

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Of The Study

Bullying has always been a big problem, but it has changed a lot because of technology. In the past, bullying happened face-to-face, like physical fights or teasing in schools or neighborhoods. Now, with the rise of technology, bullying happens online (Hicks, Le Clair & Berry, 2016). Bullying can be further subdivided into direct bullying, such as overt aggressive acts, and indirect, which includes exclusion and cyber bullying. It was once thought that physical bullying was the most common form of bullying, but it has now been recognized that verbal indirect forms of bullying can occur with even more frequency. Increased indirect bullying can be even harder to detect with the advent of social media (DePaolis & Williford, 2015). Bullying has always been a serious issue, especially among young people. It happens when someone repeatedly hurts, intimidates, or harasses another person, often targeting those who seem weaker or different. In the past, bullying mostly took place in schools, neighborhoods, and other social settings. It could be physical, like hitting or pushing, or verbal, such as name-calling, teasing, or spreading false rumors. Many children and teenagers experience bullying at some point, and it can have long-term effects on their mental and emotional well-being (Olweus, 2019).

According to (Rifauddin, 2016) Bullying can be defined as an activity or aggressive behavior that is deliberately carried out by a group of people or a person repeatedly and from time to time against a victim who cannot defend himself easily or a systematic abuse of power. Furthermore, according to (Rifauddin, 2016), understanding cyber bullying is internet technology to hurt others intentionally and repeatedly, or a form of intimidation by perpetrators to harass their victims through technological devices. The perpetrators want to see someone hurt; there are many ways that they can attack the victim with cruel messages and disturbing and distributed images to embarrass the victim for others who see him.

According to (Espelage & Hong, 2020) Victims of bullying often suffer in silence, they may feel ashamed, afraid, or hopeless, unsure of how to stop the harassment. Many bullied children experience anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, which can affect their ability to focus in school and form friendships. In some severe cases, prolonged bullying has been linked to self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Those who are frequently bullied may also struggle with trust issues and social anxiety later in life, making it harder for them to build healthy relationships.

The school environment plays a crucial role in either preventing or encouraging bullying. When schools have strong anti-bullying policies and actively educate students about kindness and respect, bullying rates tend to be lower. However, in schools where teachers and administrators do not take bullying seriously, the problem can escalate.

Parents, teachers, and community leaders all have a responsibility to address bullying. Open conversations about the issue can encourage victims to speak up and seek help. Schools need clear rules against bullying, with consequences for aggressive behavior and support for those affected. Encouraging empathy and respect from a young age can help reduce bullying and create a safer, more inclusive environment for everyone.

Despite growing awareness, bullying remains a widespread problem. The long-lasting impact on victims and the potential consequences for bullies themselves make it a serious social issue that needs continuous attention. More efforts are required to ensure that children and teenagers feel safe, valued, and supported in their environments, whether at school, in their communities, or at home.

Cyberbullying mostly happens on social media, through text messages, emails, and other online platforms, making it harder for people to avoid (Smith et al., 2018; Kowalski et al., 2020). Cyberbullying has been defined by Hinduja and Patchin (2013) as an intentional act carried out by a group or an individual using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time, against a victim who cannot easily defend him/herself. Cyberbullying is defined as targeting others through perpetrating negative and unwanted behaviors through digital technologies, such as email, instant messaging, social networking websites, and text messages through mobile devices (Bauman, Underwood, & Card, 2013; Grigg, 2012).

According to (Nasrullah, 2014) Cyber bullying as an act of defamation, humiliation, discrimination, disclosure of information or privacy content with the intention of embarrassing, or can also be interpreted with offensive insulting vulgar comments. Cyberbullying, according to Bergman and Baier (2018), is defined as the act of being cruel to others by sending or uploading harmful information or engaging in other forms of social aggression via the internet or digital technology. Many developed and developing countries, such as Nigeria, acknowledge it as a growing problem (Fareo, 2015; Olumide, Adams & Amodu, 2015). In particular, higher use of the internet is related positively to cyberbullying perpetration and victimization (Ang, 2016; Aricak et al., 2008).

The widespread use of social media platforms, mobile applications, and smartphones has facilitated the occurrence of cyberbullying. A study by Faucher et al. (2014) found that university students spend a significant amount of time online, making them vulnerable to cyberbullying. Social media platforms make it easy for negative behavior to get worse because posts and comments are often public. Barlett and Gentile (2019) explain that harmful posts can quickly spread, making conflicts bigger

Cyberbullying is a significant concern in higher education institutions, including universities in Nigeria. A study by Hirsch (2014) found that cyberbullying is a prevalent issue among university students, with varying rates of victimization and perpetration. The anonymity and accessibility of digital platforms make it easier for cyberbullying to occur, often without the same immediate consequences as face-to-face bullying.

In Nigeria, cyberbullying is a growing concern, particularly among young people. A study by the Nigerian Communications Commission (2017) found that 60% of Nigerian youths have experienced cyberbullying. This statistic underscores the urgent need to address this issue and find effective ways to support victims and prevent cyberbullying.

Because of the considerably bigger audience online and the fact that children can no longer escape their bullies by returning home to a safe setting, cyberbullying can be more harmful than conventional forms of bullying (Wang et.al., 2019). Furthermore, because of the anonymity provided by the Internet, a bully can be even more abusive online than they would be in person (Strom & Strom, 2013). Even while cyberbullying primarily occurs outside of school, it is becoming a rising problem for schools because behaviours that occur online sometimes manifest themselves in person the next day (Monks, Robinson & Worlidge, 2012). According to the data, cyberbullying is getting increasingly widespread. According to a survey, cyber-bullying victimization rates have fluctuated over the previous few years, ranging from 18.8% in May 2016 to 28.7% in November 2017, with a mean of 27.32 percent based on seven different studies conducted from May 2018 to February 2019 (Hinduja & Patchin, 2019).

In addition, cyberbullying negatively impacts victims' academic performance. Research by Worsley et al. (2018) found that students targeted by cyberbullying are more likely to report decreased academic achievement, poor focus, and lower motivation. The stress and emotional toll caused by cyberbullying can lead to absenteeism and a reduced ability to concentrate on studies, further compounding the academic challenges faced by victims.

Students have observed how social media can be both a blessing and a curse. On one hand, it is a powerful tool for communication, collaboration, and sharing information. On the other hand, it can also be a platform where bullying and harassment thrive. Cyberbullying, in particular, has become a significant concern among university students, negatively impacting their mental health, self-esteem, and interpersonal relationship.

This study aims to explore the relationship between social media platforms and cyberbullying at Kwara State University. We'll look into the types of media used by students, their online behaviors, and the ways in which cyberbullying manifests. By understanding the dynamics of cyberbullying, we hope to raise awareness and contribute to the development of strategies to mitigate its impact.

Additionally, this study aims to investigate the level of awareness of cyberbullying among students at Kwara State University, Nigeria. The study will also examine the prevalence of cyberbullying among students, the forms of cyberbullying experienced by students, and the effects of cyberbullying on students' well-being. Through this comprehensive examination, we aim to provide valuable insights that can inform policies and interventions to create a safer and more supportive environment for students.

1.2 Statement Of The Problem

Cyberbullying is a big issue nowadays, especially among young people who spend a lot of time on social media (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). Even though social media has its benefits, like staying connected and sharing information, it also has a dark side where bullies can harass others easily.

The increasing use of the internet and smartphones in Nigeria has made cyberbullying a growing concern among young people (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2017). However, there is limited research specifically examining how social media contributes to cyberbullying within university communities, particularly in institutions like Kwara State University. Many studies focus on the general effects of cyberbullying, but little attention has been given to the unique ways students' online behaviors and interactions on social media platforms influence its prevalence and impact in this specific context. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the relationship between social media use and cyberbullying among students at Kwara State University. By identifying patterns of social media usage and understanding the nature of online interactions, this research aims to provide insights that can guide strategies to reduce the effects of cyberbullying and support student well-being.

This is important to study because being bullied online can lead to serious problems, such as anxiety, depression, and even poor academic performance (Lakitta et al., 2017). Victims of cyberbullying often feel stressed, lose self-esteem, and struggle to keep up with their all forms of relationships (Beran & Li, 2005).

We need to understand how common cyberbullying is at our university, what forms it takes, and how it impacts students. This information is crucial to create effective support systems and interventions. As social media becomes more integrated into our lives, it's essential to address the negative aspects and protect our students (Faucher et al., 2014).

1.3 Research Questions

1. How regular is social media use among students of Kwara State University?
2. What social media platforms are most frequently associated with cyberbullying among students?
3. What is the relationship between cyberbullying and students' well-being?
4. Does cyberbullying significantly affect students' interpersonal relationships?

1.4 Objective Of The Study

1. To identify the social media platforms most commonly linked to cyberbullying among students.
2. To explore students' perceptions of the main causes of cyberbullying.
3. To explore if there is a relationship between cyberbullying and well being
4. To identify whether there is a significant relationship between cyberbullying and interpersonal relationship.

1.5 Scope Of The Study

This study explores the relationship between social media use and cyberbullying among students at Kwara State University, Nigeria. We will focus on students who are active on social media, examining their usage and the impact of cyberbullying.

The research will take place on the university campus, offering unique insights into students' online behaviors and experiences in a controlled setting. Data will be collected over six months to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

1.6 Significance of The Study

This study is designed to explore the complex relationship between social media use and cyberbullying behaviors among students at Kwara State University, Nigeria. The significance

of this study cannot be overstated. Cyberbullying is a pervasive issue that affects countless students, causing emotional distress, anxiety, and even suicidal thoughts. By examining the prevalence and nature of cyberbullying among students, this study aims to shed light on this critical issue.

The findings of this study will have a direct impact on the lives of students, educators, and policymakers. By providing valuable insights into the causes and consequences of cyberbullying, this study will inform the development of effective strategies for preventing and addressing this issue.

Ultimately, this study has the potential to make a real difference in the lives of students. By providing a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between social media use and cyberbullying behaviors, this study will help to create a more compassionate and supportive community for all students.

1.7 Limitations Of The Study

Like all research, this study has a few limitations. First, we're only looking at students from Kwara State University in Nigeria. This means our findings might not reflect the experiences of students across the entire country.

Second, we're relying on students to share their own experiences with cyberbullying. While their stories are incredibly valuable, there's a chance some students might not be entirely honest or might not remember everything accurately.

Third, this study focuses mainly on the link between social media use and cyberbullying behaviors. There are probably other important factors that contribute to cyberbullying, but we won't be diving into those.

Also, our research only provides a snapshot of what's happening at one point in time. To really understand how cyberbullying changes over time, we'd need to conduct a longer-term study.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature related to the topic under study. It examines key concepts and definitions, previous empirical studies, and relevant theories that provide a foundation for understanding the subject matter. The chapter is structured into three main sections: the conceptual review, which discusses important concepts such as social media and cyber-bullying; the empirical review, which examines previous studies on the use of social media platforms for cyber-bullying, particularly in Nigerian universities and Kwara State University; and the theoretical review, which explores theories that support and explain the phenomenon under investigation.

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Concept of Social Media

Across all existing literatures, there is no single universally accepted definition of the concept of social media, and this plurality of definitions has led scholars to examine its different aspects in diverse ways. The Oxford English Dictionary for instance, defines social media as “Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.” However, Kaplan and Haenlein (2019), asserts that social media comprises a variety of internet-based platforms that facilitate the creation and exchange of user-generated content while promoting interactive communication between users. Similarly, Weller (2021) argues that social media represents not only a technological innovation but also an evolving social phenomenon that integrates communication, community-building, and the sharing of ideas. In view of these perspectives, it becomes apparent that these conceptualizations stress distinct aspects of the concept, with some scholars holding up the technological mechanisms and interactive features, while others indicating the socio-cultural implications arising from user participation. Nonetheless, when considering cyber bullying among university students, these varying definitions offer a foundation for understanding how platforms designed for connectivity might also foster negative behaviors in digital environments (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019; Oxford English Dictionary, 2023; Weller, 2021).

In an attempt to examine the relationship between social media and cyber bullying among university students, the growing body of academic writings suggests that the expansive nature of digital platforms can give rise to unique challenges (Weller, 2021). For example, Lambert (2020) asserts that while social media platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for learning and social engagement, they concurrently expose users to risks including cyber bullying,

harassment, and a loss of privacy. According to Livingstone (2019), cyber bullying involves the use of digital media to intimidate or harm others, a phenomenon that is exacerbated by the anonymity and wide reach of online interactions. When considering university environments, researchers have noted that students are not only drawn to social media for academic networking and personal expression but are also increasingly vulnerable to aggressive behaviors that can impact their well-being. In this light, the definition of social media as an interactive set of tools extends into a darker realm where digital spaces can be manipulated to orchestrate bullying, and the anonymity provided by these platforms can embolden perpetrators (Lambert, 2020; Livingstone, 2019). As such, the review of literature suggests that the very features that enable the beneficial aspects of social media simultaneously open the door to harmful practices, particularly cyber bullying among emerging adult populations in higher education settings.

However, Ferguson (2021) argues that social media should be understood as a dynamic and pervasive cultural force that shapes social norms, behaviors, and even power dynamics among individuals. In his view, the term encapsulates both the interconnected infrastructure provided by digital platforms and the shifting cultural landscapes that result from constant online interaction. He contends that defining social media solely in terms of technological functions or user-generated content fails to account for its broader societal implications, particularly as these platforms increasingly influence public discourse and interpersonal relationships. Such an argument is especially relevant when analyzing cyber bullying among university students, where the cultural underpinnings of online behavior can lead to abusive practices. Ferguson (2021) further explains that by considering social media as a cultural phenomenon, one appreciates the underlying social scripts that drive behaviors like cyber bullying, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of how digital interactions impact students' academic and personal lives. Thus, this perspective calls for examining not only the mechanisms of online communication but also the socio-cultural context in which these interactions are embedded.

Furthermore, the concept has been dissected to reveal both its functional and disruptive potentials. Bello (2022) contends that social media platforms are critical facilitators of modern communication that offer university students opportunities for academic collaboration, social networking, and the dissemination of ideas. However, he warns that these same digital tools can serve as conduits for cyber bullying, given their capacity to diffuse negative interactions rapidly across peer networks. Bello's research underscores that when social media is defined

through its interactive, user-driven design-as highlighted by Kaplan and Haenlein (2019) and Oxford (2023)-it simultaneously carries the risk of undermining healthy social interactions, as seen in the rise of cyber bullying incidents on campuses. By examining the specific case of Kwara State University, Bello (2022) illustrates that the vulnerabilities associated with digital communication are not abstract but have concrete impacts on students' psychological safety and academic performance. He argues that social media, therefore, should be understood as a dual-edged sword, where its capacity to foster connections is inextricably linked to its potential to perpetrate harm if left unchecked. This duality is critical for universities seeking to balance digital innovation with initiatives that mitigate cyber bullying, an argument that deepens our understanding of the evolving nature of digital platforms (Bello, 2022; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019; Oxford English Dictionary, 2023).

In view of the foregoing, it is undoubtedly true as evidenced above that there is no single universally accepted definition of social media. Each literature reviewed touches on an essential aspect of the concept-ranging from its definition as a platform for content creation and social networking, as outlined by the Oxford English Dictionary (2023) and Kaplan and Haenlein (2019), to its characterization as a pervasive cultural phenomenon by Ferguson (2021). According to these diverse viewpoints, social media is a multifaceted entity that not only enhances communication among its users but also creates new challenges such as cyber bullying, as argued by Lambert (2020) and Livingstone (2019). Bello's (2022) work on Kwara State University students further illustrates how these various elements converge in a real-world context, highlighting both the benefits and perils of digital connectivity. While common stances include the recognition of social media as interactive digital spaces that facilitate both positive and negative forms of communication, this study further enriches the existing literature by contending that in today's evolving world the concept of social media should be understood as a dynamic interplay of technological innovation, cultural change, and emerging ethical challenges. It is imperative to note that while traditional definitions provide valuable insights, modern interpretations must also address the complex reality of digital interactions in higher education and beyond.

2.2.2 Types of Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms have become central to communication, learning, and entertainment among university students in Nigeria. However, the same platforms also serve as common

grounds for cyberbullying, often affecting students' well being, academic performance, and social relationships. Understanding the specific platforms where this occurs most frequently is essential in addressing the issue. Some of the most used social media platforms are as follows:

1. Facebook

Facebook remains one of the most widely used social media platforms among university students in Nigeria, including those at Kwara State University. Its structure enables users to communicate openly by posting, sharing, and commenting, but this openness also creates a fertile space for cyberbullying activities (Chukwuere, 2019; Okoye, 2020). According to Chukwuere (2019), over 33.6% of students in his study identified Facebook as the most frequent platform where they experienced cyberbullying, often in the form of public shaming and false accusations. Facebook's group and comment features allow for groupthink behavior that easily isolates or targets certain individuals, exacerbating the emotional effects of bullying (Okafor & Daramola, 2021). In academic institutions, such actions have been observed to negatively affect students' participation in class, their willingness to express themselves publicly, and their overall academic performance (Olowu & Dauda, 2020).

Further supporting this, a study by Kibe et al. (2022) in Kenyan universities—which share similar digital communication trends with Nigeria—also identified Facebook as the most common site for harassment, often through anonymous pages or gossip forums. These incidents ranged from body shaming to the spreading of sexually explicit content. The authors note that the ripple effect of such cyberbullying can trigger depression and even dropout tendencies among the affected students (Kibe et al., 2022; Yusuf & Adebayo, 2023). These insights indicate that even though Facebook is a legitimate platform for learning and social interaction, its structure is being misused in academic environments, making it important for institutions like Kwara State University to implement strong digital literacy and reporting frameworks (Chukwuere, 2019; Okoye, 2020; Yusuf & Adebayo, 2023).

2. WhatsApp

WhatsApp is one of the most accessible platforms for student communication in Nigeria and is extensively used by students for academic group chats, personal exchanges, and organizing events (Ibrahim & Shuaibu, 2022; Adebayo & Okon, 2021). Despite its end-to-end encryption which promotes privacy, this very feature makes it difficult to detect and monitor bullying behavior that occurs through messages, audio recordings, or group exclusion (Ibrahim & Shuaibu, 2022). In group chats especially, some students are subjected to verbal harassment or

are intentionally mocked, ostracized, or tagged with offensive memes or messages, sometimes escalating into coordinated attacks (Adebayo & Okon, 2021; Omoyajowo, 2023). This has led to real cases of depression and withdrawal, particularly among first-year students still adapting to campus life (Ibrahim & Shuaibu, 2022).

The research by Ibrahim and Shuaibu (2022) highlights the paradox of WhatsApp being both a helpful academic tool and a potential weapon for cyberbullying when used irresponsibly. They noted that 85% of university students use WhatsApp, but less than 15% were aware of the platform's features for managing harassment, such as blocking, reporting, or muting groups. Similarly, Omoyajowo (2023) reported that the high rate of unreported bullying via WhatsApp is due to the private nature of chats and the emotional burden victims face in coming forward. As WhatsApp continues to dominate student communication in Nigerian institutions, there is a growing consensus on the need to embed social media ethics and online behavior education into university orientation and counseling services (Ibrahim & Shuaibu, 2022; Adebayo & Okon, 2021; Omoyajowo, 2023).

3. Instagram

Instagram is increasingly used among students due to its visual and interactive nature. With image-sharing, video reels, and live features, it fosters engagement but also amplifies image-based cyberbullying, such as posting unauthorized pictures, sharing derogatory comments, and manipulating images to mock others (Ukwueze & Eze, 2022; Olusola & Nwachukwu, 2021). Visual forms of cyberbullying have greater emotional consequences as the targeted content can go viral and linger longer than text, increasing the embarrassment and psychological impact (Ukwueze & Eze, 2022). This form of bullying is particularly targeted at female students, often related to body shaming or fashion-related ridicule (Olusola & Nwachukwu, 2021; Ndukwe & Salihu, 2022).

Furthermore, students often lack awareness of Instagram's protective features like content reporting, comment filtering, or the "Restrict" button (Ukwueze & Eze, 2022). In their study, they discovered that although 71% of the participants actively used Instagram, more than half had never used any of its anti-harassment tools. This lack of awareness makes students vulnerable, and perpetrators feel emboldened (Ndukwe & Salihu, 2022; Olusola & Nwachukwu, 2021). As the visual nature of Instagram creates more opportunities for humiliation, there is a clear indication that university awareness campaigns need to specifically

target Instagram literacy (Ukwueze & Eze, 2022; Olusola & Nwachukwu, 2021; Ndukwe & Salihu, 2022).

4. Twitter

Twitter is unique in that it encourages open dialogue through hashtags, threads, and mentions, making it a fast-moving environment where trending topics can dominate attention. This nature of openness makes it both influential and dangerous for cyberbullying, especially among students who use it to express personal opinions (Okorie & Ekeanyanwu, 2014; Oladimeji & Salisu, 2020). Twitter bullying often occurs through quote tweets, indirect trolling, and the sharing of screenshots with derogatory comments. A notable pattern involves targeting unpopular opinions or publicly embarrassing someone for a grammatical or ideological mistake (Oladimeji & Salisu, 2020). This public ridicule often leads to anxiety, silence, or deletion of one's online presence, as reported in various student surveys across southern Nigerian universities (Okorie & Ekeanyanwu, 2014).

Although Twitter now allows users to limit who replies to their tweets and mute certain words, many students are unaware of these tools (Oladimeji & Salisu, 2020). Moreover, the drive to go viral often encourages people to join bullying trends rather than condemn them. The public nature of Twitter makes it easier for group bullying to take form through "Twitter storms," which can involve thousands of people mocking a single user. Researchers such as Okorie & Ekeanyanwu (2014) have pointed out the need for Nigerian institutions to integrate digital citizenship education into school policies to combat this type of harassment. While Kwara State University students may benefit from Twitter for academic and civic engagements, the evidence points to its considerable potential for cyberbullying if not regulated at the community level (Oladimeji & Salisu, 2020; Okorie & Ekeanyanwu, 2014).

2.2.3 Concept of Cyber-bullying

There is no single universally accepted definition of cyberbullying, and various scholars have provided definitions that capture different aspects of this complex phenomenon. According to Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, and Lattanner (2019) and UNICEF (2019), cyberbullying involves repeated hostile behavior carried out through digital means that intentionally harms the victim. In this view, the emphasis is on the digital environment and the repetition of aggressive acts. Both sources assert that cyberbullying is not merely a one-off incident but a series of deliberate actions intended to inflict emotional or psychological damage. These arguments contribute to a more diverse understanding as it notes the significance of digital

platforms in facilitating harm. The focus on repetition and intent indicates the idea that even seemingly minor online incidents can accumulate into a pattern of abuse. In the context of social media, it should be pointed out that these definitions contend how the use of technology amplifies traditional bullying behaviors, a point that is especially relevant when considering the experiences of university students who are active on multiple online platforms (Kowalski et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2019).

Other studies such as Pabian and Vandebosch (2019) and Livingstone and Bulger (2020), in their respective studies points out that cyberbullying also encompasses the misuse of anonymity inherent in digital platforms, which further enables aggressors to harass without fear of immediate retribution. Pabian and Vandebosch (2019), contend that the lack of physical presence not only emboldens perpetrators but also complicates the intervention process for institutions. These arguments are supported by empirical observations suggesting that cyberbullying can include behaviors such as spreading false rumors or publicly denigrating someone online (Livingstone and Bulger (2020). In their view, the digital dimension of cyberbullying introduces unique challenges that differentiate it from conventional bullying. This enhanced understanding is crucial as it bridges traditional conceptions of bullying with its modern manifestations on social media, thereby offering a clearer picture of the risks and mechanisms involved (Pabian & Vandebosch, 2019; Livingstone & Bulger, 2020).

The impact of cyberbullying among university students further amplifies the need for precise definitions. Research by Gonzalez, Garcia, and Rodriguez (2020) and Aboujaoude, Savage, Starcevic, and Salame (2019) reveals that cyberbullying in higher education can result in significant psychological distress, reduced academic performance, and social isolation. According to these studies, the university environment, which heavily relies on digital communication and social networking, often serves as a breeding ground for cyberbullying due to its high interactivity and anonymity features. They argue that the harms caused by cyberbullying in these settings are intensified by the constant connectivity afforded by smartphones and social media. This perspective not only reinforces the importance of digital context but also underscores the necessity for higher education institutions to develop robust support systems to safeguard student well-being (Gonzalez et al., 2020; Aboujaoude et al., 2019).

In view of the above literatures, it becomes apparent that there is a lack of consensus on a single universally accepted definition of cyberbullying. Each study has pinpointed an important

aspect of the concept, whether it is the emphasis on repetition and intent, the role of anonymity, or the context-specific impacts in university settings. Common stances from across the literature include the recognition of cyberbullying as a multifaceted problem that extends beyond simple online harassment. However, this study argues further that, in today's rapidly evolving digital environment, cyberbullying should be understood as an intentional, recurrent, and technology-facilitated behavior that not only harms individuals emotionally and academically but also reflects broader social dynamics influenced by anonymity and constant connectivity. It is imperative to note that while traditional definitions have provided useful frameworks, contemporary perspectives must extend these views to fully capture the modern complexities of digital interactions (Kowalski et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2019; Pabian & Vandebosch, 2019; Livingstone & Bulger, 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2020; Aboujaoude et al., 2019).

2.2.3 Concept of Well being

Well being is a fluid concept that comprises an array of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. World Health Organization (WHO), opines that, well being should be understood as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their community” (WHO, 2022). However, when observed closely from the understanding posit by WHO, it becomes apparent that their conceptualization moves beyond the absence of mental illness and highlights positive attributes such as resilience, productivity, and social contribution. Similarly, in the view of American Psychiatric Association (APA) tends to describes well being as “effective functioning in daily activities resulting in productive activities, healthy relationships, and the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity” (APA, 2021). Unlike the later, it should be pointed out that these observations establish that well being is a critical component of overall health, shaped by biological, psychological, and social factors.

Considering further, well being is increasingly affected by modern digital lifestyles, especially the pervasive use of social media. Students often rely on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and TikTok to communicate, express themselves, and build interpersonal relationships. While social media offers opportunities for connection and learning, it also introduces challenges to well being, particularly through experiences of cyberbullying, social comparison, and digital addiction. Studies such as by Twenge & Campbell, have revealed that

excessive social media use has led to heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation, especially among youth (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). When relate to cyberbullying, a harmful by-product of digital interaction, which has emerged as a critical factor impacting students' well being and interpersonal relationships. Cyberbullying often occurs anonymously and can be persistent and psychologically damaging. Victims of cyberbullying experience symptoms ranging from anxiety and low self-esteem to suicidal ideation and academic disengagement (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) characterizes mental disorders as clinically significant disturbances in cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflect a dysfunction in psychological, biological, or developmental processes (APA, 2013). This standard highlights the complexity of diagnosing and managing well being challenges, particularly when external stressors like social media-related pressures are involved. Anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, and stress-related conditions are particularly prevalent among students, with social media playing a contributory role through cyber harassment, exposure to unrealistic standards, and fear of missing out (FOMO). The prevalence of well being disorders among young people has prompted global concern. According to the National Institute of Well being (NIMH), one in five individuals may experience mental illness in a given year (NIMH, 2022). For university students, well being issues often go unreported or untreated due to stigma, lack of support systems, or insufficient well being services on campuses. The psychological consequences of cyberbullying and negative social media interactions not only affect individual well-being but can also strain peer relationships, reduce academic performance, and hinder personal development.

Furthermore, interpersonal relationships among students are increasingly shaped by online interactions. While digital platforms may foster connectivity, they can also promote superficial engagement, reduce face-to-face communication skills, and contribute to misunderstandings or relational conflicts. Research suggests that excessive screen time and online interaction can impair empathy, reduce attention span, and erode the quality of real-life friendships (Uhls et al., 2014). Among students of Kwara State University, this interplay between digital communication and interpersonal relationship quality is worth close examination, as it directly influences campus harmony, peer support, and emotional resilience.

In view of the foregoing, it can be deduced that the concept of well being is fluid dynamic and influenced by various evolving factors, including digital behavior and cyber experiences. The

reviewed literature collectively supports the recognition of well being as integral to overall well-being and shaped by both internal and external influences. However, this study seeks to deepen the discussion by arguing that in the digital age, well being must be understood not only in terms of clinical diagnoses or individual resilience, but also through the lens of online behaviors, virtual interactions, and their impact on students' emotional and social development. Specifically, it underscores the urgency of addressing cyberbullying and fostering responsible digital citizenship to safeguard well being and strengthen interpersonal bonds among students of Kwara State University.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Studies on the Influence of social media and cyber bullying on well being and interpersonal relationships among students in Nigeria Universities

The use of social media platforms in Nigerian universities has grown rapidly over the past few years, paralleling global trends in digital communication and youth engagement (Adeniran, 2023; Olumide, 2022). This rapid expansion has prompted a growing body of empirical research into how social media use and its associated risks, particularly cyberbullying, affect the well being and interpersonal relationships of university students (Adeoye, 2022; Bello, 2021; Okafor, 2020; Emeka, 2019). Scholars working within this field have uncovered patterns that link social media misuse to increased psychological distress, social isolation, and strained peer interactions (Adeniran, 2023; Uwakwe & Okeke, 2020). Okafor (2020) and Bello (2021) emphasize that cyberbullying in Nigerian universities constitutes the intentional use of digital tools to inflict harm or distress on others through harassment, threats, exclusion, and rumor spreading. Their findings reveal that these hostile online behaviors frequently translate into elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and poor self-esteem among victims.

Numerous empirical studies have quantified the scope of cyberbullying in Nigerian higher institutions. Okafor (2020), in a cross-sectional study involving three federal universities in southern Nigeria, found that 38.7% of students had experienced at least one form of cyberbullying within a semester, with verbal abuse and character defamation being the most common forms. Similarly, Bello (2021) reported that 33% of undergraduates in Lagos State had been subjected to cyber harassment on social media platforms, most notably Facebook and WhatsApp, underscoring how these platforms facilitate negative interactions through anonymity and group dynamics. These findings are echoed in Adeoye's (2022) longitudinal study across four public universities in the southwest, which revealed a direct correlation

between increased social media use and reported episodes of cyberbullying. The study further indicated that students exposed to repeated cyber-attacks showed higher levels of emotional fatigue and symptoms of psychological trauma, including depression and anxiety.

Supporting these trends, Adeniran (2023) conducted an institutional survey and reported a 25% increase in cyberbullying incidents among university students between 2019 and 2022, attributing the surge to the post-COVID-19 digital migration and reduced face-to-face interactions. The study documented that group chats, especially on WhatsApp and Telegram, became breeding grounds for coordinated attacks on students, often disguised as banter or academic discussions gone awry. Emeka (2019) provided some of the earliest evidence of this phenomenon by documenting a series of in-depth interviews and case studies that outlined how online victimization affected students' academic participation, interpersonal trust, and overall campus life experience. In extreme cases, students withdrew from social activities or experienced suicidal ideation, highlighting the severity of the issue.

With a focus on specific platforms, Bello (2021) highlighted Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter as major channels through which cyberbullying is perpetrated. Over 35% of the participants in his study admitted to being targeted via direct messages, comment sections, or group chats. Adeoye (2022) expands on this by explaining how peer pressure and online group culture normalize digital abuse, thereby creating toxic online environments that erode interpersonal relationships. He further noted that bullying within academic group chats often causes social anxiety, especially for first-year students trying to integrate into campus life. Adeniran (2023) supported these claims with data showing that students who faced cyberbullying were 42% more likely to report difficulties in maintaining friendships and reported feeling alienated from their classmates. Emeka (2019) also drew attention to the psychological burden of public shaming and digital exclusion, describing instances where students were removed from academic groups without cause or targeted by coordinated smear campaigns, leading to long-term relational distrust.

These studies, though varied in methodology and scope, converge on key findings that reveal a complex relationship between social media usage, well being outcomes, and student interaction patterns within Nigerian universities (Okafor, 2020; Bello, 2021; Adeoye, 2022; Adeniran, 2023; Emeka, 2019). The consistent themes across the literature include the recurrence of emotional distress among victims, the role of group-based digital behavior in shaping bullying dynamics, and the erosion of healthy interpersonal relationships within the

university environment. Nonetheless, despite the breadth of empirical data, there remain identifiable gaps. Many of these studies do not explore longitudinal outcomes such as long-term well being disorders or persistent academic disengagement resulting from cyberbullying. There is also limited research on intervention strategies and institutional policy responses specific to Nigerian universities.

In light of these findings, this review contends that cyberbullying should be understood not only as a behavioral issue but also as a public well being concern that intersects with the evolving digital cultures within tertiary institutions. It emphasizes the urgent need for integrated policy responses, well being support systems, and educational campaigns aimed at fostering responsible social media use and promoting peer solidarity. As Nigerian universities continue to digitize learning and communication, addressing the dual impact of social media and cyberbullying on student well being and interpersonal relationships becomes not just necessary but imperative for ensuring a safe and inclusive academic environment.

2.3.1 Studies on the Influence of social media and cyber bullying on well being and interpersonal relationships among students in Kwara State University

From the foregoing, it is evident that the rapid adoption of social media in Nigeria has led to innovative communication and information-sharing practices among university students. However, this growth has also been associated with a rise in cyberbullying incidents—a phenomenon that researchers are increasingly studying for its serious psychosocial consequences. In particular, studies focusing on Kwara State University reveal that frequent use of platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter is strongly linked with cyberbullying behaviors, where students may use these channels to perpetrate harassment, humiliation, and other forms of online abuse. Although the global body of literature on cyberbullying is extensive, research that zeroes in on Nigerian higher institutions and specifically Kwara State University remains limited, with only a few scholarly works available (Adebayo, 2019; Akeusola, 2023; Ajayi & Olanrewaju, 2023).

For example, Adebayo et al. (2019) conducted a survey in which 200 undergraduates from three major universities in Kwara State were assessed using a structured questionnaire. Their findings showed that 85% of respondents frequently used social media platforms, a high engagement rate that was significantly associated with an increased incidence of cyberbullying. Furthermore, the study revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the frequency of social media use and the likelihood of both perpetrating and falling victim to

cyberbullying, suggesting that more frequent engagement creates more opportunities for exposure to aggressive online behavior. These results are consistent with broader international findings, which indicate that increased time spent on social media heightens exposure to cyberbullying risks (Nonso & Mujtaba, 2022; Olowookere et al., 2023). Such evidence from Kwara State not only highlights the prevalence of cyberbullying but also illustrates how digital engagement practices can inadvertently contribute to a more hostile online environment, making it a significant public health and educational concern.

In addition to frequency metrics, qualitative studies have deepened the understanding of the underlying causes and effects of cyberbullying in these academic settings. Oniye (2022) examined how factors such as immaturity, revenge-seeking, and interpersonal conflicts contribute to cyberbullying among university undergraduates in Kwara State. His study, which employed a descriptive survey design, noted that the psychological and emotional impacts of cyberbullying are profound—ranging from decreased self-esteem and heightened anxiety to in severe cases, even suicidal ideation. The qualitative narratives collected during interviews revealed that many students were unaware of what constituted cyberbullying, while others reported feeling isolated and distressed after repeated online harassment. These findings corroborate earlier research by Oyewusi and Orolade (2014), who highlighted that low awareness levels among both students and staff exacerbate the negative outcomes of cyberbullying.

The role of institutional policies in managing cyberbullying has also been a focus of recent scholarly attention. It is important to highlight that despite the prevalence of cyberbullying incidents, studies have consistently pointed out that Nigerian universities, including those in Kwara State, lack dedicated cyberbullying management policies (Akeusola, 2023; Adebayo et al., 2019; Ajayi & Olanrewaju, 2023). Research from these institutions has shown that existing codes of conduct and disciplinary policies often do not specifically address cyberbullying, leading to inconsistencies in incident reporting and redressal mechanisms. This absence of tailored policies not only leaves victims vulnerable but also hampers efforts to hold perpetrators accountable in a coherent manner. For instance, one study observed that many incidents remained undocumented because students were unaware of proper channels or were reluctant to report cases that could tarnish their academic record (Nonso & Mujtaba, 2022; Olowookere et al., 2023).

Thus, the emerging body of literature on cyberbullying at Kwara State University albeit still limited-provides critical insights into the interplay between social media use and aggressive online behavior among university students. While empirical data indicate a strong correlation between high frequency of social media engagement and an increased risk of cyberbullying, qualitative investigations reveal that the underlying issues are multifaceted, involving psychosocial factors such as low self-esteem, inadequate awareness, and the absence of specific institutional policies to manage these behaviors (Adebayo et al., 2019; Oniye, 2022; Akeusola, 2023; Ajayi & Olanrewaju, 2023).

2.4 Gaps in Literature

One significant gap in the existing literature revolves around the disconnect between theoretical definitions of social media and their practical implications for addressing cyberbullying. While scholars like Kaplan and Haenlein (2019) define social media through its technological functions and Ferguson (2021) emphasizes its cultural influence, these varied perspectives rarely translate into actionable strategies for mitigating cyberbullying in university settings. For instance, studies by Lambert (2020) and Bello (2022) acknowledge the dual role of social media as both a tool for connection and a space for harm but stop short of exploring how institutions can leverage these definitions to design interventions. Similarly, empirical studies in Nigerian universities, such as those by Okafor (2020) and Adebayo et al. (2019), highlight high cyberbullying rates linked to platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp but do not examine how differing conceptualizations of social media inform prevention approaches. This oversight limits the development of context-specific solutions, as universities may struggle to align anti-bullying initiatives with the complex realities of digital interaction.

Furthermore, while research identifies psychological and academic impacts of cyberbullying, there is a lack of long-term studies tracking how these effects evolve over time. For example, Oniye's (2022) qualitative work in Kwara State reveals immediate well being consequences but does not assess whether these issues persist or worsen academic outcomes in later years. This gap leaves institutions unprepared to address the prolonged consequences of cyberbullying, particularly in environments with limited counseling resources. This study addresses these gaps by proposing a unified framework that connects theoretical definitions of social media to practical interventions, while also incorporating longitudinal analysis to understand the enduring effects of cyberbullying on students' well-being and academic trajectories.

Another gap lies in the inadequate exploration of institutional policies and cultural dynamics shaping cyberbullying in Nigerian universities. Although studies like Akeusola (2023) and Nonso & Mujtaba (2022) note the absence of dedicated cyberbullying policies in universities, they do not investigate how existing policies could be adapted or how cultural norms influence enforcement. For instance, Bronfenbrenner's social ecological theory is applied to explain environmental influences on behavior, but prior research fails to examine how Nigerian societal values such as collectivism or stigma around well being affect reporting and support mechanisms. Similarly, Bandura's theory of moral disengagement explains how students justify harmful actions online, yet studies overlook how local peer dynamics or familial expectations might amplify these justifications.

Additionally, while platforms like Instagram and Twitter are identified as cyberbullying hotspots, there is minimal analysis of how platform-specific features (e.g., anonymity tools) interact with cultural factors to enable harassment. This study fills these gaps by evaluating current institutional policies in Kwara State University and proposing culturally tailored reforms that address both technological and societal factors. It also integrates Bandura's and Bronfenbrenner's theories to explore how moral disengagement and environmental systems interact within Nigeria's unique cultural context, offering a holistic understanding of cyberbullying drivers and solutions.

2.5 Theoretical Review

This study adopts Bandura's (1986) theory of moral disengagement and Bronfenbrenner's (1977) social ecological theory to examine the topic: "Influence of Social Media and Cyberbullying on Well being and Interpersonal Relationships Among Students of Kwara State University." These theories present a framework for understanding both the psychological mechanisms and the layered environmental factors that influence cyberbullying behaviors, well being outcomes, and relationship dynamics among university students.

Bandura's theory of moral disengagement posits that individuals can disconnect from their internal moral standards, enabling them to engage in harmful behaviors, such as cyberbullying without experiencing guilt. This disengagement is facilitated by cognitive mechanisms like moral justification, euphemistic labeling, and displacement of responsibility. For example, a student might justify sending a hurtful message by framing it as a joke or retaliation, thus minimizing its emotional impact on the victim. Such cognitive processes not only fuel aggressive online behavior but also undermine peer relationships and contribute to poor well

being among both victims and perpetrators. Bandura's theory emerged from his broader social cognitive framework, which highlights how behavior is shaped by observational learning and internal thought processes (Bandura et al., 1996).

Bronfenbrenner's social ecological theory (1977) complements this by offering a layered understanding of how environmental contexts shape behavior and well-being. The theory outlines five interconnected systems: the microsystem (direct environments like family and school), mesosystem (interactions between microsystems), exosystem (indirect influences like institutional policies), macrosystem (cultural norms), and chronosystem (historical and developmental transitions). These systems interact to influence student behavior, well being, and the quality of interpersonal relationships. Bronfenbrenner emphasized the need to view individuals within these broader systemic contexts to fully understand their development and behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Bandura's theory assumes that moral standards can be selectively disengaged to enable unethical behavior without internal conflict. Mechanisms like moral justification allow harmful acts to be seen as righteous; euphemistic labeling sanitizes abuse through softened language; and displacement of responsibility shifts blame to peers, digital culture, or social trends. In the university context, these mechanisms explain how students may engage in online harassment, damaging well being and trust in interpersonal connections, all while maintaining a positive self-image (Bandura et al., 1996).

Bronfenbrenner's theory assumes that development and behavior are shaped by multilayered environmental influences. For students, the microsystem includes family and peer interactions that can either buffer or aggravate social media stress. The mesosystem may involve the interplay between academic pressures and home life, which together influence social engagement and emotional resilience. The exosystem reflects external structures such as university regulations on online conduct or access to counseling services that indirectly impact student well-being. The macrosystem incorporates Nigerian societal attitudes toward cyberbullying, well being, and technology use, while the chronosystem recognizes the evolving role of social media in shaping modern communication and student experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Taking into account Kwara State University, Bandura's theory explains how students rationalize or diminish the impact of their actions online. A student may refer to harmful comments as "just teasing," or shift blame to peer culture, allowing cyberbullying to continue

unchecked. These rationalizations erode social trust and can cause anxiety, depression, and isolation among students, significantly affecting their mental well-being and interpersonal bonds. Bronfenbrenner's model explains how inadequate support systems, weak institutional policies, and stigmatization of well being within the larger culture contribute to the persistence of cyberbullying and its harmful effects.

Empirical evidence supports this theoretical application. Adebayo et al. (2019) found that frequent social media use among Nigerian undergraduates correlates with increased involvement in cyberbullying either as perpetrators or victims which, in turn, negatively affects well being. Nwosu et al. (2018) reported that around 50% of students had experienced cyberbullying, with nearly one-third admitting to engaging in it. These experiences often led to anxiety, loneliness, and disrupted social relationships, highlighting the urgent need for institutional and psychological interventions.

Bandura's theory is particularly useful for explaining how students' internal justifications enable harmful behaviors, which often compromise their empathy and degrade social harmony. Bronfenbrenner's model offers a contextual lens through which to assess how social environments and policy gaps contribute to these challenges. Therefore, these frameworks collectively presents how cyberbullying facilitated by social media affects well being and interpersonal relationships.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The method used in this study is a quantitative research method with a descriptive analysis design using a survey approach. The survey research method was chosen because it allows for the collection of data from a sample of participants that is representative of a larger population. This approach enables researchers to gather information and draw conclusions about a larger group based on a smaller, manageable sample (Senam & Akpan, 2014).

The survey research process involves a systematic and rigorous approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It entails gathering information, analyzing the data, and using the results to identify trends, patterns, and issues that are relevant to the research question.

Survey research can be categorized into two main types: descriptive and analytical. Descriptive surveys aim to describe a phenomenon, situation, or trend, while analytical surveys seek to explain why certain situations exist or to identify the underlying causes of a particular issue. The choice of survey type depends on the research question, objectives, and the nature of the study.

In this study, the survey research method was used to collect data on the experiences and perceptions of students regarding social media platforms and cyberbullying. The survey was designed to gather information on the prevalence, nature, and impact of cyberbullying among students, as well as their attitudes and behaviors towards social media use.

Based on the fore-going, survey research can be categorized in:

- Descriptive survey

3.2 Population Of The Study

In research, the population refers to the entire group of people that a study is concerned with. It represents the group from which data will be collected and from which conclusions can be drawn. Daramola and Daramola (2011) states that "population is a universe of people from which you are given to draw a subset." The target population for this study consists of all students of Kwara State University, with a total population of 45,000. Since this research focuses on cyberbullying on social media and well being of student, the study considers students who actively engage with social media platforms.

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| School | population | source |
| Kwara state university | 45,000 | Registral |
| Total | 45,000 | |

3.3 Sample Size

A sample that was too small may have lacked statistical power, while an excessively large sample could have led to unnecessary resource consumption (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). To find the right balance, established guidelines for sample size selection were followed. For this study, Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table was used to determine the appropriate number of respondents. With Kwara State University having a student population of 45,000, the table recommended a sample size of 380 students. This sample size was chosen to ensure that diverse perspectives on social media platforms and cyberbullying were captured while keeping the data collection process manageable.

| S/N | SCHOOL | POPULATION | PERCENTAGE | SAMPLE SIZE |
|-----|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1. | KWARA STATE UNIVERSITY | 45,000 | 100.0% | 380 |
| | TOTAL | 45,000 | 100.0% | 380 |

3.4 Sampling Technique

Participants for this study were selected using random sampling. This technique ensured that every student at Kwara State University had an equal chance of being included, leading to a fair and representative sample of the student population. Each student was assigned a unique number. A random selection process was then used to choose participants from this list. This method allowed for the inclusion of students from different faculties, levels, and backgrounds, ensuring a variety of perspectives on social media and cyberbullying. The goal was to ensure that the sample reflected the experiences of all students, rather than just one specific group. By applying random sampling, bias was avoided, and the results were ensured to be reliable and reflective of the entire student body.

3.5 Research Instrument

A **questionnaire** was used as the instrument for data collection in this study. According to Kumar (2019), a questionnaire consists of a series of questions designed to gather information from respondents. The questionnaire was created to collect relevant data about students' experiences with social media and cyberbullying, focusing on aspects like social media usage, experiences with cyberbullying, and its impact on students.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was carefully constructed and reviewed to make sure it addressed the study's objectives. After designing the questionnaire, it was presented to the project supervisor for additional feedback. Suggestions were provided, and necessary adjustments were made to ensure the instrument was suitable for the study. For reliability, the **face validity method** was used. The questionnaire was presented to the project supervisor and lecturers from the Mass Communication department for their expert review. Their feedback helped confirm that the questions were relevant, clear, and capable of providing consistent results.

3.7 Method Of Data Collection

The data for this study was collected using a **structured questionnaire**. The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions to gather information on students' social media usage and experiences with cyberbullying.

3.8 Method Of Data Analysis And Statistical Tool

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using **descriptive statistics**. This method helped summarize the data and provide an overview of the patterns and trends related to students' social media usage and experiences with cyberbullying.

The statistical tool used for data analysis was **SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)**, which is commonly used for analyzing survey data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means were calculated to present the findings clearly and concisely.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This study followed ethical guidelines to protect participants. All students were informed about the purpose of the research, and participation was completely voluntary. Their responses were

kept anonymous and confidential. No personal information was collected, and participants had the right to stop at any time. The research was approved by the department and supervised by the project supervisor.

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CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the data collected for this study. The findings are discussed in relation to the objectives of the research. The main focus is to examine how social media usage and cyberbullying affect the well-being and interpersonal relationships of students at Kwara State University. This chapter includes a presentation of demographic data, patterns of social media use, experiences of cyberbullying, and how these factors influence students' mental health and relationships with others.

4.2 Demographic Analysis

The demographic profile in this study includes gender, age, level of study, and religion. Gender and level of study are particularly important to this research, as they help to understand how different categories of students experience the influence of social media and cyberbullying on their well-being and interpersonal relationships. The information also provides insight into the background of respondents and helps in interpreting the findings in context.

Institution of Respondents

Kwara State University formed the entire population of respondents for this study, with a total of 380 students (100%). This is because the research was specifically focused on examining the influence of social media and cyberbullying on well-being and interpersonal relationships among students within a single institution Kwara State University.

The choice to limit the study to one university was intentional to allow for a more detailed and focused investigation of the research topic. The sample size of 380 was determined using **Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table**, ensuring the data collected is representative of the larger student population of the university.

Gender of Respondents

The majority of the respondents were female, making up 70.3% of the sample, while males accounted for 29.2%. This suggests a higher level of female participation in the study, which could be due to greater interest in the topic or availability during the survey period.

Age of Respondents

The respondents' ages ranged from 15 to 30 years, with the majority concentrated in the 19–22 age group. Specifically, 181 respondents (47.6%) were aged 19–22, making it the most represented age category. This was followed by 93 respondents (24.5%) in the 23–26 age group, and 83 students (21.8%) who were between 15–18 years old. The least represented were those between 27–30 years, with only 23 respondents (6.1%). These figures indicate that most participants were young adults in their early university years a group highly active on social media and therefore central to the objectives of this research.

Faculty of Respondents

The distribution of respondents across faculties shows that students from the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences formed the highest proportion, with 189 respondents (49.7%). This may be attributed to the faculty's large student population or greater interest in topics related to media and social behavior. The Faculties of Education and Basic Medical Sciences contributed 54 (14.2%) and 50 (13.2%) respondents respectively, while the Faculty of Engineering and Technology also had 50 (13.2%). The Faculty of Arts recorded the fewest respondents, with 34 (8.9%). This wide representation across faculties adds depth to the study, ensuring that the findings are not limited to one academic background.

Level of Study

Respondents in this study were drawn from all levels of undergraduate study, ranging from 100 to 500 level. The 200 level had the highest number of participants, with 117 students (30.8%). This was followed by 400 level students, who made up 28.2% of the sample (107 respondents), and 300 level students with 72 (18.9%). The 100 level had 44 respondents, accounting for 11.6%, while 500 level students were the least represented with 40 respondents (10.5%). This spread shows that students at different academic stages were involved, allowing the study to explore varying experiences and maturity levels in relation to social media usage and cyberbullying.

Table 4.2 Respondents Demographics

| DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES | FREQUENCY | % |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 111 | 29.2% |
| Female | 269 | 70.8% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| Age | | |
| 15- 18 | 83 | 21.8% |
| 19-22 | 181 | 47.6% |
| 23-26 | 93 | 24.5% |
| 27- 30 | 23 | 6.1% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| What is your faculty at Kwara State University | | |
| Management and social science | 189 | 49.7% |
| Basic Medical science | 50 | 13.2% |
| Engineering and tech | 50 | 13.2% |
| Art | 34 | 8.9% |
| Education | 54 | 14.2% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| Level of study | | |
| 100 | 44 | 11.6% |
| 200 | 117 | 30.8% |
| 300 | 72 | 18.9% |
| 400 | 107 | 28.2% |
| 500 | 40 | 10.5% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |

Table 4.3 Social Media Usage

| SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE | FREQUENCY | % |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Which social media do you usually use? | | |
| Tiktok | 161 | 42.4% |
| Facebok | 48 | 12.6% |
| Instagram | 32 | 8.4% |
| Twitter | 26 | 6.8% |
| Snapchat | 40 | 10.5% |
| WhatsApp | 73 | 19.2% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| How many hours per day do you spend on social media | | |
| 1hour | 23 | 6.1% |
| 2hours | 42 | 11.1% |
| 3hours | 57 | 15.0% |
| 4hours | 77 | 20.3% |
| 5hours | 47 | 12.4% |
| 6hours | 50 | 13.2% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| What is the primary purpose of your social media use? | | |
| Social interaction | 114 | 30.0% |
| Entertainment | 128 | 33.7% |
| News and updates | 71 | 18.7% |
| Academic purposes | 63 | 16.6% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| Do you use social media for academic purposes? | | |
| Yes | 320 | 74.5% |
| No | 54 | 15.8% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| How often do you check social media | | |
| Multiple times a day | 283 | 74.5% |
| Once a day | 60 | 15.8% |
| Several times a week | 33 | 8.7% |
| Less than once a week | 4 | 1.1% |

| | | |
|--------------|------------|---------------|
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
|--------------|------------|---------------|

Research Question 1: What Social Media Platforms Are Most Frequently Associated With Cyberbullying Among Students

Social Media Usage

From the data collected, it's clear that students at Kwara State University are very active on social media, with TikTok being the most popular platform. About 42.4% of the respondents said TikTok is their go-to app. Other platforms like WhatsApp (19.2%), Facebook (12.6%), Snapchat (10.5%), Instagram (8.4%), and Twitter (6.8%) are also used but not as much. This shows that most students prefer fun and fast-paced apps, especially those with short videos and interactive content, like TikTok.

When it comes to how much time they spend online, most students are on social media for several hours every day. In fact, over 70% of them said they spend more than 2 hours daily. The highest number reported using social media for 4 hours a day (20.3%), followed by 3 hours (15%), 6 hours (13.2%), and so on. This tells us that social media is not just something they check once in a while it's part of their daily routine.

Looking at why they use social media, the main reason is for entertainment (33.7%), followed closely by social interaction (30%). Only a smaller number use it mainly for academic purposes (16.6%) or to get news and updates (18.7%). However, even though academics isn't their main reason, a large majority (84.2%) still said they use social media for things like sharing school materials, joining class groups, and staying updated with schoolwork.

Finally, when asked how often they check their social media, nearly three-quarters (74.5%) said they check it multiple times a day. Only a very small number (1.1%) said they check less than once a week. This shows that social media plays a major role in their daily lives, both for fun and for learning.

Table 4.4 Experiences With Cyberbullying

| EXPERIENCES WITH CYBERBULLYING | FREQUENCY | % |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| Have you ever been a victim of cyberbullying on social media | | |
| Yes | 87 | 22.9% |
| No | 276 | 72.6% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| Have you ever witnessed cyberbullying on social media | | |
| Yes | 228 | 60.0% |
| No | 138 | 36.3% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| What forms of cyberbullying have you experienced or witnessed? | | |
| Online harassment | 125 | 32.9% |
| Rumors or false information spread online | 127 | 33.4% |
| Impersonation or fake profiles | 83 | 21.8% |
| Threats or intimidation | 27 | 7.1% |
| Exclusion or being blocked from online groups | 16 | 4.2% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |

Research Question 2: The Most Common Forms Of Cyberbullying Experienced By Kwara State University Student

Experiences With Cyberbullying

From the responses gathered, it was found that while most students (72.6%) said they have not been victims of cyberbullying, about 22.9% admitted that they have personally experienced some form of bullying online. This means that even though cyberbullying doesn't affect the majority, nearly one in four students has gone through it, which is still a serious concern. Interestingly, even more students 60% said they have seen or witnessed cyberbullying happening to others on social media. Only 36.3% said they've never seen it happen. This shows

that cyberbullying is very visible in the online world students engage in, whether or not they are directly involved.

When we look at the types of cyberbullying students have experienced or witnessed, the most common ones include spreading of false information or rumors (33.4%) and online harassment (32.9%), which are almost equally common. These usually come in the form of negative comments, public insults, or lies posted about someone. Other forms mentioned include impersonation or the use of fake profiles (21.8%), threats or intimidation (7.1%), and being blocked or excluded from online groups (4.2%). So overall, the most common forms of cyberbullying involve emotional and reputational attacks rather than direct threats or being completely cut off socially online.

Research Question 3: What Is The Relationship Between Cyberbullying And Students' Well-Being

Table 4.5 Relationship Between Cyberbullying And Students'

| Well Being | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| | studentswellbe | cyberbullying |
| | ing | |
| Pearson Correlation 1 | | .179** |
| studentswellbeing Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| N | 380 | 380 |
| Pearson Correlation .179** | | 1 |
| cyberbullying Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| N | 380 | 380 |

Relationship Between Cyberbullying and Student's Well being

Findings from the responses that 380 students gave shows how their media habits relate to academic use. The findings show that students who are active on more media platforms are more likely to have a clear purpose for using media. Also, students who use more platforms spend more time on media daily.

Also, students who use media with a clear purpose are more likely to use it for academic reasons. However, spending more time on media each day is linked to using it less often, which

may mean some students use media for long periods but not frequently. Students with clear goals for using media are more likely to use it for academics, and those active on more platforms tend to spend more time online.

Table 4.6 Cyberbullying And Social Media

| Cyberbullying and social media | FREQUENCY | % |
|--|------------------|---------------|
| Social media platforms are a major cause of cyberbullying among students. | | |
| Agree | 219 | 57.6% |
| Strongly agree | 93 | 24.5% |
| Disagree | 42 | 11.1% |
| Strongly disagree | 26 | 6.8 % |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| I feel safe when using social media platforms. | | |
| Agree | 187 | 49.2% |
| Strongly agree | 94 | 24.7 % |
| Disagree | 84 | 22.1 % |
| Strongly disagree | 14 | 3.7 % |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| Cyberbullying on social media affects the mental health of students. | | |
| Agree | 168 | 44.2 % |
| Strongly agree | 140 | 36.8 % |
| Disagree | 52 | 13.7 % |
| Strongly disagree | 20 | 5.3 % |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| Students are aware of the negative impact of cyberbullying on social media. | | |
| Agree | 207 | 54.5% |
| Strongly agree | 130 | 34.2% |
| Disagree | 29 | 7.6 % |
| Strongly disagree | 14 | 3.7 % |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| Social media platforms should do more to prevent and address cyberbullying. | | |
| Agree | 183 | 48.2% |
| Strongly agree | 142 | 37.4% |

| | | |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Disagree | 43 | 11.3% |
| Strongly disagree | 12 | 3.2 % |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| I was absent minded and unable to remember what I was doing | | |
| Agree | 121 | 31.8 % |
| Strongly agree | 101 | 26.6% |
| Disagree | 110 | 28.9 % |
| Strongly disagree | 47 | 12.4 % |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| I felt disgusted by myself | | |
| Agree | 81 | 21.3% |
| Strongly agree | 72 | 18.9 % |
| Disagree | 156 | 41.1 % |
| Strongly disagree | 71 | 8.7 % |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| I thought of hurting myself | | |
| Agree | 58 | 15.3 % |
| Strongly agree | 68 | 17.9% |
| Disagree | 144 | 37.9% |
| Strongly disagree | 110 | 28.9% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| My mood cycled in terms of anxiety, anger and depression | | |
| Agree | 96 | 25.3 % |
| Strongly agree | 89 | 23.4 % |
| Disagree | 132 | 34.7 % |
| Strongly disagree | 63 | 16.6 % |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |
| I did not believe in my right to live | | |
| Agree | 59 | 15.5% |
| Strongly agree | 70 | 18.4 % |
| Disagree | 134 | 35.3 % |
| Strongly disagree | 117 | 30.8% |
| Total | 380 | 100.0% |

Research Question 4: Does Cyberbullying Significantly Affect Students' Interpersonal Relationships

Cyberbullying and Social Media

The results show that most students believe social media platforms play a major role in the rise of cyberbullying. About 57.6% agreed and 24.5% strongly agreed that platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp are a big reason why cyberbullying happens. Only a small number disagreed, showing that students are aware of the risk that comes with being online.

When asked about their sense of safety while using social media, almost 74% of the students said they feel safe (either agreed or strongly agreed). However, about 1 in 4 students still said they don't feel safe, which is something to be concerned about, especially when you consider that the internet is a big part of their daily lives.

There was also strong agreement that cyberbullying negatively affects students' mental health. Over 80% of students said it does, which tells us that students understand the emotional damage caused by online bullying, even if they haven't been directly targeted.

Most of the students (nearly 90%) said they are aware of the negative effects that cyberbullying has on people. This shows that students are not just using social media they're also thinking about how it affects their mental and emotional health.

Many students believe that social media companies need to do more to stop cyberbullying. Around 85.6% of them want platforms to take more action. This means students aren't just blaming each other, they're also calling on the platforms to step up, improve safety features, and protect their users better.

On a deeper emotional level, the responses show how badly cyberbullying and negative online experiences can affect some students. About 58.4% of them said they've felt absent-minded or emotionally distant, possibly due to stress or the pressure they feel online. This suggests that time on social media doesn't just affect how they feel in the moment, it can affect their focus, mood, and ability to stay present.

Some students even reported feeling disgusted with themselves because of things that happened online. While 41.1% disagreed, showing they haven't had this experience, around 40.2% agreed or strongly agreed. This shows that for some, social media leads to a drop in self-worth.

More seriously, a smaller group of students said they have thought of hurting themselves 15.3% agreed, and 17.9% strongly agreed. Even though the majority disagreed, these numbers should not be ignored. They reflect a group of students who are really struggling and may need emotional support or mental health help.

Some also said their mood swings between anxiety, anger, and depression because of what happens on social media. Over 48% of students said this happens to them, showing that being online can lead to emotional ups and downs sometimes without warning.

One of the most serious findings was that 33.9% of students (15.5% agreed, 18.4% strongly agreed) said they have doubted their right to live. While the majority disagreed, this response points to a deep emotional toll that should not be overlooked. Even if only a few students feel this way, it's enough to show that mental health support is urgently needed for some individuals, especially those who may be suffering silently.

4.7 Summary of Findings

This chapter presented and analyzed data on the influence of social media and cyberbullying on the well-being and interpersonal relationships of students at Kwara State University. The findings revealed that a significant number of students actively use social media platforms, with TikTok being among the most popular.

While not all respondents reported being victims of cyberbullying, a majority had witnessed it, showing that cyberbullying remains a visible concern among students. Common forms of cyberbullying reported included name-calling, spreading rumors, and emotional harassment online.

In terms of impact on well-being, many students admitted feeling anxious, stressed, or depressed due to social media. Some also reported serious emotional effects such as mood swings, self-doubt, and, in extreme cases, thoughts of self-harm. These findings suggest that social media can contribute to mental health challenges when used excessively or negatively.

Despite the negative effects, many students acknowledged that social media has also helped strengthen their relationships. This dual nature shows that social media can serve as both a support system and a stressor, depending on the experience of the user.

The chapter concluded that while students are aware of the negative impacts of cyberbullying, more effort is needed from social media platforms to address and reduce its occurrence. It also

emphasized the importance of creating support systems to help students manage their online interactions in healthier ways.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the objectives and findings of the study and provides recommendations based on the results. The study examined the influence of social media and cyberbullying on students' well-being and interpersonal relationships at Kwara State University.

5.2 Objectives Of The Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the patterns of social media use among students of Kwara State University.
2. To explore the prevalence and nature of cyberbullying among students.
3. To assess how social media and cyberbullying affect students' emotional and mental well-being.
4. To investigate the influence of social media and cyberbullying on students' interpersonal relationships.
5. To explore students' perceptions and responses to cyberbullying.

5.3 Summary Of Findings

Patterns of Social Media Use

The findings show that students of Kwara State University use various social media platforms, with WhatsApp and TikTok being the most popular. The majority spend between 1–4 hours daily on social media. Most students use social media for chatting, entertainment, and academic purposes.

Prevalence and Nature of Cyberbullying

Results show that a significant number of students have experienced or witnessed cyberbullying. The most common forms include insults, rumors, and online threats. However, most students claimed they rarely post harmful content.

Effect of Social Media and Cyberbullying on Well-Being

The study revealed that cyberbullying negatively affects students' mental health. Some respondents reported feeling anxious, depressed, or absent-minded, while others mentioned having mood swings or even thoughts of self-harm. However, a considerable number also claimed to feel safe when using social media.

Impact on Interpersonal Relationships

Findings indicate that social media can both strengthen and damage relationships. While some students feel closer to friends through social media, others reported avoiding people in real life due to online conflicts or bullying experiences.

Students' Perceptions of Cyberbullying

Most respondents believe that social media platforms are not doing enough to prevent cyberbullying. They agree that cyberbullying has serious mental health consequences and are aware of its negative impact.

5.4 Conclusion

This study explored how social media use and cyberbullying affect the emotional well-being and relationships of students at Kwara State University. From what was gathered, it's clear that students are very active on social media, especially on platforms like WhatsApp and TikTok. While these platforms help students stay in touch and build connections, they also come with negative sides. Many students shared that they have experienced or seen cyberbullying, which often leaves them feeling stressed, anxious, or emotionally hurt. Although some find support and stronger relationships online, others find that social media has caused tension in their real-life friendships. It also became clear that most students believe cyberbullying has a serious impact on mental health, but they feel that social media companies are not doing enough to stop it. Even though students are aware of how harmful online bullying can be, not all of them know what to do when it happens or how to get help. These findings support earlier research, such as Bauman (2010), which shows that cyberbullying can have a strong effect on young people's emotional and mental health.

5.5 Limitations Of The Study

This study focused only on students from Kwara State University, which means the findings might not apply to students in other schools or regions. Also, because cyberbullying is a

sensitive topic, some students may not have answered all the questions honestly maybe out of fear, embarrassment, or not wanting to share personal experiences. Lastly, the research was based on students' own reports and memories, which means some answers could have been affected by forgetfulness or personal bias.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it's important that Kwara State University takes steps to protect students from the harmful effects of cyberbullying. One way to do this is by holding regular seminars or awareness programs where students can learn about using social media responsibly and understanding the dangers of online abuse. The university should also make its counseling services stronger and more approachable, so students who are emotionally affected by cyberbullying can get the support they need. At the same time, social media companies have a role to play — they need to create stricter rules and easier ways for users to report abuse when it happens. Students themselves should be encouraged to speak up when they see others being bullied online, and to support friends who may be going through tough times. When used in a positive way, social media can help students build stronger relationships and feel more connected to each other, as noted by Manago et al. (2012).

5.7 Suggestions For Further Studies

This study opened up several ideas that future researchers can build on. For example, it would be interesting to look at the differences in how cyberbullying affects students in public and private universities. This could reveal if school type or environment plays a role in students' online experiences. Future research could also use more detailed psychological tools to better understand how deeply cyberbullying affects students' emotions and mental health. Lastly, there's a need to explore how parental guidance and digital literacy — meaning how well students are taught to use the internet safely — might help prevent cyberbullying or reduce its impact.

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