

Research Paper

## Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency

Garima Tyagi<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Amit<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Over the past 20 years, social media has made communication easier between people. But the convenience of always being online can also result in issues like Social Media Addiction and Cyberbullying. Present study looks at the connections between a sample of respondents' gender, Social Media Addiction, and Cyberbullying. The Cyberbullying Scale (Parker, 2016) and the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (Andreassen et al., 2016) were the instruments utilized. 150 participants (N=150) from reputable universities in the Delhi NCR made up the entire sample. Both male and female students were taken into consideration, and the participants ranged in age from 18 to 30 years. Random sampling was the basis for the sampling. The result revealed that there is a weak positive correlation between Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction which means, there is a slight tendency for scores to rise together, which suggests it most likely happened by coincidence. There may be additional variables influencing Cyberbullying that are not included in the analysis. The finding also revealed significant gender differences with males reporting higher levels of Social Media Addiction and Cyberbullying than the other gender. The study does have certain limitations, though. Our capacity to determine causal relationships and comprehend the dynamic interplay over time is limited by the cross-sectional design. The accuracy and dependability of the results are impacted by potential biases introduced by the use of self-reported measures. Moreover, the size and makeup of the sample may restrict how broadly the findings can be applied.

**Keywords:** *Cyberbullying, Social Media Addiction, Gender*

Over the past ten years, social networking site usage has dramatically increased, particularly among youth. Social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook have deeply embedded themselves into the daily lives of individuals. Globally, there are 4.66 billion active internet users, or 60% of the world's population. The majority of these users are from Asia. As per the findings of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission Internet Users Survey, the percentage of internet users in the nation increased from 76.9% in 2016 to 87.4% in 2018. According to the same survey, there were 24.6 million social networking users in Malaysia, with Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube being the most popular social networking sites. The widespread adoption of

<sup>1</sup>B.Sc. Psychology, 2nd year, Department of Psychology, School of Health Sciences, Sushant University

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, School of Health Sciences, Sushant University.

\*Corresponding Author

Received: January 10, 2025; Revision Received: March 28, 2025; Accepted: March 31, 2025

## **Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency**

technology has led to the emergence of problematic internet-related behaviours, like addiction to social media and Cyberbullying (Lee et al., (2023).

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying that occurs online, such as through text messages or social media, and is carried out through the use of technology. Another definition of Cyberbullying is an aggressive, persistent, and purposeful act of harming someone else by contacting them electronically over an extended period of time (Lee et al., 2023). It might include spreading untruths about people, isolating, and making fun of them. Without having to speak in person, we can still communicate with one another over the Internet. Even though we don't meet in person, some people might verbally argue or have divergent viewpoints. It could then use social media, text messaging, email, and other channels to express their unhappiness and even to harass, abuse, and bully others.

The growing prevalence of the network has also led to an increase in the severity of Cyberbullying, an emerging behaviour. Cyberbullying can have a terrible effect on teens' physical and mental health; it can cause heartbreak, embarrassment, humiliation, and marginalization, as many scholars have recently come to realize (Huang et al., 2021). These days, a lot of people live in the digital age where cyberbullying and victimization are commonplace. (Ding et al., 2020). Cyberbullying is the practice of using fake identities, profiles, and social media platforms to harass, threaten, and annoy other people. Many of these behaviours include social exclusion and isolation, sharing private information about others, making threats and spreading rumours (Cerit et al., 2021).

Cyberbullying is a serious public health issue that has spread throughout the globe in correlation with the use of social media. It can result in behavioural and mental health issues as well as a higher risk of suicide. Individuals who have experienced bullying may exhibit issues like altered sleeping and eating patterns, disinterest in hobbies and pastimes, decreased social skills, and acts of physical aggression towards both themselves and others. Additionally, Cyberbullying may result in circumstances that have a major negative impact on the quality of life of young people, including a variety of anxiety and mood disorders, a decline in academic success, and absenteeism (Kelly et al., 2016).

### **Social Media Addiction**

Addiction is defined as "a dependence, on a behaviour or substance that a person is powerless to stop"; at the point, the behaviour is problematic media use, and occasionally the behaviour and the dependence are used in place of one another (Olendorff et al.,1999). Dependence is a psychological state. Based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV (DSM-IV) addiction criteria (Yücens et al., 2018) study found no distinctions between "chemical" and "behavioural" addiction. Dependency on social media can result in significant mood swings, unfavourable outcomes, and excessive time expenditures (Yücens et al., 2018).

It begins primarily as a habit and eventually distorts into psychological dependence. Users may experience feelings of loneliness and decreased productivity (Wang et al., 2015). Social Media Addiction is defined as the inability to control one's use of social media and disruption of social and academic functions as a result of that use (Ryan et al., 2014). Strong motivation or an inner compulsion to use social media that leads to dysfunctional outcomes like failure in work or school, a decline in psychological well-being, or a breakdown in

## **Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency**

social relationships is known as Social Media Addiction (Andreassen et al., 2015). The traits or requirements of SMA are very similar to those of internet addiction: Those with high SMA scores frequently use social media to avoid unpleasant emotions and issues in their personal lives; the obsession over using social media excessively (salience); their use of social media gradually increases and their level of satisfaction from using it gradually decreases (tolerance); that display withdrawal symptoms, such as becoming agitated and bored when people are unable to use social media (withdrawal); and struggle to control, cut back, or outgrow their use of social media (relapse); their use of social media negatively impacts their psychological well-being, physical well-being, and interpersonal relationships (Andreassen et al., 2014). Given the data, it is hypothesized that, similar to internet usage, social media use can become problematic for certain people.

That is to say, some people's use of social media may escalate to the point of addiction. Furthermore, harmful consequences and an inability to exercise self-control over social media use are characteristics that set apart individuals with high and low SMA scores. (Andreassen, 2015). University students face a variety of stressors, including pressure from their studies as well as additional life challenges like moving away from home, taking care of oneself, and making new friends. As a result, students may overuse social media as a way to decompress and forget about their everyday issues. Other factors contributing to increased social media use include feeling more at liberty online and the variety of social media platforms available on mobile devices (Brailovskaia et al., 2019).

According to Kemp (2017), over 73% of internet users globally are active on social media. Globally, there are projected to be approximately 3.09 billion social media users by the end of 2021 (Statista, 2020). The most widely used social media platforms in 2020 are Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Whatsapp, TikTok, QQ, QZone, Sina Weibo, Reddit, Snapchat, Twitter, and Pinterest (Buluk et al., 2017). Facebook is the most widely used social media platform currently in use. It has over 2.3-2.41 billion monthly active users and over 1.5 billion daily users (Andreassen et al., 2013). Recently, Instagram surpassed one billion monthly active users, the great majority of whom use the app daily (Casale et al., 2020).

In summary, the discussion of Social Media Addiction and Cyberbullying lays the groundwork for a critical analysis of the interrelated problems suffering our digital society. By drawing attention to the negative impacts of Cyberbullying and the compulsive nature of social media, these contemporary issues force us to examine them in greater detail. To promote a safer and healthier online environment for everyone, it is essential to address these issues with empathy, awareness, and proactive measures. By working together, one may reduce the harmful effects of Social Media Addiction and Cyberbullying, promote digital well-being, and foster a more positive online culture.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Abaido et al., (2019) purpose to investigate how common Cyberbullying is among Arab college students, as well as its types and locations, and how people feel about reporting it as opposed to keeping quiet about it. 200 students in the United Arab Emirates provided the data. 91% of the study participants confirmed that Cyberbullying occurs on social media, with Facebook (38%) and Instagram (55.5%) being the most common platforms. Proactive measures, more stringent legal actions, and smartphone applications are discussed.

## **Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency**

Alfaray et al., (2020) looked into relationship between Social Media Addiction and social media bullying. A cross-sectional observational analytical study involving 1403 participants was carried out. On Instagram, the samples were gathered through a series of samplings. The standard Social Media Disorder (SMD) Scale was utilized to assess Social Media Addiction, and a self-made questionnaire was used to gauge the experience of being bullied. For young people in Indonesia, there is a strong link between Social Media Addiction and having experienced Cyberbullying. Future studies are required to assist governments in preventing Social Media Addiction, which has been linked to bullying.

Arpaci et al., (2020) examine whether Cyberbullying and internet addiction are significantly less likely to occur when individualism is vertical, and whether Cyberbullying and addiction are significantly less likely to occur when individualism is horizontal. Using a convenience sampling technique, 665 college students in total were chosen, and people voluntarily took part in the research. The age range of the participants was 17-19 years. 203 men were psychology, instructional technology, sciences, mathematics and others. Cyberbullying, internet addiction, and vertical and horizontal individualism were measured using self-report tools. According to the research, individualism are both vertical and horizontal has a big impact on internet addiction. Additionally, the results imply that vertical individualists have a higher risk of internet addiction. Additionally, the results show a strong correlation between Cyberbullying and internet addiction.

Garcia et al., (2020) investigated whether there are differences in Cyberbullying (as perpetrator or victim) and Internet addiction (in both Intrapersonal and Interpersonal aspects) between teenagers who are gifted and those who are not. Additionally, a sample of gifted teenagers and their classmates who were not gifted were examined to examine the current connections between Cyberbullying and Internet addiction. 122 teenagers in mandatory secondary education, aged 13 to 17, participated in the study; half of them were deemed gifted students. Regarding the prevalence of Cyberbullying and Internet addiction, there were no appreciable differences between gifted students and other students, according to data gathered through a matched case-control study design. However, findings from generalized linear models demonstrated how crucial interpersonal conflicts resulting from Internet addiction are in explaining Cyberbullying incidents.

Işı et al., (2020) investigated the current study aims to investigate the partial mediating effects of the Dark Triad (DT) personality trait and the effects of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance on SMA and Cyberbullying as distant outcome variables. In the relationships between attachment anxiety and avoidance among adolescents, v-traits, angry rejection sensitivity (RS) and anxious RS, and friendship quality are significant. Overall, the results examined the hypothesis that was put forth. The results showed that among the adolescent sample, attachment anxiety was a significant predictor of SMA. The result of the impact of attachment anxiety on Cyberbullying was determined to be negligible. Nonetheless, the relationship between Cyberbullying and attachment anxiety was mediated by irate and fearful RS. Additionally, the relationship between attachment anxiety and friendship quality was fully mediated by irate and nervous RS. Psychopathy acted as a mediating factor in the relationship between attachment avoidance and Cyberbullying. A portion of the relationship between attachment avoidance and friendship quality was mediated by psychopathy and Machiavellianism.

## **Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency**

Ismail et al., (2020) investigated the relationship between internet addiction and Cyberbullying toward psychological well-being among school-aged adolescents. The Ryff Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire, the "Cyberbullying and Online Aggression Survey Instrument," and the Internet Addiction test were used to develop the study's methodology. The study involved 168 form four students, 89 of whom were male and 79 of whom were female. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to process the acquired data. To evaluate data and extract research conclusions, descriptive analysis and inference are also employed. The study's findings indicate that there is little internet addiction and Cyberbullying among students. In the meantime, the psychological state of the student is worse. The findings demonstrate a strong correlation between internet addiction to the psychological health of adolescents. Additionally, the results demonstrated that there was no meaningful connection between Cyberbullying and school-age adolescents' psychological health.

Adanir et al., (2021) investigated the combination of Cyberbullying, internet gaming disorder, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. 76 individuals with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder were recruited. Group 1 consisted of forty children and adolescents, ages 9 to 18, who were diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and received consistent treatment for the condition. 36 kids and teenagers with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder who were receiving a diagnosis for the first time made up Group 2. The Social Media Addiction Scale, the Cyberbullying and Online Aggression Survey Instrument, and the Internet Gaming Disorder Scale were used to evaluate the participants. The finding suggest that Compared to the group receiving treatment, the untreated group had a significantly higher frequency of internet gaming disorder. In terms of Social Media Addiction, there was no discernible difference between the groups, though. There were no differences between the groups when Cyberbullying was taken into consideration.

Cerit et al., (2021) investigated to identify the level of Cyberbullying (CB), cybervictimization (CV), and Social Media Addiction among faculty students in the health sciences. There were 518 students in the faculty of health sciences who volunteered to take part in the study. Data were gathered using the researcher's personal information form, the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), and the Cyber Victim and Bullying Scale (CVBS). The study's findings showed that male students' CB and CV scores were statistically significantly higher than those of female students, as were the SMAS scores of the former. It was discovered that, in comparison to other groups, the mean scores of CB and CV of students with separated parents and the mean scores of CV of students with low academic achievement were higher. The study found that students who described their upbringing as uneven and unbalanced had mean SMAS and CV scores that were significantly higher than those of other groups. Additionally, students who identified as aggressive in their personality trait had mean SMAS scores that were significantly higher than those of other groups.

Chu et al., (2021) investigated whether stress moderated the initial stage of the mediating process as well as the direct correlation between Cyberbullying and social support, and whether Internet addiction mediated the relationship between Cyberbullying and social support. Data gathered from 1067 Chinese University students were used to test the theoretical model. Anonymized questionnaires measuring Social Support, Internet Addiction, Cyberbullying, and stress levels were filled out by participants. The relationship

## **Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency**

between Cyberbullying and social support was found to be partially mediated by Internet addiction, according to the findings. An important moderating factor in the first stage was stress. In particular, only University students who were not under a lot of stress showed a significant impact from social support on Internet addiction. The findings emphasize how important it is to pinpoint the mechanisms regulating the mediated pathways between young adults' Cyberbullying and social support.

Huang et al., (2021) aim to comprehend the prevalence of Cyberbullying among Chinese college students in social media and online gaming, as well as the factors that contribute to it. From the end of June to the beginning of July 2019, college students participated in a cross-sectional STAR questionnaire survey. Students ranked 1 through 5 (College) from two Shantou colleges were invited to take part in the survey, which was selected using the cluster random sampling technique. Data was gathered about the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents, Cyberbullying in online games and social media, self-worth, signs of anxiety, Internet addiction, etc. The result found Cyberbullying in social media and online games was linked to gender, anxiety symptoms, Internet addiction, game time, and violent game elements among Chinese college students. In conclusion, Chinese college students frequently experience Cyberbullying through social media and online gaming. The data mentioned above revealed important information about the need for focused, practical action to stop Cyberbullying among college students.

Nurtan et al., (2022) examine the connection between parental attitudes toward their children and internet addiction, Cyberbullying, Cybervictimization, and Cyberaddiction. The sample comprised 550 ninth-grade students who willingly agreed to take part in the research. The institute, the parents, and the ethical committee all gave their consent for the study. The Young's Internet Addiction Test, the Cyberbullying, Cybervictimization, and Parental Attitudes scales, as well as the Student Individual Information form, were used to gather data. The result showed that Young's Internet Addiction Test and the Cyberbullying Scale showed a positive correlation, but there was a negative correlation between internet addiction and cybervictimization.

Hussain et al, (2023) to investigate the relationship-both direct and indirect-between Cyberbullying victimization, Cyberbullying perpetration, and aggressive social media use. A total of 496 teenagers answered questions on the psychometric instruments used to measure the variables. The Turkish version of the Cyberbullying Offending Scale (CBOS), developed by Kircaburun et.al. in 2019, the Cyberbullying victimization scale (CBVS), developed by Patchin & Hinduja in 2015, Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), Aggression Questionnaire (AQ). The study's findings suggest that teens who engage in problematic social media use and engage in Cyberbullying themselves are more likely to be victims of Cyberbullying.

Lee et al., (2023) examine the frequency and contributing elements of Social Media Addiction and Cyberbullying. In Kuching, Malaysia, a public University hosted 270 medical students for the cross-sectional study. The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS), the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale 21-item, and the Cyberbullying questionnaire survey were the instruments used in the study (DASS-21). Cyberbullying victimization was reported at a rate of 24.4%, while 13.0% of respondents said people had engaged in Cyberbullying in the previous six months. While Social Media Addiction was positively associated with cybervictimization, male gender was positively associated with both

## Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency

Cyberbullying perpetration and cybervictimization. Cyberbullying perpetration has been linked to psychological motivations like gaining power and having positive attitudes toward Cyberbullying. Depression tendency doubled as a result of cybervictimization. On the other hand, an increased propensity to stress, anxiety, and depression was linked to Social Media Addiction. Malaysian medical schools must have rules and regulations against Cyberbullying.

Shaikh et al., (2023) seeks to comprehend the part that psychological and personal factors play in pushing Malaysian undergraduates attending public and private universities toward engaging in Cyberbullying. The study uses a self-administered survey to gather data and is based on a quantitative research methodology. Using SmartPLS, the data was examined using the Structured Equation Modeling (SEM) method. The findings show that personality traits and awareness of Cyberbullying are not linked to the Cyberbullying behaviours of Malaysian undergraduate students. However, psychological elements such as internalizing behaviour, antisocial behaviour, and self-esteem are crucial in shaping the Cyberbullying mindset of Malaysian undergraduate students. The study also demonstrates that Malaysian undergraduates' attitudes toward Cyberbullying are significantly positively impacted by subjective norms. Finally, by providing a conceptually validated model that forecasts the Cyberbullying behaviour of Malaysian University students, the study hopes to further the research on Cyberbullying behaviour. Additionally, the study discovered that the use of social media moderates the relationship between the intention and the act of Cyberbullying. The study will help governments, colleges, and parents by identifying important factors to take into account when developing policies to lessen Cyberbullying among college students. Watson et al., (2021) explains a cross-sectional investigation in which we examined the relationships between general mattering, school connectedness, Cyberbullying perpetration, depression/anxiety, and Social Media Addiction. The study sample consisted of 428 national adolescents in the United States. According to the findings, Cyberbullying perpetration was significantly predicted by higher Social Media Addiction scores, more hours spent online, and male identity. Therefore, people who identify as male, spend more time online, and have higher Social Media Addiction scores may be more likely to engage in Cyberbullying. We discussed how these findings might affect medical professionals who treat adolescent patients.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Aim*

The aim of the present research to identify the relationship between Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction.

#### *Objective*

- To examine the association between Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction.
- To examine gender differences in social media addiction and cyberbullying behaviours.

#### *Hypothesis*

- **H<sub>1</sub>**: There would be a positive relationship between Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction.
- **H<sub>2</sub>**: There would be a gender differences among Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction.

## **Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency**

### ***Research Design***

Present study employs from Inferential and Correlational research design.

### ***Sample***

The sample consisted from the University students. The sample size of the study was calculated based on Z- value of normal distribution curve. The sample size of the study is 150 participants (N=150) and the data was gathered using random sampling technique.

### ***Inclusion Criteria***

- University students of all the Department.
- Age range between 18 and 30 years old.
- Include both full- time and part- time students.
- Student who actively use social media platforms.
- Both male and female students.

### ***Exclusion Criteria***

- Non- University students.
- Student aged over 30 years.
- Non -social media users

### ***Tools***

- **Social Media Addiction Scale (Andreassen et al., 2016):** The BSMAS is a six-item scale used to assess SMA (i.e., “Felt an urge to use SM more and more?”). The six fundamental traits of addiction identified by Griffiths (2005)—salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse—were the foundation for the development of the scale. The scale uses a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very rarely) to 5 (very often). The Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was 0.88 and the validity was 0.55.
- **Cyberbullying Scale (Parker, 2016):** Cyberbullying victimization and offending experiences are measured with the Parker Cyberbullying Scale. It contains things like depressing, fearful, frustrated, embarrassed, angry, or unaffected feelings that are associated with Cyberbullying incidents. It consists of 19 statements. The scale was developed by parker, (2016). The score method ranges from 0 (never) to 4 (more than once), where higher scores correspond to more frequent victimization or offending behaviour. The Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was 0.934 and high validity.

### ***Procedure***

The researcher approached the participants who had met the criteria to take part in the study using the Random Sampling method. To make sure individual were willing to participate in the study, participants had to provide written informed consent. After being informed about the study, the participants had all of their questions answered. Additionally, sociodemographic information was requested of them. Participants were advised that the information gathered would be kept private and used exclusively for research.

### ***Statistical Analyses***

The acquired finding were analysed using a computer software application SPSS. The frequency distribution of the variables was used to evaluate the normality of the data. The

## Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency

mean and standard deviation were used to compute the descriptive statistics of the gathered data. The current study on gender differences employed correlational analysis.

### RESULT

The research highlights the importance of comprehending the relationship between cyberbullying and social media addiction, presenting strong correlations between instances of online harassment and behaviours involving excessive usage of digital platforms.

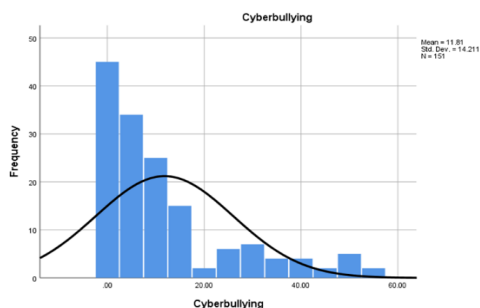
**Table 1: Shows the overall frequency mean, standard deviation and values of variables**

Variable	Mean	SD	Cyberbullying	Social Media Addiction
Cyberbullying	11.8146	14.21098	1	0.031
Social Media Addiction	15.8079	4.74934		1

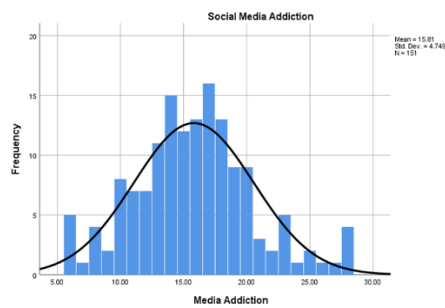
The Table No.1 shows that the correlation coefficient quantifies both the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. Cyberbullying received a lower average score (11.8) than Social Media Addiction (15.8), indicating that participants experienced greater difficulties with social media dependence. Cyberbullying has a larger standard deviation (SD) of 14.2 than Social Media Addiction, which is 4.7. This suggests that there was greater clustering around the mean among the Social Media Addiction scale scores. Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction appear to have a very weak positive correlation, as indicated by the Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.031. Though statistically insignificant ( $p = 0.709$ ), there is a slight tendency for scores to rise together, which suggests it most likely happened by coincidence. In general, although Social Media Addiction appears to be more common, there isn't a clear correlation between it and Cyberbullying behaviour in the sample. There may be additional variables influencing Cyberbullying that are not included in the analysis.

**Table 2: Shows the t- ratio of Cyberbullying, Social Media Addiction, gender.**

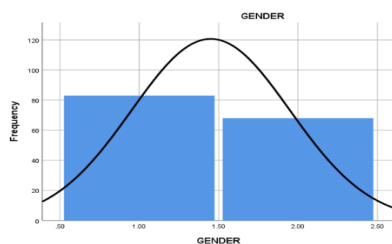
Variable	Mean	SD	t ratio	Sig. (2-tailed)
Cyberbullying	11.8146	14.21098	10.216	0.000
Social Media Addiction	15.8079	4.74934	40.901	0.000
Gender	1.4503	0.49918	35.702	0.000



**Figure 1: Cyberbullying**



**Figure 2: Social Media Addiction**



**Figure 3: Gender**

## **Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency**

The Table No. 2 shows that Cyberbullying has a mean score of 11.8146 and a standard deviation of 14.21098. With a t-ratio of 10.216 and a significance value of 0.000, the variable shows a highly significant difference or relationship with Cyberbullying. With a smaller standard deviation of 4.74934, the mean score for Social Media Addiction is 15.8079. The significance value of 0.000 and the t-ratio of 40.901 indicate a highly significant relationship or difference with regard to Social Media Addiction. Last but not least, the gender data has a mean of 1.4503 and a standard deviation of 0.49918. With a t-ratio of 35.702 and a significance value of 0.000, the sample's gender differences are found to be highly significant. Overall, these findings point to important distinctions or connections between the three factors under investigation: gender, Social Media Addiction, and Cyberbullying.

### **DISCUSSION**

The data that has been presented provides fascinating insights into the connections among gender, Social Media Addiction, and Cyberbullying. Significant findings are shown by the statistics, which both support and refute the original theories.

Firstly, there is strong evidence in the data supporting the link between Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction. A moderate degree of Cyberbullying experiences was reported by the respondents, as indicated by the mean score of 11.8146 and standard deviation of 14.21098. Simultaneously, the average score for Social Media Addiction is 15.8079, indicating a comparatively elevated degree of Social Media Addiction. A strong correlation between the two variables is further supported by the significant t-ratios and low significance values for Social Media Addiction ( $t = 40.901$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and Cyberbullying ( $t = 10.216$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The result disproves the first hypothesis, which proposed a link between Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction. Contrary to the theory, the data indicates that respondents' experiences with Cyberbullying tend to increase along with their tendency toward Social Media Addiction. Next, let's examine the gender differences. The gender mean score is 1.4503 with a 0.49918 standard deviation. In most research studies, one gender (usually male) is represented by a mean score of 1, and the other gender (usually female) is represented by a mean score of 2. In terms of Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction, there is a significant gender difference in the sample, as indicated by the high t-ratio of 35.702 and the significance value of 0.000.

Regarding Cyberbullying, the gender designated as '1'-presumably men-seems to report more instances of Cyberbullying activity than the other gender. The result is consistent with earlier studies that suggested men may participate in more aggressive online behaviours, such as Cyberbullying. However, when it comes to Social Media Addiction, people who belong to the gender code '1'-which is presumably male-show a greater degree of addiction to social media. The finding is especially intriguing because it contradicts the widely held belief that women are more likely than men to become addicted to social media. The data are consistent with Hypothesis 2, which predicted gender differences in Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction. Gender-specific approaches should be taken into consideration when addressing Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction, as evidenced by the notable gender disparity in these cases. It implies that interventions and prophylactic actions ought to be customized to address the unique requirements and tendencies connected to every gender. The observed gender differences in Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction could be influenced by various factors, including social norms, cultural expectations, and online behaviours. For instance, societal pressures might lead males to exhibit more

## **Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency**

aggressive behaviours online, while the structure and design of social media platforms could contribute to higher addiction rates among males.

In summary, the study's results offer insightful information about the intricate connections among gender, Social Media Addiction, and Cyberbullying. Even though the data disproves the original theories, it provides fresh perspectives on how to comprehend and deal with these pressing problems in the current digital era. The correlation between Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction is noteworthy, highlighting the interdependence of online behaviours and underscoring the necessity of comprehensive approaches to address these problems. The significant gender disparities also highlight the significance of gender-specific interventions for the effective treatment of Social Media Addiction and Cyberbullying. In order to promote safer and healthier online environments, future research could investigate the underlying factors contributing to these gender differences in greater detail and develop tailored interventions.

### ***Limitation***

Although the study sheds light on the connections between gender, Social Media Addiction, and Cyberbullying, there are a number of limitations to take into account when interpreting the results. Initially, we are less able to determine the causal relationships between the variables because of the cross-sectional nature of the study design. The temporal changes and directionality of the relationships cannot be examined with the single point in time data. Prospective investigations utilizing longitudinal methodologies may yield a more all-encompassing comprehension of the intricate relationship that develops over time among Cyberbullying, Social Media Addiction, and gender.

Second, response bias and social desirability bias may be introduced when Cyberbullying, Social Media Addiction, and gender are evaluated using self-reported metrics. It's possible that social norms, individual beliefs, and the desire to project a positive image of oneself will have an impact on participants' perceptions, interpretations, and reporting of their online behaviors and experiences. The validity and reliability of the results could be improved by the use of multi-method approaches, objective measures, or observational data. Furthermore, the size and makeup of the sample may restrict how broadly the results can be applied. The sample used in the study may not be entirely representative of the wide range of people from various age groups, cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic backgrounds, and geographic locations. Larger and more varied sample sizes in future studies can aid in validating the results and extending them to different populations and situations. Finally, the study may have missed possible interaction effects and underlying mechanisms connecting the two phenomena by focusing on Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction as separate constructs. A more comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationships between Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction can be obtained by investigating the mediating and moderating factors, such as coping mechanisms, social support, online behaviours, and platform features.

In conclusion, the limitations listed above emphasize the need for caution when interpreting the findings, even though the study provides insightful information about the connections between gender, Social Media Addiction, and Cyberbullying. By addressing these shortcomings, comprehensive approaches, diversified samples, and improved methods can help us better understand these intricate problems and provide guidance for the creation of

## Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency

interventions and regulations that will help everyone have safer and healthier online experiences.

### CONCLUSION

In Conclusion, the study has shed light on the connections between gender, Social Media Addiction, and Cyberbullying. Despite the initial hypothesis indicating a positive relationship, the findings show a weak positive relationship between Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction. The study also reveals notable gender disparities in Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction, with men (designated as '1') reporting higher rates than the other gender. To improve the validity and generalizability of the results, a number of flaws in the study design and methodology must be fixed. Our ability to determine causal relationships and comprehend the dynamic interplay between the variables over time is limited by the cross-sectional nature of the study. Furthermore, the accuracy and dependability of the reported data may be impacted by the reliance on self-reported measures, the possibility of response and social desirability biases, and other factors. Furthermore, the size and composition of the sample might not be typical of the larger population, which would restrict how broadly the results can be applied. Moreover, by concentrating on Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction as separate constructs without investigating possible interactions and underlying mechanisms, the study may miss important elements that contribute to these phenomena. Future research must fill a substantial research gap by investigating mediating and moderating variables like coping mechanisms, social support, online behaviours, and platform features.

### REFERENCES

- Albikawi, Z. F. (2023). Anxiety, Depression, Self-Esteem, Internet Addiction and Predictors of Cyberbullying and Cybervictimization among Female Nursing University Students: A Cross Sectional Study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(5), 4293.
- Al-Samarraie, H., Bello, K. A., Alzahrani, A. I., Smith, A. P., & Emele, C. (2021). Young users' Social Media Addiction: causes, consequences and preventions. *Information Technology & People*, 35(7), 2314-2343.
- Abaido, G. M. (2020). Cyberbullying on social media platforms among university students in the United Arab Emirates. *International journal of adolescence and youth*, 25(1), 407-420.
- Alaika, O., Doghmi, N., & Cherti, M. (2020). Social Media Addiction among Moroccan university students: a cross sectional survey. *PAMJ-One Health*, 1(4).
- Adebayo, D. O., Ninggal, M. T., & Bolu-Steve, F. N. (2020). Relationship between Demographic Factors and Undergraduates' Cyberbullying Experiences in Public Universities in Malaysia. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(1), 901-914.
- Atta, M., Malik, N. I., Abbasi, M. G., & Khan, M. (2021). Internet Addiction and Cyberbullying: Prevalence and Relationship among University Students. *Elementary Education Online*, 20(5), 6443-6443.
- ALLAHVERDÍ, F. Z. (2022). Perceived Social Media Addiction Differences by Student University Year. *Online Journal of Technology Addiction and Cyberbullying*, 9(2), 72-85.
- AL-ROB, A. B. U. (2020). Cyberbullying and Internet addiction among Palestinian Adolescents.

## **Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency**

- Alfaray, R. I., Ibrahim, Y., Faizun, R. S. A., & Irfana, L. (2020). Correlation between Social Media Addiction and social media bullying: A cross sectional analytic study in Indonesian Youth.
- Arpaci, I., Abdeljawad, T., Baloğlu, M., Kesici, Ş., & Mahariq, I. (2020). Mediating effect of internet addiction on the relationship between individualism and Cyberbullying: cross-sectional questionnaire study. *Journal of medical internet research*, 22(5), e16210.
- Adebayo, D. O., Ninggal, M. T., & Bolu-Steve, F. N. (2019). Influence of motivations for social media use on Cyberbullying behaviours among undergraduates in Malaysian public universities. *Global Journal of Guidance and Counseling in Schools: Current Perspectives*, 9(1), 36-47.
- Çimke, S., & Cerit, E. (2021). Social Media Addiction, Cyberbullying and cyber victimization of university students. *Archives of psychiatric nursing*, 35(5), 499-503.
- Chu, X., Li, Y., Wang, P., Zeng, P., & Lei, L. (2021). Social support and Cyberbullying for university students: The mediating role of internet addiction and the moderating role of stress. *Current Psychology*, 1-9.
- Darawsheh, N. (2023). The impact of cyber bullying on the psychological well-being of university students: A study in jordanian universities. *Information Sciences Letters*, 12(8), 2757-2768.
- Demircioğlu, Z. I. (2020). Antecedents of Social Media Addiction and Cyberbullying among adolescents: Attachment, the Dark Triad, rejection sensitivity and friendship quality.
- Erden, Ş., Özсарay, A. E., & Deniz, K. Z. (2022). Adolescents' Internet Addiction, Cyber Bullying, and Cyber Victimization in Terms of Various Variables. *Addicta: The Turkish Journal on Addictions*, 9(3).
- Fakir, M. K. J. (2023). Cyberbullying among University students: a study on Bangladeshi universities. *Journal of Social, Humanity, and Education*, 3(2), 119-132.
- Floros, G., & Mylona, I. (2022). Association of Cyberbullying and internet use disorder. *Current Addiction Reports*, 9(4), 575-588.
- Gámez Guadix, M., Wachs, S., & Wright, M. (2020). " Haters back off!" Psychometric properties of the coping with cyberhate questionnaire and relationship with well-being in Spanish adolescents. *Psicothema*.
- Gan, X., Qin, K. N., Xiang, G. X., & Jin, X. (2023). The relationship between parental neglect and Cyberbullying perpetration among Chinese adolescent: The sequential role of Cyberbullying victimization and internet gaming disorder. *Frontiers in public health*, 11, 1128123.
- Hazlyna, N. (2021). Awareness about cyber bullying on social media among female students in a Malaysian Public University. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)*, 12(3), 1592-1601.
- HOTAR, N., KABASAKAL, Z. T., UYANIK, G., YILMAZ, M., KANDEMİR, E. K., DEMİR, K., ... & Pınar, Ö. Z. E. R. (2022). Investigation of University Students' Internet Addiction Levels and Social Media Use Characteristics: A Descriptive Study. *Batı Anadolu Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 13(1), 569-580.
- Huong, X. V. (2023). Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Mental Health from a Psychological Perspective: A Review of the Contemporary Literature. *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*, 6(10), 6542-6546.
- Huang, J., Zhong, Z., Zhang, H., & Li, L. (2021). Cyberbullying in social media and online games among Chinese college students and its associated factors. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(9), 4819.

## Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency

- Hussain, Z., Kircaburun, K., Savcı, M., & Griffiths, M. D. (2023). The role of aggression in the association of Cyberbullying victimization with Cyberbullying perpetration and problematic social media use among adolescents. *Journal of Concurrent Disorders*.
- Ismail, S. Z., & Kutty, F. M. (2020). The relationship between internet addiction and Cyberbullying toward psychological well-being among teenagers. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, 2(3), 12-24.
- Jun, W. (2020). A study on the cause analysis of Cyberbullying in Korean adolescents. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(13), 4648.
- Lee, M. H. L., Kaur, M., Shaker, V., Yee, A., Sham, R., & Siau, C. S. (2023). Cyberbullying, Social Media Addiction and associations with depression, anxiety, and stress among medical students in Malaysia. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 20(4), 3136.
- Mohseny, M., Zamani, Z., Basti, S. A., Sohrabi, M. R., Najafi, A., & Tajdini, F. (2020). Exposure to Cyberbullying, cybervictimization, and related factors among junior high school students. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*, 14(4).
- Maftai, A., Holman, A. C., & Merlici, I. A. (2022). Using fake news as means of cyberbullying: The link with compulsive internet use and online moral disengagement. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 127, 107032.
- Nurtan, K. A., Evgin, D., & Beşer, N. G. (2022). The Relationship Between Internet Addiction, Cyberbullying and Parental Attitudes. *Journal of Pediatric Research*, 9(3).
- Oladimeji, A., & Kyobe, M. (2021, March). Factors Influencing Cyberbullying on Instagram Among University Students. In *2021 Conference on Information Communications Technology and Society (ICTAS)* (pp. 139-144). IEEE.
- ÖNDER, A., ÇOBAN, Ö. G., ADANIR, A. S., DOKUZ, G., & SOĞUCAK, Z. E. (2021). Effects Of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Treatment on Internet Gaming Disorder, Social Media Addiction, And Cyberbullying in Children and Adolescents. *Kırıkkale Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Dergisi*, 23(1), 107-115.
- Perwitasari, D. R., & Wuryaningsih, E. W. (2022). Why did you do that to me?: A systematic review of Cyberbullying impact on mental health and suicide among adolescents. *NurseLine Journal*, 7(1), 35-47.
- Sadagheyani, H. E., & Tatari, F. (2020). Investigating the role of social media on mental health. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, 25(1), 41-51.
- Shaikh, F. B., Rehman, M., Amin, A., Shamim, A., & Hashmani, M. A. (2021). Cyberbullying behaviour: a study of undergraduate university students. *IEEE Access*, 9, 92715-92734.
- Siah, P. C., Hue, J. Y., Wong, B. Z. R., & Goh, S. J. (2021). Dark Triad and Social Media Addiction among Undergraduates: Coping Strategy as a Mediator. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 13(4).
- Sureda Garcia, I., López Penádes, R., Rodríguez Rodríguez, R., & Sureda Negre, J. (2020). Cyberbullying and internet addiction in gifted and nongifted teenagers. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 64(3), 192-203.
- Wu, W., Chen, Y., Shi, X., Lv, H., Bai, R., Guo, Z., ... & Zeng, Y. (2022). The Mobile phone addiction and Depression among High School students: the Roles of Cyberbullying victimization, perpetration, and gender. *Frontiers in psychology*, 13, 845355.

## **Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency**

- Vessey, J. A., Difazio, R. L., Neil, L. K., & Dorste, A. (2022). Is there a relationship between youth bullying and internet addiction? An integrative review. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 1-25.
- Vismara, M., Girone, N., Conti, D., Nicolini, G., & Dell'Osso, B. (2022). The current status of Cyberbullying research: A short review of the literature. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 101152.
- Quilez-Robres, A., Usan, P., Lozano-Blasco, R., & Salavera, C. (2023). Digital Slaves in a Virtual World: The Relationship between Cyberbullying and Internet Addiction. Available at SSRN 4419142.
- Xiang, G. X., Zhang, Y. H., Gan, X., Qin, K. N., Zhou, Y. N., Li, M., & Jin, X. (2022). Cyberbullying and internet gaming disorder in Chinese youth: The role of positive youth development attributes. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 10, 1017123.
- Yang, S. Y., Wang, Y. C., Lee, Y. C., Lin, Y. L., Hsieh, P. L., & Lin, P. H. (2022, May). Does smartphone addiction, Social Media Addiction, and/or internet game addiction affect adolescents' interpersonal interactions?. In *Healthcare* (Vol. 10, No. 5, p. 963). MDPI.

### ***Acknowledgment***

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Tyagi, G. & Amit (2025). Cyberbullying and Social Media Addiction: Exploring the Nexus of Online Harassment and Behavioural Dependency. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(1), 2931-2945. DIP:18.01.280.20251301, DOI:10.25215/1301.280