is to find out the awareness level regarding cyber bullying among adolescents, the causes of cyber bullying and harassment in university-going youngsters, and to quantify the reported cyber bullying practices among youth. The study is quantitative and conducted in four universities of Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan using simple random sampling with a sample size of 210. Through a closed-ended questionnaire employing the survey, method data is collected. The data have been analyzed using SPSS software. The result shows that the awareness level to the prevention of cyber bullying among university students is more, and most are aware of the laws of cybercrime in Pakistan. While, the majority of incidents of cyberbullying are not reported to the Police or Cybercrime cell.

Keywords: Cyber bullying, Awareness, Cybercrime, Youth, Universities, Sindh

INTRODUCTION

Intentional and frequent damages caused utilizing devices including cell phones and computer called as cyber bullying (Henson,

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2012). When we threat, embarrass and harass the others using technology is termed as cyber bullying. Besides, it includes the threats made online, messages of aggression, rude texts and tweets posted with the intention of the threading to others online is also called cyber bullying. Additionally, online comments regarding one's religion, gender, race, physical difference and sexual orientation is also attracting the scope of the cyber bullying (Ben-Joseph, 2018). Technology and social media are the main sources of the cyber bullying hence, can occur on WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram etc, and on other social media platforms too. The types of cyber bullying are Flaming, Cyber stalking, Disparaging, Harassment, Exclusion, Impersonation, Outing, and Trickery. However, Ortega et.al., 2009 as cited in Slonje et.al., 2013 divided cyber bullying into two main headings one is bullying on internet and other on mobile phones.

With the start of the 21st century, the internet has become common for the public. People are consuming most of their time on different social sites over the internet and have become habitual to it. This trend has speed with innovations of mobile phones. As, the existence of Android mobile phones have made easy accessibility and availability of the internet. Resultantly, usage of social media sites has been observed to be increasing in the general public especially in the young population across the world (Little et.al., 2016).

On the contrary, these technologies are mostly used negatively. Many individuals including children and adults are facing many difficult situations when they encounter negative comments or harassment daily over the internet. Not only the children but adults also do not understand what to do while facing these types of situations, most are not aware of the form of the bullying. Due to this, the virtual world is not as safe as it was decades ago, and as a result, the young generation feels anxiety and confusion while uploading any personal stuff over the internet. We cannot deny the fact that the internet has plenty of advantages. However, it also consists of dangerous websites, programming that cannot only harm your computer, or mobile but can also steal your data (Quaglio, & Millar, 2020).

In a short time, cyber bullying has increased drastically after 2010, more and more people become the victim of cyber bullying. The word cyber bullying did not exist a decade before, yet the issue has become an inescapable one today. Cyber bullies do not need to be

strong or quick; they simply need admittance to a cell phone or Personal computer (PC) and a desire to threaten. . Anybody can be a cyber bully, and such people typically have not many stresses over having to eye a conflict with their victims (Poland, 2010, as cited in Notar et.al., 2013). Many internet users are not aware of cybercrime and its consequences. Cyber bullying cannot stop until the internet provides the privileged of being anonymous and give you a chance to create fake profiles without confirming your identity (Peebles, 2014).

In this technological age in which different technologies introduced daily and technology becomes more advanced, it brings a challenge that is the new age issues. Presumably, innovation has many advantages but it acquires also the negative side (Vogels et.al., 2020). Before the internet, people face physical or verbal bullying in which they have knowledge and who is the person that can bully them. In contrast, cyber bullying victims have no idea who the person is bullying or torture and how to deal with an invisible enemy. In this regard, cyber bullying happens differently, it should not mean that manipulating somebody's account details or using someone's account pretends to be anyone else; it often means making bad things about someone in order to ruin someone's reputation or gossiping and backbiting. Cyber bullying is now common and everyone once, in a while facing any kind of bad comment of negative experience over the internet and these threatening activities are harming the mental peace of the person. They generally happen via web-based networking media and other online data sites on various social media platforms.

Cyber bullying begins in the virtual world. The cyber bullies appreciate the namelessness and the unending reach of the web to go after clueless and possible victims. When they get hold of something individual of the person in question, they start to either trap or annoy them. Cyber bullying can happen anywhere, including at home, 24 hours a day, with probably many people included, via mobile phones, tweets, emails, and online social networks. To irritate, compromise, or embarrass you, cyber bullies make use of advancement. Cyber bullying, unlike traditional torment, does not expect eye-to-eye contact and is not limited to only a bunch of witnesses, one after another. Nearly everybody who owns an internet connection or any association with cell phones can try to cyber bully another person in any manner, without disclosing their genuine identity.

One of the issues called as social media cyber bullying which has created over the long run as new web-based media innovations created over a long time. Social media cyber bullying has gotten expanding consideration lately as the media started revealing insight into the staggering results that harassers can bring to their victims through social media. During the previous few years, there has been a sharp rise in media reports in regards to the utilization of social media to irritate, embarrass, scare, menace, and undermine others, with destructive results like emotional distress, tension, sadness, and in few cases suicidal tendencies (Tian, 2016).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The use age of internet and social media in Pakistan is increasing day by day. On January 2020 in Pakistan's number of the internet users was 76.38 million. However, the social media users were 37.00 million and this number enhanced between the period April, 2019 to January, 2020 by 2.4 million (Datareportal, 2020). In recent years, internet users increasing rapidly at a very fast pace as per Statista (n.d.) that almost 4.66 billion active internet users as of January 2021 are 59.5% of the world population. Furthermore, active social media users are almost 3.6 billion people who regularly visit different digital media platforms to entertain or educate themselves (Statista, n.d.). The availability of the internet has increased with the availability of mobile phones, which have become smart day-by-day and other technology that has web-enabled devices. A large proportion of web users are teenagers from 15-30 years old with a substantial proportion of these people mistreatment the net for social networking. Social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook became the foremost widespread suggests that of online communication. According to Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) as on 15 November 2016, 30 million people throughout the Pakistan use Facebook. Instagram users found to be 7.1 million by 15 October 2016. However, in 2016 the number of Snapchat and Twitter users recorded as 3.1 million (Geo News, 2017). With modernization in technology, youngsters connected to the net world and have access to social media twenty-four hours every day. The uses of the net and social media related to each advantage and consequence. Positive advantages are including accessing data, access to teaching and learning resources, and high levels of social support. The sense of social community and

social connectivity are valued among the youngsters of Pakistan. Thus, the employment of social media applications like Instagram and Facebook is widespread. Though the employment of the net and social media platforms related to clear advantages for the Pakistani community, the presence of the internet and social media additionally related to appreciable negative implications. This includes unwanted exposure to sexual material crime, cyber stalking, and cyber bullying. In this context, this study aims to identify:

- (i) The awareness level regarding cyber bullying among youth;
 - (ii) The causes of cyber bullying and harassment in university-going youngsters,
 - (iii) Quantify the reported cyber bullying practices among youth.
- Whereas, following hypotheses is constructed:

H₁: The university going students are least aware of cyber laws

H₂: The proportion of awareness regarding the prevention of cyber bullying among university-going students is high.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study in the Pakistani perspective carried out by Rafi (2019) whereby he has mentioned that the findings of his study will contribute cyber-bullying research, as this type of the research is in its initial phase in Pakistan. Such type of the researches on cyber bullying will be helpful in the designing the prevention programs of the cyber bullying in Pakistan. Hence, this current study with the title 'Cyber bullying Awareness Among students of Universities in Sindh' is filling the gap in the research from the Pakistani perspective. Another study in the Pakistani perspective conducted by Butt et al (2019) where he has observed a significant and positive association between cyber bullying and cyber victimization. Furthermore, he finds that interpersonal trust is positively and significantly associated with cyber victimization. He also tested self-esteem with interpersonal trust and this found as negatively predicted. Musharraf and Anis-ul-Haque (2018) in Pakistani context observed that in university students' occurrence of the rate of cyber bullying is high. Additionally, those involved in the cyber bullying revealed psychopathological level high and their well-being found to be poor when compared with the persons who not involved in the cyber bullying.

Bullying is difficult to vanish from schools as students adequately utilize it. Teachers as experts need to manage the outcomes

of student on-understudy bullying. The effects of biased-related tormenting should not be underestimated. Bullying perceived comprehended and taken as seriously (Jan and Hussain, 2015). Cyber bullying is a new form of aggression that rapidly increases and uses information and communication technologies like (ICT). The incidents of cyber bullying need lots of attention, while the research on the causes and psychological effects of cyber bullying has remained limited. This study found the integrated model that is theoretical incorporating empathy, social cognition, and model disengagement that relates to cyber bullying. Different mediation modeling shows Thesaurus arbitrate the effects of affective empathy and moral disengagement on cyber bullying anticipation. Finding of the study provides valuable information regarding effects of both proximal and distal risk factors of cyber bullying among the adolescence, highlight the relationship between moral self-regulation and normative processes, and set the basis for related educational as well as preventive interventions (Lazuras et.al., 2013). Examined effect of harassing in all structures on the psychological wellness and wellbeing of teenagers is exceptionally compelling, particularly in the view of victimizing the young generation for bullying using different new methods with innovations. The current investigation analyzed the connection between exploitation from both physical and cyber bullying and juvenile self-destructive conduct. Violent behavior, substance use, and hazardous sexual conduct tried to go between two types of harassment, digital and physical, and self-destructive conduct. The practically identical measure of the difference in self-destructive conduct represented by both cyber bullying and physical harassment underscores the significance of further cyber bullying research. The immediate relationship of each hazard conduct with self-destructive conduct likewise underscores the significance of decreasing danger practices. In addition, the job of brutality and substance use as intervening practices offers a clarification of how hazard practices can improve a young adult's probability of self-destructive conduct through the adjustment to physical agony and mental uneasiness (Litwiller and Brausch, 2013).

Those who are in the groups of cyber bully/victims show bad scores on measures of academic performance their physical health and psychological health. There have all the earmarks of being the cover between contribution in conventional bullying and cyber bullying.

Additionally, the academic, psychological, and physical relates of these types of bullying resembled one another (Kowalski et.al., 2012). With the more use of technology, the chance of cyber bullying has more increased. It is important to investigate that the rate of cyber bullying in higher education is higher and Universities and colleges are finding out more ways to reach the students over the internet and monitor their activities (Watts et.al., 2017).

Bullying among students is a recalcitrant issue in American schools; research also found that several students do not address bullying they encounter or experience, despite numerous attempts on the part of adults (Delara, 2012). 90 percent of young respondents have witnessed cyber bullying as suspects or bystanders (Wong-Lo et.al., 2011). 17.3% are the victims of bullying on the internet while 37.8% are the victims of traditional school bullies. The researchers found a significant correlation between conventional bullying and cyber bullying, though it is not perfect. Furthermore, the two forms of bullying had similar physical, psychological, and academic correlates (Kowalski & Limber, 2013). Youth who had been victims or perpetrators of conventional or cyber bullying were more likely to attempt suicide than those who had not (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). Cyber bullying distinguishes from traditional forms of bullying in that it is perpetrated utilizing technology, such as the Internet, to enhance situational anonymity (Burton et.al., 2013). Around 30% of students who are identified as somehow engaged in cyber bullying, either as victims or perpetrators; one in four students (25.7%) stated being engaged in cyber bullying as both a perpetrator and a victim in three months (Mishna et.al., 2012).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study is quantitative. The targeted population of this study is university students and conducted in the four universities of Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan. The selected universities are the University of Karachi, NED University, Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU), and Jinnah University for Women, Karachi. The sampling technique used for this study is simple random whereas the sample size is 210 participants. Through a closed-ended questionnaire employing the survey, method data collected. The data have been analyzed using SPSS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data have been analyzed into two stages using the software SPSS. In the first stage, this explained as descriptively. In this section, demographic characteristic of the participants and item analysis made. In the second stage, hypotheses tested using the chi-square test.

TABLE-1
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Demographic	Frequency	Valid Percentage
Gender		
Male	81	38.6
Female	128	61.0
Prefer not to Say	01	0.5
Age		
14 to 18	1	0.5
19 to 23	128	61.0
24 to 28	71	33.8
29 to 35	10	4.8
Qualification		
Undergraduate	115	54.8
Graduate	74	35.2
Other	21	10.0

The above-mentioned table reveals the demographic characteristics of the participants. Out of a total 210 participants, the male respondents are 81, which is 38.6% and the female participants are 128 that is the 61%. Therefore, in this survey, the female participation is more than the male. The reason behind the more involvement of the female participant that they were more interested in the topic, hence, participated in a greater proportion. Furthermore, participants of this survey are mostly the young and belonging to age groups between 19 to 23 or 24 to 28 years, who are active users of the internet and social media sites. 128 respondents found to be of the age between 19 to 23 years constituting 61% of the population of this research. Secondly, 71 youngsters are of the age group between 24 to 28 years, this consists of 33.8% of total participants. As for as, the educational background of the participants is concerned (115) 54.8%

of respondents belong to the undergraduate programs of the selected universities, while (74) 35.2% are from the graduate programs.

ITEM ANALYSIS

TABLE-2						
HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND ON SOCIAL MEDIA						
Gender		How much time do you spend on social media				Total
		Less than hour	2 to 4 hours	5 to 10 hours	Not daily	
	Male	4	40	34	3	81
	Female	7	61	58	2	128
	Prefer not to say	0	1	0	0	1
Total		11	102	92	5	210

Table 2 shows the time spend by the participants on social media. 81 male participants and 128 female participants out of 210 provided their responses. Therefore, 40 male and 61 female respondents say that they spend 2 to 4 hours daily. While 34 male and 58 female participants are of the view that they spend 5 to 10 hours daily. Only, 4 male and 7 female participants spend less than an hour, and 2 female, 3 male respectively provided their responses that they do not use social media daily.

TABLE-3				
DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CYBER LAWS IN PAKISTAN?				
Age	Do You Know about the cyber law in Pakistan			Total
	Yes	No	Somewhat	
14 to 18	1	0	0	1
19 to 23	46	47	35	128
24 to 28	30	23	18	71
29 to 35	4	3	3	10
Total	81	73	56	210

We asked the participants about the awareness of cyber laws of Pakistan and in this regard, Table 3 shows the proportion of the youth about the awareness of the cyber laws in Pakistan. Almost 46 respondents of age group between 19 to 23 years say that they know about the cyber laws and 35 say they somewhat know about the cyber laws, while the 47 do not know about the laws. Out of total 210

participants, 81 respondents have awareness of cyber laws having enforcement in Pakistani society, 56 responds found to be aware at some level while, 73 do not know about it.

TABLE-4
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CYBER BULLIED?

Gender	Have you ever been cyber bullied?			Total
	Yes	No	Maybe	
Male	22	55	4	81
Female	34	80	14	128
Prefer not to say	0	1	0	1
Total	56	136	18	210

In response to the item '*Have you ever been cyberbullied?*' The above-mentioned table No.4 shows that 56 participants, in general, agree that they have become a victim of face bullying sometimes, while 136 says they never face bullying. The remaining 18 agree that may be face bullying online had happened with them but they are not sure about this incident occurred with them. Gender wise from our participants 22 male and 34 female is of the view that face bullying once has happened with them.

TABLE-5
IF YOU HAVE BEEN CYBER BULLIED, DID YOU REPORT TO ANYONE

Qualification	If you have been cyber bullied, did you report to anyone		Total
	Yes	No	
Matric	1	0	1
Intermediate	4	8	12
Undergraduate	28	74	102
Graduate	18	56	74
Other	6	15	21
Total	57	153	210

A very important question asked from the participants if they have been cyberbullied, did they reported the same to the concerned authorities. In this perspective the aforesaid table no. 05 reveals the results of the crosstabulation and found that out of 210, only 57 respondents lodged the reports of the cyberbullying incidents at the proper channels. The rest of the participants 153 recorded their

responses as no. Therefore, data reveals that incidents of cyberbullying happen with people but most are not reported.

TABLE-6
HOW LONG WERE YOU CYBER BULLIED?

Gender	How long were you cyber bullied					Total
	Once	Few times	Repeatedly over a month	Repeatedly over a year	None	
Male	12	14	1	0	54	81
Female	21	23	0	3	81	128
Prefer not to say	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	33	37	1	3	136	210

Table 6, consists of the following question that if someone facing a bully on cyber sites, what was the frequency of it, someone is facing a bully, once in a while or few times, maybe someone faces bullying repeatedly over a month, or someone faces bullying repeatedly over a year, someone never faced it. There are 33 responses which show that they faced bullying once, 37 respondent say they faced few times. Whereas, 136 respondents say they never faced it. Only 3 participants say that they faced it repeatedly over a year. The only one participant faced cyberbullying repeatedly for over a month.

TABLE-7
HOW OFTEN DO YOU THINK CYBER BULLIED HAPPENS?

Gender	How often do you think cyber bullied happens					Total
	It happens all the time	It happens too often, but not all the time	It happens sometimes	It hardly ever happens	It never happens	
Male	15	28	22	5	11	81
Female	28	36	31	10	23	128
Prefer not to say	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	43	64	54	15	34	210

To know the point of view of the participants regarding the timings and frequency of the cyberbullying at the media of internet and in this regard Table 7 shows that 43 respondent thinks that cyberbullying happens all the time on the internet, while the 64 responses show it happens too often, 54 says it happens sometimes, 15

thinks it hardly happens while 34 says it never happens on the social sites.

TABLE-8
HAVE YOU EVER CYBER BULLIED SOMEONE?

Age	Have you ever cyber bullied someone			Total
	Yes	No	Not sure	
14 to 18	0	1	0	1
19 to 23	8	107	13	128
24 to 28	2	60	9	71
29 to 35	0	9	1	10
Total	10	177	23	210

Table no. 08 reveals the responses of the participants regarding ever the participants have personally bullied someone on the internet. Only 10 respondents say that they bullied and acted as the perpetrator of cyber bullying. On the other end, 177 participants decline that they were never bullied and 23 responses show that the participants are not sure about the act of bullying they would have committed against anyone.

TABLE-9
BASED ON YOUR OBSERVATION, IN WHICH FORUM DOES CYBER BULLYING MOST OFTEN OCCUR?

Age	Based on your own observations and experience, in what forum does cyber bullying most often occur			Total
	By text messaging, on cell phones	By social media	Other	
14 to 18	0	1	0	1
19 to 23	17	107	4	128
24 to 28	9	58	4	71
29 to 35	2	7	1	10
Total	28	173	9	210

Based on the people's observation the researchers want to find out that, how cyberbullying happens and on which platform it is in majority committed. The data reveals that 173 participants of different age groups consider social media as the largest platform where cyberbullying does occur in different forms. Whereas 28 participants are in the support of text messaging on cell phones as a platform of

cyberbullying. Only 9 participants think it is happening through other mediums.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

TABLE-10
RESULTS OF CHI-SQUARE TEST OF FIRST HYPOTHESIS

Test Statistics	
	Did you know about cyber laws in Pakistan
Chi-Square	4.657 ^a
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.097
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 70.0.	

The results of chi-square show that the P-value of this test is greater than 0.05 (i.e. 0.097) at the calculated value $\chi^2 = 4.657$ with $df = 2$. Hence, as per the result data seems to be in significant. Therefore, H_1 "The university-going students are least aware of cyber laws" is not supported by the data.

TABLE-11
RESULTS OF CHI-SQUIRE TEST OF TWO HYPOTHESIS

Test Statistics	
	Do you know how to contact cybercrime, FIA, or any law enforcement agencies
Chi-Square	78.952 ^a
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	0.000
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 52.5.	

The results of chi-square show that P-value of this test is less than 0.05 (i.e. 0.000) at the calculated value $\chi^2 = 78.952$ with $df = 3$. Hence, as per the result data is highly significant. Therefore, H_2 "The proportion of awareness regarding prevention of cyber bullying among the university going- students is high" supported by the data.

CONCLUSION

As compared to the male students, more female students participated in this study. Mostly the participants are young between

the age groups 19 to 23 or 24 to 28 years. The majority of undergraduate students of the selected universities participated in this study. The majority of the participants spend 2 to 4 hours on social media on daily basis. The survey data reveals 136 participants out of a total of 210 never faced cyberbullying. Besides, the study shows that the incidents of cyberbullying in the majority are not reported. Youngsters only tell about the incidents to parents or friends, never take the help of the Police or Cybercrime cell who are working for making cyberspace a more secure and safe place for the youngsters. 43 respondent thinks that cyberbullying happens all the time on the internet and 177 declined that they have never bullied to anyone. As per this study, social media is a large forum for cyber bullying. While, this study does not support the point of view that social media is the only forum for cyber bullying. Therefore, it can happen on other digital forums too.

Furthermore, two hypotheses tested during this study using chi-square test. H_1 hypothesis found not supported and H_2 is being supported by the data. Hence, on this basis, the study reveals that the awareness level among the youth about cyber bullying is on the least stage, although youngsters know about the cyber laws to some extent, but they cannot differentiate the bullying or harassment. Due to which they cannot find it offensive when someone bullies them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Cyber bullying incidents must be prevented by the concerned authorities need to educate the people by telling them the safety hazards of cyber bullying. Awareness sessions should arrange, academic research on this topic might further be conducted.
- The young generations who are active members of social media sites advised to confirm the source before spreading any news or if they face any kind of negative experience, they have the responsibility to register the complaint against their problem, so the law enforcement agencies can help them.

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