

The Impact of Cyberbullying on Female University Students of Lahore

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This study investigates the prevalence, nature, and consequences of cyberbullying among female university students in Lahore, a population increasingly exposed to digital communication and its associated risks. With expanding social media use, students encounter harassment in the form of hurtful comments (23%), impersonation (21.5%), rumor-spreading (18.3%), non-consensual image sharing (15.5%), and threats (10%). The purpose of the study was to examine how such experiences influence students' emotional wellbeing, social functioning, and academic performance, and to explore reporting behaviors alongside institutional responses. Grounded in Social Learning Theory and Stress and Coping Theory, the research explains how online behaviors are modeled and how victims psychologically appraise and respond to cyberbullying stressors. A quantitative survey design was employed, using purposive sampling to collect data from 400 female students across public and private universities. Findings revealed that 47.3% had experienced cyberbullying, with 21.3% reporting repeated victimization. Emotional impacts were notable: 25.3% felt anxious or stressed, 15.6% reported lowered self-esteem, and 10.3% experienced sleep disturbances or depressive symptoms. Academically, a smaller yet meaningful proportion (9.3%) agreed that their concentration and grades were affected. Despite these impacts, 43.8% never reported their experiences, and 56% stated their institutions provided no awareness sessions. The study recommends establishing confidential reporting systems, strengthening mental-health services, enforcing digital safety policies, and integrating cyber-ethics education into university programs to safeguard female students' wellbeing.



1. Introduction

College students are usually online while using Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, or Twitter for chatting, studying, or self-expression. These platforms will cause problems like cyberbullying, which has been defined as a repeated pattern of using technology to harass or otherwise harm one's peers (Patchin & Hinduja, 2015), authenticated through the usage of electronic text messaging, e-mail, or social media in communications. Cyberbullying, however, can be observed differently from other forms of bullying because there is an atypical norm for every case and happens at any time and reaches a wide audience quickly because of the anonymity offered to the harassing agent (Tokunaga, 2010; Slonje et al., 2013). All those potential cause of risk from harassment may lead to hate comments, trolling deploy fake accounts to spread rumors, or even blackmail with private pictures (Livingstone et al., 2017). For universities, it is different, but the margin of risk is far higher because they mostly face body shame, gender harassment, sexualized bullying, and non-consensual pornography (Citron, 2014; Henry & Powell, 2018). Such experiences lead to poor self-esteem and additional strains such as anxiety or depression, which might prevent study focus (on one or both), as well as socialization (Smith et al., 2008). Lahore is the educational capital of Pakistan and houses a plethora of females, most of whom use social media at exaggerated levels, making it one of the prime study areas on the matter of cyberbullying across Pakistan culture (Rafi, 2020). The discussion would include the nature and prevalence of cyberbullying among female students in Lahore, its effect on academic performance and social and psychological wellbeing, reasons behind underreporting, and what steps should be taken to protect the students. This chapter comprises the introduction, background-problem statements, objectives, and the significance of the study

Cyberbullying is also one of the manifestations of modernity and has massive impacts on educational, psychological and social networks of University students, especially those belonging to female categories in urban cities like Lahore. "A repeated, intentional behaviour and done through digital media, with the design or appeal, this victim would be offended (Patchin & Hinduja, 2015). Digital media, through mobile communication and internet access, and social media, give rise to a format change in customer-oriented forms of harassment and transform the two-faced-to-face into online harassment, as those continued contents would enjoy an extensive audience and may never die away entirely (Slonje & Smith, 2008).

The cultural society and the online exposure of women in Lahore pose these unique risks. Cyberbullying manifests in the form of threatening texts or posts; gossip on social media that leads to embarrassment; impersonation and false rumours leading to humiliation; the sharing of images by mutual consent that becomes weaponized during a breakup or as revenge; doxing (publishing private information); and threats. Its essential features, intended to differentiate it from other forms of aggression, are intentional, repetition, power imbalance, and the feasibility of electronic mediation to cause harm and damage against the victim (Kowalski et al., 2014; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). Growing cyber aggression is owing to its anonymous possibility, its as certain ability and persistence, through which the offense can often go viral; accessibility of the content, that is, access time; and the possible multi-mode (e.g., text, image, audio or video) representations making it all the more difficult for targets

to evade or control unwanted material (Suler, 2004).

1.1 Objectives

The main goals of this study are:

1. To measure cyberbullying in terms of frequency and severity, and compile a list of devices used to threaten the victim.
2. To identify forms of cyberbullying among female University students in the city of Lahore.
3. To explore the impact of cyberbullying on female University students in terms of social, academic, and psychological wellbeing.

2. Literature Review

Cyberbullying is said to be widespread and growing in prevalence among female university students in Pakistan, with findings suggesting that at least 65% experienced social networking site abuse in the usual forms of frequent use of Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and others. The survey findings showed that in the schools, girls were more likely to be victimized than boys, under the projection of gender socialization, socializing perspective, and society's outlook. However, relative prevalence is not well studied, and how temporal variation in exposure may affect constructs such as HF support, academic engagement/motivation, emotional regulation, or confidence has not been considered. This study seeks to fill this gap by studying the impact of the frequency of cyberbullying on emotional adjustment and academic engagement, specifically among female University students from Lahore.

Hussain & Fatima studied how primary types of cyberbullying comprised body shaming, impersonation through fake accounts, and blackmail. According to Khan and Abdullah (n.d.), gender-based cyber harassment is one important finding from the study that female students are being harassed due to the threat of such exposure, such as negative comments passed against their physical appearance or personality-defaming stories. This study did not quantify emotional or behavioral indicators because it was based primarily on anecdote and, therefore, will contribute to the enhancement of gendered tendencies.

Javed and Saleem (2023) state, "the trend of cyber stalking consisting stalking to surveillance via messaging and visits to a web-based platform and listening through digital medium said to have grown far gigantically among university aged urban women in Pakistan. The victims reported being highly paranoid and anxious, with the fear that everyone was talking about their worth behind their back." With respect to the impact of cyber stalking, it does not address learning performance, classroom participation, and similar issues. The present study fills this gap by examining the effects of continuous online surveillance on academic attendance, communication, and self-efficacy within a school-based context.

In Malik Iqbal (2024), it has been reported that "Online Impersonation by infrequent users has become one of the most common forms of bullying, which includes using names of even female students to spread rumors on the Internet or edited pictures." This research also



brought to light the discovery of emotional pain and fear of loss of reputation, not self-assuredness in learning or group task preference due to impersonation; hence, this paper uses measures that are more quantifiable rather than anecdotal evidence as far as the relationship between impersonation and its connection with reduced student confidence in peers and in academic involvement.

In other similar studies, Khan and Ali (2024) had reported on the strong positive relationship of cyberbullying with anxiety, while this construct also highlighted sleep disturbance and emotional instability among female students in Lahore. They, however, await the long-awaited results of the study, framed by the study's huge limitations and narrow generalizability, given that only 35 patients were used in this study. This research expanded the scope with a greater sample, besides using other more competent measures in assessing psychological distress and academic behavior.

Brown and Davis (2023) discovered that when youths become overly exposed to Cyberbullying, they may easily fall into depression, emotional weariness, and lack of motivation. This study was Western but did not incorporate culturally specific contexts regarding the gender issue in South Asia. There is sparse information concerning depression arising from cyberbullying among female University students in Lahore, Pakistan, under cultural aspects and reputation ramifications.

Rafiq and Ahmed (2025) state that "It directly hurt self-esteem so even informants continued with long run with the self-worth issues." Their study explored general adolescent community populations rather than specific University contexts. This study focuses on the impact of reduced self-esteem through cyberbullying on female university students in academics and in their social lives at the campus level.

According to the research results by Ahmad and Yousaf, cyberbullying ruined the understanding and trust of classmates to the level that they even started fearing engaging, sharing ideas, or working on group assignments. However, it still stated some aspects of the relationship and did not directly connect trust to academic performance. The present analysis will explore how distrust negatively affects class participation, group projects, and academic performance of female students in Lahore.

Fatima and Qureshi (2025) found a lack of Reporting Systems, counseling, and support from the University authorities for victims of cyberbullying in Pakistani universities. But their analysis did not examine student outcomes. It is without effective support, to which this study refers, that sustained emotional problems, academic collapse, and future liabilities are connected among female students residing in Lahore.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework lays out the categories to be studied in the research and the on female students of Lahore University through two theories, which explain the phenomenon of cyberbullying and the transaction process on the part of victims- Social Learning Theory and Stress Coping theory. These theories, in general, explain not just how such bullying behaviors are generalized, but also how psychological responses are adopted

by victimized students in this regard.

2.3 Social Learning Theory

After Bullying, Bandura in 1977 proposed social learning theory, which posits that a person acquires certain behavior through observation and imitation of others in society. All of this is on social media, with students observing one another day in and day out online. The way they speak and comment, ruin and mock, shame and threaten one another on WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. I feel students who view cyberbullying do not even see appropriate modeling whereby such bullies achieve high degrees of admiration, likes, or support toward such activities that suggest imitating what they did out of their reasoning, that it is okay, and something to be copied.

Recent data increasingly push this trend with evidence of imitation behavior among younger members, who emulate behaviors observed in their peer group and normalize the phenomenon of cyberbullying at the University level (Hussain & Fatima, 2025; Khan & Abdullah, 2024). This study would partially support Social Learning Theory, as it explains the high prevalence of cyber victimization among students in Lahore, with a greater tendency towards more malevolent acts. It illustrates that Internet harassment, body-shaming, and impersonations are not born instinctively. Rather, they are behaviors that we learn from friends and the media.

2.3.1 Stress and Coping Theory

Thus, proclaims Lazarus and Folkman (1984): Stress and Coping Theory, from which it may be understood that the worth of stress-standards may be evaluatively emphasized by people seeing threat in such instances across contexts or situational settings. However, different tool sets could be applied to minimize emotion. For female University students, cyberbullying is obviously a very serious psychological stress, since it basically strikes at their reputation, self-esteem, and popularity. A prospective student would first evaluate the threat (primary appraisal) and subsequently assess how she would respond to it (secondary appraisal) upon experiencing cyber victimization.

Recent research indicates that cyberbullying is a significant contributor to high anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and decreased focus on academic study for girls who apply maladaptive coping styles. Against this background, the theory of stress and coping serves as an overarching framework through which to dissect the impacts of cyberbullying on the emotional precursors to school engagement and behaviors of adolescents, laying bare the intricate mechanisms employed by students in dealing with experiences of online victimization.

These theories were potent cross-fertilizers to be able to allot themselves into a proper culturally relevant framework while analyzing the developmental process of cyberbullying and its effects on female students and collective coping strategies on emotional and academic outcomes associated with such experiences within the higher education environment at Lahore.

2.4 Hypotheses

H1: Cyberbullying has a huge impact on the mental wellness of female university students in Lahore.

H2: The relationship between cyberbullying and overall academic engagement and performance of students is negative among the female University population.

H3: An increased cyberbullying experience positively predicts social behavior and self-efficacy among female University students.

3. Research Methodology

In the chapter, we examined approaches through which a research study can be conducted on cyberbullying and its impact on female University students of Lahore, Research Design, Population to be studied, sampling technique, sample size, data collection tool (method of data collection), operational definition, measures/assessments, method of analysis, and ethical consideration. These are meant to permit the study to be replicated by offering a methodological and transparent summary of how research was performed, by whom, for what purpose, and in what manner.

3.1 Research Design

Given the survey approach taken here, the research design is clearly quantitative. Quantitative studies are concerned with gathering numerical data from large numbers of participants, enabling statistical analysis of trends and patterns (Creswell, 2014). Such constructs work very well in exploring how often, in what form, and the emotional effects and academic implications of a girl's cyber victimization are being explored within a University population. One good reason for a survey is that it provides a means to collect information easily and systematically from a larger population presumed to be capable of accurately reporting on your study variables.

3.2 Population of the Study

It is this group of female University students currently studying in Lahore who seemed to be most affected. Such groups are particularly prone to cyberbullying because they usually form quite strong social networks, Dawood et. al, 2020 in this regard. Virtual harassment types in the local context of body image and reputation, personal privacy can have a more detrimental impact on girls as students. Lahore itself has its history, as a city with a longer history than any other educational city in Pakistan, and with students from all kinds of economic strata and cultural diversities, which could give a very good opportunity to see how children in Pakistan experience are likely to encounter cyberbullying in their emotional, relational, and academic lives.

3.3 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method used when the nature of the study does not allow all respondents to participate (Etikan et al., 2016). Consequently, the inclusion criteria were: any female college student between 18 and 26 years of age who used social platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok. Further, participants

were required to be victims or witnesses of cyberbullying at least once so that the sampling could better represent the population for whom the impacts of online harassment are severe. Such criteria should provide both substantial and truthful data relevant to the goals of this research.

3.4 Sample Size

The study's power among students. A collection of 400 students provides a sufficient number (qualitative and statistical) to judge from. To promote some diversity, we have selected public and private universities in Lahore, which include the University of the Punjab, Kinnaird College for Women, University of Management and Technology (UMT), and Lahore College for Women University (LCWU).

3.5 Data Collection Tool

In the study, a structured questionnaire was developed for data collection. It used a Five-Point Likert Scale (Likert, 1932) as a measurement scale for comparing attitudes, experiences, and perceptions. A 20-item measure of general topics about specific aims: frequency and type of cyber victimization, emotional and psychological consequences, academic performance, and social isolation or exclusion, and coping strategies, self-esteem/confidence. This approach was successful in data collection, as respondents were open and honest in their responses.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Results

Table No 1: Age

Variables	n	Percentage
15–18	37	9.3
19–22	246	61.5
23–26	70	17.5
Above 26	47	11.8

The age distribution generally reflects that most participants in this study are female undergraduate students aged from late teens to early twenties, that is, between 17 and 23 years old at entry to a University. The early distribution is very crucial as far as modeling is concerned, regarding the age at which cyberbullying is negatively associated with the

University of Lahore.

Table No 2: Level of Education

Variables	n	Percentage
Intermediate (F.A/F.Sc)	122	30.5
Undergraduate (B.A/B.Sc)	192	48.0

Postgraduate (M.A/M.Sc/M.Phil)	74	18.5
Other	12	3.0

Table 2 presents the academic level of the 400 female undergraduates. Of the above, 48.0% of respondents have a B.A./B.Sc undergraduates. This is the category of students spending the longest in higher education institutions and are likely to form the most exposed population in all kinds of online contacts, particularly online academic social interactions and leisure interactions with digital means; hence, they are more likely to suffer from cyberbullying victimization.

Table No 3: Institution Type

Variables	n	Percentage
Government College/University	198	49.5
Private College/University	155	38.8
Semi-Government	46	11.5
Other	1	.3

Table 3 Distribution of respondents by the type of organization where they studied in Lahore. Field Data (2025). The Poll shows that 49.5% female students were admitted to government colleges and universities. Table 4.1.4 shows the distribution pattern as per evidence from the field survey.

Table No 4: Area of Residence in Lahore

Variables	n	Percentage
Urban (e.g., Gulberg, DHA, Johar Town)	192	48.0
Suburban (e.g., Township, Wahdat Road)	146	36.5
Rural/Outskirts	62	15.5

Table no 4 shows the place of residence among respondents in Lahore. It was found that 48.0% respond to terms on city sides, such as Gulberg, DHA, Johar Town. Therefore, when such a student lives in these areas, he or she will spend much time being online and thus get much exposure to social networking opportunities and acts of cyberbullying. 36.5% of respondents lived in fringe locales such as Township and Wahdat Road. 15.5% were also from Lahore, but had a rural background or came from its peripheries.

Table No 5: Regular access to the Internet

Variables	n	Percentage
Yes	380	95.0
No	20	5.0

To generalize the implications of these findings, it is evident that Internet access is readily available to almost all female University students in Lahore, making it significant to explore the impact of cyberbullying on such tech-savvy learners.

Table No 6: Platform Most Frequently

Variables	n	Percentage
WhatsApp	169	42.3
Instagram	68	17.0
Facebook	36	9.0
TikTok	32	8.0
Snapchat	41	10.3
Twitter/X	17	4.3
YouTube	37	9.3

The distribution of respondents by the social media they mainly use to follow (other) is given in Table no 6, up to the categories below. Worth noting above all is that chatting online with someone seems to be mostly done on WhatsApp (42.3%), more than on any other platform. Instagram is the second most popular space (N=17.0% respondents).

Table No 7: Experienced Cyberbullying

Variables	n	Percentage
Yes	189	47.3
No	211	52.8

The table shows the responses of female students of the University in Lahore regarding cyberbullying. From the collected data, it was confirmed that more than 47.3% of female University students in Lahore became victims of cyberbullying, while around 52.8% went on to counter with counterclaims.

Table No 8: Experienced Cyberbullying in the past 12 Months

Variables	n	Percentage
Never, Rarely (1–2 times)	173	43.3
Sometimes (3–5 times)	137	34.3
Often (6–10 times)	63	15.8
Very Often (more than 10 times)	21	5.3

The data on infliction of cyberbullying in the past 12 months among female University students of Lahore are provided in Table 4.1.8. A little over half of the teachers surveyed (56.7%) indicated infrequently (1-2 times) or never being victims of cyberbullying,

Table No 9: Face Cyberbullying Repeatedly (More Than Once)

Variables	n	Percentage
Strongly disagree	97	24.3
Disagree	115	28.7
Neutral	103	25.8
Agree	78	19.5
Strongly agree	7	1.8

A number of those who have been cyber bullied repeatedly or who were scared to defend themselves against those who might attack them are shown in Table 4.1.9. From the figure, it can be seen that 28.7% disagreed, whereas 24.3% strongly disagreed; that is, more than half of the female University students (53%) do not experience cyberbullying.

Table No 10: Form(s) of Cyberbullying have Experienced

Variables	n	Percentage
Hurtful comments/messages	92	23.0
Spreading rumors online	73	18.3
Sharing embarrassing photos/videos without consent	62	15.5
Threats or intimidation	40	10.0
Exclusion from group chats	6	1.5
Impersonation (fake accounts)	86	21.5
Sexual harassment (unwanted advances, morphed images)	28	7.0
Other	13	3.3

Lahore shows that the female academy students are all subject to all forms of e-bullying. The highest percentage of respondents, 23.0% reported being bullied with mean or harsh comments/posts. This could spell verbal abuse as perhaps the most visible form of cyber bullying, highlighted by the communication style, harmful or abusive, as another prevalent form of harassment, on the face of funny by both high-profile (no accountability) mobile messaging apps and some well-known social media platforms.

Table No 11: Primary Perpetrator

Variables	n	Percentage
Classmate	81	20.3
Friend	137	34.3
Stranger	63	15.8
Ex-partner	28	7.0
Family member	1	.3
Unknown person	90	22.5
Other	137	34.3

In a careful perusal of Table, no 11, it became clear that among female University students in Lahore, friends occupy the topmost ranking of being the leading factors of cyber-bullying (34.3%).

Table No 12: Report the Cyberbullying to Anyone

Variables	n	Percentage
Yes	225	56.3
No	175	43.8

This examines whether the respondents discussed their experiences of cyberbullying/harassment with someone known, which is also presented in Table 12. The outcome shows that 56.3% of female students from universities in Lahore admit to having reported such cases, while 43.8% did not.

Table No 13: Anxious or Stressed because of Cyberbullying

Variables	n	Percentage
Strongly disagree	82	20.5
Disagree	48	12.0
Neutral	169	42.3
Agree	56	14.0
Strongly agree	45	11.3

Table 13 illustrates how participants emotionally felt in reaction to the experience of

cyberbullying and whether they experienced anxiety or stress regarding an episode that was linked to UKB. An additional 42.3% of respondents expressed neutral opinions

Table No 14: Affected my Academic Performance (e.g., concentration, grades)

Variables	n	Percentage
Strongly disagree	80	20.0
Disagree	108	27.0
Neutral	175	43.8
Agree	17	4.3
Strongly agree	20	5.0

The table 14 gives perception issues about the influence that cyberbullying has on academic performance- concentration, grades, and class work.

Table No 15 Avoided using Social Media after the Incident

Variables	n	Percentage
Strongly disagree	116	29.0
Disagree	130	32.5
Neutral	119	29.8
Agree	31	7.8
Strongly agree	4	1.0

Findings are then representative of the majority of non-participation in SNS use for a time after those events. Boasting a high 61.5%, those who were still using the device proved to have some 29.0% strongly disagreeing with their assertion, and a further 32.5% holding less outright disagreement with the statement.

Table No 16: Lowered my Self-Esteem or Confidence

Variables	n	Percentage
Strongly disagree	109	27.3
Disagree	69	17.3
Neutral	160	40.0
Agree	43	10.8
Strongly agree	19	4.8

Table 16 would indicate how respondents perceived changes in self-esteem or a

decrease in confidence when incidents of cyberbullying occurred, notably, the response options. Neither agree nor disagree' had one of the more significantly received ratings and seems to show an indeterminate position by the respondents as to whether cyberbullying could impact their confidence

Table No 17 Experienced Sleep Disturbances or Depression

Variables	n	Percentage
Strongly disagree	136	34.0
Disagree	106	26.5
Neutral	117	29.3
Agree	25	6.3
Strongly agree	16	4.0

Interviewees reported experiencing sleep problems or depressive symptoms by means of cyberbullying in (Table No 17). Findings suggested that most of the participants sampled did not witness these mental health conditions [34.0% strongly disagreed and 26.5% disagreed that cyberbullying was related to sleep/depressive symptoms]. So, the net 60.5% allows speculation that either most were able to cope with negative online experiences or did not find them too serious to affect their psychological wellbeing.

Table No 18: Felt unsafe even in Physical Spaces (College/Home)

Variables	n	Percentage
Strongly disagree	130	32.5
Disagree	92	23.0
Neutral	129	32.3
Agree	27	6.8
Strongly agree	22	5.5

The data reveal that, when analyzed, most students are not registering any form of unfocused fear regarding accidents outside Cybersecurity. Almost 45.3% felt unsafe on their campuses upon being cyber victimized, while 32.5% strongly disagreed, and another 23.0% disagreed that they felt safe among people outside their homes after being victimized online.

Table No 19: Affected my Relationships with Friends/Family

Variables	n	Percentage
Strongly disagree	105	26.3
Disagree	94	23.5
Neutral	109	27.3
Agree	87	21.8
Strongly agree	5	1.3

Table No 19 contains the reported opinions of respondents on their relations with friends and family due to cyberbullying. The data were quite clear: most students did not feel that online bullying had overtly affected their personal relationships. About 26.3% of them completely

disagreed, while 23.5% disagreed on the idea that their relationships have, to a large extent, been negatively affected by cyberbullying behavior (Figure 6).

Table No 20: Seek Professional Help (counselor, psychologist) due to Cyberbullying

Variables	n	Percentage
Yes	123	30.8
No	234	58.5
Prefer not to say	43	10.8

Based on the perception of results, 58.5% of participants reported that they never sought a professional. Existing page 4 of 29 indicates that the majority of female University students in Lahore choose to handle their emotional aftermath on their own or through informal sources such as friends and family. It is also consistent with cultural stigma or lack of knowledge about counseling resources, as well as the presence or absence of psychological services at a specific university.

Table No 21: Aware of Pakistan's Cybercrime Laws (e.g., PECA 2016)

Variables	n	Percentage
Yes	196	49.0
No	142	35.5
Prefer not to say	62	15.5

All in all, female undergraduates in Lahore have moderate knowledge of the law. The perception of being a safe place for browsing should at least be maintained within universities. They would need to offer cyberspace law awareness and digital literacy workshops (Les et al. 2014) through collaboration between the University and FIA to raise students' awareness of their rights, responsibilities, and legal instruments against cyberbullying. The fight against cyberbullying is needed to avert its recurrence (Les et al., 2016).

Table No 22: Institution Conducted any Awareness Sessions on Cyberbullying

Variables	n	Percentage
Yes	134	33.5
No	224	56.0
Prefer not to say	42	10.5

Thirty-three and a half percent of the persons interviewed reported having attended some school-instituted information dissemination sessions on cyberbullying. Such are the healthy signs that some universities/colleges in Lahore are taking measures to educate and sensitize their students on responsible Internet use. Funding, albeit late, for cyberbullying awareness is good to see.

4.2 Testing of Hypotheses

H1: Cyberbullying has a huge impact on the mental wellness of female university students in Lahore.

The impact of connectivity is being emphasized to find its significance through in- depth reporting before corroborating news accounts with direct speech reports between a range of 4" and 6". More specifically, the comparatively higher frequencies and percentile values ascribed to each marker (Anxiety/stress/self-esteem/depression) in Tables 13, 16, and 17 below indicate descriptions of distance with respect to those aspects possibly indicating how health-related problems from cyberbullying were affecting almost one-quarter (25-30%) of respondents registered across all four markers: 'I feel uncomfortable when I read online messages directed to me.', 'I fear that someone will insult me or embarrass me with a comment/a status posting in social media like Facebook, Twitter' (Table 4, p. 1).

They said that they had "closed" within. Some more appeared to be indifferent and neutral in the short term, but were likely to become sympathetic towards the emotional burden on the victim; this evidence and supports the hypotheses. Thus, there is support for H1. The findings reveal that cyberbullying seriously endangers the mental health and wellbeing of female University students in Lahore.

H2: The relationship between cyberbullying and overall academic engagement and performance of students is negative among the female University population.

More specifically, Tables 14 and 15 outcomes indicated that a considerable percentage of students had a hard time focusing on classes and reduced student motivation in academic life following the extent of exposure (after being victimized by cyber-bullying). For most students, directly on their studies would probably have some modest effect, since a constant minority of about 10%-15% (from an N of 810) report from less Effect to perfect connections with previous research on academic engagement. Accordingly, in the most direct manner, cyberbullying impairs educational progress. The indirect effect comes to learning, as this is impaired by the interference of cyberbullying in sleep and emotion regulation. Therefore, support for H2 stands, as we showed that cyberbullying hampers academic engagement and achievement for quite a good number of females.

H3: An increased cyberbullying experience positively predicts social behavior and self-efficacy among female University students.

Some students' social status and self-efficacy regarding the outlook on cyberbullying. On the other hand, some have had their relationships and self-esteem shattered by cyberbullying. In contrast, others have escaped via different means: by being online or by finding professional or emotionally supportive company in the presence of social media. Moreover, we have seen a reasonable amount of evidence that most victims developed their adaptive strategies and reflexivity while navigating online contexts. If data reveal an increasing positive relationship linking exposure to cyberbullying with these adaptive coping strategies and higher self-efficacy, higher awareness of online boundaries may or may not influence this relationship. So, H3 supports partially: the results indicate that a heightened exposure just to cyberbullying

among students is predictive of adaptation and self-esteem benefits for some students.

4.3 Discussion

The current research focused on the impact of cyberbullying on psychological wellbeing, academic achievement, and social adjustment among female University students in Lahore; recruitment was made with 400 respondents across various universities, whether public or private/semi-government, and found evidence. It also shows cyberbullying as an essential point of concern in this sample, impacting students emotionally, academically, and behaviorally. The following dialogue includes notes on key descriptive statistics and the results of hypothesis testing.

The conclusion was that cyberbullying had an impact on psychological wellbeing and study style, and friendship with female University students in Lahore. H1.1 portion of the hypothesis was first partially proved, as it became noticeable that some of the victims suffered more than others (anxiety, emotional distress, and less confidence in performance). The second hypothesis was then supported, as a negative predictor of cyberbullying was shown to reduce academic engagement. Partial support was seen for hypothesis three since some victims exhibited adaptive functioning and some small resilience after the sad events.

In summary, the study stressed the immediate need for awareness campaigns on institutional services for mental health support and legal sensitization at large among the Lahore universities. Open discussions about Internet safety will undoubtedly be among the most effective components for reducing the rates and impacts of cyberbullying, with the establishment of reporting procedures and the acquisition of knowledge on responsible online citizenship being other vital aspects. The findings significantly advanced understanding of the psychosocial realities of young women in higher education in Pakistan and underscored the shared responsibility of educational institutions, policymakers, and digital platforms to create safer online spaces for female University students.

5. Conclusion

Cyberbullying affected approximately half (47.3%) of the respondents, at least once; in fact, that proportion is more representative of the online harassment faced by young females. The primary of these was hateful comments, identity performances, and rumor-mongering extensions of regular behaviors on social media, weaponized for use against subjects. The most frequent sources of them were classmates or friends, or known people to the youths, thus clarifying that online aggression comes mostly from offline social relationships and is far from being a consequence of encounters with absolutely unknown people.

This showed one of the adverse effects of cyberbullying on the mental health of individuals. People who get to this are anxious and nervous with a lot of self-doubt after exposure to certain aspects. In most cases, though not as severe as Paul and Lesley-Hawkins' experience, they reported feeling distressed. Still, they admitted to significant amounts of emotional exhaustion, sleep difficulty, and fear of being judged unfairly. Its bearing on Hypothesis 1 is somewhat supportive, as it does support the statement that cyberbullying affects the psychological wellbeing of female undergraduates.



Results also show a small relationship between the different dimensions of cyberbullying and social behavior. A few players have become even shyer, more suspicious, and guarded in their communication with strangers, while others have become emotionally challenging, digitally literate, and assertive in online conversation. These partial findings partially supported Hypothesis 3; i.e., exposure to cyberbullying strengthened adaptive coping among some participants, thereby improving self-efficacy and enhancing emotion regulation.

And while it was psychologically challenging for them, very few would actually totally quit using the social media sites. More than 60% continued to use those sites well after their incidents, giving insight into just how deeply attached people are to the ways lives interlace with the digital world, with a much smaller segment taking a hiatus to recuperate emotionally or reduce their risk.

In short, cyberbullying has numerous and quite complex effects on psychological complaints, academic achievement, and social relations. This would also embody students' resistance to online assaults. The presence of reactionary behavior among a subset of respondents suggests that potential avenues for change include awareness, education, and social networks.

The findings indicated that preventive education on cyber-ethics and mental health support would be among the prevention strategies in the University setting in Lahore.

Another session that would expand students' knowledge base on cyber laws and confidentiality reporting mechanisms in this area will also be included, along with easy access to counseling services, which may facilitate or even increase students' responses (in dealing with) cyberbullying. Working with FIA Pakistan will also enable and contribute knowledge that will be created at grassroots levels with young college students, helping them know what abuse is and report it confidently online by understanding the PECA 2016 Act.

5.1 Limitations

- The sample included female University students in Lahore; hence, findings cannot be generalized to male participants or those from other cities or provinces in Pakistan.
- Data collection methods were mostly done through self-reports, which may have some bias due to respondents being unwilling to discuss their private or potentially embarrassing matters about cyberbullying experiences.
- Being cross-sectional means data was collected at only one point in time, making it impossible to gain any understanding of the long-term psychological or behavioral effects of cyberbullying.

5.2 Recommendations

- Integrate cyberbullying awareness into University matters through orientation sessions and campus events involving student leaders on the safe use of the internet, including privacy settings, and later options for reporting incidents.
- Offer a professional therapy service coupled with counseling for all cyber-



bullying victims in different universities, and it will include those who have encountered bigger anxiety issues, stress, and self-esteem issues.

- Encourage holding periodic workshops and talks on the Laws of Cyber Crime in Pakistan (PECA 2016) to embed legal awareness in students and encourage early reporting of cybercrimes.

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