

# Cyberbullying and Its Impact on Self-Esteem Among Young Adults

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## ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying has emerged as a significant psychosocial concern in digitally connected societies. The present study examined the relationship between cyberbullying victimization and self-esteem among young adults using a quantitative correlational research design. A total of 80 participants aged 18–30 years completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and the Cyberbullying Victimization Scale (CVBS) through an online survey.

Descriptive statistics indicated moderate levels of self-esteem ( $M = 28.3$ ,  $SD = 5.6$ ) and low-to-moderate levels of cyberbullying victimization ( $M = 11.2$ ,  $SD = 7.4$ ). Spearman's rank-order correlation revealed a significant negative relationship between cyberbullying victimization and self-esteem ( $r_s = -0.42$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The findings suggest that higher levels of cyberbullying victimization are associated with lower levels of self-esteem.

The results highlight the psychological impact of online victimization and underscore the need for preventive and intervention strategies to promote digital well-being among young adults.

**Keywords:** Cyberbullying, Self-Esteem, Young Adults, Correlational Study, Psychological Well-Being

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of digital communication platforms has transformed interpersonal interactions, particularly among young adults. While online environments provide opportunities for social connection and identity development, they have also increased exposure to cyberbullying—defined as intentional and repeated harm inflicted through electronic media.

Previous research has demonstrated that cyberbullying victimization is associated with depression, anxiety, emotional distress, and reduced psychological well-being. Self-esteem, defined as an individual's overall evaluation of self-worth, is particularly vulnerable to negative peer experiences. Theoretical perspectives such as Cooley's Looking-Glass Self and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory suggest that self-concept develops through social interactions, including digital contexts.

Although prior studies have established associations between cyberbullying and adverse psychological outcomes, further quantitative evidence is needed to examine the strength and direction of this relationship among young adults. The present study aims to empirically examine the correlation between cyberbullying victimization and self-esteem.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To assess levels of cyberbullying victimization among young adults.

2. To assess levels of self-esteem among young adults.
3. To examine the relationship between cyberbullying victimization and self-esteem.

## HYPOTHESIS

H1: There will be a significant negative correlation between cyberbullying victimization and self-esteem among young adults.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study employed a **quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design**.

### Participants

The sample consisted of 80 young adults aged 18–30 years. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling via social media platforms and university networks.

### Inclusion Criteria

- Age between 18–30 years
- Active use of social media
- Provided informed consent

### Tools Used

#### 1. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

A 10-item self-report measure assessing global self-esteem. Responses are rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency in the present study (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .72$ ).

#### 2. Cyberbullying Victimization Scale (CVBS)

A Likert-type scale measuring frequency of cyberbullying experiences (1 = Never to 5 = Very Often). Higher scores indicate greater victimization.

The Cyberbullying Victimization Scale showed good internal consistency in the present sample (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .77$ ).

### Procedure

Data were collected through an anonymous online questionnaire. Participants provided informed consent before participation. Confidentiality was ensured.

### Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, Minimum, Maximum) and Spearman's rank-order correlation to examine the relationship between cyberbullying victimization and self-esteem.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Self-Esteem (RSES)	80	16	40	28.3	5.6
Cyberbullying (CVBS)	80	6	38	11.2	7.4

Participants reported moderate levels of self-esteem and low-to-moderate levels of cyberbullying victimization.

### **Correlation Analysis**

Spearman's rank-order correlation indicated a significant negative relationship between cyberbullying victimization and self-esteem:

$r_s = -0.42, p < .01$

This suggests that higher cyberbullying victimization is associated with lower self-esteem.

### **DISCUSSION**

The findings support the hypothesis that cyberbullying victimization is significantly associated with reduced self-esteem among young adults. The moderate negative correlation indicates that online harassment can meaningfully impact individuals' self-perception.

These findings are consistent with previous empirical research demonstrating that exposure to digital aggression negatively influences psychological well-being. The results reinforce the importance of addressing cyberbullying as a mental health concern.

### **LIMITATIONS**

- Small sample size (N = 80)
- Convenience sampling limits generalizability
- Cross-sectional design prevents causal inference
- Self-report measures may introduce response bias

### **IMPLICATIONS**

- Educational institutions should implement cyber-safety programs.
- Mental health professionals should assess cyberbullying exposure during counseling.
- Digital platforms should strengthen anti-harassment policies.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that cyberbullying victimization is significantly and negatively associated with self-esteem among young adults. Addressing cyberbullying is essential to promote psychological well-being in digitally connected populations.