

Chapter 12

Cyberbullying Perception and Experience Among the University Students in Bangladesh: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the understanding of the conceptualization of the global phenomenon of cyberbullying among university students in Bangladesh. The emerging themes of this study investigate and explore the concepts of university students using their social-ecological perspective. The study's aim is to learn about the antecedents, contexts, and conditions that influence the phenomenon, and the consequences of the victims through focus group discussions (FGD). Using the thematic coding data analysis, the study findings will contribute to having an in-depth idea about the perceptions of university students. This timely needed research work will provide the South Asian point of view where a handful study was undertaken in comparison to the Global North. The novelty of this study consists to explore young people's technology abuse, which can lead to cyberbullying, in addition to finding methods to deal with cyberbullying issues if they arise. This study is intended to assist all parties including young people, parents, teachers, and other social-ecological stakeholders.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the previous decade, the global issue of cyberbullying has piqued the interest of academics. In contrast, scholars from all around the world have yet to agree on how to draw a straight line between cyberbullying and traditional bullying (Alipan et al., 2020; Chun et al., 2020; Dennehy et al., 2020; Kofoed & Staksrud, 2019; Langos, 2012; Peter & Petermann, 2018). Therefore, the simple definition of cyberbullying is a source of debate among academics. Cyberbullying has been distinguished from regular bullying in terms of conceptualization (Langos, 2012; Olweus & Limber, 2018; S. H. & J. W. Patchin, 2014; Smith et al., 2008). Although academics have characterized cyberbullying from the perspective of the Global North. This study attempts to discover how university students in South Asia perceive this phenomenon. As a consequence, the objective of this study is to discover the perception of university students in Bangladesh who are most engaged in social media. Whereas, Dhaka city has the second biggest user base of the Facebook platform (Daily Prothom Alo, 2017; The Daily Star, 2017) which ensures regular engagement with online social media and might face more unwanted cyberbullying in their day to day activities. Also, this study explores the types, reasons, and consequences of cyberbullying victims.

Different types of communication and interpersonal connections have been facilitated by the exponential development in the accessibility and use of the internet, mobile phones, and social networking sites (Ganesh & Bright, 2020; Lodhia & Stone, 2017). The cyber-world increasingly occupies a significant percentage of the lives of today's youth. Youth in the United States are expected to spend 7.5 hours per day watching the media. Today's young people are generally "active, experiential learners, natural multitaskers, using a range of digital devices and platforms simultaneously to drive their informal learning agendas" (Bittman et al., 2011, p.161).

As a result, issues like online crimes and polluted online environments are increasing among young people. According to recent studies, cyberbullying is defined as a shift from traditional forms of bullying to online ones via online and social media platforms (Donnerstein, 2021, p.35; Walters & Espelage, 2020). Regardless of the convenience that internet technologies bring, constant exposure to and engagement with them exposes users to specific online connections that may put their safety, emotional and psychological well-being in danger. One of the potential risks of relying on online technologies is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying and online harassment are significant difficulties for users of social media platforms, particularly young people, according to recent research findings (Abaido, 2020; Glazzard & Stones, 2019, p.7; Kaluarachchi et al., 2020; Siraba, 2019).

This study aims to find the understandings of the university students' perspectives of cyberbullying conceptualization in addition to their cyberbullying experiences in their university surroundings. Besides, the study explained the university students' perspective on cyberbullying from a social-ecological standpoint, such as peers, caregivers or family, academic institutions, media, and culture around their university surroundings. Importantly, the study's findings will shed light on the significance of the natural environment in the lives of cyberbullying victims, for example, the role of social-ecology when the victims are victimized and the types of cyberbullying mostly the university students face.

WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?

According to prior studies, cyberbullying begins as a joke, with occurrences such as hacking accounts (email, social media/network profile) and young people doing so for fun, but the subsequent behaviors

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