

Cyberbullying and social intelligence: a case of university students in Jordan

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Abstract

Cyberbullying continues as a phenomenon affecting students recently. It has long been a phenomenon of concern as wide range of psychological problems inclusive is associated. This study aimed to investigate the relationship of cyberbullying and social intelligence between university students, in additional, to find out whether students gender effect on level of cyberbullying and emotional intelligence among university students. Sample of the study consisting of 216 participants (100 males and 116 females). The results reported a moderate negative statistical relationship between cyberbullying and social intelligence among university students. The level of cyberbullying, while the level of social intelligence was moderate among students. Finally, results showed that there are gender statistically significant effects in level of cyberbullying among bullied and bullies' students in favor of male students.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Social Intelligence, Bullies, Bullied, Bystander.

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is one of the psychological phenomena that have attracted substantial research attention in the last few decades. Bullying is a phenomenon that has increased dramatically among not only school students but also among university counterparts. Bullying is an abnormal behaviour that reflects the presence of psychological disorders in the bullying individual. Bullying affects negatively its victims as it causes behavioural and psychological disturbances, self-confidence imbalance, and the feelings of stress, anxiety, turmoil and distress (Swearer & Hymel, 2015).

Modern technology and social media platforms can be considered a double-edged sword. They play a detrimental role despite the positive role they play in enabling individuals to communicate with each other in a positive manner without being restricted to time and place, abolishing geographical borders between countries of the world, and providing many

useful applications in various aspects of life. However, the prosperity of technology and the tendency to use social media have become a fertile environment and a means for practicing negative behaviours by individuals who misuse these platforms by deliberately and repeatedly bullying others (Al-Anzi, 2021).

With the spread of modern digital technology and the great drift towards the use of various social internet networking sites, applications and smartphones, the concept of cyberbullying has emerged. Cyberbullying takes place when some individuals start mocking, harming and bullying others through the different social media websites. This form of misconduct can be considered as an extension of the real bullying. Cyberbullying is considered one of the most prevalent forms of bullying, which gives the bully the opportunity to hide his true personality, and sometimes impersonate other individuals or unreal characters (Al-Jizawi, 2021). Cyberbullying

includes many forms of exploitation and bullying, including intellectual exploitation, sexual exploitation, and physical exploitation. It further includes intimidation, terror, threats, spreading rumours and degrading others by using offensive images or words, deliberately, and repeatedly insult the bullied individuals (Al-Zahrani, 2019).

The phenomenon of cyberbullying has recently spread widely among university students. Consequently, this can result in various negative effects on the university students' personalities, emotional development, cognitive and social intelligence, whether they are bullies or victims of bullying. The university education stage is regarded a very important and decisive stage for young people that qualifies them for the labour market and develops their personalities and behaviours to equip them to build their own future (Al-Ghamdi, 2020).

Social intelligence reflects the individual's ability to express themselves, deal with others, deal with different real-life situations, read social situations and possess problem-solving skills. Furthermore, social intelligence assists individuals to establish successful human relationships, control critical situations with wisdom and knowledge, and the ability to persuade others and adapt well with them. Consequently, such individuals can be regarded as socially intelligent ones (Al-Halabi, 2021).

Cyberbullying

Al-Shahrani (2021) defines cyberbullying as the abnormal behaviour through websites that target a group of individuals because of their race, religion, language, identity, physical traits, social or physical status, or gender due to the presence of a specific disability. This behaviour can result in different forms of psychological harm to the person being bullied. Cyberbullying can be described as any activities that are conducted through any social media platform on the internet. Such misconducts target individuals or groups through which compromise hostile or aggressive messages aiming at damaging others using known or disguised identities (Tokunaga,

2010). It can be further defined as the deliberate exploit of electronic devices to recurrently harm an individual or a group (Akbulut and Eristi, 2011).

There are several reasons that can lead to the practice of cyberbullying. The first reason is related to the tendency of the bullies to possess and control others. It can be also related to the attempt of the bullies to attract more attention from their surrounding and seek a positive outlook and approval (Banat, 2021). Besides other personal reasons such as narcissism and increasing self-confidence, and the individual's need to satisfy his desires and needs. This may occur when an individual is unable to express his desires or satisfy them socially. Therefore, he resorts to electronic bullying as a passage to unload his emotions and needs, especially in the absence of social control (Banat, 2021). One of the long-term consequences of cyber-bullying is the destruction of mental health. Cyberbullying is expected to have a negative impact on social life of the individuals and on their ability to communicate with others (Alotaibi, 2019). It can also lead to depression and the individual's decision to commit suicide (ibid). These effects may include the loss of self-confidence, inability to make friends and constantly feeling fear and anxiety, which can destroy both physical and mental health of the victims of cyberbullying (Alotaibi, 2019).

There are several recent studies that found a high level of cyberbullying among school students aged 14 or above (e.g., Al-Makani, Younis and Al-Hiyara, 2017). Amara (2017) detected a positive correlation between traditional and electronic bullying for victims of bullying and bullies which was in favor of males. In another study, El-Shinawy (2016) attempted to verify the psychometric efficiency of the electronic bullying scale. The findings indicated that there were differences between males and females for both, i.e. victim of bullying and bullies. Furthermore, the study found that there was an overlap between being an electronic bully or a victim of electronic bullying. In order to identify the relationship between emotional deprivation and aggressive behavior among a sample of middle school

students, Ali & Al Bayati (2009) revealed that middle school students felt a moderate degree of deprivation from parental affection, and the spread of hostile behavior to a moderate degree as well. It also showed a positive correlation between aggressive behavior and emotional deprivation among preparatory stage students.

The spread and development of electronic social media platforms has led to the emergence of electronic bullying, which has negative effects, both at the level of bullies or the victim of bullying. Specifically, those who lived long periods of emotional disturbance and behavioral problems. Braithwaite and Ahmed (2004) found that most bullies belong to families that were characterized by disintegration, separation, chaos and negative relationships, which would push them to integrate into bullying behavior and activities.

Social intelligence

Social intelligence is defined as “the individual’s ability to perceive the intentions, motives and feelings of others and to distinguish between them, the ability to analyze facial expressions and gestures and their intended meaning, the degree to which the individual possesses a set of skills such as self-confidence, and the ability to solve problems creatively and the absence of shyness and social openness” (Al-Arfaj, 2021, p. 334). Al-Mamari (2021) referred to the general manifestations of social intelligence, which are represented in the following: First, social harmony which means adherence to ethics and the rules governing society, a feeling of happiness with others and appropriate social interaction. Second, social competence, which means exerting effort and social struggle to achieve satisfaction in human relations and fulfilling the social and personal needs. Third, social identity, which expresses the individual’s ability to belong to the community in which he lives and feel that he is part of it without losing his identity. Fourth, self-control, which refers to the individual’s ability to act in a socially responsible manner. Fifth, the distribution of social resources which represents the individual’s ability to obtain friendship, happiness, and social acceptance.

Among the social intelligence skills mentioned by Yassen (2021) are manipulation, empathy, and negotiation. Manipulation is represented by the individual’s ability to convince others of his ideas and directions. Empathy can be represented by the individual’s ability to understand the feelings of others, the knowledge of their weaknesses, and the ability to adapt to new individuals and anticipate their desires. Negotiation which is the individual’s ability to gain individuals through whom he can achieve a moral or material interest on his side, but they do not give it to him voluntarily, and he cannot obtain it by force. So, the bully resorts to negotiation in a way that helps him to bring views together or exchange views using available methods of persuasion and thus reaching a satisfactory solution.

Previous studies

Giumetti, Kowalski, Schroeder and Lattanner (2022) examined studies on cyberbullying on social media among kids and adults, as well as the link between such activity and happiness. Indiscreet posting, time spent on social media, and personality factors were all mentioned as probable predictors of cyberbullying via social media in the study. Include psychological discomfort, lower life satisfaction, and suicide thoughts as possible negative consequences on well-being associated to cyberbullying via social media. The research finishes with preventative and intervention suggestions, such as the deployment of cyberbullying detection tools to urge users to think twice before sending a cyberbullying message. We also point out some of the existing study’s shortcomings and make some recommendations for further research.

Coelho, Marchante, and Romao (2022) looked at whether adolescent social anxiety and social retreat trajectories were linked to their involvement in conventional or cyberbullying roles over the course of a year in middle school. Self-reports and instructor reports were used to measure social anxiety and withdrawal three times over the course of a year. 511 middle school students made up the sample. The self-reports revealed that while there were no differences in initial levels of social anxiety

between victims and bully–victims, victims, and bully–victims experienced more pronounced increases in both social anxiety and social withdrawal during the analyzed period than students who were not involved in traditional bullying or cyberbullying. According to teacher accounts, victims, and bully–victims had greater initial levels of social anxiety and social withdrawal, as well as a more severe rise in social withdrawal, than children who were not bullied. Classroom size, but not gender, affected the trajectories of social anxiety and social retreat. These findings suggest that being a victim or a bully–victim in conventional bullying and cyberbullying is linked to a significant increase in social anxiety and social isolation.

At the social level, Zehir and Karaca (2021) wanted to look at the link between innovation and emotional capacities. The goal of this research is to define the substance and extent of the social innovation idea, as well as the link between social innovation and emotional competency, which is based on social intelligence. The ultimate purpose of social innovation is to bring about a change that will benefit society. This research is focused on theoretical discussions on social innovation's two theoretical dynamics: innovation and transformation. The transition is based on the phenomena of social intelligence. The ability to produce and maintain social innovation must be translated into social competency. At the societal level, social intelligence gives awareness for change. The link between social innovation and social intelligence is examined in this paper, and social innovation is explained using pertinent theories. This research also intends to raise awareness of the notion of social innovation.

Yirci, Karakose, and Malkoc (2021) investigated teenage students' cyberbullying conduct and being a victim of cyberbullying, with a focus on gender and grade level inequalities. The study described its findings as variations between gender and grade level in cyberbullying and cyber victimization based on a cross-sectional survey of 311 teenage students continuing their high school education in secondary education institutions in Turkey.

The "Cyberbully/Cyber-victim Scale," a Likert-type survey, was used to collect data for the study. T-test, ANOVA, and Tukey's b test were used in conjunction with statistics to analyze the acquired data. Regarding the gender variable, the study's findings reveal a considerable difference in the level of students performing cyberbullying behaviors and being exposed to them inside virtual platforms. Male students are more likely than female students to engage in cyberbullying and to be exposed to it on virtual platforms. Furthermore, the findings of the study show that on virtual platforms, female students' rumor (gossip) more than male students. With regard to the grade level variable, there was also a significant difference in the level of participants performing and being exposed to cyberbullying behaviors on virtual platforms. According to the research, kids in higher grades engage in more cyberbullying actions and are exposed to cyberbullying more frequently than students in lower grades. In other words, as pupils progressed through the grades, their performance and exposure to cyberbullying increased.

The association between cyberbullying and emotional deprivation among school kids was investigated by Alkhubata, Al Khalidi, and Al-Dalalah (2020). The participants were 432 school students (179 men and 253 females) from the Directorate of Education's schools in Jordan's Southern Jordan Valley, who were chosen at random from the 10th, 11th, and 12th classes. Scales for cyberbullying, emotional deprivation, and being bullied were used. The study discovered a link between cyberbullying and emotional deprivation among bullies and bullied students, with male students faring better. The research also revealed that both bullies and victims of bullying suffered from a significant level of emotional deprivation. Emotional deprivation was found to be a strong predictor of cyberbullying in both bullies and bullied pupils.

Problem of Study

Cyberbullying is the result of internal causes and factors that come from the individuals themselves, and also from external

factors that come from the environment and society that threaten psychological security or compensate for a sense of inferiority. The family, its climate and the relationships that bind its members are among the most important factors and reasons that affect the process of psychological, social and emotional development of the individual. Many of the personality traits that individuals acquire depend on the nature of social upbringing and their relationships with the members of their family and society. Therefore, the disturbance of family upbringing will negatively affect the growth of the children, as they may become discontented with those around. Consequently, they may face difficulties in adapting to their psychological needs on the one hand and the requirements of society on the other hand as a result of the lack of psychological and social security.

A study by Quintana-Orts, Mérida-López, Rey, & Extremera (2021) indicated that individuals who are victims of cyberbullying suffer from low levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction, a decline in the level of social relationships and an inability to adapt to different situations. They also suffer from dealing with life's troubles and difficulties, and lack of desire to form relationships with others, which may negatively affect the individual's social intelligence. Social intelligence plays a role in the ability to act in social situations and understanding the psychological aspects of others, linked to a different structure of mental abilities by which the individual deals with the contents of the social sphere, the ability to understand the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of others in different social situations. It consists of a set of skills that help the individual in solving social problems in a proper manner and achieving a good social result that is useful to others.

Aims of Study

This study was designed to investigate the relationship between cyberbullying and social intelligence among university students, in addition to revealing the effect of gender variables that may interact. The study also attempts to examine whether cyberbullying can

be predicted through the level of social intelligence among the victim, the bully and the neutral.

Research Questions:

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a correlation between cyberbullying and social intelligence among university students?
2. What is the level of cyberbullying and emotional intelligence among university students?
3. What is the predictability of cyberbullying through social intelligence among university students?
4. What is the effect of participants gender on the level of cyberbullying and emotional intelligence among university students?

Methods

Sample

The study population consisting of Isra university students in Jordan, the sample were 216 participants (100 males and 116 females) were randomly selected during the second semester of 2021/2022 academic year. The scale of cyberbullying, social intelligence, and a bullying victim were administrated to the sample. According to the scales scores, the sample were divided into three groups: bullied, bystanders, and bullies. The bullies category consisting of the participant who recorded 50% or more on scale of cyberbullying. On another hand, the bullied category involved the participant who recorded 50% or more on scale of bullying victim. While the bystander category presents the participants who recorded less than 50% on cyberbullying and bullying victim scales.

Table 1: *The sample details.*

Variable	Category	N	100%
Gender	Male	100	46.29%
	Female	116	53.70%

Types of participants	Bullied	57	26.38%
	Bystander	115	53.24%
	bullies	44	20.37%

Tools

For purpose of data collection from the sample of the study regarding to their demographics, cyberbullying, cyberbullying victim, and social intelligence, the following scales were employed:

1. Cyberbullying scale from (Almakanin, Younis and Alhiary, 2018), consisting of (17) items.
2. Cyberbullying victim scale from (Shennawi, 2016) consisting of (24) items.
3. Social intelligence scale from (Abu Amsha, 2013) consisting of (29) items divided into three domains: The ability to deal with others (12,3,4,5, 6,7,8), social communication (9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17), and affecting and being affected by social situations (19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29).

In order to achieve the reliability of the scales, "Split-half and Cronbach alpha coefficient" were calculated as shown in Table 2 below. The reliability values that "obtained by using split-half and Cronbach Alpha" method presented that the scales are suitable and reliable and for the target of the study.

Table 2: *Reliability of the scales*

Scale	Items	Cronbach Alpha	Split-half
Cyberbullying	17	0.88	0.84
Social intelligence	29	0.91	0.87
Bullying victims	24	0.87	0.84

Table 4: *results of one sample t-test results.*

Category	Variable	df	Mean	t	Sig
Bullied	cyberbullying	56	121.05	2.47	0.00
	social intelligence		55.70	3.66	0.07
Bystanders	cyberbullying	114	47.70	2.18	0.04
	social intelligence		42.57	3.21	0.02
Bullies	cyberbullying	43	53.88	49.72	0.00
	social intelligence		23.34	77.80	0.04

*Significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$)

Results

Question One: Is there a correlation between cyberbullying and social intelligence among university students?

To answer the question, Pearson correlation coefficient test was run for examine of the relationship of cyberbullying and social intelligence amongst bullied, bystanders, and bullies in Table 3.

Table 3: *results of Pearson correlation coefficients test.*

Cyberbullying	Social intelligence	N	Sig
bullied	-0.433**	57	0.00*
Bystanders	-0.510**	115	0.00*
bullies	-0.118	44	0.07

*Significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$)

Results in table (3) provided a moderate negative statistical relationship between cyberbullying and social intelligence among bullied, bystanders and bullies participants.

Question Two: What is the level of cyberbullying and emotional intelligence among university students?

"t-test was used for one sample to determine the level of emotional deprivation and cyberbullying among the three groups: bullies, bullied and bystanders", as shown in Table below.

As presented in table (4) the level of cyberbullying among students is high and statistically significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$). The results showed that the level of social intelligence is moderate and did not find any statistically significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$). Furthermore, the results find out low level of cyberbullying and social intelligence level among the bystander's category participants.

Question Three: What is the predictability of cyberbullying through social intelligence among university students?

To answer the question, the simple regression analysis was run based on Enter Method as manifest in Table 5.

Table 5: Results of simple regression analysis

Category	Independent variable	Model	B	R	R ²	Beta	t	Sig
Bullied	cyberbullying	constant	33.60	0.526	0.21	0.54	4.11	0.00*
		social intelligence	0.19					
Bullies	cyberbullying	constant	4.83	0.611	0.367	0.59	5.73	0.00*
		social intelligence	0.35					
Bystander	cyberbullying	constant	2.19	0.124	0.014	0.13	0.18	0.07
		social intelligence	0.03					

Significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$)

Table (5) provided a statistical significance difference in level of cyberbullying of bullied group ($R^2 = 0.21$), which presented that the social intelligence can explain 21% of level cyberbullying variation. Which leads that the social intelligence is a good predictor of cyberbullying. thus, the equation can be as: $\text{cyberbullying} = 33.60 + 0.19 (\text{social intelligence})$. Related to bullies' group, the results showed a statistical significance difference in level of cyberbullying ($R^2 = 0.367$), which means that social intelligence explains 36.7% of level of cyberbullying variation. Hence, the equation

predictive can predict as: $\text{cyberbullying} = 4.83 + 0.35 (\text{social intelligence})$. Finally, results in above table did not find any statistical significance difference in level of cyberbullying among bystanders' group.

Question Four: What is the effect of gender on the level of cyberbullying and emotional intelligence among university students?

To find out whether bullied, bystanders, and bullies' gender significantly affects in level of cyberbullying and social intelligence. Two independent samples test was employed as presents in table (6).

Table 6: results of two independent of participants based on their gender.

Category	Variable	Gender	Mean	St. dev	t	Sig
bullied	cyberbullying	male	57.412	9.732	5.135	0.00*
		female	45.330	5.932		
	social intelligence	male	123.411	30.667	1.285	0.206
		female	105.831	26.272		
bystanders	cyberbullying	male	25.924	5.727	3.817	0.002
		female	22.454	4.547		
	social intelligence	male	55.647	19.891	0.871	0.334
		female	53.321	118.072		

bullies	cyberbullying	male	57.411	9.733	4.147	0.001*
		female	45.334	5.933		
	social intelligence	male	124.410	29.667	1.274	0.203
		female	104.531	25.253		

Significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$)

Results in table (6) found out that there are gender statistically significant effects in level of cyberbullying among bullied and bullies' participant in favor of male students. the results did not provide any gender statistically significant effects in level of cyberbullying among bystanders' participants.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to see if there was a link between cyberbullying and social intelligence among university students. The study discovered that electronic bullies made up 20.37 percent of the whole sample population, victims of bullying made up 26.38 percent, and bystanders made up 53.40 percent of the total sample population. The study's findings also demonstrated a significant prevalence of cyberbullying among both bullies and victims of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying and social intelligences have a negative association.

The high percentages found might be frightening given unstable signs of the prevalence of cyberbullying among university students in Jordan, based on the findings of this study. As a result, this study identifies a number of explanations and elements that may contribute to the rise in cyberbullying. The most essential element might be the study's growing levels of social intelligence among pupils. It might be claimed that familial bonds and affection have a considerable impact on the development of children's mental, physical, emotional, and psychological characteristics. Nonetheless, children who are emotionally neglected, lack parental affection, and get inadequate care will have detrimental consequences for their social intelligence, awareness, and mental ability. Furthermore, because the student's physical and personal features contribute to becoming a bully or a

victim of cyberbullying, this will cause psychological difficulties and complexity among them. Results of current study agrees with study of Alkhutaba, Al Khalidi, and Al-Dalalah (2020) which is discovered a link between "cyberbullying and emotional deprivation among bullies and bullied students". Also, agrees with study of Yirci, Karakose, and Malkoc (2021) which revealed a considerable difference in the level of students performing cyberbullying behaviours and being exposed to them inside virtual platforms. Male students are more likely than female students to engage in cyberbullying and to be exposed to it on virtual platforms.

Conclusion

Students' cyberbullying is a notable topic that has been highlighted and supported by a body of previous work. Bullying is also linked to an increased risk of long-term injury, which can lead to a variety of catastrophic psychological, social, educational, and physical consequences. This study, on the other hand, provides insight into the increasing issue of cyberbullying and the effects of emotional deprivation among university students. Further study and studies are essential in order to illustrate the negative impacts of social intelligence on cyberbullying and other forms of bullying among university students. According to the study's findings, the incidence of bullying and social intelligence varies by gender among university students. Because it was conducted on a sample of university students in Jordan during the second semester of the academic year 2021/2022, the findings of this study are constrained in terms of its temporal and geographical drivers. The current study's findings are restricted by the types of assessments used, including the Cyberbullying Scale (Al-Makanain, Younis, and Al-Hayari, 2018), the Social Intelligence Scale (Abu Amsha, 2013), and the

Cyberbullying Victim Scale (Al-Shennawi, 2016).

The study's findings can be used to assist psychologists and mental health professionals in developing strategies to lessen this worrying phenomenon and its detrimental implications. The findings of the study are expected to help university counsellors and professors guide students in adjusting some behaviours, predicting indicators of cyberbullying, and dealing with the consequences of cyberbullying when communicating via social media and smart phones.

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