

## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EXPERIENCING CYBER-BULLYING AND CYBER-STALKING AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

**Masooma Mubasher**

MS Student, Department of Gender and Development Studies, LCWU, Lahore  
[masoomayytz@gmail.com](mailto:masoomayytz@gmail.com)

**Asma Seemi Malik\***

Assistant Professor & Incharge Department of Sociology, LCWU, Lahore  
[asmaseemi3@gmail.com](mailto:asmaseemi3@gmail.com)

**Amjad Mahmood**

Assistant Professor, Punjab College of Information Technology, Lahore  
[amjadmahmood502@gmail.com](mailto:amjadmahmood502@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*This research specifically aims to investigate the prevalence of online harassment among boys and girls. A study on the perception and experiences of young adults regarding online harassment victimization has been selected with the topic "Gender differences in experiencing cyber-bullying and cyber-stalking." It offers detailed insights into their experiences and behaviours concerning cyber bullying, as well as the impact of cyber bullying on their lives and their coping strategies. This qualitative study employs a purposive sampling technique, with 12 participants (6 males and 6 females) aged 19 to 30 from various colleges and universities engaging in in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis was utilized to transcribe and analyze the interviews. The findings reveal no significant gender differences in cyber bullying and cyber stalking experiences among young adults. Both boys and girls were found to be targets of online harassment, but they often refrained from reporting such incidents due to privacy concerns. The primary challenge for future cyber bullying prevention efforts will be keeping up with the rapid advancements in technology.*

**Keywords:** Cyber bullying, cyber-stalking, social networking sites, young adults, online moral disengagement.

### INTRODUCTION

Advancements in information technology have significantly impacted individuals' lives, streamlining daily tasks and enhancing efficiency. Digital tools have gained popularity in various domains such as entertainment, communication, information gathering, and lawful access. Consequently, young people increasingly use social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp as safe havens, which in turn affect ethics, culture, practices, and complicates people's lives (Betts, 2016).

The Internet offers numerous benefits for teenagers and adults, such as fostering community support, self-awareness, and critical thinking skills. Access to information, academic assistance, and cross-cultural integration contribute to educational advantages. However, with increasing online engagement, recent attention has been directed towards understanding the potential dangers of the internet and its misuse ((Bozzola et al., 2022)

Information technology tools are often misused, rendering cyberspace an arena devoid of constructive dialogues that promote social responsibility, care, and respect. Cyberbullying has emerged as a social issue, with women and young individuals frequently targeted and silenced by the online community (Li et al., 2015).

Cyberstalking involves the persistent use of electronic media to harass or intimidate others. Cyberbullying and cyber abuse negatively impact victims' health, academic performance, and relationships, as well as their physical and mental well-being. Over time, cyberbullying may lead to adverse consequences such as cyber victimization. Concurrently, increased online exposure among

---

\* Corresponding Author

young people heightens the risk of negative effects on sleep, exercise, and social well-being (Shariff, 2016; Wöfler et al., 2014).

The term "stalking" has been intentionally avoided by the authors, as they argue that media exposure has sensationalized the word, evoking psychologically charged images. Instead, they describe a "persistent pursuer" as someone exhibiting a recurring or extended pattern of threats or harassment directed at an individual. Such behaviour causes the targeted person to fear physical harm (Shariff & Churchill, 2010).

White, Longpré, Stefanska (2020) emphasize the spectrum of behaviors exhibited by stalkers, defining stalking as a series of actions that involve repeated and persistent attempts to impose unwanted contact on others. Focusing on the impact on victims, McGrath and Casey describe stalking as unsolicited surveillance and intrusion into a victim's life and activities, often with the intention of intimidating or threatening the victim or those close to them (Choon& Chan, 2022).

The proliferation of websites and social media platforms has accompanied the evolution of the internet. Instagram, in particular, has emerged as a communication pioneer. Users can create their profiles, share with friends and foes alike, and edit them online. While personal information is typically withheld during face-to-face interactions, publishing such details online poses risks. Consequently, countless young individuals are susceptible to cyberbullying, either as victims or as perpetrators (Wilding et al., 2018).

The use of alias profiles further exacerbates the issue, as anonymity emboldens users to engage in conversations without fear of consequences. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Google have become hotbeds for cyberbullying (Lenhart, 2010).

One intriguing aspect of the online bullying discourse is gender differences. Women traditionally exhibit stronger moral values than men. As Smith et al. (2019) reported that women tend to communicate more through texts and emails. When combined with subtle forms of cyberbullying, this disparity might perpetuate gender inequality in face-to-face interactions or render women less empowered in cyberbullying contexts. Some studies suggest that men and women report online abuse with equal frequency(Wong, Cheung, Xiao & Chan, 2015).

Moreover, Barlett and Coyne (2014) observed that gender differences in cyberbullying participation were not statistically significant. The assertion that boys are more susceptible to cyberbullying than girls is not supported by substantial empirical evidence(Navarro &Jasinski, 2013). Faucher, C., Jackson, M., & Cassidy, W. (2014)

### **Objectives**

1. To offer comprehensive and detailed insights into the experiences and actions of young adults in relation to cyberbullying.
2. Evaluate the consequences of cyberbullying on both the virtual and real-life aspects of adult lives.
3. To enhance knowledge regarding the strategies young adults employ to cope with cyberbullying incidents.
4. Determining whether men or women are likely to face cyberbullying.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Theoretical Framework**

Cyberbullying involves the use of new communication technologies, such as the internet and cell phones. It is the practice of sending harmful text or images via the Internet or other digital communication tools to people. Willard (2008) identifies a variety of techniques that may involve fiery, harassment, cyber bullying, humiliation, squatting, leaving, trickery and exclusion. The threat of suicide may also be a form of cyber bullying, which is very serious. On cyberspace, people often feels like having no personality, often spontaneous, self-centred, hostile, so they feel that they can say whatever they want without being judged. Like out-dated harassment, gender is an imperative threat in virtual oppression too (Douglass et al., 2018). According to UNESCO (2015) in a report regarding woman cyber oppression, showed their worries over the increased cases of women cyber victims on internet. More than 70 per cent women fall victim to online harassment. Furthermore more than 72 per cent nations with such cases didn't take any stern action to provide relief to these victims.

The study of Patchin and Hinduja (2012) indicated that the number of youth reporting cyberbullying instances varies greatly depending on the definition of the term and the age of those surveyed. The study sampled 4,441 teens, ranging in age from 11 to 18, from a large school district in

the southern U.S. In this study, the researchers defined cyberbullying as “when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through email or text message or when someone posts something online about another person that they don’t like”.

Gender expectations are often mixed. The majority of male criminals of physical abuse are boys; although girls may also be directly or indirectly involved, with a slight variation of the words. Cyberbullying is most prevalent when there is no face-to-face contact, so it is more likely to be found in girls than in boys. There have been few studies that illustrate gender differences, but in the ones that do, there are differences (Uusitalo-Malmivaara&Letho, 2016).

Wong, Cheung and Xiao (2017) discovered that girls are more likely to be targeted online, especially by texts and phones, than boys. Sorrentino et al. (2019) found no differences in gender of victims of cyberbullying; however, there is an increase in cyberbullying for boys compared to girls.

A review by Barlett and Coyne (2014) revealed that young men were more likely than young ladies to threaten others on the web. Li announced that there is no critical contrast among orientation and cyberbullying for other people. Li et al. (2012) tracked down irrelevant outcomes for digital harassers and targets, demonstrating that for all sexual orientations, understudies have a similar encounter and inclusion in digital tormenting.

A Canadian study found that young women were more likely to be infected with cyber-stalking than young men. In 2014, 7% of young women reported being bullied online, compared to 5% of young men. Similarly, single people who have never been married were at greater risk of becoming a victim of cyber-stalking (6%) compared to 4% of those who were once married (or once married) or living together. Earlier this decade, women under 30 and single / unmarried were more likely to be homosexual / bisexual. They were also more likely to experience cyberbullying and cyberbullying (Connell, 2014). In a study conducted by Ybarra and Mitchel (2004), 1,501 teens aged 10-17 were interviewed by telephone. One of literature found that 3 to 72 percent of adolescents aged 10-19 yrs. become victims of cyber bullying and become its committer as 1 to 41 percent (Selkie et al., 2015).

In a study conducted by Li (2007), the nature and extent of cyberbullying among youths were examined. According to 264 surveys conducted among three high school students, about half had been bullied, and one in four had been bullied online. Over half of the students also reported knowing someone who had been bullied online. Most cyberbullies harass someone electronically. Reports have shown that victims of cyberbullying and viewers do not inform adults about the incidents. In terms of cybercrime and cyberbullying, it has been found that men are more likely to be bullies and cyber bullies than women. In addition, female victims of cyberbullying are more likely to contact older people than males.

Suicidal and violent thoughts are the devastating results of bullying (Alavi et al., 2017). Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24 (Sumner et al., 2015). As more information is revealing a link between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation or act, both victims of cyberbullying and the criminals have demonstrated. It is probably attempted suicide "murder" where the victim does not actually participate. According to the latest National Vital Statistics Report, suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24 (Borowsky, Taliaferro, McMorris, 2013). Suicide and its attempts have been enhanced among people since 2008, made it the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest cause of death among 10-34 yrs. Old persons (Plemmons et al., 2018). According to Andriessen et al. (2018) out of 20 adolescents, one did suicide every year. It is found by Hinduja and Patchin (2018) that it is 2 times more likely that students, who faced cyber bullying or bullying in their life, commit suicide.

There’s proof to show that involvement in cyberbullying differs by gender. When it came to report bullying, this gender gap was not evident. Boys and girls reported the same numbers of being bullied offline (12.3% vs. 14.1%), with more boys reporting abuse offline (8% vs. 5%). Kowalski surveyed 1,915 girls and 1,852 boys in grades 6, 7, and 8 from throughout the southwestern and southeastern United States and found that girls reported being bullied online more often than boys (25% vs. 11%) and cyberbullying more than boys (8.6%). There is clearly room for further research before conclusive suggestions can be made regarding girls' chances of becoming victims of cyberbullying or their specialized knowledge about it ((Kowalski et al., 2014).

Among 500 subscribers, one in five women reported experiencing online sexual harassment. It may take the form of flames (open assault), high-profile sexual images, or pornography that degrades women. Additional forms may include seduction under false pretences and visible rape (Bryce, J., & Fraser, J. (2013

Additionally, research has shown that boys are more likely to be physically abused than girls, and men and women are equally at risk of verbal abuse. The results of a study regarding whether girls are bullied and abused more often than boys are incomplete. On the contrary, Vandebosch and Green (2019) applied strict statistical methods and found that in all three of the traditional forms of exploitation, the boys scored higher than the girls on a social scale, and the boys were found to be bullies and exploited more than the girls.

### **Theory of Bandura**

In accordance with Bandura's (1997) assertions, an individual's arousal plays a significant role in their perception of danger. When a person perceives a sense of control in a given situation, they are less inclined to regard it as a threat. In contrast, a diminished sense of control contributes to heightened susceptibility to perceived threats. The notion of Internet self-efficacy refers to the conviction held by individuals in their ability to proficiently navigate and utilize the Internet, which is closely linked to their prior experience with the medium. As postulated by the theory of industrious endeavour, individuals possessing higher degrees of Internet expertise are likely to experience an enhanced sense of control during virtual interactions and exhibit increased self-assurance in addressing cyberbullying-related matters.

### **THE CURRENT STUDY**

As the previous research and reports reviewed above suggested, cyberbullying it really does happen, but it is not clear whether gender is contributing to cyberbullying. This study, therefore, examines the type and level of young adult's knowledge of cyberbullying that focuses on the impact of gender. Younger students are selected because in young age is a time when physical abuse increases its frequency and intensity. Consistently, and perhaps as a precursor, this period we also see a series of urgent changes in the social welfare of young adults. This study is designed to help fill this void. To learn more about the unique experiences of both boys and girls who suffer from cyberbullying and online harassment. The following research questions have been identified;

**Research Question 1:**What kinds of incidents of cyberbullying and cyber-stalking are being experienced by adults?

**Research Question 2:**What is the impact of cyberbullying on young adults?

**Research Question 3:**In what ways do young adults respond to being victims of cyberbullying?

**Research Question 4:**What factors should be considered in the development of future efforts to prevent cyberbullying?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The goal of this study was to explore whether young adults experience cyberbullying and cyberstalking differently based on their gender. For this purpose, qualitative method was used.

#### **Research Design**

In this study, an open-ended questionnaire was developed by using literature review and expert opinions, and interviews were conducted in order to gather the data.

#### **Participants**

In this qualitative study, 12 young adults were interviewed, aged between 19 and 25 years old, from different colleges and universities in Lahore. Purposive sampling was used as a method for selecting samples in this study. Six males and six females participated in the in-depth interviews. All participants were voluntarily participated with their proper concern.

#### **Inclusion Criteria**

The present study included young adults aged 19 to 25. Participants living in Lahore were included. There were also participants from various socioeconomic classes included in the study.

#### **Exclusion Criteria**

There were no children included in the study. Uneducated people were not included. Study participants were not older citizens.

#### **Tools/Measures**

By using semi structured interviews, participants were asked about cyber-harassment behaviours and their experiences. The interview schedule was divided into three sections;

1) Participants' experiences with cyber-harassment. 2) Impact of cyber-harassment on their lives. 3) Coping with cyber-harassment consequences.

In addition to the questions related to the adult's experiences on social media and demographic information such as their gender, age, education, siblings, and income, these questions were also asked using an in-depth interview method.

### Procedure

The researcher conducted about 12 interviews with individuals (males and females) who were actively engaged in social media activities after obtaining departmental authorization and approval from BOS. Apart from obtaining consent from the participants and ensuring their privacy, the purpose and objectives of the interview were briefly explained to them. Participants were interviewed in their respective languages on tape recorders. Analyzing the interviews using thematic analysis followed the transcription of the tapes.

### Analysis

Each interview was transcribed and coded. Using the theoretical framework to code the interviews, themes and subthemes were categorized. In thematic analysis, qualitative data is (usually inductively) coded into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories, and consistent patterns and relationships between them are then identified to be used as explanations. Among the themes are the verbatims respondents provided and patterns found in the data. A connecting theme is formed when similar meanings, experiences, and patterns are aggregated. By reviewing the transcriptions, the researcher gets to know them. After defining names and themes, the researcher concludes.

## RESULTS

In depth interviews were conducted for the extraction of the required information. The participants demographics are listed below:

**Table 1**

*Demographic characteristics of participants (N=12)*

<i>Demographic variables</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Missing</i>
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	6	50.0	
Female	6	50.0	
<b>Age (in years)</b>			
19 years	4	33.3	
20 years	2	16.7	
21 years	1	8.3	
22 years	1	8.3	
23 years	1	8.3	
25 years	3	25	
<b>Education</b>			
BS/BBA/MA	9	75	
MS/MPhil/MBA	3	25	
<b>Department</b>			
IR (International Relations)	4	33.3	
Mass Communication	1	8.3	
Microbiology	1	8.3	
IT (Information Technology)	2	4.0	
Software Engineering	4	33.3	
<b>Family Income</b>			
50,000 to 1 Lac	10	85.0	
1 Lac above	1	8.3	

Above mentioned table shows the demographics for the males and female participants selected for the interview. The participants involved in the interviews were young adults and all belonged to different colleges and universities of Lahore.

**Figure1**

The table1 demonstrates the major themes of the following study.



These major themes are extracted from the interviews based upon the responses of males and females. Initially, the researcher arose 12 major themes, but after digging deeper, the researcher narrowed it down to six themes.

#### **Past time activities**

People have different hobbies and leisure activities that they like to do in their free time. When the researcher asked from the respondents about their past time activities.

Respondent (8) replied:

*"I use social media in my free time. I use mostly Instagram and Facebook. I use tweeter also".*

While participant (10) shared:

*"I am kind of introvert person due to which... I do not do outdoor sports. That's why I am very much active on social media. In my free time, I prefer to watch movies or random videos on you tube".*

Additionally, other participants shared the same leisure activities they enjoy doing in their spare time. Most of them shared that they enjoy spending time on social media.

#### **Striking App**

As we all know the world has become global village now. And no one can live without the advance technology and social media. In our daily routine, we use social media for different purposes. Everyone is spending their free time on social media and people like to spend their most of time on the apps or websites they like the most. When the researcher asked about the most interesting and favorite app of participants; most of them responded that they prefer to use Instagram more. According to our participant (6): Yes, I use social media. I like to use Instagram and I use Facebook sometimes. I prefer Instagram because it covers almost all the features like music, videos and news. Further, I found it easy

to handle and I like the privacy of Instagram. Other respondents shared the same thing that they use Instagram more as compared to other apps.

Another participant (6) said:

*“The best thing about Instagram is it's explored pitch, fashion sites, memes accounts etc. Also, I like this feature of direct message your followers and contact them there on site”.*

### **Cyber bullying/stalking**

Cyberbullying is becoming a public health problem. In some cases, cyberbullying management may include sending malicious text messages, emails, or instant chat messages; forwarding confidential emails, messages, or instant chat messages to another person; imposing offensive website functions on a person; and so on. To make social media page in order to harass someone, or to use mobile camera to capture video of someone without their concern can cause serious problem in someone's personal and public life. It appears that such forms combine into two distinct modes, visual and textual (Shariff & Churchill, 2010). When the researcher asked the respondents about their views on cyberbullying and what they thought when they hear the phrase online harassment. The respondent (5) said: To ask someone's personal information, wrong favours, sexual demands, to annoy others by unnecessary messages and calls, and to show their vulgar side of their personality. These are all included in online harassment. There are so many fake sides on social media. They first try to manipulate girls and after that use their information in order to ask sexual favours or money. They take or save their snaps wrongfully and then threat them with other fake accounts. The other participants shared the same views about cyber-bullying and stalking. They counted both phrases in same context. Participant's (6) remarks about cyberstalking was:

*“The act of stalking someone's interests, hobbies and information that he or she might be uploading on their account. The reason can be just to fulfil their wishes/plans or it can be for time pass”.*

### **Victim's Experiences:**

As a user of social media, people might have to face some unpleasant incidents which affect their public and private lives. The social media life affecting badly on teens and youths mental and physical health. Many undergoes with emotional trauma and in severe cases they try to attempt suicide.

When the researcher asked from participants about their unpleasant incidents on social media, the one of respondent (5) shared their incident: I have experienced it once. When someone asked about my snaps on Instagram. I did not share it with him. After insisting or making me fool, he succeeded to get my pictures. You know, we all go through these experiences in young age where we have not aware of the pros and cons of this. Same happened with me at that time. Then, after some time...I saw my snaps on different unknown accounts. He had been uploaded it on his different accounts. I tried my best to convince and request him to please delete my snaps. He did not respond. I trusted him but he ditched me by using my snaps. Further, she said:

*“I was in depression at that time. For me, it was very difficult to cope up with the situation. I attempted suicide by taking over dose of sleeping pills. But now, I am recovered from the depression”.*

The participant (9) said: And I myself have experienced this issue. A random girl on Instagram messaged me once and we started talking... soon she started to ask for my pictures and she was demanding the mobile recharge and money transfer through easy paisa by saying she is in need and she will send me back. I did not trust her and simply blocked her. But as I have experienced it by myself... so I will surely say not only the girls are the victim of cyber-bullying but also the boy's face it.

It was agreed by both boys and girls that there are no gender differences in dealing with cyber bullying and harassment. The social media world effects them both differently.

### **Support system**

Participant (2) said: *“My family supported me in all this because what least my friends could do for me at that time”.*

Male participant 2 shared, friends cannot provide you that support the family can provide you that time. Families should understand the sensitivity of the problem and should support their son and daughter in such issue. The adults should share their problem with their parents so that they can file a complaint against the mockers.

On the other hand, the participant (3) stated, I share my personal talks with my friends because I trust them the most. Also, I share my things with my cousins too. But I think, sharing your problem with your friends cannot solve your issue. I think, we should file report against such people who disturbs our mental health. There should be strict punishment for them. So that, they cannot repeat the same mistake by harassing some other person. There should be online helpline number for those people who

are suffering from this issue. So that, the victims can find help and support by sharing their problem with them.

Participants reported that their parents and friends are their most important support systems, as they can help them in such circumstances and can trust them easily.

### **Gender and bullying**

The participant's (6) views about the gender difference in experiencing cyber bullying and stalking was; Well, as we are living in male dominant society so mostly women are the victims of harassment and these kinds of cases. I myself have never experienced such kind of issue like someone threaten me and sent me malicious messages. So, I think that mostly women are the victim because males are the one who are using these types of platforms for harassment purposes and threatening purposes.

Participant (11) shared: I have experienced it personally or have been heard many cases in my surrounding. And, I think girls are the victim of cyber harassment as compared to boys. But now a days both genders have similar ratio of facing harassment on social media. They both are facing cyber bullying equally. I face this issue I think daily. On my Instagram account, I use to put motivational stories and posts where I suggest and advice our youth by saying: "For God's sake, please do not trust any stranger on social media, even do not trust your relatives or friends of friends". And I received so many negative comments on my stories and under my posts where people write negative comments.

Moreover, female participant (4) stated:

*"Males are the one who are using these types of platforms for harassment purposes and threatening purposes"*.

Men and women both agreed that they have been the victims of online harassment and that they both have different incidents.

## **DISCUSSION**

The present study was conducted to explore the perception and experiences of males and females on cyber bullying victimization. In this qualitative study, 12 young adults were interviewed. Six males and six females participated in the in-depth interviews. The current study revealed that both boys and girls become victims of online harassment or cyberbullying on social media. The study found no gender differences in facing cyber bullying and stalking among young adults. It was found that both boys and girls are subjected to online harassment, but they tend not to report these issues because their privacy is at risk. But they face this issue equally with different social media experiences. Previous research findings of Wong, Cheung, Xiao and Chan (2015) also supported this fact that cyber bullies and victims did not show a significant difference in gender. Also, the study of Sorrentino et al. (2019) found no differences in gender of victims of cyberbullying; however, there is an increase in cyberbullying for boys compared to girls. While the Canadian study found that young women were more likely to be infected with cyber-stalking than young men (Connell, 2014).

The theory of Badura also supported the current study. In accordance with Bandura's (1997) assertions, an individual's arousal plays a significant role in their perception of danger. When a person perceives a sense of control in a given situation, they are less inclined to regard it as a threat. In contrast, a diminished sense of control contributes to heightened susceptibility to perceived threats. The notion of Internet self-efficacy refers to the conviction held by individuals in their ability to proficiently navigate and utilize the Internet, which is closely linked to their prior experience with the medium.

Initially, the researcher asked the participants about their understanding of online harassment and what they think when they hear the term 'cyberbullying'. Majority of the respondents responded that sending malicious and unwanted messages, asking wrong favors, demanding money and blackmailing all counts in online harassment. In the previous study, the researchers defined cyberbullying as "when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through email or text message or when someone posts something online about another person that they don't like" (Justin & Patchin, 2010).

During the study, the researcher asked the participants about their online experiences. Most of them stated that they faced bullying, negative comments, wrong demands, and threats. In most cases, the participants found themselves lost and tried to commit suicide. Suicidal and violent thoughts are the devastating results of bullying. According to the latest National Vital Statistics Report, suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24 (Borowsky, Taliaferro, McMorris, 2013). In addition, the U.S. Division of Health and Human Services reports that "both male and female murder rates have increased dramatically from 2000 to 2003.

Most of the people who responded to the question about the biggest source of support they found in their online experiences said they shared their experiences with their parents and friends. Both family and friends supported them in their hard time. There were some male respondents who said they had not discussed their problems with anyone. Meanwhile, female respondents shared their problems with their family members and friends. In addition, respondents mentioned the role of family and the importance of it in managing the situation. The previous literature found that victims of cyberbullying and viewers do not report the incidents to adults. In addition, female victims of cyberbullying are more likely to contact older people than males (Li, 2008).

The current study specifically aims to find out the gender differences in experiencing cyberbullying and stalking among young adults. A majority of participants said there are no gender differences when it comes to experiencing cyber bullying. Cyberbullying affects both the genders. But they do not like to report such incidents because of fear of leaking privacy. Also, males are less likely to share their personal feelings and incidents with others than females because they do not like to show their emotional weaknesses. The study by Hinduja reflects this idea. The research findings of Patchin and Hinduja found, females are typically more emotionally affected by cyberbullying than males. This is not surprising due to the fact, as mentioned earlier, that males have a reluctance to admit weaknesses especially from an emotional standpoint. In reality, one would expect males to be at least equal if not higher in emotional response concerning anger and frustration (Hinduja&Patchin, 2018).

Also, the study of Sorrentino et al. (2019) also found no differences in gender of victims of cyberbullying; however, there is an increase in cyberbullying for boys compared to girls. Ybarra and Mitchell in (2004) concluded, cyber bullies and victims did not show a significant difference in gender.

At the end, the respondents also suggested that there might be some sort of awareness campaigns about cyber-bullying to guide the newly coming individuals on social media. They also recommended that the government should focus on the increase of awareness of cyber-bullying portals and even still there are cyber-bullying reporting portals but most of the teens and young adults do not know how to contact them and how to report their cases. So, government should spread awareness about their portals by increasing the advertising and marketing their portals in schools, colleges and universities or by running adds on social media platforms. So that, young adults get educated about their portals. In addition, the government will have to figure out whether any content hosted by harassers is illegal or could harm people. In that case, they must take action, including removing any illegal content.

## **CONCLUSION**

In Pakistani culture, bullying is deeply ingrained. We can only contain the problem in the short term and not eliminate it completely because bullying is deeply embedded in our competitive society. The current study revealed that the boys and girls on social media both become the victim of online harassment or cyberbullying. The study found no gender differences in facing cyber bullying and stalking among young adults. It was found that both boys and girls are subjected to online harassment, but they tend not to report these issues because their privacy is at risk. But they face this issue equally with different social media experiences. The impact of bullying and cyberbullying on today's youth is the most troubling problem at hand. With more knowledge about the reasons behind bullying and the methods used, prevention programs are getting more effective. An effective program needs to identify the problem clearly, recognize it, and come up with consistent ways to deal with it across all platforms. For cyberbullying prevention in the future, the biggest challenge will be keeping up with the pace of technological innovation.

## **Limitations and Implications for Future Research**

During the research, the respondents were shy or unwilling to give their personal information so convincing them to communicate was a hurdle for researcher. Also, if we take more sample size then chances to make diversity. This research can be conducted by using quantitative or longitudinal design in order to gather more in-depth data.

Table 2. Practice, Policy and Research Implications.

Stakeholders	Recommendations
Practitioners (law enforcement, service sector providers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources and training for law enforcement in identifying and responding to digital criminal violence, harassment, and cyberstalking.</li> <li>A collaborative effort between the police and the service sector to gather evidence.</li> <li>A network of helplines, free support centers, and resources to provide support and advice to victims.</li> <li>Developing clear community codes of conduct; establishing mechanisms through which victims can report harassing behaviours and have the content removed.</li> </ul>
Policy makers and law reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The government should ensure that rather than making ID verification mandatory, social media platforms should give all users the option to verify their identity on a voluntary basis, and should reject interactions with unverified accounts.</li> <li>Social media companies should look into complaints and have their accounts banned after three strikes.</li> <li>The social media companies should ban a person's whole device if they have been found guilty of online abuse. That way, they wouldn't be able to use the same device for another account in the future.</li> <li>Group chats shouldn't be accessible to people who aren't your friends on social media.</li> <li>Put in a filter system for offensive and rude comments/words instead of automating the removal of posts. The context must be checked manually before removing posts. The Posts must be appealing.</li> </ul>
Researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A further study of the prevalence, nature/impacts of online harassment would be useful.</li> </ul>

## REFERENCES

- Alavi, N., Reshetukha, T., Prost, E., Antoniak, K., Patel, C., Sajid, S., Groll, D. (2017). Relationship between Bullying and Suicidal Behaviour in Youth presenting to the Emergency Department. *J Can Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*, 26(2), 70-77. Epub 2017 Jul 1. PMID: 28747929; PMCID: PMC5510935.
- Andriessen, K., Mowll, J., Lobb, E., Draper, B., Dudley, M., & Mitchell, PB. (2018). Don't bother about me. The grief and mental health of bereaved adolescents. *Death Stud.*, 42(10), 607-615. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2017.1415393>. Epub 2018 Mar 1. PMID: 29364783.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.

- Barlett, C., & Coyne, S.M.(2014). A meta-analysis of sex differences in cyber-bullying behavior: the moderating role of age. *Aggress Behav.*, 40(5), 474-88. doi: 10.1002/ab.21555. Epub 2014 Aug 6. Erratum in: *Aggress Behav.*, 41(5), 513. PMID: 25098968.
- Barlett, C.P., Prot, S., Anderson, C.A. & Gentile, D.A. (2017). An empirical examination of the strength differential hypothesis in cyber bullying behavior. *Psychology of Violence*, 7(1), 22-32. [https://doi: http://dx.doi.org.proxy.mah.se/10.1037/vio0000032](https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org.proxy.mah.se/10.1037/vio0000032)
- Betts, L.R. (2016). Cyberbullying: Approaches, consequences, and interventions. In J. Binder (Ed.), *Palgrave studies in Cyber psychology*, London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Borowsky, I.W., Taliaferro, L.A., McMorris, B. (2013). Suicidal Thinking and Behavior Among Youth Involved in Verbal and Social Bullying: Risk and Protective Factors. *J. Adolesc. Health*, 53, S4–S12. [https://doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.10.280](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.10.280).
- Bozzola, E., Spina, G., Agostiniani, R., Barni, S., Russo, R., Scarpato, E., Di Mauro, A., Di Stefano, A.V., Caruso, C., Corsello, G., & Staiano, A. (2022). The Use of Social Media in Children and Adolescents: Scoping Review on the Potential Risks. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 19(16), 9960. [http://doi: 10.3390/ijerph19169960](http://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19169960). PMID: 36011593; PMCID: PMC9407706.
- Bozzola, E., Spina, G., Agostiniani, R., Barni, S., Russo, R., Scarpato, E., Di Mauro, A., Di Stefano, A.V., Caruso, C., Corsello, G., & Staiano, A. (2022). The Use of Social Media in Children and Adolescents: Scoping Review on the Potential Risks. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 19(16), 9960. [https://doi: 10.3390/ijerph19169960](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19169960). PMID: 36011593; PMCID: PMC9407706.
- Bryce, J., & Fraser, J. (2013). It's common sense that it's wrong: Young people's perceptions and experiences of cyber bullying. *Cyber psychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 16(11),
- Choon, H & Chan, O. (2022). Is This Stalking? Perceptions and Victimization Experiences of Stalking and Intrusive Behaviors in Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Ghana. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 19(11), 6689. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19116689>
- Connell, N. M., Schell-Busey, N. M., Pearce, A. N., & Negro, P. (2014). Badgrlz? Exploring sex differences in cyber bullying behaviors. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 12(3), 209-
- Douglass, C.H., Wright, C.J., Davis, A.C., Lim, M.S. (2018). Correlated sexual 27 harassment in person and technology facilitated harassment from an online survey among young Australians. *Sexual Health*, 15(4), 361-365
- Faucher, C., Jackson, M., & Cassidy, W. (2014). Cyberbullying among university students: Gendered experiences, impacts, and perspectives. *Education Research International*, 2014.
- Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. W. (2018a). Connecting adolescent suicide to the severity of bullying and cyber bullying. *Journal of School Violence*, 1–14.
- Kowalski, R.M., Giumetti, G.W., Schroeder, A.N., Lattanner, M.R. (2014). Bullying in the digital age: a critical review and meta-analysis of cyber bullying research among youth. *Psychol Bull.*, 140(4), 1073-137. doi: 10.1037/a0035618. Epub 2014 Feb 10. Erratum in: *Psychol Bull*, 140(4):1137. PMID: 24512111.
- Lenhart A. 2010, May 6. Cyberbullying: what the Research Is Telling Us. <http://www.pewInternet.org/Presentations/2010/May/Cyberbullying-2010.aspx> Retrieved from. [Google Scholar]
- Li, Q. (2008). A cross-cultural comparison of adolescents' experience related to cyberbullying. *Educational Research*, 50(3), 223-234.
- Li, Q., Smith, P. K., & Cross, D. (2012). Research into cyber bullying. *Cyber bullying in the global playground: Research from international perspectives*, 1-12.
- Li, Y., Chen, P., Chen, F., & Wu, W. (2015). Roles of fatalism and parental support in the relationship between bullying victimization and bystander behaviors. *School Psychology International*, 36(3), 253–267. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034315569566>
- Navarro, J.N., & Jasinski, J.L. (2013). Why girls? Using Routine activity theory to predict cyber bullying experiences between girls and boys. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 23(4), 286-303.
- Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2012). *Cyber bullying prevention and response: Expert perspectives*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. (ED529048)
- Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2013). Cyber bullying among adolescents: Implications for empirical research. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 53(4), 431-432.
- Plemmons, G., Hall, M., Doupnik, S., Gay, J., Brown, C., Browning, W., Casey, R., Freundlich, K., Johnson, D. P., Lind, C., Rehm, K., Thomas, S., & Williams, D. (2018). Hospitalization for

- suicide ideation or attempt: 2008–2015. *Pediatrics*, 141(6), e20172426. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-2426>
- Selkie, E.M., Kota, R., Chan, Y-F., Moreno, M. (2015). Cyber bullying, depression, and problem alcohol use in female college students: a multisite study. *Cyber psychol. Behav. Soc. Netw.* 18, 79–86. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2014.0371>
- Shariff, S. (2016). Defining the Lines on Cyber bullying: Navigating a balance between child protection, privacy, autonomy and informed policy. Retrieved from *Pakistan Review of Social Sciences*, 2 (2), 2021 <https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/839-defining-the-lines-on-cyberbullyingnavigating-a-balance-between-child-protection.html>
- Shariff, S., & Churchill, A. H. (Eds.). (2010). Truths and myths of cyber-bullying: *International perspectives on stakeholder responsibility and children's safety* (Vol. 38). Peter Lang
- Smith, P.K., López-Castro, L., Robinson, S., Görzig, A. (2019). Consistency of gender differences in bullying in cross-cultural surveys. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 45, 33-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.04.006>.
- Sorrentino, A., Baldry, A.C., Farrington, D.P., & Blaya, C. (2019). Epidemiology of cyber bullying across Europe: differences between countries and genders. *Educ Sci.*, 19, 74–91. <https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2019.2.005>
- Sumner, S.A., Mercy, J.A., Dahlberg, L.L., Hillis, S.D., Klevens, J., & Houry, D. (2015). Violence in the United States: Status, challenges, and opportunities. *JAMA*, 314(5), 478–88.
- UNESCO. (2015). *Cybercrime against women and girls. A WORLD-WIDE WAKE-UP CALL. A report by United Nations Broadband Commission's Working Group on Gender*. New York; UNESCO.
- Vandebosch, H., & Green, L. (Eds.). (2019). *Narratives in research and interventions on cyberbullying among young people*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- White, E., Longpré, N., Stefanska, E.B. (2020). Stalking Behaviors Presented by Ex-Intimate Stalkers: A Victim's Perspective. *J Interpers Violence*, 37(7-8), NP5074-NP5093. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520934429>. Epub 2020 Jun 26. PMID: 32590921.
- Willard, N. (2008, November 8). *Cyber victimization and cyber threats: Responding to the Challenge*. Presentation at the 10th Annual Safe and Healthy Schools Conference, Oklahoma City, OK
- Wölfer, R., Schultze-Krumbholz, A., Zagorscak, P., Jäkel, A., Göbel, K. & Scheithauer, H. (2014) Prevention 2.0: targeting cyberbullying @ school. *Prevention Science*, 15, 879-887.
- Wong, R. Y., Cheung, C. M., & Xiao, B. (2017). Does gender matter in cyberbullying perpetration? An empirical investigation. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 79, 247–257.
- Wong, R. Y. M., Cheung, C., Xiao, B.S., and Chan, T. K .H. (2015). The instigating, Impelling, and Inhibiting Forces in Cyber bullying Perpetration across Gender. Proceedings of the Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems (PACIS), Singapore, 2015, <https://aisel.aisnet.org/pacis2015/109>. , Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3932038>
- Ybarra, M. L., & Mitchell, K. J. (2004). Youth engaging in online harassment: associations with caregiver–child relationships, Internet use, and personal characteristics. *Journal of Adolescence*, 27(3), 319–336. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2004.03.007>