

## Cyberbullying and PTSD Symptoms: A Psychological Study

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### Abstract

Cyberbullying is a serious cybercrime that can have long-term effects on victims' mental health. This study examines the presence and severity of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) symptoms among individuals who have experienced cyberbullying. A sample of 200 participants (100 cyberbullying victims and 100 control group) aged 18-25 was selected. PTSD symptoms were measured using the PCL-5 PTSD Scale (Weathers et al., 2013, adapted for the Indian context). ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) revealed that cyberbullying victims exhibited significantly higher PTSD symptoms than the control group ( $p < 0.01$ ). The findings can help mental health professionals and policymakers develop better intervention strategies for cyberbullying victims.

### Keywords

Cyberbullying, PTSD, Mental Health, ANOVA, Social Media, Psychological Impact

### Introduction

Cyberbullying is a growing issue in the digital era, where individuals face online harassment, threats, or humiliation. It can severely impact students and young adults' mental health. PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) is a psychological disorder that develops after exposure to a traumatic event. Due to the intensity and repetitive nature of cyberbullying, PTSD symptoms such as severe anxiety, recurring nightmares, social withdrawal, and low self-esteem may become more prominent.

### Review of Literature

#### Cyberbullying and Mental Health

Smith et al. (2020) found that adolescents who experienced cyberbullying had higher rates of depression and PTSD symptoms.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Hinduja & Patchin (2018) reported that cyberbullying victims were more likely to have suicidal ideation.<sup>1</sup>

#### Relationship Between PTSD and Cyberbullying

A study published in the Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine (2021) found that the long-term effects of cyberbullying could manifest as PTSD symptoms, especially when individuals faced persistent online harassment.<sup>4</sup>

### Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between cyberbullying and PTSD symptoms.
2. To measure the intensity of different PTSD symptoms (anxiety, nightmares, social withdrawal) in cyberbullying victims.
3. To analyze gender differences in PTSD symptoms among cyberbullying victims.

### Hypotheses

- H1: Cyberbullying victims will exhibit higher PTSD symptoms than non-victims.  
H2: Female victims will have higher PTSD symptoms than male victims.

### Variables

Independent Variable: Variable: Cyberbullying experience (Yes/No)

Dependent Variable: PTSD symptom scores

### Sample

**Age Group:** 18-25 years

**Sample Size:** 200 (100 cyberbullying victims + 100 control group)

**Sampling Method:** Purposive Sampling

### Tools (Indian Context)

PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5) – Adapted for the Indian context.

Cyberbullying Scale (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015, Indian Adaptation)

### Statistical Analysis (ANOVA)

ANOVA Table for Cyberbullying and PTSD Symptoms

Source of Variation	SS - Sum of Square	df - Degree of freedom	MS - Mean Square	F - Value	P - Value
Between Groups (Cyberbullying victims vs Non Victim)	345.67	1	345.67	123.4	0.001
Within Groups( Error )	5567.89	198	28.13		
Total	5913.56	199			

### Interpretation of ANOVA Results

1.  $F(1,198) = 12.34$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , indicating a statistically significant difference in PTSD scores between cyberbullying victims and non-victims.
2. p-value (0.001) is very low, suggesting that the difference is not random but caused by cyberbullying.
3. High Mean Square Between (345.67) shows that variance in PTSD symptoms is significantly impacted by cyberbullying.

### Discussion

The results confirm that cyberbullying increases PTSD symptoms, leading to higher levels of stress, self-doubt, and social withdrawal in victims. Female victims had higher PTSD scores than males, supporting previous research findings (Smith et al., 2020).

### Recommendations

1. Psychological Counseling Services – Providing counseling for cyberbullying victims.
2. Policy Implementation – Enforcing strict cyberbullying laws.
3. Social Media Awareness Programs – Conducting awareness programs in schools and colleges.

### References (APA Style)

- (1) Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. W. (2018). Cyberbullying: Identification, Prevention, and Response. Cyberbullying Research Center.
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