

EXPLORATIVE STUDY ON CYBERBULLYING OF FEMALE TERTIARY STUDENTS IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore Bangladeshi Tertiary Female students' experiences, beliefs, and behaviors related to cyberbullying. During our research, we examined what happens to victims after they have been cyberbullied, their personal opinions, and why they choose not to report the incident. As the number of social media users grows, cyberbullying is becoming quite prevalent. With so many ways cyberbullies can reach their victims, cyberbullying is becoming a very common issue. Harassment, impersonation, and cyberstalking are all forms of cyberbullying. The analysis took place by using a range of questionnaires, to understand what can cause the victim to feel inadequate and overly self-conscious, as well as the possibility of suicide. The university and parents can take numerous steps to prevent cyberbullying and to intervene if it occurs. Despite the convenience that social media and other communication technologies offer us, our students are also exposed to interactions that put their safety and emotional wellbeing at risk.

Keywords: Cyberbully, Social Media, Female, University, Victims, Friends, Internet, Bangladesh, Behaviors, Beliefs.

I. INTRODUCTION

Bullying is an aggressive behavior perpetrated against a victim resulting from power imbalances and constitutes a form of abuse. Due to rapid technological advancement, tertiary students, particularly females in Bangladesh, are becoming increasingly concerned about their online presence, since they are often subject to some form of invasion of privacy. There has been a rise in cyberbullying and online character assassination recently, as the victims and accused in many sensational incidents are routinely abused by a section of Internet users. It is not only a growing issue in our digital era, but it also causes psychosocial and physical harms, such as depression, and self-harming behaviors, leading to one of the most tragic outcomes-suicide. A recent study has found that a large number of students are victims of cyberbullying, leading to a broader realization that cyberbullying is a growing issue. A survey was conducted among 248 female tertiary students in Bangladesh, to structure the existing database, present the common types of cyberbullying and portray the current state of cyberbullying research in Bangladesh. The purpose of our study was to better understand students involved in cyberbullying and their peers, as well as to examine their beliefs and behaviors during and after the incidents.

II. METHODOLOGY

Almost equal numbers of female and male students attend tertiary institutions in Bangladesh, and thanks to 5G internet, Bangladesh has one of the highest numbers of internet users of all South Asian countries. Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to cause harm to others. In addition, we wanted to understand whether the victims think online monitoring and vigilance are lacking. Since cyberbullying is such a new phenomenon, little research has been done on it. Therefore, there have been few measures developed to assess cyberbullying. We divided our online survey into four sections. The first part collected demographic data about students, while the second and third parts examined students' behavior and beliefs about cyberbullying, either as participants or bystanders. Students were asked about their online behaviors, social activities, and their daily lives as part of the fourth part of the survey. On a 5-point Likert-type scale, responses ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) for each of the questions in this section.

Participants and Procedures

There has been a random selection of individual students, to ensure complete anonymity and protect students from any negative consequences. There were students studying either in bachelor's or from different years of study. We reached to the department head of 5 institutions from 2 major cities and asked to send the online

survey link to their students. As per our target, out of 380 students, 248 students decided to participate on our survey which formed the basis of our study.

Table 1: Student’s Demographic Data

SN.	Year of Study	Dhaka City(n)	Chittagong City(n)
1	First	40	33
2	Second	39	35
3	Third	28	20
4	Fourth	33	20

Over 80% of these female students used Internet at home and close to 90% had access to some sort of mobile internet plans. The mean age of the whole sample was 22.3 years.

Questionnaire

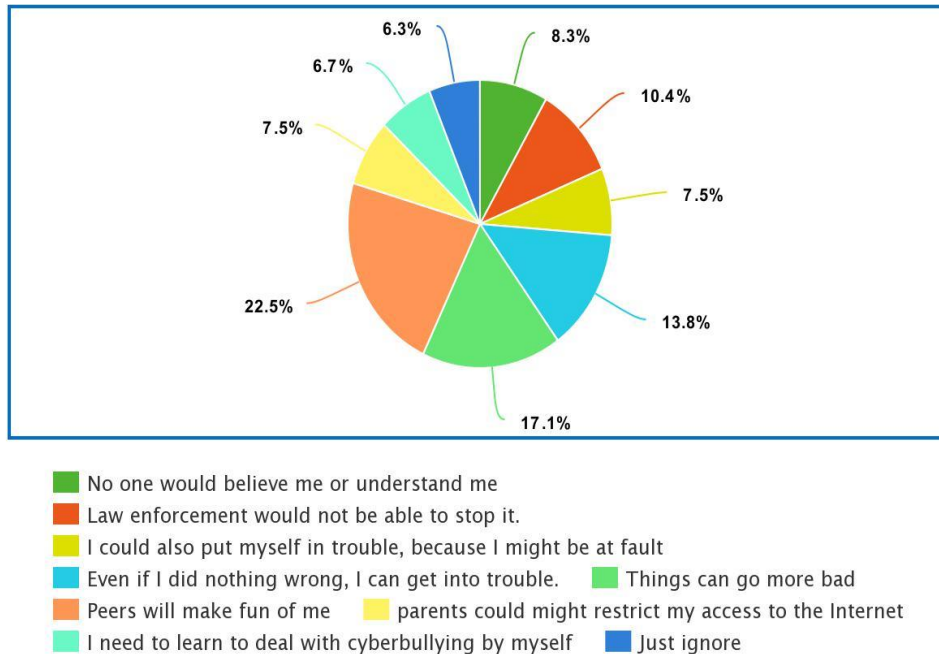
In the second and third sections of the online survey, general questions were asked about the frequency of being a victim of bullying of any kind, followed by specific questions about each type of cyber bullying, including cyber stalking, flaming, harassment, denigration, outings, and exclusions. Those who have been victimized and those who have seen a peer being cyberbullied were both reported. We asked about the perceived impact of bullying with the possibility of giving reasons. We also asked about whether they had spoken to someone about it. The last part of the survey as mentioned, was comprised of opinion-based questions such as whether cyberbullying should be reported or not, and whether they believe it is important to create a more respectful online world.

III. MODELING AND ANALYSIS

Research has shown that victims of bullying usually lack the social networks to protect them from abuse. Peers have contributed greatly to the establishment and maintenance of bullying systems as silent acceptors. In addition, bullies tended to be physically stronger than their victims. The study was a preliminary analysis of the data, and only descriptive statistics were used.

Table 2: Reaction, Behavior and Consequence

Construct	N	%
Reaction (N=234)	Number	Percentage
- Live with it	- 69	- 29%
- Upset	- 65	- 28%
- Depressed	- 60	- 26%
- No opinion	- 40	- 17%
Behavior(N=236)	Number	Percentage
- Do nothing	- 42	- 18%
- Tell to stop	- 45	- 18%
- Get away	- 64	- 28%
- Tell a friend	- 45	- 19%
- Complaint	- 40	- 17%
Consequence(N=244)	Number	Percentage
- Got better	- 63	- 26%
- Got worse	- 75	- 30%
- Nothing happened	- 80	- 32%
- Not told anyone	- 26	- 11%



meta-chart.com

Figure 1: Why Incidents Don't Get Reported

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing and modelling the survey questions, few students attempted revenge. The majority of students did not inform anyone. In the absence of action, two out of five choose not to report, and fewer than a quarter tried to get revenge on the cyberbully. Two out of five victims chose to run away from the cyberbully. More than a third of victims did nothing, and less than a quarter told the cyberbully to stop. Typically, cyberbullying occurs when a perpetrator posts humiliating content on social media sites, such as an embarrassing photo or message, which affects the victim's feelings, responses, and coping methods. These bullying contents are often exposed to other users who are connected to the perpetrators and victims and subsequently, affect their decision to comfort the victims, ignore the incident, or reinforce and join in the perpetrators' bullying behaviour. There were several reports of cyberbullying involving angry and vulgar messages sent repeatedly, either from classmates or from internet strangers. Students disclose massive amounts of personal information on the Internet, becoming dependent on the Internet to the point where their lives live off their online time and having a high prevalence of suicide and self-harm communities among depressed students. Cyberbullying is considered less harmful by students compared to traditional bullying and video and picture bullying. Further, since most victims do not seek support from their friends or disclose cyberbullying to anyone, their friends might not fully grasp the severity of the issue, and adults might not be aware of cyberbullying. Some students gain social support through ganging up against other females during their senior year. Women can humiliate themselves online and have many people view it, which makes ganging up against them easier.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of our study contribute to a better understanding of what cyberbullying is. Most universities have yet to develop effective protection and intervention programs for cyberbullying, as this is a fairly new phenomenon. Males are predominantly the ones who commit stalking when they are in abusive relationships or when they refuse to accept romantic overtures they have rejected. Cyberbullying can be classified into many types. Gender differences, perceived impact factors, and perceived awareness were found to be important indicators as new technology is penetrating younger adult groups and new capabilities are being developed as instant messaging, IoT, etc. Cyberbullying is rapidly evolving and changing its nature. This presents new researchers and practitioners face new challenges to prevent cyberbullying and intervene when cyberbullying has occurred. Universities, parents, and students can take several steps and involve educators, legal authorities, parents, and community members in preventing and responding to cyberbullying; alert cyberbullies and their

families about the negative consequences of cyberbullying and supervise and monitor Internet activities effectively. Lastly, an effective threat analysis plan should be developed for any reports of cyberbullying that raise concerns.

VI. REFERENCES

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