

Facebook Addiction and Cyberbullying Perpetration Among Young Pakistani Adults

Reeba Sharif Chaudhary¹, Pulwasha Anwar², Anum Rabbani³, Khadija Fatima⁴,
Nuzhat Shaheen⁵, Tanzeela Naveed⁶ and Samra Bano⁷

<https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2025.14.2.19>

Abstract

There is substantial literature on the cyberbullying activities of young adults associated with problematic social media use; however, studies specifically examining the relationship between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration—particularly in Pakistan—remain limited. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration among young Pakistani adults. A quantitative correlational research design and purposive sampling technique were employed to collect data from 244 Pakistani young adults between the ages of 18 and 35 (179 men and 65 women), with a mean age of 23.69 years (SD = 3.56). The study utilized two instruments: the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale to assess Facebook addiction and the Cyberbullying Perpetration and Victimization Questionnaire (used only to measure cyberbullying perpetration). The results revealed a positive and significant association between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration among young adults. The study highlights implications for mental health awareness, the promotion of help-seeking behaviors, and improved socialization.

Keywords: Facebook Addiction, Cyberbullying Perpetration, Young Adults.

Introduction

Facebook is a widely used social media platform that offers significant benefits for communication, education, and business (Feiler, 2008; Sernani, 2025). However, its problematic use—commonly referred to as Facebook addiction—can lead to serious negative consequences (Ryan et al., 2014). Excessive use may impair daily functioning, affecting academic, occupational, social, and personal domains (Andreassen et al., 2012; Griffiths, 2012). Studies have linked problematic Facebook use to an increased likelihood of cyberbullying perpetration (Dredge et al., 2014; Lee & Shin, 2017). Cyberbullying involves

¹MS Scholar, Department of Psychology, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: Reebasharifchaudhry@gmail.com

²PhD Scholar, Department of Psychology, Institute of Social Sciences, Bursa Uludağ University, Bursa, Turkey.

Email: pulwashakhansrk@gmail.com, ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2492-1979>

³MS Scholar, Riphah Institute of Clinical & Professional Psychology, Riphah International University Islamabad, Lahore Campus.. Email: anuamzeeshan@gmail.com, ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1721-6418>

⁴Alumni, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, GIFT University, Gujranwala, Pakistan.

Email: hijaabfatima632@gmail.com, ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-6255-2225>

⁵Placement Supervisor at Department of Psychology, Forman Christian College University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: nshaheen576@gmail.com

⁶MS Scholar, Department of Psychology, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: tanzeelanaveed123@gmail.com

⁷Alumni, Riphah Institute of Clinical & Professional Psychology, Riphah International University Islamabad, Lahore Campus, Pakistan. Email: samraadeel817@gmail.com



the use of electronic communication to intimidate, harass, or threaten others (Camerini et al., 2020; Polanin et al., 2022; Rice et al., 2015).

Research in southern Thailand found that Facebook-related bullying among secondary school students often involved exclusion, flaming, and cyberstalking. Key risk factors included low academic performance, high Facebook usage, sharing personal information, and strong peer attachment. Most victims were female and under the age of 16. The study suggested that prevention strategies should focus on digital supervision and academic support rather than increasing peer engagement (Noipom et al., 2023). In Myanmar, gendered online harassment reflects cultural norms and disproportionately affects young women. Interviews grounded in feminist theory revealed consequences such as emotional distress and withdrawal from digital spaces, emphasizing the need for gender-sensitive policy solutions (Zaw, 2023). A study on Vietnamese Generation Y examined the psychological impact of cyberbullying and digital vigilantism. Through thematic analysis of Facebook discourse and two high-profile cases, researchers identified emotional harm and behavioral changes, highlighting the need for stronger legal protections (Wondwilatnurak, 2024).

Problematic use of social media platforms has been significantly associated with cyberbullying perpetration among young adults in Pakistan aged 18 to 25 ($M = 22.18$, $SD = 1.91$). The increased use of social media within this age group underscores growing concerns about digital aggression among emerging adults (Zahra et al., 2025). However, in Pakistan, the link between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration among young adults aged 18 to 35 remains underexplored, despite frequent anecdotal observation. A general lack of awareness about responsible social media use, coupled with the use of fake accounts to conceal identities, may contribute to this issue. Therefore, this study aims to address the gap by examining the relationship between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration among young adults.

Objective

1. To investigate the relationship between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration among young Pakistani adults.

Hypothesis

1. There will be a positive and significant relationship between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration among young Pakistani adults.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional correlational research design to examine cyberbullying perpetration among 244 Pakistani adults aged 18 to 35 using purposive sampling technique. The inclusion criteria were that participants must be men or women and enrolled in either a HEC-recognized public or private university in Pakistan. The study comprised two instruments: The Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS), a six-item Likert scale (1–5) developed by Andreassen et al. (2016), which demonstrated an internal consistency of 0.8, and the cyberbullying perpetration subscale of the Cyberbullying Perpetration and Victimization Questionnaire, comprising 20 items on a 5-point Likert scale, which demonstrated an internal consistency of 0.93 (Lee et al., 2017).

The study followed the APA 7 ethical code of conduct. The procedure included obtaining permission from the authors for using the questionnaires, briefing the participants, and providing a consent form. The consent form clarified that participants were willingly taking part in the study and could withdraw at any point. No physical or emotional harm was caused to the participants. After signing the consent form, participants filled out the study demographic questionnaire, the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (to measure Facebook addiction), and

the cyberbullying perpetration subscale (to measure cyberbullying perpetration). Upon receiving the data, it was entered into SPSS version 27 for analysis.

Results

Table 1: Characteristics of Participants (N=244)

Characteristics	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age			23.69	3.56
Gender				
Men	179	73		
Women	65	24		
Education				
Bachelor	100	41		
Master	102	42		
Ph.D	42	17		

Note: *f*=Frequency, %= Percentage, *M*= Mean, *SD*= Standard Deviation.

The table above shows that the mean age of participants is 23.69, with a standard deviation of 3.56. In terms of gender, 179 participants (73%) are men, while 65 (24%) are women. Regarding education, 100 participants (41%) have a bachelor's degree, 102 (42%) have a master's degree, and a minority—42 participants (17%)—are pursuing a Ph.D.

Table 2: Relationship of Facebook Addiction and Cyberbullying Perpetration (N=244)

Variables	1	2
1.Facebook Addiction	-	.38**
2.CBP		-

Note: ** $p < .01$, CBP= Cyberbullying Perpetration

The table above indicates a positive and significant relationship between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration.

Discussion

Although cyberbullying perpetration has been widely observed among problematic Facebook users—those addicted to Facebook—there has been little research specifically examining the relationship between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration among young adults, particularly university students. Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore the relationship between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration among young adults in academic settings.

The first hypothesis of the study is supported, as the correlational analysis shows a positive and significant relationship between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration among young adults in Pakistan. This finding aligns with previous research, which indicates that problematic social media use among young Pakistani adults is linked to aggressive behavior (Shahid et al., 2024). Another study supports this result, showing a positive association between social media addiction and cyberbullying perpetration among young adults (Zahra et al., 2025). A recent study on PUBG game addiction and aggression also demonstrates that problematic violent gaming is associated with aggressive behavior among young Pakistani adults, and such addictions can negatively affect well-being (Bashir et al., 2024; Shahid et al., 2025). Another recent study found that problematic online gaming is positively and significantly associated

with cyberbullying perpetration among young adults in Pakistan, specifically students (Shahid et al., 2025).

The significant and positive relationship between Facebook addiction and cyberbullying perpetration among Pakistani young adults may be due to a lack of awareness regarding responsible social media use. Limited digital literacy, the use of fake profiles to maintain anonymity, and personal insecurities are potential contributing factors. Additionally, boredom—often stemming from high unemployment or disengagement with academic activities—may lead university students to engage in such harmful online behavior.

Conclusion

The cross-sectional correlational study concluded that Facebook addiction is significantly and positively related to cyberbullying perpetration among Pakistani young adults. Furthermore, Facebook addiction positively and significantly predicts cyberbullying perpetration in this population. Thus, the objective of the study is fulfilled, and implications can be drawn in light of the findings.

Implications

One key implication of this study is the need for greater awareness among mental health professionals. In Pakistan, knowledge about the psychological effects of Facebook addiction and cyberbullying remains limited. Educational institutions should host workshops and awareness campaigns to reduce excessive Facebook use and enhance academic performance. Parents and youth must be made aware of the risks, and those struggling with overuse should be encouraged to seek psychological support. Government intervention is also crucial. Cyberbullying perpetrators must be held accountable, and victims' rights protected. The Federal Investigation Agency's Cybercrime Wing should educate students on relevant laws and their consequences. Finally, promoting physical activities and healthy social interactions is essential for supporting the well-being of young adults.

References

- Andreassen, C. S., Pallesen, S., & Griffiths, M. D. (2017). The relationship between addictive use of social media, narcissism, and self-esteem: Findings from a large national survey. *Addictive Behaviors*, 64, 287–293.
- Andreassen, C. S., Torsheim, T., Brunborg, G. S., & Pallesen, S. (2012). Development of a Facebook Addiction Scale. *Psychological Reports*, 110(2), 501–517.
- Bashir, S., Shahid, M. S., Bibi, M., & Mukhtar, S. (2024). Ludo star game addiction, social connectedness and psychological well-being in university students of Lahore, Pakistan: Ludo star game addiction, social connectedness and psychological well-being in university students. *Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Research*, 4(3), 1–8.
- Camerini, A.-L., Marciano, L., Carrara, A., & Schulz, P. J. (2020). Cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among children and adolescents: A systematic review of longitudinal studies. *Telematics and Informatics*, 49, 101362.
- Dredge, R., Gleeson, J., & De la Piedad Garcia, X. (2014). Presentation on Facebook and risk of cyberbullying victimisation. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 40, 16–22.
- Feiler, J. (2008). *How to do everything: Facebook applications*. McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Lee, C., & Shin, N. (2017). Prevalence of cyberbullying and predictors of cyberbullying perpetration among Korean adolescents. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 68, 352–358.
- Lee, J., Abell, N., & Holmes, J. L. (2017). Validation of measures of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization in emerging adulthood. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 27(4), 456–467.

- Noipom, R., Lim, A., & Sittichai, R. (2023). Determinants of cyberbullying perpetration on Facebook among secondary school students in Southern Thailand. *Social Psychology of Education*, 26(3), 793–809.
- Polanin, J. R., Espelage, D. L., Grotz, J. K., Ingram, K., Michaelson, L., Spinney, E., Valido, A., Sheikh, A. E., Torgal, C., & Robinson, L. (2022). A systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions to decrease cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. *Prevention Science*, 23(3), 439–454.
- Rice, E., Petering, R., Rhoades, H., Winetrobe, H., Goldbach, J., Plant, A., Montoya, J., & Kordic, T. (2015). Cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among middle-school students. *American Journal of Public Health*, 105(3), e66–e72.
- Ryan, T., Chester, A., Reece, J., & Xenos, S. (2014). The uses and abuses of Facebook: A review of Facebook addiction. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 3(3), 133–148.
- Sernani, P. (2025). Social media and electoral dynamics: A dataset of X and Facebook activity during the 2024 European elections. *Data in Brief*, 59, 111407.
- Shahid, M. S., & Yaseen, F. (2025). PUBG game addiction, emotional regulation and aggression among young adults. *Journal of Asian Development Studies*, 14(1), 649–655.
- Shahid, M. S., Batool, F., Khan, M., Ashraf, S. J., Jabeen, S., Shami, A. Z. A., & Khan, M. A. (2025). Online gaming addiction, narcissism, and cyberbullying perpetration among young pakistani adults: a comparative study. *Insights-Journal of Life and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 200–206.
- Shahid, M. S., Yousaf, R., & Munir, H. (2024). Social media addiction, depression and aggression in young adults. *Journal of Professional & Applied Psychology*, 5(2), 276–285.
- Wondwilatnurak, N. (2024). An examination on the factors influencing cyberbullying among Generation Y on Facebook commenters in Vietnam.
- Zahra, M., Anwar, P., Arif, M. B., Qureshi, M. S., Zahid, H. S., & Rahman, R. (2025). Problematic social media use and cyberbullying perpetration among young adults in Pakistan: Narcissistic traits as a mediator, social support and empathy as moderators. *Journal of Asian Development Studies*, 14(1), 1090–1099.
- Zaw, K. Y. (2023). *Perceptions of online harassment: Ethnographical research of Myanmar university students*.