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THE DARK SIDE OF ONLINE LEARNING: EXAMINING THE RISE OF CYBERBULLYING ON LEARNING INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENTS IN THE AGE OF VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the growing incidence of cyberbullying and how it affects undergraduate emotional well-being and interest and engagement in learning in the context of online learning. With the use of structured questionnaire, the study collected data from 224 undergraduate using a descriptive survey design. According to the demographic analysis the majority of respondents were first-year students between the ages of 21 and 25. According to the results undergraduates most frequently use WhatsApp as a social media platform for online education. Forty-two percent of those surveyed said they had been the victim of cyberbullying and Facebook was the site most commonly linked to these occurrences. Cyberbullying and learning interest and engagement were found to be statistically significantly correlated by the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis ($r = .360$, $p < .05$), suggesting that cyberbullying adversely affects undergraduates' motivation and engagement in academic activities. However, no significant relationship was found between cyber bullying and emotional well-being ($r = .049$, $p > .05$), suggesting that undergraduates resilience levels vary. However, findings reported that undergraduate's experiences with cyberbullying had caused them to face emotional difficulties like anxiety or worry and low self-esteem. According to the study's findings cyberbullying is a serious problem in online learning environments that affects undergraduates' academic engagement. To lessen the effects of cyberbullying and enhance undergraduate's wellbeing in online learning environments the study suggests instituting institutional policies regarding digital

conduct creating student support networks and incorporating digital citizenship education in curriculum.

Keywords: Cyberbullying; Emotional well-being, Learning interest and Engagement, Undergraduates

Introduction

Globally and specifically in higher education the introduction and ongoing development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) particularly the Internet has drastically changed the nature of education (Itasanmi *et al.*, 2024). One of the main forces behind education reforms is the spread of knowledge sharing that resulted from its emergence. Education in schools and institutions has changed as a result of the introduction of new technology-assisted learning tools like smartphones smart boards MOOCs tablets laptops simulations dynamic visualisations and virtual laboratories (Abid *et al*., 2022). The Internet of Things (IoT) has been shown to be among the most economical ways to educate young adults. It is also a strong way to incorporate a top-notch educational experience for all (Keengwe & Bhargava, 2014). Over time there has been a significant increase in the use of technology in education with online learning now being the most popular course and method offered by higher education institutions. In addition to the various digital activities that young adults participate in today including internet browsing, social networking site, video games and digital technology which encompasses gadgets like computers, tablets and cell phones (Omokhabi, 2021).

E-learning also referred to as remote education or online learning is essentially a digital platform that enables students to access knowledge or information whenever they need it regardless of time constraints or distance from a physical location (Bossman & Agyei, 2022). Due to its increased accessibility usability and convenience for both teachers and students it has consequently altered the way that learning and teaching resources are accessed. In higher education institutions this type of instruction which does not involve physical spaces where students can be located has both benefits and drawbacks. With the growing popularity of virtual classrooms the swift incorporation of digital technology into education has completely changed the nature of learning (Kalyani, 2024). Students now have more accessibility and flexibility thanks to online learning but there are also new issues such as the growth of Cyberbullying (CB) and how it may affect student's interests in learning (Alismaiel, 2023). A major issue in online learning environments is cyberbullying which is defined as the use of technology to harass threaten or intimidate people via digital platforms (Menin Guarini Mameli Skrzypiec & Brighi, 2021). According to a study, 34% of students report having experienced online harassment indicating that online bullying is becoming more common (Hertz *et al*., 2020). A culture of disinhibition may be fostered by the anonymity of online spaces and the absence of in-person interactions which may encourage people to act in bullying ways (Kowalski *et al.*, 2014). Due to inadequate

institutional policies Nigeria's quick shift to e-learning has exposed students to risks related to online safety such as CB which may have an impact on their mental health, overall wellbeing and social development (Akeusola, 2024).

Concerns about students learning interest and engagement in virtual classrooms continue to be significant in addition to CB. A person's attention and investment in particular events and learning materials including both short-term psychological states and long-term sustained tendencies and preferences are referred to as learning interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Situational interest and individual interest are the two broad categories into which learning interest can be divided (Hidi 1990). A transient mental state that results from interactions between students and their surroundings as well as the course materials is known as situational interest. While engagement entails actively participating, concentrating and interacting with the course material, student engagement measures how attentive, curious, interested, enthusiastic and committed students are during learning experiences as well as how motivated they are to learn and progress in their academic careers (Lattanze ,2025). He further submitted that student engagement is based on the notion that learning is improved when students are inspired, curious or interested and it tends to suffer when they are disinterested, bored, and apathetic or detached.

Cyberbullying has serious and wide-ranging effects on learning interest and engagement. Students who experience CB might avoid online social interactions which could lead to feelings of isolation and poorer academic performance. Similarly, students with engagement issues often have trouble learning new material and developing critical thinking skills. In virtual classrooms, low participation can result in poorer comprehension poorer grades and higher dropout rates. Universities must improve digital literacy programme strengthen anti-CB policies and upgrade technology infrastructure to facilitate smooth online learning in order to allay these worries. In order to increase student engagement and maintain their interest in learning Akeusola (2024) recommends that Nigerian universities incorporate e-learning with interactive tools and active learning techniques. Student's sense of motivation and connection can be increased through tactics like gamification, online group discussions and real-time feedback systems (Wahid, 2024). Additionally offering sufficient support systems and guaranteeing dependable internet access can greatly increase student engagement with online learning.

With more and more students being harassed, victimised, intimidated and humiliated online cyberbullying has grown to be a serious issue in educational settings. Undergraduate's emotional well-being, learning interest and engagement may all suffer as a result of this phenomenon. Students are frequently the victims of online and phone harassment. Virtual classrooms have been implemented by Federal University Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE) to improve the quality of education. Like many other institutions undergraduates at FOUYE

rely on virtual platforms for discussions, academic interactions and assessments. Online learning environments have however also made room for CB which can have a detrimental impact on undergraduate's mental health, academic achievement and general interest in learning. Creating strategies to make a digital learning environment safer and more effective requires an understanding of how CB affects undergraduate's interest in learning in virtual classrooms. By examining the prevalence of CB and its effects on students learning interest and engagement at FUOYE this study seeks to investigate the negative aspects of online learning. The research will shed light on the difficulties associated with virtual learning by examining undergraduate's experiences and perceptions. By providing suggestions for developing a more secure and interesting online learning environment in Nigerian higher education institutions the findings will add to the current discussion on online education. It is in this context, that this present study examined cyberbullying on learning interest and engagement in the age of virtual classrooms in Federal University, Oye Ekiti among undergraduates.

Research Questions

1. Which is the most frequently used social media platforms among undergraduates?
2. What is the prevalence of cyberbullying among undergraduates?
3. What is the relationship between cyberbullying and learning interest and engagement among undergraduates?
4. What social media platforms play the most common role in promoting the prevalence of cyberbullying among undergraduates?
5. What is the relationship between cyberbullying and emotional well-being among undergraduates?

Literature Review

Prevalence Rate of Cyber-bullying

There is evidence of bullying related suicides in developed nations such as the United States Canada and the United Kingdom (UK) (Abaido, 2020). These incidents also serve as a reminder of the severity of bullying in both online and offline contexts especially on social media sites where the victim has nowhere to go and is constantly the target of hatred. Undergraduate's social and emotional well-being as well as their academic achievement may be impacted by this circumstance. Studies on CB among college students as well as its impact and potential ramifications have been carried out recently. High prevalence rates ranging from roughly 4 percent to as high as 42.8 percent have been documented in developed nations (Gohal *et al.*, 2023. According to Black (2014), the prevalence of bullying, cyberbullying and victimization in this sample was high. Over half of the students (53.2%, n = 41) had taken part in bullying in their lifetime. About a third of the students (31.2%, n = 24) reported taking part in cyberbullying. Overall, 49.4% (n = 38) of the students had been bullied in their lifetime, while 28.6% were victims of cyberbullying (n = 22). Relative to males, significantly more females were both

perpetrators of cyberbullying and bullying, and significantly more females were both victims of cyberbullying and bullying. Research indicates that long-term use of the internet causes cyber victims to use social media extensively become more reliant on it display risky online behaviors and longer-term online skills and chat more with older online friends (Dredge *et al.,* 2013). The prevalence of CB in Serbian adolescents was examined by Popovic-Citic *et al.* (2011). The majority of the students had their own mobile phones and the majority of them used the Internet every day according to the results. Male students reported more bullying than female students indicating a significant gender gap in CB. According to comparable research done in the United States between 10 and 37 percent of adolescents have bullied someone online (Gan *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, a prevalence rate of 18 percent was reported by Gan *et al.* (2014) and Selkie *et al*. (2016) while Alim (2016) found that 80 percent of people had the condition.

Although CB is endemic in Nigeria, its prevalence is underreported because of its nature and the paucity of research on the subject. Even though there is evidence of an increase in the use of electronic media there is also a dearth of literature on the prevalence of CB. However, the proliferation of CB is becoming more widespread as ICTs become more prevalent in society. According to the 2016 study by Olumide, Adams, and Amodu 39.8% of the participants had experienced cyberbullying and 21.0% had been both the victim and the perpetrator. A high prevalence rate of CB was reported by Ada, Okoli, Obeten and Akeke (2016) in Nigerian higher education institutions. Oyewusi and Orolade (2014) and Okoye Nwoge and Onah (2015) were among the other researchers who reported a high prevalence of CB in Nigeria. According to a study conducted at a university in Nigeria by Nwosu Ementa and Ejikeme (2018) between 48 and 57 percent of undergraduate reported having experienced bullying via various cyber media.

In one study Antoniadou *et al* (2016) looked into how bullying and CB in teenagers relate to one another. According to their findings cyber disinhibition cyber activity psychopathic traits and being a man were all predictive factors of CB while pleasure-seeking cyber disinhibition and being a woman were all predictive factors of traditional bullying. While Internet skills predicted traditional victimization cyber disinhibition assertiveness and a lack of peer relationships predicted CB. Aricak's (2009) study also looked at two potential predictors of CB (psychiatric symptomatology) in college students. The results showed that the categories of non-bully-victims pure-victims pure-bullies and bully-victims differed significantly. Victims who were bullied or pure victims reported significantly more mental symptoms than victims who were not bullied. According to the route analysis hostility and psychoticism were significant predictors of CB. Furthermore, the results showed that almost 50% of survey respondents acknowledged engaging in at least one instance of phone or online impersonation.

The effects of bullies, victims, bully-victims and eyewitnesses on the behaviour and

emotional responses of Malaysian adults were investigated by Balakrishnan (2018). His research revealed that while most offenders did nothing after committing a crime the majority of them expressed regret. The majority of victims reported defending themselves and most of them experienced anger despair and depression after being bullied. Barlett and colleagues. (2014) found that female students primarily engage in CB by revealing secrets they have been told about others gossiping about people online disparaging their sexual orientation or personality or calling people untrustworthy. In 2005 Keith and Martins found that women participate in a more relational form of CB than men. Gender role expectations and culture may be the cause of this. Based on the overall prevalence rate the results of a study conducted in 2015 by Balakrishnan on the effects of gender, age and internet usage on CB in Malaysian adolescents showed that CB continued after school. Despite this there were no notable gender differences. More women than men were cyberbullies and victims. Younger people were found to engage in more CB behaviour (as bullies and victims) than their older colleagues although their findings also showed no discernible age differences. Considerable differences in internet usage were discovered individuals who used the internet for two to five hours a day reported experiencing more victimization and engaging in CB than those who used it for less than an hour.

Aparisi and others in a study conducted in 2021 examined the connection between academic performance motivation learning strategies and CB. It discovered that victims of bullying struggle more to plan and organise their study and exam schedules have fewer control and consolidation strategies and are less able to adjust to university life. Bernardo *et al.* (2020) study on the impact of bullying and CB on university dropout rates revealed that bullied adolescents were more likely than non-bullied teens to think about leaving school. They also found that certain social integration-related factors aided instructors in their moderating role. Kokkinos and Antoniadou (2019), study on CB and victimisation among undergraduate CB was found to be negatively correlated with conscientiousness and negatively correlated with depression. Low agreeableness, high extraversion, high loneliness and high compulsive Internet use predicted cyber victimisation whereas low agreeableness, frequent Internet use and higher levels of negative Internet outcomes predicted CB. The study reported that students who use the Internet problematically possess specific personality traits and exhibit a range of social and psychopathological symptoms may be more likely to experience CB and victimisation.

Peled (2018), found that CB victims typically exhibit psychological issues like loneliness depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, social exclusion, school phobias and poor academic performance. As a result, they may consider suicide as a way to end the torture. Kokkinos and colleagues (2014) looked into the characteristics of participants who were college students in relation to the CB phenomenon. According to their findings cyber-victims scored higher on empathy but CB predicted more psychiatric symptoms,

more psychopathic traits and a high thrill-seeking nature. CB was linked to depression, Internet use, impulsive or irresponsible behaviour, callousness or lack of emotion and a lack of social skills (Jung *et al.*, 2014). In addition to psychological issues like inappropriate behaviour alcohol consumption, smoking and a lack of academic commitment. Jung *et al.*, 2014, claimed that CB also harms the emotional and physical health of helpless victims

Methodology

The study's research design was survey-based. All undergraduates at Federal University of Oye-Ekiti made up the study's population. 500 respondents from different faculties at the Federal University of Oye-Ekiti were selected using a simple random sampling technique. The study's instrument was a self-structured scale that was modified to account for the CB based on existing research and modified based on research on cyber bulling behaviour by Abdelrazek and Eltantawy (2020). The instruments were designed and hosted via the online application Google Forms. Through the various undergraduate communication group platforms (Google Classrooms, WhatsApp and Telegram). Participation was completely voluntary, and the identities of respondents were kept confidential. The questionnaire consisted of five sections. The first section captured demographic information about the students. The second section assessed the most commonly used social media platforms among undergraduates. The third section examined the prevalence of cyberbullying among undergraduates, while the fourth focused on the relationship between cyberbullying and emotional well-being. Finally, the fifth section explored the impact of cyberbullying on students' interest in learning and their engagement in academic activities.

A total of 224 respondents who provided accurate answers to the questionnaire were included in the data analysis following the completion of the data collection process. This study received approval and ethical clearance from the Faculty of Education at the Federal University of Oye-Ekiti. For the data analysis, descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), were employed.

Results

The study's participant's demographic details were displayed in Table 1. Only 3. 6 percent of the sample were between the ages of 26 and 30 with the majority of undergraduates (50. 9%) being between the ages of 21 and 25. Those between the ages of 15 and 20 came in second (45. 5%). There were more females (58. 0 percent) than male (42. 0 percent) in the gender distribution. The bulk of undergraduates (59. 8%) are in their 100 level of study whereas the percentage drastically drops at higher levels: 200 level undergraduates make up 19% 300 level students make up 13% and 400 level undergraduates make up only 7%.

Table 1 Demographical Characteristics of Undergraduates in the study

S/N	Variables	Labels	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	15-20 years	102	45.5
		21-25 years	114	50.9
		26-30 years	8	3.6
2	Gender	Male	94	42.0
		Female	130	58.0
3	Level of study	100 level	134	59.8
		200 level	44	19.6
		300 level	30	13.4
		400 level	16	7.1

Research Question One: Which is the most frequently used social media platforms among undergraduates?

Table 2 displayed the most commonly used social media platforms of undergraduates in a virtual classroom. With 73. 2% of undergraduates using it WhatsApp is the most widely used platform demonstrating its dominance in virtual classroom communication and interaction. Undergraduate's inclination for a combination of communication and entertainment platforms is reflected in Facebooks 33. 9% usage, TikToks 25. 9% and Snapchats 21. 4%. With only 7. 1 percent of users Twitter is the least popular platform among undergraduates while 19. 6 percent use Instagram. Undergraduates prefer flexible platforms like WhatsApp for their virtual classroom needs according to the data.

Table 2 Social Media Platforms most frequently used by Undergraduates

s/n	Social media platform	No	Yes
1	Facebook	148(66.1%)	76(33.9%)
2	Instagram	18(80.4%)	44(19.6%)
3	Snapchat	176(78.6%)	48(21.4%)
4	Twitter	208(92.9%)	16(7.1%)
5	WhatsApp	60(26.8%)	164(73.2%)
6	TikTok	166(74.1%)	58(25.9%)

Research Question Two: What is the prevalence of CB among undergraduates?

Table 3 looked at the undergraduate population's prevalence of CB. The prevalence of these problems is demonstrated by the fact that a sizable percentage of undergraduates (42 percent) reported having experienced CB and 38.4% reported having been the victim of online bullying or harassment. Though a smaller percentage reported seeing it on a monthly basis (16. 1 percent) weekly basis (14. 3 percent) and daily basis (3. 6 percent) the majority (66. 1 percent) have never experienced online bullying or harassment. About half of the undergraduates (50 percent) said they had never encountered CB in their personal experiences during the previous year compared to 33.9 percent who said they had encountered it occasionally 13.4 percent who

said they had encountered it monthly and 2.7 percent who said they had encountered it weekly. These results showed that although a significant percentage of undergraduates' experience CB the frequency varies greatly with a smaller group experiencing it on a regular basis.

Table 3 Prevalence of Cyber-bullying among Undergraduates

S/n	Variables	Labels	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Have you ever experienced cyber-bullying (for example. social media, messaging apps, online gaming)?	No	130	58.0
		Yes	94	42.0
2.	Have you ever experienced bullying or harassment online	No	138	61.6
		Yes	86	38.4
3.	How often do you witness online/cyberbullying or harassment?	Daily	8	3.6
		Weekly	32	14.3
		Monthly	36	16.1
		Not at all	148	66.1
4.	Frequency of cyberbullying experienced in the past one year	Daily	112	50.0
		Weekly	6	2.7
		Monthly	30	13.4
		Never	76	33.9

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between cyberbullying and learning interest and engagement among undergraduates?

The results of a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis examining the relationship between CB and undergraduate learning interest and engagement are shown in Table 4. The table indicates a statistically significant relationship between CB and learning interest and engagement among undergraduates (r=.360, n=224, p (.001) <.05). (r=. 360 p = 224. 1) As a result, CB affected the undergraduates learning interest and engagement in and participation in the study.

Table 4 Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the Relationship between Cyberbullying and Learning Interest and Engagement among Undergraduates

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	R	p-value	Remarks
Cyberbullying	7.6786	2.08868	224	.360*	.001	Sig.
Learning interest and Engagement	23.7054	4.37202				

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Research Question four: What social media platforms play the most potent role in promoting the prevalence cyberbullying?

The social media sites most frequently linked to encouraging CB among undergraduates were identified in Table 5. Facebook is the most common platform causing 37. 5 percent of cases which suggests that it plays a big part in encouraging bullying behaviour. Significant roles are also played by TikTok

(25.9 percent) and Twitter (25.0 percent) which illustrates how common CB is on sites that encourage public sharing and interaction. Instagram (4. 5 percent) and Snapchat (7. 1 percent) are less commonly used

Table 5 Social Media Platforms that play the most Potent Role in Promoting the Prevalence of Cyberbullying

Social media platforms	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	84	37.5
Instagram	10	4.5
Snapchat	16	7.1
Twitter	56	25.0
TikTok	58	25.9
Total	224	100.0

Table 5 examined the connection between CB and undergraduates' emotional well-being identifying significant mental health issues. The majority of undergraduates assessed their overall emotional well-being as either fair (25.0 percent) or good (38 .4 percent) with 36.6 percent rating it as poor or very poor. There are clear emotional difficulties: 79.5 percent report feeling overwhelmed or hopeless and 75.9 percent report mood swings or irritability. Although 77.7 percent said they feel free to express their feelings 67.9 percent said they can take constructive criticism or unfavorable comments. Only 11.6% of undergraduates described their resilience as excellent while the majority (44.6%) rated themselves as fair. However, a total of 43. 8 percent of undergraduates fell into the poor or very poor categories. These showed that emotional stability and coping strategies are greatly impacted by CB highlighting the necessity of interventions to increase undergraduates' emotional support and resilience.

Table 6 Cyberbullying and Emotional Well-being among Undergraduates

S/n	Variables	Labels	Frequency	Percentage
1	How would you rate your overall emotional well-being	Very poor	46	20.5
		Poor	36	16.1
		Fair	56	25.0
		Good	86	38.4
2	Do you experience mood swings or irritability?	No	54	24.1
		Yes	170	75.9
3	Have you felt overwhelmed or hopeless?	No	46	20.5
		Yes	178	79.5
4	Do you feel comfortable expressing your emotions?	No	50	22.3
		Yes	174	77.7
5	Can you cope or handle criticism or negative feedback?	No	72	32.1
		Yes	152	67.9
6	How would you rate your resilience and ability to bounce back from challenges?	Very poor	42	18.8
		Poor	56	25.0
		Fair	100	44.6
		Excellent	26	11.6

Research Question five: What is the relationship between cyberbullying and emotional well-being among undergraduate?

Table 7 displays the results of a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) study that looked into the connection between undergraduate emotional well-being and CB. The table found no statistically significant relationship between the two (r=.049, n=224, p (.468)>.05). Therefore, CB has no effect on the study's undergraduate emotional well-being.

Table 7 Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between Cyberbullying and Emotional Well-being of Undergraduates

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	R	p-value	Remarks
Cyberbullying	7.6786	2.08868	224	.049	.468	Not Sig.
Emotional well-being	13.7857	2.57768				

Research Question 6: What are the emotional difficulties experienced by undergraduates about cyberbullying?

Anxiety or worry is the most prevalent problem affecting 54.5 percent of undergraduates according to Table 8 which lists the emotional challenges they faced in the previous year. Other emotional issues which are less common but still noteworthy include low self-esteem which affects 57.1 percent of undergraduates. These emotional struggles showed that many undergraduates face significant psychological challenges likely exacerbated by academic pressures and social factors. Depression or sadness affects 30.4 percent of undergraduates while difficulty sleeping affects 11.6 percent of them.

Table 8 Emotional difficulties experienced by Undergraduates in the past year

S/n	Emotional difficulties experienced	No	Yes
1	Anxiety or worry	102(45.5%)	122(54.5%)
2	Depression or sadness	156(69.6%)	68(30.4%)
3	Low self-esteem	96(42.9%)	128(57.1%)
4	Difficulty sleeping	198(88.4%)	26(11.6%)
5	Others	206(92.0%)	18(8.0%)

Discussion

Social media is widely acknowledged to have advantages and disadvantages and the research has produced solid proof to support this notion. According to the study's findings undergraduates use WhatsApp more than any other social media platform. This suggests that group chats are possible on WhatsApp which facilitates communication between undergraduates in collaborative settings like study or project teams. This investigation validates the conclusions of Nordianah *et al. (*2023) as well as Onyema *et al.* (2024), who noted that compared to Instagram or TikTok students prefer WhatsApp because it is the most popular platform for online learning and the best for screen sharing real-time collaboration and file sharing. These features

promote a more interactive and collaborative learning environment. WhatsApp facilitates organized communication that is suitable for academic discussions. Additionally, Omokhabi (2023) reported that the majority of young adults use platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, WhatsApp, Hangout Meet, Twitter, Tumblr, and Facebook for educational purposes.

The finding on the prevalence of CB among undergraduates. The findings demonstrate the prevalence of these problems by revealing that a sizable percentage of undergraduates reported having CB and having been the victim of online bullying or harassment. Students who experience CB may have anxiety, depression, stress and low self-esteem which could have an impact on their general mental health according to the study's implication (Chen *et al.* 2023). These results align with the study by Alrajeh et al. (2021), which highlighted that most students have experienced cyberbullying and its association with depression, emphasizing the widespread nature of this issue in educational environments.

The study indicates a significant relationship between CB and learning interest and engagement among undergraduate students. It finds that students who frequently experience CB often show signs of anxiety, worry, and low self-esteem, all of which negatively affect their ability to focus on their academic work. Students who experience online harassment often struggle with feelings of fear, insecurity, and demotivation, which can make it difficult for them to fully engage in their education. This finding aligns with research conducted by Cervero et al. (2024) and Shen (2024), which shows that cyberbullying (CB) is significantly associated with university students' intentions to drop out and their disengagement from academics. Victims of cyberbullying tend to withdraw from academic activities due to their diminished motivation and interest in learning.

According to research on social media sites that contribute mostly to the prevalence of CB. The study shows that Facebook is the most popular platform facilitating bullying behaviours in 37. 5 percent of cases. Its significant user base broad accessibility and wealth of group interaction features could be the cause of this. The study confirms the findings of Ghani and Bakar (2023) who found that Facebook's widespread accessibility and group-based interactions make it the most frequently reported platform for CB and online harassment.

The findings regarding cyberbullying (CB) and students' emotional well-being reveal no statistically significant correlation between the two. This suggests that CB does not impact the emotional well-being of the study participants. These results contradict much of the previous research, which generally indicates that CB has a negative effect on students' mental health. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that some undergraduates may have developed psychological resilience, allowing them to withstand the effects of CB. Additionally, undergraduates who experience milder forms of CB may be less vulnerable and thus not as severely affected. This aligns with the

findings of Chitranka and Rani (2025), who noted that while some students demonstrate resilience and are not emotionally impacted, many victims of cyberbullying still experience significant distress

Conclusion

The frequency of CB and its impact on undergraduate learning motivation and emotional well-being in virtual classrooms were examined in this study According to the demographic information majority of the undergraduates were first-year students and were young mostly female. Because of social media platforms features which make group communication easier WhatsApp was found to be the most widely used social media platform for academic communication highlighting its widespread use in educational interactions. With a considerable percentage of undergraduates reporting first hand experiences of online harassment the results showed that CB is a serious problem. The relationship between CB and learning interest and engagement was found to be statistically significant suggesting that students who experience CB may be less engaged and interested in their studies. This study however found no significant correlation between CB and emotional well-being which is different from most previous research. This could be because undergraduates have varying levels of resilience or different coping strategies. The main platform associated with CB cases was found to be Facebook which was followed by TikTok and Twitter. The complex relationship between negative online behaviour and social media use is highlighted by these findings. Numerous students reported experiencing emotional challenges like anxiety or worry and low self-esteem underscoring the need for better emotional and psychological support networks in educational environments.

Recommendations

We suggest the following in light of the study's results:

- Higher institutions of learning such as universities should start cyberbullying awareness and prevention initiatives to teach students how to recognise report and handle CB. To encourage knowledge of digital etiquette and responsible social media use regular workshops and seminars ought to be organised by university Management
- To ensure safe and inclusive communication channels educational institutions should collaborate with Information Technology departments to manage and oversee online learning platforms and create a safe and inclusive virtual learning environment. By integrating reporting tools into learning management systems students can easily and discreetly report instances of online abuse. • Counseling services should be sufficiently provided to handle student's emotional difficulties and mental health. .To lessen the emotional effects of CB, institutions should offer professional support options like therapy sessions ,peer support groups and workshops on resilience building.

- Because WhatsApp and other platforms are so widely used educational institutions and instructors ought to support organised learning activities on them. To reduce abuse and exposure to bad behaviour rules for academic use of social media should be set.
- To build a culture of respect in virtual interactions and to prepare students for ethical social media engagement, courses on digital literacy and responsible online conduct should also be incorporated into the undergraduate curriculum.

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