



Impact of Social Networks on the Increase of Cyberbully Among Nigerian University Students In Ilorin Metropolis

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ABSTRACT: Over the years, social networks has been used for different criminal activities such as cyber fraud, spamming, cyberbullying, cyber stalking. Cyberbullying is a phenomenon that is well known in developed countries, popularly on the internet and social networks. However, in developing countries as Nigeria, the awareness is less. In Nigeria, the majority of youths subscribe to social networks where cyberbullying is rampant. This study focused on assessing the relationship that exist between the frequency of social network usage, activities performed and impacts on cyberbullying among university students, this study use survey of quantitative method to collect data, the data was analysed using SPSS. The study show WhatsApp and Facebook to be used frequently among the Nigeria undergraduate students. Most respondent wants to use Social network, however end up been cyberbullied. Facebook is found to be most used Social Network for cyberbully. It was found that cyberbully exist among undergraduate and Social Network serves as the contributory media to which cyberbully occur. This therefore, indicates that Social Network has certain impact on the increase cyberbully among students.

Keywords: Social networks, cyberbully, university, students

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INTRODUCTION

Cyberbullying is a willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices (Hinduja and Patchin, 2010). It is a continuous process of intentionally hurting people using technological gadgets. This study defines Cyberbullying as an act of being mean to others by using information and communication involving electronic technologies to facilitate deliberate and repeated harassment or threat to an individual or group which can be done by an individual or group. Cyberbullying generally takes a psychological form rather than the physical form that exist in the traditional or ordinary bullying, it majorly affects the mental health of the people that are cyberbullied, that is, it can take the form of sending nasty, mean or

threatening messages, emails, photos or video clips saying hurtful things or accessing someone's accounts to create trouble.

According to Lenhart (2007), about one third (32%) of all teenagers who use the internet had experience been targets of a range of annoying and potentially menacing online activities. These individuals received threatening messages, private emails or text messages forwarded without their consent, their embarrassing picture posted without permission, or having rumors about them spread online.

In 2006, national law enforcement agencies estimated that over 13 million children and adolescent between the aged 6 and 17 were victims of cyberbullying (Fight Crime: Invest in kids, 2006). According to the statistics in the

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report of National Crime Prevention Council (2014), 43% of teens have been victims of cyberbullying in the 2013, 81% of youth said that others cyberbully because they think it's funny, almost 80% of teens affirm not having parental rules about Internet use or found ways around the rules, nearly 30% of teens wanted to seek revenge on those who cyberbullied them and only 11% of teens talked to parents about incidents of cyberbullying.

In Nigeria, Cyberbullying is a growing menace among Internet users, which is generally unknown to most internet users. In 2015, the National Assembly in Nigeria initiate a 'Social Media Bill' which was widely rejected by the populace due to the less knowledge and awareness of cyberbully. Some Nigerians feel it is a way of targeting individuals and a way of silencing the populace from the popular

'freedom of speech' enjoyed. Misuse of social network has become an increasingly pertinent issue in Nigeria among social network users, and popularly regards it as 'freedom of speech.' The cyberspace in now used to carry out different kinds of harassment that are happening before now within the school. However, on the internet there is no supervision whatsoever to control the bully. Nigerian teens with access to wide spread Internet and social network sites get bullied on daily basis without them knowing what they did to instigate it or how to prevent it. This research work uses survey design of qualitative method with 244 students as respondents across Universities within Ilorin metropolis. It focuses on creating awareness about cyberbullying, the role social network activities and usage play on cyberbullying and cause for increase in cyberbully among students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Issue

Social networking sites are ways of connecting with people, making and developing friendships or contacts, socializing with other existing friends' network. Overtime, the use of social networks is been abused and people use them to perpetuate illegal activities such as online fraud, pornography distribution, and cyberbullying. According to Cyberbully Resource Centre (2011), the World is said to be witnessing an increase in the use of social networks, which has also led to increase in the cases of cyberbullying, the most affected people by cyberbullying are adolescents and teens between the ages of 12 and 17 years.

In this modern age, most teenagers have high-speed Internet access, which they use to send instant messages to their friends, share videos online and keep personal profiles on social networks. However, this wide internet access has provided some teenagers with the means of committing crimes, and inflict injury on others. This technology has allowed some teens to take the bullying that thrives in school compounds

onto cyberspace by sharing shameful pictures, information, videos and more. This act of cyberbullying also enables teenagers to bully each other on social networks and over the internet. This study will focus on assessing the role social network has played in the increase of cyberbullying and also ways of preventing cyberbullying in Nigeria. It also focuses on assessing the relationship that exist between social network usage, activities performed on social network and their impact on cyberbullying among university students and students' level of understanding.

Social Networks

In recent years social networks has become a part of our everyday life, it is an avenue to meet people, grow business contacts, and keep in touch with family and friends. Social networking services refers to the breadth of existing services, the place of existing services within the history of internet technologies and services, and the rapid development of new tools and practices (Fraser, 2008). This definition Look at the speed

with which the online social networking landscape is developing, where it was and where it is.

Boyd and Ellison (2007), "Defined social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, then view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site". It can be through desktop computer or mobile-based device with internet connection designed to facilitate communication, collaboration, and content sharing across networks of contacts. According to Fraser (2008) social networks allows sharing of personnel information and contents posted on profiles and the likes among contacts and other people on the social network. These allow users to manage, build and represent their social networks online, they might also include the profiles of events, companies, and even political parties. They may let you add anyone in the network as your "friend" or contact, or they might ask for all connections to be agreed by both parties. They typically support the public display of networks although they may offer privacy restrictions, or facilitate closed communities. Permissions are a very important feature of most social networking services. They allow members and groups to control who gets access to their profiles, information, connections and spaces, as well as degrees of access. The level of granularity and control varies from service to service, but typically settings allow you to keep your information private. The Director General Information Society and Media of the European Commission states that nowadays, hundreds of millions of Internet users participate in social networks, form communities, produce and consume media content in revolutionary ways.

A social network web site allows a user to create a "profile": set up an account to create a digital representation of themselves, select other members of the site as contacts or connections, communicate and engage with these users and create a social group (Trampedach, 2008).

White (2012) classified social networks into seven major categories. These include social connection among friends and family such as the use of Facebook, Twitter, Google+, MySpace; Media sharing which makes it easy to share video and photography content online such as YouTube, Flickr, Histogram; Professional use to provide opportunities for career-related growth, some of these types of network provide a general forum for professionals to connect, while others are focused on specific occupations or interests such as LinkedIn and Classroom 2.0; Informational communities are social media users who seek answers to everyday problems, for example, Super Green Me, Do-It-Yourself Community; Educational networks are social media sites that many students go in order to collaborate with other students on academic projects, to conduct research for school, or to interact with professors and teachers via blogs and classroom forums. Hobbies been one of the most popular reasons many use the Internet to conduct research on their favourite projects or topics of interest, when people find a website based on their favourite hobby, they discover a whole community of people from around the world who share the same passion for those interests. This is what lies at the heart of what makes social networks work; academic researchers who want to share their research and review results achieved by colleagues may find academic-specific social networking to be quite valuable. A few of the most popular online communities for academics are Academia.edu, google Scholar, users of this academic social network can share their own research, as well as follow research submitted by others.

Cyberbully Trend

Cyberbully can be due to lack of awareness on the part of the bully with him or her not knowing the impending danger of cyberbullying or that cyberbullying has the most effect on self-esteem, confidence, mental and emotional well-being. The reason why most cyberbullies adopt this method is they think they will get off scot-free. According to Willard (2007) who defined cyberbullying as being cruel to others by sending or posting injurious substances or engaging in other forms of social cruelty using the internet or other digital technologies. The author described cyberbullying as a form of online social aggression. Also the author discussed the different risks associated with cyberbullying such as sexually related risk, unsafe online communities and dangerous groups. Willard further classified cyberbullying, as Flaming: online fights through messaging using angry and vulgar language; Harassment: using offensive

and insulting messages; Denigration: sending or posting cruel gossip or rumours of individual to damage reputation or friendships; Impersonation: breaking into someone's account, posing as that person, sending messages to make the person look bad, get that person in trouble or danger, or damage that person's reputation or friendships; Outing and Trickery: sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online or tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information. This is then shared online; Exclusion: intentionally excluding someone from an online group; Cyber stalking: sending messages that include threats of harm, fright or highly intimidating; and Cyber threats: Cyber threats are either direct threats or distressing material that raises concerns or provides clues that the person is emotionally upset and may be considering harming someone, harming him or herself, or committing suicide.

METHODOLOGY

The research used survey design of quantitative method. The research design was adopted due to the type and aim of the study, proportionate stratified and purposive sampling was adopted in this study in which questionnaire was used to measure peoples' perception about social media and the impact on the rapid increase of cyberbullying. The study used 244 responses for the study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0 was used for data analysis.

Descriptive statistics was carried out on the data alongside simple frequency count, the percentage and chi-square was analysed. Data was collected from three (3) universities within the Ilorin Metropolis. Out of two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires distributed for the study, only two hundred and forty four (244) were dully filled and returned; and were used for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Over the last decade, the use of social media has increased tremendously to an unpredictable level. As years go by, the use of social media and other interactions with media by adults and children alike, as risen drastically (Lebedz, 2012). Social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and twitter are fast rising in usage, thousands of people on daily basis joins these social networking sites with the notion to meet people and create business connections. Other

social media applications such as WhatsApp are also not left out. Teenagers especially spend most of their time on the internet, youths spend more time with social media than any single other activity besides sleeping. According to Cyberbullying Resource Center (2011) social media is shown to be highly common among 12-17 year olds, it also shows that 95% of all teens surveyed use the internet on regular basis and 80% of them use social networking sites.

Social networking sites or social media has become a broad and major medium for carrying out the act of cyberbullying, also social media’s audience is larger than it seems, it gives room for multicast and broadcast messages, hereby giving people unknown to you access to your social network profile.

Facebook has transformed from a public space to a behavioral laboratory (Jayson, 2014). This is due to Social networking sites been open to all sort of people with good and bad intentions, when a profile is created, it is open to contacts, friends or followers which gives room for interaction of all kinds, which can also bring about cyberbullying.

Table 1 shows how frequent respondents use social network. The table revealed that 121 (49.6%) of the respondents always use Facebook, 46 (18.9%) often use Facebook, 41 (16.8%) sometimes use Facebook, 34 (13.9%) seldom use Facebook while 2 (0.8%) of the respondents never use Facebook. It also revealed that 55 (22.5%) of the respondents always use Twitter, 79 (32.4%) often use Twitter, 47 (19.3%) sometimes use Twitter, 33 (13.5%) seldom use Twitter while 30 (12.3%) of the respondents never use Twitter.

It further revealed that 69 (28.3%) of the respondents always use Instagram, 44 (18%) often use Instagram, 42 (17.2%) sometimes use Instagram, 22 (9%) seldom use Instagram while 67 (27.5%) of the respondents never use Instagram. Similarly, 171 (70.1%) of the respondents always use WhatsApp, 46 (18.9%)

often use WhatsApp, 11 (4.5%) sometimes use WhatsApp, 10 (4.1%) seldom use WhatsApp while 6 (2.5%) of the respondents never use WhatsApp. In the same vain, 38 (15.5%) of the respondents always use 2go, 23 (9.4%) often use 2go, 36 (14.8%) sometimes use 2go, 57 (23.4%) seldom use 2go while 90 (3.9%) of the respondents never use 2go. Finally, the table revealed that 115 (47.1%) of the respondents always use BBM, 61 (25%) often use BBM, 25 (10.2%) sometimes use BBM, 23 (9.4%) seldom use BBM, while 20 (8.2%) of the respondents never use BBM. It can be concluded that WhatsApp is the most used social media among all while 2go is the least used.

Table 2 shows various activities engaged on social network. Item 1 revealed that majority 208 (84%) of the respondents used social networks to make new friends while 39 (16%) of the respondents did not. Item 2 revealed that almost all 212 (86.9%) of the respondents used social networks for posting and viewing photos while only 32 (13.1%) of the respondents did not. Item 3 revealed that majority 228 (93.4%) of the respondents used social networks for posting new messages and chatting while minority 16 (6.6%) of the respondents did not. Item 4 revealed that majority 229 (93.9%) of the respondents used social networks to interact with people with common interest while minority 15 (6.1%) of the respondents did not. Item 5 revealed that majority 231 (94.7%) of the respondents used social networks for discussion and interaction with class mates while

Table 1: Social Network Frequency of Use

Social Network	Always (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Seldom (%)	Never (%)
Facebook	121 (49.6%)	46 (18.9%)	41 (16.8%)	34 (13.9%)	2 (0.8%)
Twitter	55 (22.5%)	79 (32.4%)	47 (19.3%)	33 (13.5%)	30 (12.3%)
Instagram	69 (28.3%)	44 (18%)	42 (17.2%)	22 (9%)	67 (27.5%)
WhatsApp	171 (70.1%)	46 (18.9%)	11 (4.5%)	10 (4.1%)	6 (2.5%)
2go	38 (15.5%)	23 (9.4%)	36 (14.8%)	57 (23.4%)	90 (3.9%)
BBM	115 (47.1%)	61 (25%)	25 (10.2%)	23 (9.4%)	20 (8.2%)

Table 2: Social Network Activities

S/N	Item	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Making new friends	208 (84%)	39 (16%)
2	Posting and viewing photos	212 (86.9%)	32 (13.1%)
3	Posting new messages and chatting	228 (93.4%)	16 (6.6%)
4	Interacting with people with common interest	229 (93.9%)	15 (6.1%)
5	Discussing and interacting with class mates	231 (94.7%)	13 (5.3%)
6	Keeping in touch with family and friends	230 (94.3%)	14 (5.7%)
7	Reading other peoples' profiles or news feeds	195 (79.9%)	49 (20.1%)
8	Exchanging news through text or videos	196 (80.3%)	48 (19.7%)

minority 13 (5.3%) of the respondents did not. Item 6 revealed that majority 230 (94.3%) of the respondents used social network to keep in touch with families and friends while minority 14 (5.7%) of the respondents did not. Item 7 revealed that majority 195 (79.9%) of the respondents used social networks to read other people's profiles or news feeds while minority 49 (20.1%) of the respondents did not. Item 8 revealed that majority 196 (80.3%) of the respondents used social networks to exchange news through text or videos while minority 48 (19.7%) of the respondents did not.

Table 3: Have you ever experienced cyberbullying before?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	79	32.4
No	165	67.6
Total	244	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table 4: Sources of Cyberbully

	Frequency	Percent%
Classmates	40	24.2
Friends	42	25.5
Family	11	6.7
Strangers	72	43.6
Total	165	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table 3 reveals that majority 165 (67.6%) of the respondents had experienced cyber bullying before while minority 79 (32.4%) of the respondents had not.

Table 4 reveals that 40 (24.2%) of the respondents had been cyberbullied before by their classmates, 42(25.5%) had been cyber bullied before by friends, 11(6.7%) had been cyberbullied before by family, 72 (43.6%) had been cyberbullied before by strangers. This is an indication that majority of the respondents had been cyberbullied before by strangers while minority of the respondents were bullied by their family. This indicates that most cyberbullying are performed by people the cyberbullied victims do not know.

Table 5 shows how the victims of cyberbullying felt when cyberbullied. The table revealed that 31 (18.8%) of the respondents felt sad when cyberbullied, 98 (59.4%) felt depressed, 20 (12.1%) felt angry while 16 (9.7%) of the

Table 5: Reaction to Cyberbully

	Frequency	Percent
Sad	31	18.8
Depressed	98	59.4
Angry	20	12.1
Revengeful	16	9.7
Total	165	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

respondents felt revenge when cyberbullied. This implies that majority of the respondents felt depressed when cyberbullied while minority felt revengeful.

Table 6 shows the actions taking up by people when cyberbullied. The table revealed that 12 (7.3%) of the respondents reported to their parents when cyberbullied, 18 (10.9%) took a physical fight, 22 (13.3%) reported to appropriate authorities while 28 (17%) of the respondents took revenge by cyberbullying, lastly 85(51.5%) did nothing about it. This implies that majority of the respondents did nothing when cyberbullied while minority of the respondents reported to their parents when cyberbullied.

Table 7 shows relationship between network and cyberbullying. Item 1 reveals that majority 176 (72.1%) of the respondents were of the opinion that social networks controlled cyberbullying by blocking the abuse while minority 68 (27.9%)

of the respondents did not opine that. Item 2 reveals that majority 62.7% of the respondents were of the opinion that social networks have controlled cyberbullying by reporting the abuse while minority 37.3% of the respondents objected. Item 3 reveals that majority 185 (75.4%) of the respondents had once blocked someone on a social networks before due to cyberbully, while 60 (24.6%) of the respondents had never blocked someone on a social networks.

Item 4 reveals that majority 130 (53.3%) of the respondents had never reported abuse on a social networks and 114 (46.7%) of the respondents had reported abuse on social networks. Item 5 reveals that 155 (63.5%) of the respondents had removed or deleted a cyberbully (person) from their contact list while 89 (36.5%) of the respondents had never removed or deleted a cyberbully (person) from their contact list.

Table 8 revealed that majority 173 (70.9%) of the respondents had never cyberbullied somebody while minority 71 (29.1%) of the respondents had ever cyberbullied somebody. This also show that majority 206 (84.4%) of the respondents were of the opinion that when they cyberbullied others, the person involved did not remove or delete them while minority 38 (15.6%) of the respondents objected, majority 151 (61.9%) of the respondents had never been cyberbullied on a social networking site while 93 (38.1%) of the respondents experienced been cyberbullied on a social networking site.

Table 6: Action Taken After Cyberbullied

	Frequency	Percent
Report to your parents	12	7.3
Take a physical fight	18	10.9
Report to appropriate authorities	22	13.3
Revenge by cyberbullying	28	17
Did Nothing	85	51.5
Total	165	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table 7: Social Network and Cyberbullying

S/N	Items	Yes	No
1	Do you think social networks have controlled cyberbullying by blocking?	176 (72.1%)	68 (27.9%)
2	Do you think social networks have controlled cyberbullying by reporting abuse?	153 (62.7%)	91 (37.3%)
3	Have you ever blocked someone on social networks before?	184 (75.4%)	60 (24.6%)
4	Have you ever reported abuse on social networks before?	114 (46.7%)	130 (53.3%)
5	Have you removed or deleted a cyberbully (person) from your contact list?	155 (63.5%)	89 (36.5%)

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table 8: Cyberbullying questions

S/N	Questions		Frequency	Percentage
Q1	Have you ever cyberbullied anybody	No	173	70.9
		Yes	71	29.1
Q2	If Q1 is yes, did the person delete you	No	206	84.4
		Yes	38	15.6
Q3	Did you feel bad for cyberbullying others	No	213	87.3
		Yes	31	12.7
Q4	Have you been cyberbullied on Social Network	No	151	61.9
		Yes	93	38.1

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table 9: What form of bullying was it?

	Frequency	Percent
Posting shameful pictures of you on timelines or profile	18	19.4
Laughing at you in a group	51	54.8
Writing offensive comments on your post or pictures	24	25.8
Total	93	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Table 9 showed the form of bullying experienced by people. The table revealed that 18(19.4%) of the respondents experienced bullying by Posting shameful pictures of them on their timelines or profile, 51 (54.8%) of the respondents experienced bullying by them getting ‘laughed at’ in a group, 24 (25.8%) of the respondents experienced cyberbullying by the bullies writing offensive comments on their posts or picture. This is an indication that majority of the respondents experienced bullying by them getting ‘laughed at’ in a group, some respondents experienced bullying by ‘posting shameful pictures’ of them on their timelines or profile. According to the this

research getting ‘laughed at’ in a group is the most popular form of cyberbullying and Table 10 indicate that Facebook is the most used to cyberbully, with 58.1% response, this might be due to been the widest used social network.

Table 10: Frequency of the social networks with cyberbullying

	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	54	58.1
WhatsApp	20	21.5
2go	10	10.8
Others	9	9.6
Total	93	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2015.

CONCLUSION

The study shows the frequent use of WhatsApp and Facebook among the Nigeria undergraduate students. Even though, most respondent who use Social network, want to keep in touch with family and friends, many end up been cyberbullied. The study shows Facebook as the most used Social Network for

cyberbully. It was found that cyberbully does exist among the undergraduate and the use of Social Network been the contributory media to which cyberbully occur. This therefore, indicates that Social Network has certain impact on the increase cyberbully among students. This simply means that access of undergraduate students

to social network enhances the practice of cyberbullying that is the more time youths spend online the higher the likeliness of them been cyberbullied. The frequency of teens on social networks platforms breeds more cyberbullies and invariably leads to more cyberbullying on social networks.

The Pew survey shows percentages of students and their involvement on-line, which shows that majority of the uses are constructive yet the 80% of teens using social networking sites is one of the keys to cyberbullying. This survey shows that even though 80% of teens use internet for good reasons such as researching their assignment, knowing new things, this does not denied increased chances of them been bullied or becoming a bully.

The study revealed that increase usage of mobile device might increase the possibility of cyberbully, by easy accessibility to social network profiles by different users using their mobile devices, which also indicates that mobile devices used to access the internet can also be a facilitating factor for cyberbullying on social networks.

The study shows factors that facilitates cyberbullying on social networks might include establishing a presence on social networking sites, spending a lot of time on these sites and then feeling unaccepted among peers online. The above factors enhance cyberbullying, and activities youths carry out or engage in might lead them to getting cyberbullied.

Some literatures pinpoints the factors leading to cyberbullying and also the people who are vulnerable to bullying. These indicate that activities performed on social networking sites might cause bullying and also make a person vulnerable to cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying a phenomenon on the internet that has caused psychological and mental damage to people, youths especially. It has been revealed that youths spend most of the time on daily basis on social networks, this study showed that people who spend most of their time on social networks are targets of cyberbullies, that is, the more the time spent the more likelihood of getting cyberbullied.

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