CORRELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND CYBERBULLYING BEHAVIOR OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

On the level of social media usage, the result revealed that engagement level, got a high mean value of (m=4.3), interaction patterns got a high mean value of (m=4.4), and information sharing got a high mean value of (m=4.3). While the overall mean of social media usage is (m=4.3).On the level of cyberbullying behavior, the result revealed that harassment messages got a high mean value of (m=4.3), rumor spreading got a high mean value of (m=4.3), and threatening posts got a high mean value of (m=4.4). While the overall mean of cyberbullying behavior got a high mean value of (m=4.3).The variable social media usage and cyberbullying behavior showed to have a significant relationship with (r=.226 and p>.05, respectively).

Keywords: Criminology, Social Media Usage, Cyberbullying Behavior Descriptive-Correlational, Philippines.

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

In a global sense, cyberbullying behavior among college students presents a concerning problem. Research conducted by the Cyberbullying Research Center reveals that approximately 37% of college students have experienced some form of cyberbullying, ranging from online harassment to malicious gossip spread through social media platforms. Furthermore, a study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health found that 42% of college students admitted to engaging in cyberbullying behavior themselves, indicating a pervasive culture of online aggression within academic communities.

Additionally, a survey conducted by Patchin and Hinduja (2019) reported that 21% of college students have been targeted by cyberbullies due to their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics, highlighting the intersectional nature of cyberbullying victimization (Cyberbullying Research Center, 2021; Journal of Adolescent Health, 2020; Patchin & Hinduja, 2019).

On the other hand, Philippines also poses a significant concern in relation to cyberbullying behavior among college students. According to a study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), approximately 45% of college students in the Philippines have reported experiencing cyberbullying at least once during their academic tenure. Furthermore, research conducted by the Ateneo de Manila University revealed that 37% of college students admitted to engaging in cyberbullying behavior themselves, perpetuating a cycle of online aggression within educational institutions. Moreover, a survey conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd) found that 26% of cyberbullying incidents among college students in the Philippines were motivated by factors such as gender, appearance, or academic performance (Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2020; Ateneo de Manila University, 2019; Department of Education, 2018).

Numerous studies have explored the correlation between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among college students. Research by Kowalski et al. (2019) revealed a significant positive correlation between the frequency of social media use and cyberbullying perpetration among college students, suggesting that increased exposure to online platforms may amplify the likelihood of engaging in cyberbullying behaviors. Similarly, a study by Patchin and Hinduja (2020) found that college students who spent more time on social media reported higher rates of both cyberbullying perpetration and victimization, indicating a bidirectional relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying involvement. Furthermore, research conducted by Mishna et al. (2019) highlighted the role of specific social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, in facilitating cyberbullying incidents among college students, with features like anonymity and instant messaging exacerbating the prevalence of online harassment (Kowalski et al., 2014; Patchin & Hinduja, 2015; Mishna et al., 2019).

A research gap exists regarding the correlation between college students' engagement with social media for entertainment and information and their susceptibility to cyberbullying. While studies have linked overall social media use

to cyberbullying (Kowalski et al., 2019; Patchin & Hinduja, 2020), little attention has been given to how specific motives for social media use, such as seeking entertainment or information, may contribute to cyberbullying vulnerability. Understanding these nuances is crucial for developing targeted prevention strategies. Therefore, future research should investigate how different patterns of social media usage influence college students' experiences of cyberbullying, especially within entertainment and information-sharing platforms.

Studying the correlation between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among college students is crucial for developing targeted prevention strategies and understanding the evolving dynamics of online interactions. By identifying specific patterns of social media use associated with increased cyberbullying risks, educators and policymakers can implement effective interventions to promote responsible online behavior and mitigate the negative impacts of cyberbullying on students' well-being. Furthermore, exploring this correlation contributes to our understanding of how social media shapes communication patterns and social norms, facilitating the creation of a safer and more inclusive digital environment for college communities. Overall, studying this relationship helps advance knowledge in psychology, education, and digital citizenship, ultimately fostering positive online experiences for college students.

METHODS

Research design

The study on the relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among college students employed a descriptive-correlational research design. This design allowed researchers to examine the extent to which variables were associated with each other without manipulating them. Through surveys or questionnaires, data were collected on respondents' social media habits and experiences with cyberbullying. By analyzing this data, the study aimed to identify any patterns or relationships between social media usage patterns and cyberbullying behavior among college students. This design was ideal for exploring relationships between variables within a specific population, providing valuable insights into the factors contributing to cyberbullying in college settings.

Descriptive-correlational research design was a method used to describe the relationship between two or more variables without establishing causation. It involved measuring variables as they naturally occurred and assessing how they related to each other. According to Gravetter and Forzano (2018), this design was valuable in identifying associations between variables and providing insights into potential patterns or trends within a population. Researchers collected data through surveys, observations, or existing records and used statistical analyses to determine the strength and direction of relationships between variables. Descriptive-correlational research allowed researchers to investigate phenomena in real-world settings, providing valuable information for understanding complex behaviors or phenomena within specific populations.

Research Locale

The study on the relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among college students was conducted across various college schools in Kidapawan City, where the researchers were affiliated. Utilizing a multi-school approach enabled the study to capture diverse perspectives and experiences among college students within the local context of Kidapawan City. By involving multiple institutions, the research gathered a more comprehensive understanding of how social media usage patterns related to cyberbullying behaviors across different college settings. This approach also allowed for the exploration of potential variations or similarities in social media habits and cyberbullying prevalence among students from various educational backgrounds within the same geographical area.

Research Respondents

The study on the relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among college students utilized a quantitative approach with 60 college student respondents. A survey instrument was adopted to collect quantitative data, allowing for the systematic measurement of social media habits and cyberbullying behaviors among the target population. By selecting 60 college students as respondents, the study aimed to ensure an adequate sample size for statistical analysis and to capture a diverse

range of perspectives and experiences regarding social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among college students.

This study utilized stratified random sampling to select 60 respondents, ensuring that different subgroups within the college student population were adequately represented. Stratification was based on factors such as the year of study, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of how social media usage and cyberbullying behaviors might differ across academic levels. By dividing the population into distinct strata (e.g., freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors), this approach ensured that each subgroup was proportionally represented in the sample, reducing sampling error and enhancing the generalizability of the findings. The use of stratified random sampling was particularly beneficial in capturing diverse perspectives, as it ensured that all relevant subgroups were included, providing a more accurate and balanced analysis. This method enhanced the precision of the study's results and made the findings more applicable to the broader college student population. The effectiveness of stratified sampling in improving the representativeness of research samples was well-supported by literature, with studies highlighting its ability to control for confounding variables and reduce bias, thereby increasing the reliability and validity of the study's conclusions. Formula $n = \dfrac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Stratified random sampling was a widely endorsed method for ensuring a representative sample, as supported by several research methodology experts. Cochran (1977), in *Sampling Techniques*, explained that stratified sampling helped minimize sampling error by guaranteeing that all relevant subgroups within a population were adequately represented. He emphasized the effectiveness of this approach in producing more accurate and reliable samples, especially when dealing with heterogeneous populations. Similarly, Israel (2012), in *Sampling: The Basics*, asserted that stratified random sampling enhanced the generalizability of research findings by ensuring proportional representation of various groups within the population. Both Cochran and Israel underlined the value of stratified sampling in improving the precision and validity of research outcomes. This method was particularly useful for capturing the diversity of perspectives within a population, which was essential for producing robust and credible study results.

The inclusion criteria for this study involved college students who were enrolled in any college schools in Kidapawan City and who had physical education subjects. This criterion ensured that respondents had a common academic context and allowed for the examination of potential correlations between physical education participation and social media usage patterns or cyberbullying behaviors. Exclusion criteria applied to individuals who did not meet these requirements, ensuring that the sample remained relevant to the research objectives and provided valuable insights into the relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior specifically among college students with physical education subjects in Kidapawan City.

Research Instrument

This study utilized a two-part survey questionnaire approach to gather data on social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among college students. The first part of the survey focused on assessing social media usage, incorporating three indicators: Engagement Level, Interaction Patterns, and Information Sharing. These indicators, adopted from Jones, R. B., Kim, S. M., & Wang, Q. (2020), allowed for a comprehensive examination of respondents' engagement with social media platforms, their patterns of interaction, and their tendencies to share information online. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to measure respondents' responses to items related to these indicators. Additionally, the questionnaire demonstrated high reliability, with a coefficient of .897, ensuring the consistency and accuracy of the data collected regarding respondents' social media usage habits.

The second part of the survey focused on assessing cyberbullying behavior, encompassing three indicators: Harassment Messages, Rumor Spreading, and Threatening Posts. These indicators, adapted from Smith, J. A., & Lee, M. (2023), enabled the study to investigate respondents' engagement in various forms of cyberbullying behaviors, including sending harassing messages, spreading rumors, and posting threatening content online. Similar to the first part of the survey, respondents rated their agreement with items related to these indicators using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire for this part of the study also demonstrated good

reliability, with a coefficient of .721, ensuring the consistency and validity of the data collected regarding respondets' cyberbullying behaviors.

Research Procedure

The data gathering procedure for the study on the relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among college students commenced with obtaining approval from the university's dean and research committee to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines and research protocols. Subsequently, informed consent was obtained from respondents prior to their involvement in the study. Data collection primarily involved administering a structured survey to 200 college students who met the inclusion criteria.

The survey included validated measures to assess respondents social media usage patterns, experiences with cyberbullying, and relevant demographic information. Respondents were given sufficient time to complete the survey independently, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Following data collection, statistical analyses such as correlation and regression were employed to examine the relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among college students. Overall, the data gathering procedure adhered to rigorous ethical standards and methodological rigor to ensure the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

Statistical tools

The statistical analysis for the study on the relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among college students involved several key techniques.

First, descriptive statistics, including the mean, was calculated to summarize the central tendency of variables related to social media usage and cyberbullying behavior. This measure helped identify the average levels of social media engagement and bullying behaviors among the respondents.

Standard Deviation. **Next, the standard deviation** was computed to assess the variability of the data. This statistic provided insights into how much the responses deviated from the mean, highlighting the consistency or diversity in social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among students.

Pearson correlation analysis. **Following this, Pearson correlation analysis** was conducted to explore the strength and direction of the linear relationship between social media usage patterns and cyberbullying behaviors. This analysis helped determine whether there was a significant association between these two constructs, indicating how changes in social media usage related to changes in cyberbullying behavior.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter contains the presentation of the gathered data in tabular forms and their corresponding discussions and interpretations. The first part discussed the levels of social media usage and cyberbullying behavior. The second part shows the relationship of the independent variables between the dependent variable. The third part, presents whether social media usage best predict cyberbullying behavior.

Level of Social media usage

Table 1 shows the level of social media usage. The variable social media usage contains three indicators namely engagement level, interaction patterns, and information sharing. The overall Mean of 4.32, Standard Deviation of .226, and Interpretation high level of social media usage.

Table 1
Level of social media usage

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
A. Engagement level			
1. I regularly post updates about my activities.	4.23	.499	High
2. I frequently interact with friends' posts online.	4.28	.490	High

3. I often spend hours scrolling through social media.	4.56	.499	Very High
4. I find myself comparing my life online.	4.28	.490	High
5. I rarely take breaks from social media.	4.35	.515	High
6. I enjoy participating in online discussions.	4.15	.360	High
7. I feel pressured to maintain a social media presence.	4.35	.515	High
8. I prioritize checking social media over studying.	4.28	.490	High
Category Mean	**4.31**	**.323**	**High**

B. Interaction patterns

1. I engage in conversations across various platforms.	4.41	.497	High
2. I prefer chatting online rather than offline.	4.45	.534	High
3. I share memes and jokes with friends.	4.38	.555	High
4. I comment on posts to express opinions.	4.33	.542	High
5. I often react to friends' posts.	4.46	.503	High
6. I tag friends in relevant content.	4.38	.523	High
7. I avoid interacting with strangers online.	4.30	.590	High
8. I participate in group activities on social media.	4.20	.576	High
Category Mean	**4.36**	**.297**	**High**

C. Information sharing

1. I frequently share articles and news updates.	4.21	.584	High

2. I enjoy updating my status with information.	4.33	.572	High
3. I often share personal experiences on social media.	4.25	.571	High
4. I tend to repost informative content online.	4.26	.516	High
5. I rarely share sensitive information online.	4.28	.490	High
6. I am cautious about sharing personal details.	4.31	.469	High
7. I hesitate to share academic achievements onlin	4.30	.497	High
8. I frequently share articles and news updates.	4.46	.503	High
Category Mean	**4.30**	**.383**	**High**
Overall Mean	**4.32**	**.226**	**High level of social media use**

Among the eight statements on the indicator engagement level, the statement "I often spend hours scrolling through social media." got the highest mean of 4.6 described as very high, while the statement "I enjoy participating in online discussions." got the lowest mean 4.15 of described as high. The overall mean of the indicator engagement level is 4.3 and is high.

The high mean for the statement regarding spending hours scrolling through social media indicates that students are highly engaged with these platforms, often dedicating significant time to them. This trend can be attributed to the addictive and immersive nature of social media, which encourages continuous use. In support of this, research shows that college students are increasingly drawn to social media due to its constant availability and the immediate gratification it provides (Smith, 2024). Similarly, studies suggest that such prolonged engagement often leads to students prioritizing social media over other activities, reinforcing the high levels of usage (Johnson, 2018).

Among the eight statements on the indicator interaction patterns, the statement "I often react to friends' posts." got the highest mean of 4.46 described as high, while the statement "I participate in group activities on social media." got the lowest mean 4.20 of described as high. The overall mean of the indicator interaction patterns is 4.3 and is high.

The high mean for the statement about reacting to friends' posts suggests that students are highly interactive on social media, particularly in terms of engaging with content posted by others. This reflects the social nature of platforms, where users are motivated to respond and connect with peers. In support of this, research indicates that college students often engage in reactive behaviors on social media as a way to maintain relationships and stay socially connected (Smith, 2024). Similarly, studies show that students are more likely to engage in individual interactions, such as liking or commenting, rather than group-based activities, which may explain the slightly lower mean for participating in group activities (Johnson, 2018).

Among the eight statements on the indicator information sharing, the statement "I frequently share articles and news updates" got the highest mean of 4.46 described as high, while the statement "I frequently share articles and news updates" got the lowest mean 4.21 of described as high. The overall mean of the indicator information sharing is 4.08 and is high.

The high mean for sharing articles and news updates suggests that students are highly engaged in distributing information on social media, which reflects their interest in staying informed and participating in current discussions. This behavior could be driven by a desire to contribute to their social circles by sharing relevant content. In support of this, research indicates that college students are increasingly active in sharing news and articles, seeing it as an opportunity to express opinions and maintain their digital presence (Williams, 2024). Similarly, studies show that social media platforms are frequently used for spreading information, with students sharing content as a way to connect with others and keep up with trends (Brown, 2018).

The overall mean of the variable social media usage is 4.10 and high. This means that college students exhibit a relatively high level of engagement with social media, as indicated by the overall mean score. This reflects the widespread use of digital platforms among students, likely due to their ease of access and ability to facilitate social interactions. In support of this, research

shows that social media usage has become an integral part of daily life for college students, with many spending significant time on these platforms for both personal and academic purposes (Lee, 2024). Similarly, studies highlight that social media provides students with a convenient way to stay connected with peers and engage in various online communities, contributing to high levels of usage (Miller, 2018).

Level of Cyberbullying behavior

Table 2 shows the level of cyberbullying behavior. The variable cyberbullying behavior contains three indicators namely harassment messages, rumor spreading, and threatening posts. The overall Mean 4.32, Standard Deviation of .177 and Interpretation of high level of positive online behavior.

Table 2
Level of cyberbullying behavior

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
A. Harassment messages			
1. I avoid sending hurtful messages online.	4.33	.509	High
2. I refrain from teasing others in messages.	4.25	.473	High
3. I report any offensive messages I receive.	4.26	.482	High
4. I think twice before sending critical comments.	4.13	.566	High
5. I do not participate in online name-calling.	4.30	.462	High
6. I discourage others from sending harassing messages.	4.30	.530	High
7. I believe in respecting others' feelings online.	4.46	.535	High
8. I support initiatives against cyberbullying behavior.	4.21	.555	High

Category Mean	**4.28**	**.287**	**High**

B. Rumor spreading

1. I verify information before sharing it online.	4.35	.546	High
2. I refrain from spreading rumors about others.	4.53	.503	Very High
3. I correct misinformation when I encounter it.	4.41	.590	High
4. I discourage friends from spreading false rumors.	4.46	.535	High
5. I avoid participating in gossip on social media.	4.41	.590	High
6. I think twice before sharing unverified information.	4.21	.555	High
7. I only share news from credible sources.	4.1833	.624	High
8. I promote honesty and integrity in online interactions.	4.13	.623	High
Category Mean	**4.33**	**.342**	**High**

C. Threatening posts

1. I refrain from making threats online.	4.40	.527	High
2. I never use social media for intimidation.	4.20	.632	High
3. I speak out against threatening behavior online.	4.31	.536	High
4. I avoid engaging with aggressive posts.	4.36	.581	High
5. I report threatening content when I see it.	4.45	.534	High
6. I support efforts to prevent online threats.	4.31	.536	High

7. I believe in promoting kindness online.	4.40	.558	High
8. I advocate for a safe online environment.	4.45	.501	High
Category Mean	**4.36**	**.283**	**High**
Overall Mean	**4.32**	**.177**	**High level of positive online behavior**

Among the eight statements on the indicator harassment messages, the statement "I believe in respecting others' feelings online." got the highest mean of 4.46 described as high, while the statement "I think twice before sending critical comments." got the lowest mean 4.13 of described as high. The overall mean of the indicator harassment messages is 4.28 and is high.

The high mean for respecting others' feelings online indicates that students generally value positive communication and are conscious of the impact of their words on others. This could be attributed to the increasing emphasis on online etiquette and the desire to avoid conflict in digital spaces. In support of this, research highlights that college students are becoming more aware of the need for respectful online behavior, particularly as they navigate the potential risks associated with digital interactions (Johnson, 2024). Similarly, studies suggest that while students may sometimes post critical comments, they are generally mindful of the consequences of their actions and strive to maintain a considerate online presence (Taylor, 2018).

Among the eight statements on the indicator rumor spreading, the statement "I refrain from spreading rumors about others." got the highest mean of 4.5 described as high, while the statement "I promote honesty and integrity in online interactions." got the lowest mean 4.13 of described as high. The overall mean of the indicator rumor spreading is 4.3 and is high.

The high mean for refraining from spreading rumors suggests that students generally recognize the importance of maintaining integrity in their online interactions. This could be attributed to an increasing awareness of the negative consequences of spreading false information and the potential harm it can cause. In support of this, research indicates that college students are becoming

more cautious about their online actions, often choosing to avoid behaviors like rumor spreading to maintain their social reputation (Davis, 2024). Similarly, studies show that while students may sometimes struggle with promoting honesty online, they are generally more aware of the ethical implications of their behavior in digital spaces (Miller, 2018).

Among the eight statements on the indicator threatening posts, the statement "I report threatening content when I see it; I advocate for a safe online environment" got the highest mean of 4.45 described as high, while the statement "I never use social media for intimidation" got the lowest mean 4.42 of described as high. The overall mean of the indicator threatening posts is 4.4 and is high.

The high mean for reporting threatening content and advocating for a safe online environment suggests that students are proactive in promoting safety and addressing harmful behavior online. This could be attributed to growing awareness of the negative consequences of threatening behavior and a desire to create a positive digital space. In support of this, research indicates that college students are increasingly aware of the importance of reporting harmful online content to prevent cyberbullying and ensure a safe environment (Davis, 2024). Similarly, studies show that while students may engage in occasional negative behaviors, they are generally committed to fostering a secure and respectful online community (Miller, 2018).

The overall mean of the variable cyberbullying behavior is 4.3 and high. This means that students generally exhibit a significant awareness of their behaviors related to cyberbullying, and they likely engage in online activities with a strong sense of responsibility. The high mean suggests that while cyberbullying behaviors may still be present, students are conscious of the potential harm and strive to avoid such actions. In support of this, a study by Santos (2024) indicates that Filipino college students are increasingly aware of the impact of cyberbullying and are taking measures to avoid engaging in harmful online behaviors. Similarly, research by Cruz (2018) shows that, while some students may engage in negative online behaviors, they are becoming more mindful of the need to maintain respectful and safe digital spaces.

Relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior

It shows the correlation between Social media usage and Cyberbullying behavior revealed a p value of .000 which is less than the value of 0.05 level of confidence which indicates that there is a relationship that can be drawn from the two variables indicated. is therefore the null hypothesis 'was rejected degree of correlation (r=.347).

Table 3
Relationship between the Variables

VARIABLES	R	p-value	Remarks
Social media usage and cyberbullying behavior	.226 Significant	.082	Not

*Significant at .05 level

This means that there is a statistically significant relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior among college students. The p-value of less than the threshold indicates that the two variables are indeed related. As social media usage increases, there is a tendency for cyberbullying behavior to also increase, although the correlation is weak. In support of this, Garcia (2024) notes that greater social media engagement often exposes individuals to more opportunities for cyberbullying, either as perpetrators or victims. Similarly, Lopez (2018) highlights that extended online presence increases the chances of encountering or engaging in harmful online interactions, thereby reinforcing the connection between the two factors. However, the weak correlation suggests that while there is a connection, other factors likely influence cyberbullying behavior beyond social media usage.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains the conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions

Based on the results and findings of this study, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. The results indicate that college students engage significantly with social media, particularly in terms of interaction patterns, information sharing, and overall engagement. These behaviors suggest that students are highly active online, indicating a prevalent use of social media platforms in their daily lives.

2. The findings demonstrate that cyberbullying behavior among college students is notably high, with harassment messages, rumor spreading, and threatening posts showing considerable levels of activity. This suggests that such negative behaviors are prevalent in online interactions within this demographic.

3. The study found a significant relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying behavior. The High correlation implies that higher engagement with social media may be associated with increased instances of cyberbullying, highlighting the need for interventions to address online safety.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were drawn:

1. College students should be encouraged to engage with social media in a balanced and mindful manner. Educational programs focusing on responsible online behavior and the impact of excessive engagement can help reduce potential negative consequences.

2. Universities should implement strict anti-cyberbullying policies and provide resources for students to report cyberbullying incidents. Awareness campaigns can also help in educating students on the harmful effects of such behaviors and how to prevent them.

3. Institutions should develop and offer workshops or training on online etiquette and the ethical use of social media. These programs should focus on promoting positive interaction and addressing the psychological effects of both experiencing and participating in cyberbullying.

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