

IMPACT OF CYBERBULLYING ON NIGERIAN YOUTHS IN YABA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed the impact of cyberbullying on the Nigerian youths. The study adopted the descriptive research design while stratified random sampling method was used to draw respondents from Bariga and Shomolu in Yaba Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria. Stratified random sampling was used in selecting the respondents using gender as basis for stratification. The data collected from the respondents were analysed using the inferential statistics of Chi-square (X^2) and t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that all the five hypotheses were rejected, which simply implies that Nigerian youths are significantly exposed to cyberbullying, aggressive behaviours, sexual harassment, emotional trauma that are associated with those who have gone through cyberbullying and there was more males and females experience cyberbullying most. The study recommends that schools and communities should work together to reduce the threat of cyberbullying among children and youth, cyber safety education curriculum should be part of the at all levels of education this will help inculcate the right information and behaviour to the learners, thereby reducing different types of cyberbully behaviour and coping skills to youths. Parents and schools should focus on early prevention of different types of antisocial behaviour, health educators as well as the government should create more awareness on cyber bullying in Nigeria.

Key words: *Cyber bullying, Emotional health, Sexual harassment, Aggressive behaviour Nigerian youths.*

Introduction

Information communication technology is a modern means of human and business interaction that has developed rapidly in the last decade which has brought about a lot of electronic business, social, emotional interaction that do not necessarily need physical presence. This new mode of interaction has brought about reduction in physical, financial, and emotional mishaps such as injuries, loss of life, money and other valuables. Despite all these benefits, electronic interaction is still associated with some problematic interactions. One of these problematic interactions is cyberbully.

Bully has always been part of human living. Stephenson and Smith (1989) define bully as a form of social interaction in which a more dominant individual (the bully) exhibits aggressive behaviour which is intended to and does

in fact cause distress to a less dominant individual (the victim). The aggressive behavior may take the form of a direct physical and/or verbal attack or may be indirect when the bully hides a possession that belongs to the victim or spreads false information about the victim. The advancement in modern technology has influenced a new method of victimisation that has taken over traditional bullying to a new extreme dimension. Cyberbully according to Hinduja and Patchin, (2010) is the voluntary and repetitions of abuse that is inflicted through computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. Olweus, (1993) defined cyberbully as a modern form of bully which is an intentional aggressive behavior (hostile intent) and repeated (repetition) carried out against defend less victim (power imbalance). Oyewusi and Orolada (2014) cited the definition of cyberbully by David-Ferdon and Hertz 2007, Patchin and Hinduja, (2006) as the use of electronic methods of communication, such as the internet or a cell phone to repeatedly cause intentional harm or emotional distress. Cyber bullying as opined by Hoff and Mitchell (2008) often occur in the context of relationship difficulties, such as the breakup of a friendship or romance, envy of a peer's success or in the context of prejudiced intolerance of particular group such as, the group of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability

Cyberbully has attracted much attention both in the media and in scientific research because of the number of suicide deaths that were motivated by severe experiences of cyberbully over the last decade, (ABC News, 2007). To substantiate this, Mesah, (2009) reported that cyberbully jeopardizes the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of children and puts society at the risk of ethical and moral deterioration. Equally, National Crime Prevention Control, (2010) stated that it has affected over 40 percent of adolescents in the past years. The internet is a medium that is commonly used now by most in-school adolescent to perpetuate cyber bullying which manifested in the form of verbal threat attacks and taunts from peers while chatting via the internet or text messages. This development of cyberbully is now gaining momentum in Nigeria with an unimaginable psychological effect on the wellbeing of in-school adolescents (Okoiye, Nwoga & Onah, 2015).

Cyberbully uses modern technology to victimise people in any of these forms; flaming: electronic transmission of angry or rude messages, harassment: repeatedly sending insulting or threatening messages, cyber talking: threats of harm or intimidation, denigration: put downs, spreading cruel rumours, masquerading: pretending to be someone else and sharing information to damage a person's reputation, outing: revealing personal information about a person which was shared in confidence, exclusion: maliciously learning a person out of a

group online, such as a chatline or a game ganging up on one individual (Schenk & Fremouw, 2012)

Many victims of cyberbullying are likely to suffer in silence, however, some warning signs and symptoms that indicate that someone may be a victim of cyberbullying according to American Association of School Administrators and Education (2009) are, avoiding the computer, cell phone, and other technological devices, appearing stressed when receiving an e-mail, instant message, or text, withdrawing from family and friends, reluctant to attend school and social events. Other signs and symptom are, displaying numerous negative feelings, including sadness, anger, frustration, decline school grades, lack of eating or sleeping. lower self-esteem, increased depression and/or anxiety, reporting health problems (stomach aches, headaches), troubling sleeping or frequent nightmares, and detachment from friends, sudden withdrawal at home and social events, sudden anger/rage, and self-destructive behavior such as cutt A bully exhibits any or all of the signs; avoid conversations about computer and cellphone activities, quickly switch of screen or close programs when a person walks by the computer, excessive laughing while using the computer or cell phone, using multiple online accounts, or an account that is not his or her own, spending an unusual amount of time using the computer or cell phone and becoming upset when access to the computer or cell phone is denied.

Cyberbully according Palmeri (2013) is a unique component that can be determinantal on victimized adolescents. For example, cyberbully victim can receive an unlimited number of harassing messages through several different networks. Within a matter of minutes, the cyber bully can post a rumour on a victim's Face book status or send harassing text messages that fill the victim's inbox. If cyber bully post is embarrassing or defaming of a victim on any social networking website, everyone who is a friend with the cyberbully or the victim has the potential to see the post. The victim not only has to deal with the embarrassment of being victimized, but also with the knowledge that everyone who has access to the internet is able to witness the humiliation. This situation can cause significant emotional and psychological harm that can make the in-school adolescents developing low self-esteem, poor self-concept and less efficacious in relationship with their environment. Cyber victims are also prone to psychosomatic symptoms like headaches, abdominal pains, and sleeplessness (Sourander, Brunstein-Klomek, Helenius, Ikonen, Lindroos, Luntamo & Koskelainen, 2010). Juvonen and Gross, (2008) reported that victims of cyber bully experience symptoms such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, social exclusion, poor academic performance and some experience suicidal thoughts.

Cyber bully according to Oyewusi and Orolada (2014) affects the physical, social, emotional and cognitive functioning and wellbeing of the

victims. Patchin and Hinduja, (2006) reported that 43% of victim of cyberbullying are frustrated, 40% felt angry, more than 27% felt sad and 27% confessed that it affected them of home. Samara, Burbige, El Asam, Foody, Smith and Morsi, (2017) stated that the student was emotional and upset because the website is public and viewed by anyone while a first year student reported that the bully's remark depressed her and affected her mental health negatively, and other student equally reported of depression and suicidal thoughts physical effects stomach problems arising from the cyberbully. Okoiye, Nwoga and Onah (2015) finding showed cyberbully could make the in-school adolescents develop low self-esteem, poor self-concept and become less self-efficacious in their relationship with their environment. Sheriff (2009) stated that cyberbully is detrimental to the mental health and emotional development of young people in any modern society.

The features of cyberbully that differentiate it from traditional bully or face-to face according to Patchin and Hindiya, (2010), Slonje and Smiths, (2008), Patchin and Hindiya, (2010), Mason, (2008) are; perception of perpetrators' anonymity, the potentially infinite audience, the bully inability to observe the targets immediate reaction, the absence of time and space constraints or occurs at any time of the day or night, the antagonist uses various form of technology such as cell phone, chat rooms, websites and emails in sending threatening text messages, posting malicious messages, uploading embarrassing pictures or videos, quick or very fast distribution of messages and images to a very wide audience on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or My Space, on the internet.

In view of all these, it is of great concern to the researcher to investigate the impact of cyberbullying on Nigerian youths in Yaba Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. Exposure to cyberbullying will not have significant impact on Nigerian youths in Yaba Local Government Area Lagos State.
2. Aggressive behaviour associated with cyberbullying will not significantly have impact on Nigeria youths in Yaba Local Government Area Lagos State.
3. Sexual harassment associated with cyberbullying will not significantly have impact on Nigerian youths in Yaba Local Government Area Lagos State.

4. Cyberbullying will not have significant difference between Nigerian male and female youths in Yaba Local Government Area, Lagos State.
5. Emotional health associated with cyberbullying will not have significant impact on of Nigerian youths in Yaba Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Methodology

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study. This design was considered appropriate because of its power to manipulate variables. The sample for the study comprises of 450 respondents who were selected through stratified sampling technique using gender as basis for the stratification. The instrument used for data collection from the respondents was a validated self-structured questionnaire. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the respondents with the help of three research assistants using on the spot method of administration to ensure 100% collection of data. The inferential statistics of chi-square (X^2) and t- test was used to test all hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Respondents' gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	218	48.44
Female	232	51.56
Total	450	100.0

Table 1 shows that (n=218; 48.44%) were male while (n=232; 51.56%) were female respondents.

Figure 1: Showing gender of the respondents

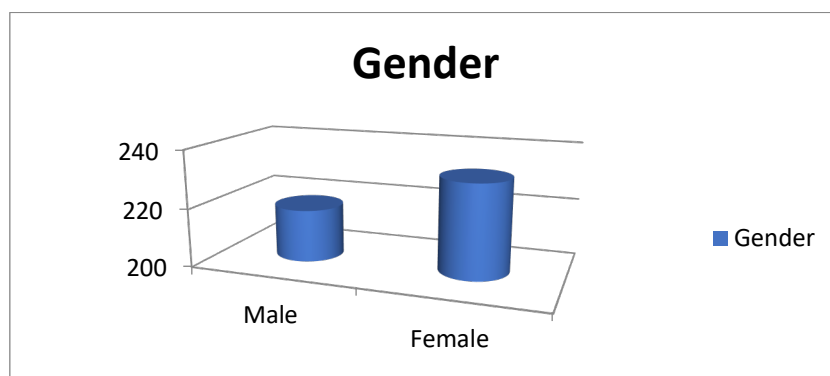
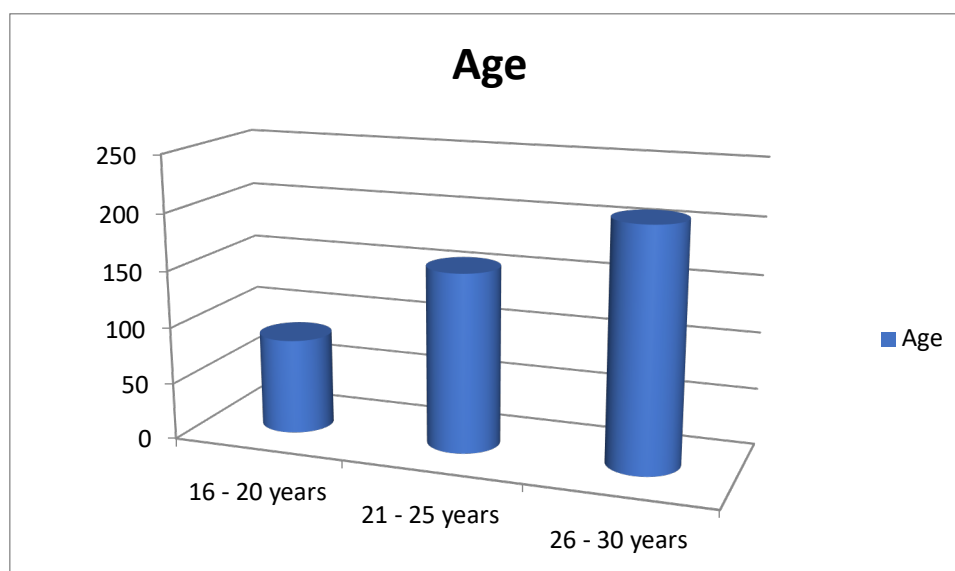


Table 2: Respondents' Age

Age	Frequency	Percent (%)
16 - 20 years	84	18.67
21 - 25 years	157	34.89
26 - 30 years	209	46.44
Total	450	100.0

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents (n=209; 46.44%) were between 26-30 years old, while few of the respondents (n=84; 18.67%) were between 16-20 years old.

Figure 2: Age of Respondents

Hypotheses

The Chi-square (X^2) and t-test inferential statistics was used in testing the stated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: Exposure to cyberbullying will not have significant impact on Nigerian youths in Yaba Local Government Area Lagos State.

Table 3: Chi-square (X^2) analysis of on exposure to cyberbullying impact on Nigerian youths in Yaba Local Government Area Lagos State

N	Df	LS	X^2 - Cal	X^2 Tab	Remarks
450	8	0.05	238.71	15.51	Significant

$$P < 0.05$$

Information on Table 3 indicates that the calculated Chi-square (X^2) value of 238.71 is greater than the tabulated X^2 value of 15.51; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that the Nigeria youths were significantly exposed to cyberbullying violence

Hypothesis 2: Aggressive behaviour associated with cyberbullying will not significantly have impact on Nigeria youths in Yaba Local Government Area Lagos State.

Table 4: Chi-square (X^2) analysis of aggressive behavior associated with cyberbullying among Nigerian youths in Yaba Local Government Area Lagos State

N	Df	LS	X^2 - Cal	X^2 Tab	Remarks
450	6	0.05	173.94	12.59	Significant

$$P < 0.05$$

Information on Table 2 indicates that the calculated Chi-square (X^2) value of 173.94 is greater than the tabulated X^2 value of 12.59; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that aggressive behaviors are significantly associated with cyberbullying violence among Nigerian youths.

Hypothesis 3: Sexual harassment associated with cyberbullying will not significantly have impact on Nigeria youths in Yaba Local Government Area Lagos State.

Table 5: Chi-square (X^2) analysis on sexual harassment associated with cyberbullying impact on Nigeria youths in Yaba Local Government Area Lagos State

N	Df	LS	X^2 - Cal	X^2 Tab	Remarks
450	6	0.05	169.33	12.59	Significant

$$P < 0.05$$

Information on Table 3 indicates that the calculated Chi-square (X^2) value of 169.33 is greater than the tabulated X^2 value of 12.59; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that sexual harassment is significantly associated with cyberbullying violence among Nigeria youths.

Hypothesis 4: Cyberbully will not have significant difference between Nigerian male and female youths in Yaba Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Table 6: Analysis of t-test on cyberbully impact on Nigerian male and female youths in Yaba Local Government Area, Lagos State

Gender	Mean	S.D	N	Df	t-calc	t-crit	Remark
Male	2.98	9.08	218	448	4.24	1.98	Significant
Female	3.41	11.401	232				

Table 6 above shows that the t-calc value of 4.24 is greater than the t-critical value of 1.98 at a 0.05 level of significance for the male and female group. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was a significant difference between the male and female who have gone through cyberbullying.

Hypothesis 5: Emotional health associated with cyberbully will not have significant impact on of Nigerian youths in Yaba Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Table 7: Chi-Square (X^2) Analysis on Emotional health associated with cyberbully impact on of Nigerian Youths in Yaba Local Government Area, Lagos State

N	Df	LS	X^2 - Cal	X^2 Tab	Remarks
450	18	0.05	281.47	28.87	Significant

$$P < 0.05$$

Information on Table 7 indicates that the calculated Chi-square (X^2) value of 281.47 is greater than the tabulated X^2 value of 28.87; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that cyberbully has a significant impact on emotional health of Nigerian youths.

Discussion of Findings

This study found out that Nigerian youths were exposed to cyberbullying violence. This result of the study is in line with Okoiye, Nwogu and Onah, (2015) who reported that cyberbullying is now gaining momentum in Nigeria with an unimaginable psychological effect on the wellbeing of in-school adolescents. It also corroborates the findings of National Crime Prevention Council. (2010) which reported that cyberbullying has affected 40 percent of adolescents in the past years. The finding of the study further showed that aggressive behaviours were associated with cyberbullying among Nigerian youths. This agrees with Sourander, Brunstein-Klomek, Helenius, Ikonen, Lindroos, Luntamo, and Koskelainen, (2010) who stated that the cyberbully can post a rumour on a victim's Facebook status or send harassing text messages that fill the victim's inbox within a matter of minutes. In his own submission, Palmeri (2013) is of the view that cyberbully is a unique component that can be determinantal for victimized adolescents. For example, cyber bully victims can receive an unlimited number of harassing messages through several different networks. Okoiye, Nwoga and Onah (2015) opined that cyber bully is commonly used now by most in-school adolescents to perpetuate cyber bullying by sending all forms of verbal threats, attacks and taunts peers while chatting via internet or messages. The finding showed that Nigerian youths are sexually harassed on cyber. This study agrees with the findings of Michell, Ybarra and Finkelhor, (2017) Mishna, Cook, Handalla, Daciuk and Solomon, (2010), Willard, (2007) who stated that victims of cyberbullying are exposed to sexual comments (e.g sending unwanted sexual texts or photos and sexual behaviours or being asked to do something sexual via email.).

The result of the study showed that cyberbullying has negative impacts on the emotional health of Nigerian youths. This finding agrees with Sourander, Brunstein-Klomek, Helenius, Ikonen, Lindroos, Luntano & Koskelainen, (2010) and Juvonen and Gross, (2008) who reported that cyberbully posts can cause embarrassment or defaming of a victim and this can cause significant emotional and psychological harms that can result the in-school adolescents developing low self-esteem, poor self-concept and become less efficacious in their relationships with their environment. It was also reported that victims of cyber bully experience symptoms such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, social exclusion, poor academic performance and experience suicidal thoughts. The study further revealed that females experience cyberbullying more than males. This is in line with UNESCO, (2017) which report revealed that more girls experience been more cyberbully victim than boys.

Conclusion

Information, communication and technology gadgets are available and accessible to everyone. Hence the societies, families and the school should work in synergy to redeem and rescue the children, the youth and the community from impending danger of mental, moral, social and emotional derailment.

Based on the outcome of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Parents and schools should focus on early prevention of different types of antisocial behaviour among learners.
2. Cyberbullying is the schools and communities' issues; therefore, the schools and communities should work to reduce the threat of cyberbullying among children and youth.
3. Cyber safety education curriculum at all levels of education should be introduced in the school curriculum. This will help to inculcate the right information and behaviour to the learners that will bring about sanity the modern information technology.
4. Government and non-governmental agencies should create awareness of cyberbully through mass media to the general public.

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