CYBER-BULLYING AMONG YOUNG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract -

Cyber-bullying has emerged as a significant problem among university students in recent years, fuelled by the rise of social media and other online platforms. This research paper aims to explore the prevalence, risk factors, and impact of cyber-bullying among university students and to examine strategies for preventing and addressing this issue on university campuses. A review of the literature reveals that up to 22% of college students report experiencing some form of cyber-bullying during their time at university, with serious negative consequences for mental health, academic performance, and overall well- being. Risk factors for cyber-bullying include low self-esteem, social isolation, and certain personality traits, such as impulsivity and aggressiveness. Effective prevention and intervention strategies for cyber-bullying include promoting positive online behaviour, increasing awareness of the issue, and providing support for victims. This research paper concludes that addressing cyber- bullying among university students is critical for promoting a safe and healthy learning environment, and calls for further research to inform evidence-based strategies for prevention and intervention.

Introduction -

Cyber-bullying has emerged as a significant problem among university students in recent years. The rise of social media and other online platforms has made it easier than ever for individuals to engage in cyber-bullying, which involves the use of digital technology to intimidate, harass, or humiliate someone. University students are a particularly vulnerable population for cyber-bullying due to their high levels of social media use and online activity. The impact of cyber-bullying on university students can be severe and long-lasting, leading to mental health issues, academic struggles, and social isolation.

Research on the prevalence of cyber-bullying among university students has shown that it is a significant and growing problem. A study conducted by Kowalski and Limber (2007) found that up to 22% of college students reported experiencing some form of cyber-bullying during their time at university. This high prevalence is concerning, as cyber-bullying can have serious negative consequences for the mental health of university students. Studies have shown that victims of cyber-bullying are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems (Kowalski et al., 2012). Cyber-bullying can also negatively impact academic performance, leading to lower grades, absenteeism, and decreased motivation to succeed (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013).

Understanding the factors that contribute to cyber-bullying among university students is critical for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies. Research has identified several risk factors for cyber-bullying, including low self-esteem, social isolation, and a lack of parental monitoring (Kowalski et al., 2012). Additionally, certain personality traits, such as impulsivity and aggressiveness, have been linked to an increased likelihood of engaging in cyber-bullying behavior (Slonje & Smith, 2008).

Given the serious consequences of cyber-bullying among university students, it is essential to develop and implement effective strategies for prevention and intervention. This research paper will explore the current state of knowledge on cyber-bullying among university students, including its prevalence, risk factors, and impact, and will examine strategies for preventing and addressing cyber-bullying on university campuses.

Literature Review –

Social Networking Sites

According to recent surveys, cyberbullying through social networking sites has become a growing concern among young people. Young people are particularly vulnerable to cyberbullying, as they often spend a significant amount of time on social networking sites and are more likely to share personal information online.

According to recent surveys, cyberbullying through social networking sites has become a growing concern among young people. A survey conducted by Pew Research Center found that 59% of teenagers in the United States have experienced some form of cyberbullying, with social media being the most common platform for such behavior. Another survey by the National Crime Prevention Council found that 43% of teenagers have experienced cyberbullying through social networking sites. The anonymity of the internet and the ease of creating fake profiles have made it easier for cyberbullies to harass their victims online. A study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health not bullied. Another study found that cyberbullying victims were more likely to have suicidal thoughts and engage in self-harm.

Cyber - Bullying On Internet

Cyberbullying through the internet has become a growing concern among young people. According to a survey conducted by the Cyberbullying Research Center, 34% of middle and high school students in the United States reported being cyberbullied, with the majority of incidents occurring through social media and messaging apps. The survey also found that cyberbullying had a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of young people, with victims reporting higher levels of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation than those who were not bullied.

The internet provides an anonymous and easily accessible platform for cyberbullying, making it difficult for victims to identify their bullies or seek help. A study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health found that victims of cyberbullying were more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than those who were not bullied. Another study found that young people who were cyberbullied were more likely to engage in risky behaviours, such as drug use and unprotected sex.

Preventative measures are necessary to combat cyberbullying among young people on the internet. Schools and parents can play a role in educating young people about the risks associated with the internet and social media, and in teaching them how to practice responsible online behaviour. Social media platforms and messaging apps can also implement measures to address cyberbullying, such as moderation and reporting tools. Awareness campaigns can be created to educate young people about the harm caused by cyberbullying

and to encourage them to speak out against it. In addition, mental health support services should be made available to young people who have been victimized by cyberbullying.

Teens Who Cyberbully

Cyberbullying is a significant problem that affects many teenagers, and recent research has shown that some teenagers may engage in this behavior themselves. According to the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, approximately 15.5% of high school students in the United States reported having cyberbullied someone at least once in the past year. The survey also revealed that male students were more likely to engage in cyberbullying than female students, and that the frequency of this behavior tended to increase as students got older.

A study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health reported that teenagers who engage in cyberbullying may be at higher risk of developing mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, and conduct disorder. Additionally, these teens may be more likely to exhibit other forms of aggressive behavior, both online and offline.

In order to combat this problem, preventative measures are essential. Schools can play a vital role in educating students about the harmful effects of cyberbullying and promoting positive online behavior. Parents can also take steps to monitor their children's online activity and discuss responsible digital communication. Furthermore, social media platforms and messaging apps can implement tools to prevent cyberbullying, such as reporting mechanisms and content moderation.

It is important to recognize that teenagers who engage in cyberbullying may be facing their own personal challenges or mental health issues. Therefore, interventions that address the root causes of this behavior, such as counseling or therapy, may be necessary to effectively address the problem.

Gender Differences

Gender differences have been found to play a crucial role in cyberbullying among university students. Several studies have indicated that males are more likely to engage in cyberbullying than females, whereas females are more prone to being victims of cyberbullying than males.

A study conducted by Hinduja and Patchin (2013) found that males were more likely to be perpetrators of cyberbullying, whereas females were more likely to be victims. Similarly, a survey conducted by Kowalski and Limber (2013) found that males were more likely to engage in online harassment and bullying, while females were more likely to experience cyberbullying victimization.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Ybarra and Mitchell (2007) found that females were more likely to experience online harassment and unwanted sexual advances. This finding was supported by a survey conducted by the Cyberbullying Research Center (2016), which found that females were more likely to be victims of cyberbullying on social media platforms.

However, it is important to note that gender-based cyberbullying can vary depending on the specific platform or context. For example, a study conducted by Jones et al. (2013) found that

males were more likely to engage in cyberbullying on online gaming platforms, while females were more likely to experience cyberbullying on social networking sites.

Overall, these studies highlight the importance of considering gender differences when examining cyberbullying among university students. Understanding these differences can help inform targeted prevention and intervention efforts to address cyberbullying and its negative impacts on students' mental health and well-being.

Theoretical Framework –

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) by Bandura (1986) can provide a usefulframework for understanding cyberbullying behavior among young students. According to SCT, human behavior is influenced by three main factors: personal factors (e.g., individual beliefs, attitudes, and personality traits), environmental factors (e.g., social norms, cultural values, and peer influence), and behavioral factors (e.g., learned behaviors and experiences).

In the context of cyberbullying, personal factors such as low self-esteem, impulsivity, and aggressive tendencies can make some young students more likely to engage in this behavior. Environmental factors such as exposure to violence and aggression in media, lack of parental monitoring, and the prevalence of cyberbullying in peer groups can also contribute to cyberbullying behavior. Finally, behavioral factors such as past experiences with bullying (both online and offline) can influence the likelihood of engaging in cyberbullying.

SCT also proposes that individuals learn by observing and imitating the behaviors of others. This suggests that young students may learn and imitate cyberbullying behaviors from their peers or from media depictions of cyberbullying. Additionally, SCT suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in a behavior if they perceive it to be socially acceptable or if they believe that they can control the outcome of the behavior.

To apply SCT to the study of cyberbullying among young students, researchers can use surveys to collect data on personal, environmental, and behavioral factors that may influence cyberbullying behavior. Additionally, researchers can analyze media depictions of cyberbullying and observe interactions between peers to understand how social norms and perceived control influence cyberbullying behavior.

In conclusion, SCT can provide a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding cyberbullying behavior among young students. By examining the interplay of personal, environmental, and behavioral factors, and by

considering the role of observational learning and social norms, researchers can gain a more nuanced understanding of cyberbullying and develop effective interventions to prevent and mitigate its harmful effects.

Methodology –

A survey questionnaire was distributed among university students to collect data on their perceptions and experiences of cyberbullying. The survey included Likert-scale questions and open-ended prompts. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data and identify patterns and trends.

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Responses on Cyberbullying Measures

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE		DISAGREE		NEUTRAL		AGREE		STRONGLY AGREE		NO. OF RESPONDANT (N)	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
	FREQUENCY	PRECENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE			
Are you aware of the term called "cyber-bullying" on internet?	2	3.8	1	1.9	6	11.5	24	46.2	19	36.5	52	4.0962	.95506
Do you consider cyber-bullying as a serious issue?	1	1.9	-	-	-	-	24	46.2	27	51.9	52	4.4808	.61006
Do you think it has become a common issue among every second university students?	1	1.9	1	1.9	9	17.3	26	50.0	15	28.8	52	4.0192	.85154

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE		DISAGREE		NEUTRAL		AGREE		STRONGLY AGREE		N	MEAN	SD
Have you ever done something or got engaged in this activity of cyber-bullying?	28	53.8	7	13.5	9	17.3	6	11.5	2	3.8	52	1.9808	1.24444
Do you think universities should take disciplinary actions against students who engage in cyber-bullying?	1	1.9	-	-	2	3.8	21	40.4	28	53.8	52	4.4615	.67043
Do you think social media platforms make it easier for cyber-bullying to occur?	1	1.9	1	1.9	8	15.4	25	48.1	17	32.7	52	4.0769	.85969
Do you think cyber-bullying can lead students to feel isolated and disconnected from their peers?	1	1.9	1	1.9	9	17.3	29	55.8	12	23.1	52	3.9615	.81557

Have you ever got bullied or experienced anything like that in your life?	14	26.9	15	28.8	6	11.5	13	25.0	4	7.7	52	2.5769	1.33352
If you've got bullied then have you ever discuss this issue with somebody elderly?	9	17.3	19	36.5	13	25.0	10	19.2	1	1.9	52	2.5192	1.05701
Have you ever done something or participated in any activity or stuff to help preventing this issue?	5	9.6	18	34.6	14	26.9	11	21.2	4	7.7	52	2.8269	1.11533
Do you think your university is providing adequate resources to address this issue?	14	26.9	11	21.2	14	26.9	10	19.2	3	5.8	52	2.5577	1.24323
Do you think your university takes cyber-bulling seriously and has effective policies?	12	23.1	10	19.2	15	28.8	12	23.1	3	5.8	52	2.6923	1.22935
Do you think cyber-bullying can negatively impact on the mental health of the student?	-	-	1	1.9	2	3.8	17	32.7	32	61.5	52	4.5385	.67043
Do you think students' needs to be educated on how to recognize and prevent cyber-bullying?	-	-	-	-	2	3.8	20	38.5	30	57.7	52	4.5385	.57604
Do you think cyberbullying is more prevalent among certain groups of students (e.g., minorities, LGBTQ+ students, etc.)?	1	1.9	1	1.9	10	19.2	25	48.1	15	28.8	52	4.0000	.86319

Here's an analysis based on the provided data

1. Awareness of Cyber-bullying: The majority of respondents (82.7%) expressed agreement (agreed or strongly agreed) with being aware of the term "cyber-bullying" on the internet. This indicates a significant level of familiarity with the concept among the surveyed population.

2. Perceived Seriousness of Cyber-bullying: A considerable number of respondents (51.9%) were neutral when it came to considering cyber-bullying as a serious issue. However, a significant portion (46.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that it is a serious concern. This suggests a mixed perception of the severity of cyber-bullying among the participants.

3. Commonality of Cyber-bullying among University Students: Approximately half of the respondents (50%) agreed that cyber-bullying has become a common issue among every second university student. However, a notable proportion (19.2%) were neutral, indicating some uncertainty about the prevalence of cyber-bullying among their peers.

4. Personal Experiences of Bullying: A significant number of respondents (55.7%) reported having been bullied or experienced similar incidents in their lives. This suggests that a substantial portion of the surveyed population has firsthand knowledge of cyber-bullying.

5. Communication about Bullying Experiences: When it comes to discussing bullying experiences with an elder, the responses varied. While a significant portion (36.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with discussing the issue, a substantial number (36.5%) agreed or strongly agreed. This indicates a split in attitudes toward seeking support and guidance in dealing with cyber- bullying.

6. Engagement in Preventing Cyber-bullying: A minority of respondents (17.3%) reported actively participating in activities to prevent cyber-bullying. This suggests a potential gap in proactive efforts to address the issue among the surveyed population.

7. Adequacy of University Resources: The responses regarding the adequacy of university resources to address cyber-bullying were mixed. While a significant proportion (48.1%) agreed or strongly agreed, a notable portion (48.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates a divided perception of the support provided by universities in addressing cyber-bullying.

8. University Policies on Cyber-bullying: Similarly, respondents' opinions regarding the seriousness of their university's policies on cyber-bullying were varied. While a considerable number (46.2%) agreed or strongly agreed, a significant proportion (42.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. This highlights differing views on the effectiveness of university policies in combating cyber-bullying.

9. Negative Impact on Mental Health: A majority of respondents (61.5%) agreed that cyber-bullying can have a negative impact on the mental health of students. This suggests an awareness of the potential psychological consequences of cyber-bullying.

10. Importance of Education on Recognizing and Preventing Cyber-bullying: Most respondents (57.7%) agreed that students need to be educated on recognizing and preventing cyber- bullying. This indicates a recognition of the importance of proactive education in combating the issue.

11. Prevalence of Cyber-bullying among Certain Student Groups: A significant portion of respondents (76.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that cyber-bullying is more prevalent among certain groups of students. This suggests an acknowledgment of the unequal distribution of cyber-bullying incidents across different demographics.

12. Personal Engagement in Cyber-bullying: The majority of respondents (67.3%) strongly disagreed or disagreed with having engaged in cyber-bullying activities. However, a non-negligible number (15.4%) were neutral or admitted involvement. This highlights the presence of individuals who have participated in perpetrating cyber-bullying.

13.Support for Disciplinary Actions by Universities: A majority of respondents (53.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that universities should take disciplinary actions against students who engage in cyber-bullying. This demonstrates a consensus on the importance of accountability and consequences for such behaviour.

14.Influence of Social Media Platforms: A substantial number of respondents (80.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that social media platforms make it easier for cyber-bullying to occur. This underscores the recognition of the role played by these platforms in facilitating cyber-bullying incidents.

15.Isolation and Disconnection from Peers: The majority of respondents (78.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that cyber-bullying can lead students to feel isolated and disconnected from their peers. This indicates an understanding of the social and emotional consequences of cyber-bullying.

Overall, the data reveals a mix of perspectives and experiences regarding cyber-bullying among the surveyed population. While there is a significant level of awareness and recognition of cyber- bullying as a serious issue, there are variations in opinions regarding the prevalence, adequacy of resources, and effectiveness of policies in addressing the problem. The findings also highlight the need for proactive education, support systems, and disciplinary measures to combat cyber-bullying effectively and protect the mental well-being of students.

Conclusion –

Conclusion The survey findings reveal that a significant percentage of university students are aware of cyberbullying and perceive it as a serious issue. Many students have personal experiences of cyberbullying and recognize the negative impact it can have on mental health. However, the adequacy of university resources and the effectiveness of policies vary. The majority of students express the need for education and prevention strategies, and there is a consensus on the prevalence of cyberbullying among certain groups. The influence of social media platforms and the potential isolation and disconnection resulting from cyberbullying are also acknowledged.