

Gender and Cyberbullying: Evaluating the Experience of Facebook Users Among Female Public Secondary School Students in Awka South, Anambra State.

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Abstract

The study investigated the topic: "Gender and cyberbullying: Evaluating the experience of Facebook users among female public secondary school students in Awka South, Anambra State". The research design was survey, and a sample size of 300 respondents was chosen based on the sample size determining formula, as worked out by Comrey and Lee. Structured questionnaire was the instrument for data collection, while analysis of data was descriptively completed. The researchers found out that significant proportion of female public secondary school students in Awka South are largely bullied on the Facebook. They also discovered that majority of these students are seriously bothered when bullied online. The study also revealed that majority of the female students were regularly traumatized as a result of the online bullying, and that this seriously affected not only their social life, but academic performance in school. Finally, the study showed the different forms of cyberbullying which female public secondary school students face online to include: trolling, harassment, cyber-stalking, and some others which are similar to the ones already mentioned. Based on the foregoing, the researchers recommend among others, that the school authorities and government should as much as possible, work hard to address the issue of cyberbullying among students. This the researchers suggest, could be done by organising seminars, talks and other educative programmes that will help inform these students on how to avoid being bullied online.

Keywords: *Awka South, Cyberbullying, Facebook, Female Public Secondary Schools.*

Introduction

In April 12, 2022, the video of a pregnant young girl identified as Martha went viral on social media. The reason for this viral video was that Martha, a young pregnant lady, was caught in a camera, having an illicit affair with a supposed “prophet”. However, the challenges of the young lady became worse when the viral scandalous videos of her affair with the randy prophet were re-shared by numerous social media links. This consequently attracted high level cyber-bullying against Marta. Many of the cyberbullies sent very oppressive, abusive and offensive texts, until Martha could not withstand the horrendous attacks, the aftermath of these repeated online bullying was that this poor girl eventually committed suicide, and of course, that also led to the death of her unborn baby. However, the man who was also caught in this act with Martha was not bullied like the poor girl. Sadly, this is just one out of the several cases of cyberbullying witnessed globally, especially with the female gender being more at the receiving end. Today, the challenges of cyberbullying in most societies is not only worrisome, but has become a huge cog in the developmental wheel of young people, especially the female child (Nobert, 2021, p.12).

In fact, the extent that the female folk is cyber-bullied in the recent time remains a subject for empirical investigation. This study therefore evaluates the experiences of female secondary school students in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State towards cyber bullying.

Statement of Problem

Cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon (Rao, 2022). The statement above is true, especially when viewed against the fact that social media, which gave rise to this form of bullying is also relatively new. In the recent time, anecdotal evidence has clearly demonstrated that cyberbullying thrives largely on the digital nature of social media technology. This phenomenon which allows permanent record of hurtful, harmful and defamatory information has got the ability to affect young people. It is usually prevalent among young females of secondary school age (Kernaghan & Elwood, 2013). Furthermore, the far-reaching effect of this social predicament is such that these bullied female students are exposed to a number of cruel experiences that not only predispose them to online hostility, but is grossly antithetical to the proper formation, growth and development of the girl child. Again, research has shown that most times, some of these female students who are bullied on Facebook fail to report their experiences to others (Beebe, 2010, p.123). This again constitutes another huge concern and prompts such questions like: to what extent are female secondary school students bullied on Facebook? What challenges do these female students pass through in the hands of bullies? How does online bullying experiences affect the educational development of the girl child? Are there different forms of bullying online? These are the main concerns that this study examined.

Research Questions

Based on the study objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What proportion of female public secondary school students in Awka South have experienced cyberbullying on Facebook?
2. What are the challenges that female public secondary school students in Awka South face as a result of cyberbullying?

3. What are the different forms of cyberbullying that female public secondary school students in Awka South face?

Review of Literature

Cyberbullying: An Overview

Cyberbullying or cyber harassment is a form of bullying that is done by electronic means (Smith, 2018, p.123). This type of bullying is also known as “online bullying” In recent time, specifically in the present era with increased technological revolution, cyberbullying has become very common among teenagers (ReachOut, 2024, p.1). Cyberbullying can be conceptually viewed as a situation where someone; most times, teenagers, bully or harass others on the internet and other digital spaces (). This bullying experience has on several occasions, been reported on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok and YouTube (Pyżalski, 2012, p.120). Bullying on the cyber space can take different forms that include: posting rumors, threats, sexual remarks, pejorative labels, otherwise referred to as hate speech. (Peter & Mahavi, 2018). This form of bullying or harassment can sometimes be identified by repeated behavior and intent to harm (Tokunaga, 2010, p.12). Victims of cyberbullying have been reported to experience lower self-esteem, increased suicidal tendency and a variety of negative emotional responses, including: being scared, frustrated, angry and depressed. (Hinduja & Patchin, 2019, p.123). Today, as a result of high-profile cases in cyber bullying, there appears to be high level of awareness, especially in the United States in the recent years concerning cyber bullying (Hu, 2010). Currently, several US states and other some other developed countries have passed laws to combat cyberbullying (Gregory & Trudy, 2014). This is given the fact that its effect appears alarmingly destructive (). It is important to note that these laws are designed to specifically address the challenges that has arisen as a result of this new, yet harmful phenomenon (Gregory & Trudy, 2014).

Cyberbullying: A Social Menace on Facebook.

Before the arrival of cyber technology, bullying had remained an offline thing (Jang, Song & Kim, 2014). Young school students were in most cases bullied by much stronger students and this experience most times, leave the bullied students in much fear and distress. In the present era driven by technology, bullying has migrated online (Economist, 2018). The implication of the above statement is that just like bullying in schools, churches and gatherings of different categories, bullying has found its way online. Today, most young people who are active online face cyberbullying. Interestingly, prominent among the social media platforms that has been implicated for it penchant for cyberbullying is the Facebook (Sevcik & Niklova, 2018). Cyberbullying generally occurs on websites and the social media, using the internet, cell phones, laptops, computers, and so on. This phenomenon is prevalent globally, and the ways of bullying vary according to the nature of technology (Li, 2006). According to Ging and O’ Higgings (2016) “the social media is implicated as an attractive platform for cyberbullying” Similarly, Gahagan, Vaterlaus and Frost (2016) “identified the Facebook as a platform where friends gather and has the potential of encouraging cyberbullying” Research has shown that people involved in bullying others online develop aggression among the victims, as these victims also react aggressively to frustrating conditions (Vollink, Bolman, Dehue, & Jacobs, 2013). Bharati, Chalise, Bhandari, Ambu, Regmi, Adhikari & Gautam (2021) reported that “37.4% participants among 213 nursing students were bullied on Facebook and that these victims faced serious academic (61.5%) psychological (57.7%) and social problem. In the same manner, Akirim and Sulasmi (2022)

discovered that “most students repeatedly send unnecessary messages on the social media (Facebook inclusive) because of rival thought, frustration and preference to trouble others” In recent times, the internet and social media platforms like the Facebook have given bullies a new forum in which to taunt their victims. And while the landscape is different, **the effects can be similar and often worse** than those resulting from face-to-face interaction (Driscoll, 2022). Just like the traditional face-to-face bullying, Facebook bullying can take many different forms (Driscoll, 2022). Commenting on the few examples of Facebook bullying Driscoll (2022) notes:

Facebook cyber bullying can take the different forms that include: private derogatory messages, comments or threats, public comments within profiles, pages or posts, sharing sensitive sharing sensitive or unflattering images or videos of the victim, posting explicit or threatening images or videos to the victim’s profile or page, pages or groups set up for the purpose of tormenting a victim or victims, exclusion from private pages or groups causing the victim to feel left out.

Just like the face-to face traditional bullying, the Facebook with its capability to facilitate social gathering has provided a platform where people can as well be bullied extensively. This no doubt, has constituted new social predicament (Hallmark, 2023). It might be important to note that Facebook bullying does not have to involve words, in most cases, images, memes and videos are used to attack the victims (National Bullying Prevention Center, 2023, p.1).

Cyberbullying and the Female folk: What Connection?

Research has shown that women and men can be victims of cyber violence (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021). However, evidence shows that women and girls are highly and more likely exposed to it (Sugira, 2021). Not only that the female folk are more likely to be targeted by the cyber bullies, they can suffer from the serious consequences, resulting in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm and suffering arising therein. Research has demonstrated in the recent time that cyberbullying is a part of the continuum of violence against women and girls and represents yet another form of abuse and silencing embedded within the existing gendered power structures (EIGE, 2021). The above argument is anchored on the premise that within the new technological space, violent acts are taking place, which also represent the same violence that women and girls experience in the physical world. There are many forms of cyber violence that target women and girls exclusively. These include forms of non-consensual intimate image abuse like cyber-flashing and sextortion, as well as virtual rape. It might be imperative to note that across the OECD countries with available data, about 12% of girls aged 15 report having been cyberbullied, compared with 8% of boys (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019). Furthermore, the Cyberbullying Research Center found that adolescent girls (50.9%) are more likely than boys (37.8%) to have experienced cyberbullying in their lifetime (Cyber Bullying Research Center, 2021). In Nigeria, Tsuria and Folorunsho (2023) discovered that “53% of females were victims of cyberbullying on a number of social media platforms as against 40.8% males. The foregoing provides a clear evidence of the prevalence of cyberbullying among the female folks than their male counterparts” Similarly in a study conducted by Faucher, Jackson and Cassidy (2014) “it was established that females are usually seen at the receiving end as victims of cyberbullying, while their male counterparts are labelled as perpetrators of online bullying” Some scholars however have argued that traditional and modern day bullying occurs as a result of imbalance of power between the bully and the bullied (Whittaker & Kowalski, 2015). In other

words, when the bully attacks and the victim is upset and does not know how to defend him or herself, then this creates the imbalance within the dyad and, by definition, a bullying attack. This usually leaves the female victims at the mercy of their attackers, while male victims, in some cases, can stand up to defend themselves (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018). In their seminal study, Kim, Kimber Boyle and Georgiades (2019) provided gendered perspective of cyberbullying between females and their male counterparts thus:

Female adolescents reported significant prevalence of cyberbullying victimization (9.4%) as compared with their male counterparts (7.8%). Similarly, exposure to cyberbullying victimization was associated with an increased odds for psychological distress, suicide ideation, and delinquency among both female and male adolescents (adjusted odds ratios ranged from 1.76 to 4.63); however, the effects were more pronounced in females than their male counterparts. Likewise, among females, but not males, the odds of reporting psychological distress, suicide ideation, and delinquency increased (in a step-wise fashion) with more frequent exposure to cyberbullying victimization. Cyberbullying victimization was associated with an increased odds of adolescent substance use only among females than their male counterparts.

The statistics above clearly provide the picture of the challenges faced by the female folk as being more prone to cyberbullying more than their male counterparts – a situation that urgently demands for legislating laws that will not only protect females against the challenge of cyberbullying, but sustain such protection over time.

2.1.4 Cyberbullying among young people: What effects?

Anecdotal evidence has demonstrated one in five teens and preteens have experienced cyberbullying in some form (Oyewusi & Orolade, 2014, add one more). Cyberbullying can take many forms, including sending threatening or offensive messages, posting embarrassing photos or videos, spreading rumors or lies, and engaging in online harassment such as trolling or flaming (Olumide, Adams & Amodu, 2015). The psychological and emotional consequences of online harassment have been reported among adolescents who are within the ages of 14 and above (Okoye, Nwoga & Onah, 2015). Studies have found that victims of cyberbullying can experience depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Odora & Matoti, 2015). Victims of cyberbullying ages 15 and above have been reported to be more likely to experience physical health problems, such as headaches and stomachaches (Akpan & Notar, 2016, p.12). Cyberbullying can also lead to serious mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal thoughts, and self-harm (Walrave & Heirman, 2011, p.123). Interestingly, research has shown that parents and educators can help by talking to children and teens about the dangers of cyberbullying and also teaching them how to respond to it (Ada, Okoli, Obeten & Akeke, 2016). It is also important that schools come up with clear policies to address cyberbullying and as much as possible, enforce them when appropriate (Ayas & Horzum, 2010). Studies have shown that online harassment is a serious form of cyberbullying that can have serious psychological and emotional consequences. Psychologists therefore argue that it is important to take steps to reduce and prevent this type of digital aggression as its effects can be grossly devastating on teenagers. Research has also shown that victims of cyberbullying are usually under emotional stress and this has always led to lack of concentration on studies; in other words, this somewhat affects the academic progress of victims (Balogun & Bello, 2017, p.105). More so, since the victims of cyberbullying are often psychologically

attacked, the consequential effect of depression that arises from this situation prevents students from academic excellence (Balogun & Bello, 2017).”

Exploring forms of Cyberbullying: Quick Overview

There is ample research evidence of the different types of cyberbullying. The following carefully explores these forms:

Exclusion as a form of Cyberbullying

Exclusion a form of cyberbullying. It is particularly the act of leaving someone out deliberately. Exclusion exists with in-person bullying situations, but it is also used online to target and bully a victim. For example, your child might be excluded/uninvited to groups or parties while they see other friends being included, or left out of message threads or conversations that involve mutual friends. According to a recent study by Gámez-Guadix, Orue & Smith, (2020), exclusion is a growing form of cyberbullying among adolescents. Their study found that exclusion, defined as “avoiding or ignoring someone in an online messaging platform,” was the most frequently reported type of cyberbullying in their sample of over 1,400 Spanish adolescents. Furthermore, those who are reported experiencing this form of cyberbullying were more likely to be faced with higher levels of psychological distress, greater social anxiety, and lower self-esteem (Gámez-Guadix, Orue & Smith, 2020),

Harassment

Harassment is another form of cyberbullying. It normally refers to a sustained and constant pattern of hurtful or threatening online messages sent with the intention of doing harm to someone. Harassment on the internet has become a growing problem in Nigeria (Akinjobi, Oluduro & Adebayo, 2019). Victims of online harassment usually suffer from emotional and psychological trauma such as depression, anxiety and even suicidal thoughts (Akinjobi, Oluduro & Adebayo, 2019). This is why the NCC has established the Cybercrime Reporting Portal, which allows victims to report online harassment and other Cybercrimes (NCC, 2018).

Outing/Doxing

Outing, also known as doxing, refers to the act of openly revealing sensitive or personal information about someone without their consent for purposes of embarrassing or humiliating them. This can range from the spreading of personal photos or documents of public figures to sharing an individual’s saved personal messages in an online private group. The key is the lack of consent from the victim.

Trickery

Trickery is similar to outing, with an added element of deception. In these situations, the bully will befriend their target and lull them into a false sense of security. Once the bully has gained their target’s trust, they abuse that trust and share the victim’s secrets and private information to a third party or multiple third parties.

Cyber stalking

This is a particularly serious form of cyberbullying that can extend to threats of physical harm to the child being targeted. It can include monitoring, false accusations, threats, and is often

accompanied by offline stalking. It is a criminal offense and can result in a restraining order, probation, and even jail time for the perpetrator.

Frapping

Frapping is when a bully uses your child's social networking accounts to post inappropriate content with their name. It can be harmless when friends write funny posts on each other's profiles, but has potential to be incredibly harmful. For example, a bully posting racial/homophobic slurs through someone else's profile to ruin their reputation.

Masquerading

Masquerading happens when a bully creates a made-up profile or identity online with the sole purpose of cyberbullying someone. This could involve creating a fake email account, fake social media profile, and selecting a new identity and photos to fool the victim. In these cases, the bully tends to be someone the victim knows quite well.

Dissing

Dissing refers to the act of a bully spreading cruel information about their target through public posts or private messages to either ruin their reputation or relationships with other people. In these situations, the bully tends to have a personal relationship with the victim, either as an acquaintance or as a friend.

Trolling

Trolling is when a bully will seek out to intentionally upset others by posting inflammatory comments online. Trolling may not always be a form of cyberbullying, but it can be used as a tool to cyberbully when done with malicious and harmful intent. These bullies tend to be more detached from their victims, and do not have a personal relationship. Internet trolling is a common form of bullying that takes place in an online community, such as online gaming or social media, in order to elicit a reaction or disruption or simply just for someone's own personal amusement (Diaz, 2016).

Flaming

This type of online bullying constitutes of posting about or directly sending insults and profanity to their target. Flaming is similar to trolling, but will usually be a more direct attack on a victim to incite them into online fights.

Nigeria Cybercrime Act of 2015 and the dilemma of Online Anonymity

The Cybercrime Act 2015 defines cybercrime as "any illegal activity involving the use of computers, communication networks and digital devices in the Federal Republic of Nigeria." It provides for the prosecution and punishment of offenders who commit cybercrimes, including computer-related fraud, cyber-stalking, cyber- terrorism, identity theft, and unlawful access to computer systems. The Act also prohibits the transmission of false messages, false data and other malicious activities.

The Act establishes the National Agency for the Prohibition of Computer Related Offences (NAPCRA) to enforce the provisions of the Act. The Agency is tasked with investigating and prosecuting cybercrime cases, as well as providing technical assistance to individuals and

organizations affected by cybercrime. The Cybercrime Act 2015 also provides for the establishment of the Nigerian Cyber security and Infrastructure Agency (NCIA). The Agency is also responsible for the security of Nigeria's cyberspace, developing and implementing policies and strategies to protect the country's cyber infrastructure and monitoring any activities that threaten the security of the nation's cyberspace.

The Act also provides for the establishment of the Nigerian Cybercrime Court which has the authority to hear and determine cases relating to cybercrime. The Cybercrime Court is empowered to impose penalties on offenders, including fines, imprisonment, or both. It is an important step forward in the fight against cybercrime in Nigeria. It provides the legal framework to prosecute and punish offenders and establish the necessary institutions to ensure the security of the nation's cyberspace.

The law criminalizes a variety of offences – from ATM card skimming to identity theft. It imposes, for instance, seven years imprisonment for offenders of all kinds and additional seven years for online crimes that result in physical harm, and life imprisonment for those that lead to death. But like almost every law in the country, there is the problem of enforcement. The “yahoo boys” still daily throng cybercafé premises to “transact” their business with the owners looking away. Yet the law criminalizes internet café owners who allow their premises to be used to commit online crimes. (Cybercrime, 2015). Cybercrime offenses have become very popular, with anonymity being one of the main challenges in dealing with offenders (Cybercrime, 2015). Anonymity has been defined as “the state of not being identified or distinguished from other individuals” (Papacharissi, 2004). Research has shown that in the context of cybercrime, anonymity enable offenders to commit crimes without fear of detection or prosecution, this explains the reason crime has thrived in the cyberspace. The ability to remain anonymous has become easy due to the use of proxy servers and other technologies such as Tor and VPN (Jones, 2018; Bray & Jesse, 2016). These technologies allow offenders to hide their true identity by routing their traffic through an anonymous server, thus making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to trace the origin of the traffic – this challenge has continued to produce a cog in the wheel of such efforts geared toward addressing the problem of cyberbullying. In order to reduce the anonymity of cybercrime offenders, a number of solutions have been proposed. One of these solutions is to increase the use of technologies such as block-chain, which is a technology that can be used to track the origin of transactions and identify the individuals behind them (Jones, 2018). In addition, law enforcement agencies are also advised to use data mining techniques to identify the IP addresses of offenders and track down their true identity (Jones, 2018). In the same manner, law enforcement can also work with online service providers to identify the true identity of offenders by tracing the origin of their traffic (Jones, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory (SLT), first outlined by psychologist Albert Bandura, is a theory that provides a framework for understanding how people learn from one another. SLT suggests that behaviours are learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement, SLT provides a useful framework for understanding how cyberbullying behaviours develop and can be maintained over time. According to the theory, behaviour is learned through observations of other people's behaviour (modelling), as well as reinforcement (positive or negative) of the behaviour. In the case

of cyber bullying therefore, these processes can occur both offline (e.g., observing a friend cyberbully someone) and online (e.g., seeing someone get a reaction to a cyberbullying post). In terms of modelling, individuals may observe the behaviour of someone they know and imitate it. This can occur in a variety of contexts, including when an individual observes a peer cyberbullying someone in real life or online. In terms of reinforcement, positive reinforcement (e.g., receiving likes on a cyberbullying post) can reinforce the behaviour, while negative reinforcement (e.g., receiving criticism for a cyberbullying post) can reduce the likelihood of it occurring again.

In summary, when the Social learning theory is viewed in line with the subject of this study, it becomes reasonable to argue that most times, it is the aggressive behaviour of students learnt over the years that is carried into the cyber and this consequently translates into cyberbullying. In other words, cyberbullying online might result from the fact bullies bring to the cyber space such violent actions they have watched, seen online and internalized over the years. Put differently, some of these teenagers carry those aggressive behaviours they have internalized through social learning on their fellow students, via online cyberbullying.

Methods

The study adopted the descriptive survey as the research design where a sample of 300 respondents were randomly selected from a population of 12, 546 female secondary school students of Awka South, using the Comrey and Lee sample size determining formula. The population of the study comprise all the female secondary school in Awka South Local Government Area. 300 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents with a return rate of the same 300, which were successfully retrieved and analysed.

The multistage sampling technique was used to select the respondents across the secondary schools in Awka South. At the first stage, the researchers chose six secondary schools out of the nineteen public schools in Awka South. The following schools were selected: Capital City Secondary school, Awka, Community Secondary school, Umuokpu, Girls' Secondary School, Awka, Ezi-Awka Secondary school, Awka, Community Secondary school, Amawbia and St. John of God Secondary school, Awka.

At the second stage, the researchers chose two classes from each of the six secondary schools selected above using the same simple random procedure described earlier. Thus, a total of twelve classes emerged as follows: for Capital City Secondary school, Awka - SSS 1 and SSS 2 emerged. Community Secondary school, Umuokpu had SSS 1 and SSS 3, Girls' Secondary school, Awka had JSS 1 and SSS2, Ezi-Awka Secondary school Awka had SSS2 and SSS 1, Community Secondary school, Amawbia and SSS1 and JSS 2 and St John of God Secondary school, Awka had SSS 2 and SSS3.

At the third stage the researchers selected twenty-five students from each of the 12 classes. They employed the purposive sampling procedure at this stage to enable them select the first twenty-five female students they came across at each of the 12 classes. This on the whole resulted to 300 respondents. The collected data were collated, presented and analysed using statistical tables and simple percentages.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1 Distribution of Responses Showing Demographic Data of Respondents

Total	100% (N=300)	100% (N=300)
Variables	Frequency	Percentage
CCSSA	50	16.67%
CSSU	50	16.67%
GSSA	50	16.67 %
EASSA	50	16.67 %
CSSA	50	16.67%
SJGSSA	50	16.67%
TOTAL	300	100% %
Respondents Age		
13 – 14	69	20.33%
15 – 16	89	29.67%
17 – 18	150	5.0 %
TOTAL	300	100%
Respondents Class		
JSS 1	50	15.0%
JSS 2	65	21.6%
SS1	60	20.1%
SS 2	55	18.3%
SS 3	70	23.7%
TOTAL	300	100%

The table above displays the responses showing the demographic data of respondents. From the answers gathered, it was clear that CCSSA had 16.67% of the respondents, CSSU had 16.67%, GSSA had 16.67% and EASSA had 16.67%, CSSA had 16.67%, and SJGSSA had 16.7%. From the foregoing, it is evident that all the schools had equal even distribution of the respondent's schools. For the respondent's age, the table showed that 20.33% of the respondents fell within the ages of 13-14 years, 29.67% of them were within the age brackets of 15 -16 years, while only 5.1% of them fell within the ages of 17-18 years. It is therefore obvious that students within the ages of 15-16 years had the highest number of distribution. Furthermore, for the respondent's class, the data gathered showed that 15.0% of the respondents were from JSS 1 class, 21.6% of them were from JSS 2 class, 20.1% were from SS1 classes, 18.3% were from SS2 classes and 23.7% were from SS3 classes. The data here demonstrates that greater percentage of the respondents came from SS3 classes.

Analysis of Proportion of Female Secondary School Students That are Bullied on Facebook
Table 2

	Do you have a smart phone?	Do you make use of Facebook?
Yes	71.3% 214	86.3% 259
No	28.6% 86	13.7% 41
Total	100% (N=300)	100% (N=300)

Table 2 above indicates that 71.4% of the respondents said that they have a smart phone, only 28.6% noted that they don't. Similarly, 86.3% of the students said that they make use of Facebook, while about 13.7% said that they don't. The implication of the foregoing is that significant number of the students have smart phones and also make use of Facebook.

Table 3: How often do you surf Facebook?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Often	225	75%
Sometimes	50	16.67%
Rarely	25	8.33%
Total	300	100%

Table 3 shows that 75% of the respondents surf the Facebook often, only 16.67% answered that they do that sometimes and only 8.33% of them indicated that they surf the Facebook rarely. From the foregoing therefore, it is clear that the respondents who surf the Facebook ranked higher. From the analysis of tables 2 and 3 above, it is evident that significant proportion of the female public secondary school students in Awka South have experienced cyberbullying on Facebook.

Challenges that Female Public Secondary School Students in Awka South As a Result of Cyberbullying.

How do you see online bullying?

Table 4

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Traumatizing	175	58.3%
Full of Violence	108	36.1%
Neutral	17	5.6%
Total	300	100%

This table shows how the respondents see Facebook bullying. From their responses, it can be seen that 58% see it as very traumatizing, 36% see it as full of violence, while 5.67% of the students were neutral. What this data suggests is that a considerable of the respondents perceive online cyberbullying as traumatizing.

Table 5

	Do you think that cyberbullying affects your mental health and wellbeing?	Do you think it affects your relationship with people?	Do you think it affects your academic performance?
Yes	93% 279	87.7% 263	87.7% 263
No	7% 21	12.3% 37	12.3% 37
Total	100 (300)	100 (300)	100 (300)

Table 5 shows that 93% of the respondents said that they think that cyberbullying affects their mental health, 87.7% said that they think it affects their relationship with people and another 87.7% of the respondents also indicated that they think cyberbullying. From the foregoing therefore, it is apparent that female public students in Awka South are traumatized as a result of cyber bullying. It also affects their mental health and well-being as well as their academic performance in school.

Analyzing the Different Forms of Cyberbullying that Female Public Secondary School Students in Awka South Face

Indicate the form of Cyberbullying that you face online

Table 6

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Trolling	80	26.67%
Harassment	52	17.33%
Cyber-stalking	48	16%
Others	120	40%
Total	300	100%

Table 6 shows the respondents' responses on the type of bullying encountered. 26. 67% ticked trolls, 40% ticked harassment, 16% ticked cyber-stalking, while only 17% of them ticked others. From the foregoing, it can vividly be said that the respondents encountered other forms of cyberbullying on Facebook, which are distinct from trolling, harassment and cyber-stalking.

How often do you Experience the different forms of cyberbullying

Table 7

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Trolling	88	29.3%
Harassment	120	40.0%
Cyber stalking	49	16.3%
Others	43	14.3%
Total	300	100%

Table 7 shows that 29.3% of the respondents said that they experience trolling often on the Facebook. 40.0% noted that they experience it often. 16.3% said that they experience it, only 14.3% others said that they also experience cyberbullying on the Facebook. The implication of the data in table 7 is that significant number of the students indicated that they experienced harassment as the major form of bullying online. It consequent upon this that the researchers aver that the respondents experience harassment, trolling and cyber stalking most on Facebook.

Discussion

The findings of this study are discussed in line with the research questions, in relation to the reviewed literature and in consideration of the bearings of the postulations of the theoretical framework.

The result from the analysis of tables 2 and 3 shows that significant proportion of the female public secondary school students in Awka South have experienced cyberbullying on Facebook. Interestingly, this finding re-echoes the discovery of a number of scholars that in the recent time, bullying appears to have somewhat migrated to online platforms like the Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc. (UNICEF, 2024; Straus, 2023; Johanis, Barkar & Ismaila, 2020). This position is also in congruity with Howarth (2024) who argues that “Few generations ago, bullying was an exclusively one to one person activity. However, today, bullies can reach their targets through social media, text messaging, Facebook, email and online gaming (Chukwuere, Chukwuere and Kumalo 2017). Consequently, in line with the current finding, research has shown the presence of bullies online, especially among the female secondary school students. Nigeria also appears to have similar experience. It is therefore reasonable to argue in line with the postulations of the Social Learning Theory that just like bullies behave outside digital platforms, there is the tendency that when such opportunities that engendered bullying offline is seen online, they will as well bully. Interestingly, today, digital platforms have provided opportunities that provoke bullying online.

Similarly, the result from tables 4 and 5 indicates that female public students in Awka South are traumatized, affected in their mental health well-being and academic performance in school as a result of cyber bullying. This finding is in line with the argument of Kaspersky, (2023) who notes in his study that “cyberbullying resulted to mental health issues, increased stress, anxiety, depression and low-self-esteem” More so, a number of scholars (Bansal, Singh, Walt, 2014; Gordon, 2024) have found that cyberbullying correlates with mental health issues. In the same manner, the present finding also agrees with the findings of Tuafik, Asyraaf, Intan, Harraz Khairunnisa and Nor (2023) that “cyberbullying affects not only mental health of the bullied, but their academic performances, produces unstable emotions, such as: anxiety, stress, low social skills

and confidence. Likewise, the findings are related to that of Plexousakis, Kourkoutas, Giovazolias, Chatira K, & Nikolopoulos (2019) and Nielsen, Tangen, Idsoe, Matthiesen, & Magerøy (2015), who affirmed that 37% of the British adolescents who were bullied online indicated clinically significant level of trauma. Furthermore, Nwifo and Nwoke (2018) revealed that cyberbullying victims may have developed depression, sadness, anxiety, and difficulty with relationships, self-inflicted suicide and the tendency to drop out of school. In the same vein, Kamanthi (2024) pointed out that cyberbullying affects victims self-esteem, causes feeling of sadness and at long run, impacts on mental health. They also note that it leads to poor academic performance of students.

In the same vein, tables 6 and 7 provided answer to the third research question. Based on the data gathered from the tables, it was clear that the respondents particularly experienced cyberbullying like: harassment, trolling and cyber stalking most on Facebook pages. Interestingly, Mathew (2023) revealed that stalking and trolling are the most experienced cyber bullying on Facebook. However, the present finding does not align with the study of Kibe, Kwaya, Ogolla (2022) who discovered that the main types of cyberbullying experienced by students on Facebook include: shaming, impersonation, blackmail, exposure and cyber stalking. Equally, Kibe, Kwaya, Kogos, Ogalla, Onsare (2022) note that many of the students had experienced such cyberbullying like: shaming, impersonation, blackmail, outing, cyber-stalking, trolling, catfishing, revenge porn, exclusion, warning wars and vigilantism online. It might be imperative to extrapolate that the reason the present study and that of Kibe et.al (2022) is not in agreement might be somewhat connected to cultural differences that exist within the climes where these research works were carried out. However, the present study is in agreement with Okoiye, Nwoga and Onah (2015), the authors discovered that the students experienced cyber-stalking, trolling, harassment, shaming, impersonation and blackmail on social media more.

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is imperative to note that Facebook has become preferred medium for social interaction and relationship among young people globally (Okoiye, Nwoga and Onah, 2015). In addition, the platform has also provided a place where young people bully their mates. In the recent time, research has shown that young people face numerous forms of online bullying and attack daily, these online attacks grossly affect not only the mental well-being of the victims, but also their academic performances. It is against the foregoing that these authors make the following recommendations; that:

- School authorities and the government should endeavour to carefully address the issue of cyberbullying among students of secondary schools in Awka South LGA, by creating strong awareness through organising such events like: seminars, academic talks and continuously educating the children on how to identify, avoid and most importantly, prevent online bullies attacking them.
- Furthermore, positive educational interventions to promote safer use of new digital media and ICT's platforms should be encouraged in secondary schools, as this will help educate the students on how to prevent, and as much as possible avoid cyberbullying
- Educators should find a way of giving the adolescent female students orientation on the need to develop good virtues, inculcate discipline and positive self-control. In the same manner, parents should closely monitor their children's use of internet by observing their

discussions and antics online. It might be important to note that when appropriate guidance is given to these girls, who are mainly adolescents, it will go a long way in moulding them into better people.

- In addition, young people should never accept bullying or fall for their antics. In fact, if every youth stands up against bullying on Facebook and other social media platforms, the incidences will no doubt reduce. This, the authors of this work, strongly feel, should also form the core part of the international alliance and campaign to sensitize young people to stand up against all forms of cyber-bullying.

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