

SMARTPHONE ADDICTION AND CYBERBULLYING VICTIMIZATION: PREVALENCE OF SOCIAL ANXIETY AMONG FEMALE UNDERGRADUATES

Abstract

Over usage of smartphone is a global issue among teenagers, and the continual presence of smart phones has a negative impact on their well-being. With the extensive, daily use of the Internet and smart phones, young people are at increased risk to be exposed to some form of cyber bullying (Ljepava, & Tomic, 2019). Cyber bullying is a public health issue that affects mostly women and causes them grief and anxiety. Cyber-victimization has the ability to inflict serious harm as well as increased social anxiety. Cyber bullying is a common social maladjustment that has negative repercussions on the wellbeing and development of adolescents, but numerous questions remain as to the relationship between cyber bullying and social anxiety in adolescence (Martínez-Montegudo et al, 2020).

The primary purpose of the present study is to explore the relationship between social anxiety and cyber bullying victimization among female undergraduates and to establish if smart phone addiction moderates the above relationship.

Introduction

Cyber-victimization has the ability to inflict serious harm as well as increased social anxiety. There are several studies relating to cyber victimization and social anxiety, while few studies have related the cyber bullying with social anxiety. Cyberbullying is the deliberate use of electronic communication tools to disturb an individual or specific group of individuals intentionally and repeatedly (Ang & Goh, 2010; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). The use of electronic technology including email, text messaging, various social networking sites such as Instagram, Facebook, twitter and blogs have become a primary means of communication for college students. Smart phones provide adolescents with a vast media platform (especially the social media) that allows them to share two-way information rather than one-way information. It is a communication network where an individual can create many ways of sharing information without any restrictions time and space limits.

Anxiety and depression are linked to cyber- victimization, and victims of cyber bullying have a higher level of depression than non-victims. Empirical research has shown that there is a link between internet addiction and cyber bullying(Sam et al., 2019).

Smartphone addiction among females and cyber bullying

A study found the link between gender and anxiety; girls had a greater tendency to experience the onset of various types of anxiety, including panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, separation anxiety disorder, and social anxiety (Kaloeti et al, 2021). Gender disparities in smart phone addiction have been found in their study (Al-Barashdi et al, 2015). According to the findings of Aljomaa, et al. (2016), males are more likely than females to be smart phone addicts. Bisen and Deshpande (2016) examined the prevalence of smart phone addiction among engineering students.

Social Anxiety and Cyber-victimization

Cyber-victimization can occur when someone sends embarrassing information about them or others over the Internet. This victimization results in emotional humiliation and embarrassment, leading to the idea that cyber-victimization is linked to the development of social anxiety symptoms (Campbell et al., 2012; Dempsey et al., 2009). According to Troy and Sroufe (1987), students with social anxiety are more likely to be victimized by others due to overt displays of worry, putting them at risk for victimization. According to a study by Storch et al. (2003), adolescents who have been relationally traumatized by their peers have higher levels of social anxiety. Social anxiety was significantly associated with several forms of bullying involvement in adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention- Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and warrants being considered into prevention and intervention programs for bullying involvement (Liu et al., 2021). In a study by Dempsey et al. (2009), cyber victimization was linked to social anxiety symptoms in public middle schoolstudents.

Therefore, the current study aims to investigate whether there is a relationship between social anxiety, cyber victimization, and the impact of smart phone addiction. More specifically, looking at whether the impact of social anxiety on cyber bullying is moderated by smart phone addiction.

AIM of the study

To study the relationship between social anxiety and cyber bullying victimization and the impact of smart phone addiction.

Methodology

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To study about the smart phone addiction among female undergraduates
- 2) To analyze the cyber bullying Victimization among the smart phone users
- 3) To study about the relation between Cyber bullying and social anxiety among female undergraduates.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses has been formulated

H1: Social anxiety will have no impact on cyber bullying victimization

H2: Smartphone addiction will have no impact on cyber bullying victimization

H3: The impact of social anxiety on cyber bullying will not be moderated by smart phone addiction

Research Design and Tools of the study

This qualitative research study tries to find out the psychological impact of smart phone usage among female undergraduates by using primary data collection with the help of questionnaire, interview method and anxiety rating scale tests.

SAS - Smartphone Addiction Scale (SAS) developed by Kwon et al. (2003). The scale consists of 6 factors and 33 items with a six-point Likert scale (1 “strongly disagree” and 6 “strongly agree”). The six factors were daily-life disturbance, positive anticipation, withdrawal, cyberspace-oriented relationship, overuse, and tolerance. The internal consistency reliability of the whole scale is 0.769.

Cyber bullying Victimization Scale

Cyber bullying Victimization Scale was developed by Hinduja and Patchin (2009). The scale consists of 9 items with a “yes” or “no” scale which describes an individual’s experience. The internal consistency reliability of the whole scale is 0.707.

The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS)

Comprises 24 social situations to be replied to twice on a 4-point response scale (0=none to 3=severe) for social fear and social avoidance. Social fear has internal consistency reliability of 0.769, while social avoidance has internal consistency reliability of 0.756 (Liebowitz, 1987).

Expected Outcomes

This study gives the findings of relationship between social anxieties among female undergraduates.

Find out the cyber bullying victimization in Chennai city.

This study gives the idea of the impact of social anxiety on cyber bullying will be moderated by smart phone addiction.