

Examining the Relationship between Cyber-Victimization, Self-Efficacy, Resilience and Psychological Well-Being among Young Adults

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Abstract: Cyber-Victimization has been considered as a threat to well-being for young adults. The prevalent use of digital technologies and social networking sites have created new avenues for harassment, humiliation and victimization. Exposure to Cyber-Victimization can have significant psycho-social outcomes for individuals. Repeated experiences of online abuse, humiliation or exclusion may lead to psychological distress, i.e., anxiety, depression, fear, sleep disturbances, suicidal ideation, reduced self-esteem and so on. The purpose of the study was to analyse the relationship between cyber-victimization, self-efficacy, resilience and psychological well-being among young adults. An exploratory research design was employed with 346 participants. Data were collected using four standardized Instruments: Cyber-Victimization Scale (CYBVICS), Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), General Self-Efficacy scale (GSE) and Brief Resilience Scale (BRS). The data were analysed using Spearman rank-order correlation and Mann Whitney U test. The results showed a significant negative association ($r_s = -0.278, p < .001$) between Cyber-Victimization and psychological well-being, indicating that higher levels of online victimization were associated with lower levels of psychological well-being. Conversely, self-efficacy and resilience revealed significant positive relationships with psychological well-being ($r_s = 0.490, p < .001$ and $r_s = 0.443, p < .001$), which highlighted that the individuals with greater self-efficacy and resilience reported better psychological well-being. In Addition, there were no significant differences in cyber-victimization, self-efficacy and resilience across educational levels ($U = 11223.00, z = -2.082, p = .037$), while psychological well-being differed significantly among the educational groups.

Keywords: Cyber-Victimization, Psychological well-being, Self-efficacy, Resilience, Young adults

1. Introduction

The accelerated growth of digital and social media platforms over the past two decades has changed how people communicate around the world, with the widespread use of smartphones and internet access, many people now rely on daily communication using apps such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as messaging platforms like WhatsApp. This fast adoption of communication technologies has changed how individuals interact and exchange information. However, it has also led to new forms of interpersonal harm, particularly cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass or target another person directly. It can occur through texts, comments and numerous apps on social media. It can also occur on gaming platforms where people interact, participate in and share content. It can also include sharing personal or private information about someone else, causing embarrassment or humiliation. Exposure to cyberbullying has been linked with several psychological consequences such as anxiety, depression, emotional distress and decreased psychological well-being. Individuals who experience online harassment may develop feelings of helplessness, social isolation and diminished self-esteem, which can significantly affect their social, occupational and personal areas of life.

Consequently, understanding the psychological elements which help individuals to cope with the negative consequences of cyberbullying has been a significant focus in emerging psychological research.

Among the psychological elements that may determine how individuals respond to cyberbullying are self-efficacy and resilience. Self-efficacy, a concept introduced by the psychologist Albert Bandura (1977), is defined as, "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (Bandura, 1994). Individuals with low self-efficacy toward a task are more likely to avoid it. Those with high self-efficacy are not only more likely to attempt the task, but they also will work harder and persist longer in the face of difficulties.

Similarly, resilience is defined as, "the process of, capacity for or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten et al., 2001). Resilient people utilize their resources, strengths and skills to overcome challenges and work through setbacks.

2. Review of Literature

Guo et al. (2025) studied how cyberbullying adolescents and young adults. They analysed 173 participants from 115 published between 2009 and 2025. They stated that cyberbullying was significantly associated with one's self-esteem. Participants who reported high self-esteem were less likely to be bullied online, while those with low self-esteem were more susceptible to be bullied. They also concluded that self-esteem, cultural norms, age and gender difference play a significant role in shaping one's experience of cyberbullying.

Another study by Noor et al. (2025) looked how being a victim of cyberbullying affects self-esteem and the mental health of adults. A survey on 300 participants was conducted.

The results demonstrated that people who were bullied online reported lower self-esteem as well as their mental well-being was also negatively impacted in relation to those who were not bullied. The authors emphasize the importance of skill development and coping strategies and provide support to those who are bullied.

In a study conducted by Rojo-Ramos et al. (2024), self-efficacy was found to be associated with being a bully as well as a victim. Their study involved 1,232 participants from Spain aged between 8-16 and found that children with higher self-efficacy are less likely to be victims.

Chen et al. conducted a study in 2025. They looked 672 teenagers. In his study, it was found that defending self-efficacy predict defending behaviour. The researchers found that individuals with higher levels of empathy are more likely to defend others.

In a study conducted by Kamil and Al-Hadrawi (2022), it was examined how self-efficacy impacts mental health in adolescents. The survey consisted 320 adolescents. The findings showed a significant correlation between self-efficacy and mental health. It was also found that the level of self-efficacy is impacted by the parents' marital status and family size.

In 2022, a study conducted by Fino and Sun, examined the relationship between creative self-efficacy personality traits, and psychological well-being. 248 students aged between 18 and 25 years were studied. The researcher found that creative self-efficacy is a sign for psychological well-being and personality traits such as openness and conscientiousness also play a vital role in fostering one's psychological well-being.

Manjani and Mansury (2025) studies the influence of gender and family type on resilience and mental well-being. Their sample consisted of 160 adults. The study showed remarkable results in which the researcher found no difference in resilience between men and women. However, differences in mental well-being based on gender were found.

Niyazova and Madaliyeva (2022) studied how resilience and mental well-being are connected. They studied 150 people where they found that resilience is a positive sign of mental well-being. It was found that resilience builds people's potential to cope with adversities of life and positively impacts the mental wellbeing.

Another remarkable study by Stegmair and Prybutok (2024) the relationship between resilience and cyberbullying was examined. The researchers conducted a survey on 1,086 students at a university in Texas. The result of their study implicated that self-efficacy and social support hinders the adverse outcomes of cyberbullying.

Another study Güçlü Aydoğan et al. conducted a study in 2025. They observed at how resilience, self-efficacy and metacognition are related to cyberbullying. Their sample consisted of 574 high school students. The findings of the study show resilience, self-efficacy as well as metacognition is related to bullying. The study further posits that resilience and negative meta worry should be studied to understand

cyberbullying and we need to teach people skills to stay safe online and provide support to those who are bullied and effective measures should be implemented.

3. Hypotheses

- 1) Ho: There will be no significant relationship between cyber victimization and psychological well-being among young adults.
- 2) Ho: There will be no significant relationship between General self-efficacy and Psychological Well-being among young adults.
- 3) Ho: There will be no significant relationship between resilience and psychological well-being among young adults.

4. Objectives

- 1) To measure the level of Cyber-victimization, General self-efficacy, Resilience and Psychological well-being among young adults aged 18 to 25.
- 2) To examine any differences between Graduate and Post-graduate students across variables.
- 3) To assess the relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being among young adults experiencing cyber-victimization.
- 4) To assess the relationship between resilience and psychological well-being among young adults experiencing cyber-victimization.
- 5) To examine the relationship between Cyber-victimization and Psychological Well-being among young adults.

5. Method

Sampling Technique

The sample in this study represents a focused segment of the youth population, especially college and university students, as they are frequent users of social media and digital communicative platforms and are therefore much vulnerable to the experiences of cyber-victimization. The participants will be selected from various colleges and universities through snowball sampling. The study initially had 400 participants within the age range of 18-25 years, after data screening 54 people were excluded from the analysis due to no Cyber-Victimization. Therefore, the final sample consisted 346 participants. Both male and female participants will be included to get heterogeneous responses and a broader understanding of the variables under the study. Individuals who actively use social networking sites, online messaging applications or digital platforms will be considered eligible for participation. The identified sample is appropriate for investigating the relationship between cyber-victimization, psychological well-being, self-efficacy and resilience among young adults in the contemporary digital environment.

Inclusion criteria

- Individuals aged between 18-25 years of young adult.
- Individuals who use social media on a regular basis.
- Students, self-employed individuals actively participate in at least one social media platform.

Exclusion criteria

- Individuals aged beyond 25 years of age.
- Individuals who do not use social media.
- Individuals who are diagnosed with severe clinical disorders have been excluded.

Measures**Cyber-Victimization Scale (CYBVICS):**

The Adolescent Cyber-Victimization Scale (CYBVICS), was developed by Buelga et al. (2019). Their scale measures the individual experiences that adolescents have with cyber-victimization. The CYBVICS consists of 18 items. Of these 18 items, 8 pertain to Direct Cyber-Victimization, while the remaining 10 pertain to Indirect Cyber-Victimization. When responding to the items, participants indicate how often they experience the listed forms of cyber-victimization. The scale demonstrates positive psychometric properties. Factor analyses and reliability tests indicate that CYBVICS is a valid scale to measure cyber-victimization of the adolescent population.

Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB):

The Psychological Well-Being Scale was developed by Ryff (1989) in an attempt to measure positive functioning and well-being. For the current study, an 18-item version of the scale was utilized. The remaining items pertain to the other six areas of psychological well-being. These areas include Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, and Self-Acceptance. Each area of well-being is assessed by three items. Ryff (1989) has reported good reliability for the scale. The scale has been shown to have construct and factorial validity.

General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE):

Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) introduced the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) to examine the extent to which people believe they have the ability to successfully deal with difficult and challenging situations in life. The GSE has 10 items and measures generalized self-efficacy, instead of self-efficacy in a specific area. The GSE has been shown to have good reliability in a number of countries with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .76 to .90. It has been used in a number of studies, and results have shown it has good construct validity and good cross-cultural validity, and thus it can be used confidently to measure self-efficacy.

Brief Resilience Scale (BRS):

Smith et al. (2008) developed the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) to measure the ability to 'bounce back' from stress and adversity. The BRS has 6 items and measures resilience directly. BRS studies have reported good reliability, with alpha coefficients of .80 to .91, in addition to good test-retest reliability. The BRS has been shown to have good validity and reliability, and evidence has been found to support both convergent and discriminant validity of this measure.

Procedure

The study was conducted using google forms which were circulated among Colleges and University students through snowball and purposive sampling. Every participant gave their consent. The study used four questionnaires – Cyber

Victimization Scale (CYBVICS), Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB), General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), Brief Resilience Scale (BRS). After the data collection a normality test has been conducted for the variables of Psychological Well-being, cyber-victimization, and resilience to see whether the data follows normal distribution or not. For this, Shapiro-Wilk has been used. As the data is not normally distributed, non-parametric statistical analysis has been used. Then spearman correlation has been conducted to see any correlation between self-efficacy, psychological well-being, and resilience separately with each other and computed using IBM SPSS software. Mann-Whitney U test was used, as the data did not meet the assumptions of normality. Then the analysis was done at 0.05 levels of significance. And lastly, effect size has been calculated between the two independent groups of graduates and postgraduates.

4. Results**Test for Normality**

Tests of normality were conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results indicated significant deviations from normality for Cyber-Victimization (CYBVICS) $W = .800$, $p < .001$, General Self-Efficacy (GSE; $W = .965$, $p < .001$), Brief Resilience Scale (BRS; $W = .987$, $p < .001$), and Psychological Well-Being (PWB; $W = .986$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the assumption of normality was violated for all study variables. Consequently, non-parametric statistical analyses were employed for subsequent analyses.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed for all study variables. The mean score for Cyber-Victimization (CYBVICS) was 28.2 (SD = 10.1), while General Self-Efficacy (GSE) averaged 2.89 (SD = 0.630). For the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), the mean score was 3.01 (SD = 0.641), and Psychological Well-Being (PWB) averaged 4.73 (SD = 0.72)

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for study variables

VARIABLES	N	MEAN	SD
CYBVICS	346	28.2	10.1
GSE	346	2.89	0.630
BRS	346	3.01	0.641
PWB	346	4.73	0.722

Note: CYBVICS scores represent total scores, whereas GSE, BRS and PWB scores represent mean scores

Mann-Whitney U test

A Mann-Whitney U test was utilized to identify any potential differences that may exist between the graduate students and the post-graduate students. Findings indicate that both groups were statistically equivalent in terms of cyber victimization ($U = 12087.50$, $z = -1.047$, $p = .295$), general self-efficacy ($U = 11952.00$, $z = -1.209$, $p = .227$), Resilience ($U = 11852.50$, $z = -1.332$, $p = .183$). In contrast, psychological well-being did demonstrate a statistically significant difference, specifically that post-graduate students (Mean Rank = 172.29) were significantly higher than graduate students (Mean Rank = 150.71); $U = 11223.00$, $z = -2.082$, $p = .037$

Table 2: Mann-Whitney U test among study variables

Variables	Mean Rank ¹	Mean Rank ²	N	U	Z	P
CYBVICS	166.92	156.08	161	12087.5	-1.047	0.295
GSE	155.24	167.76	161	11952	-1.209	0.227
BRS	154.62	168.38	161	11852.5	-1.332	0.183
PWB	150.71	172.29	161	11223	-2.082	0.037

Spearman Correlation

To examine the relationship between Cyber-victimization, general self-efficacy, Resilience and Psychological Well-Being Spearman correlation was computed between the scores of variables (N = 346). Cyber-victimization showed a significant weak negative correlation with Psychological Well-being, ($r_s = -0.278$, $p < .001$). General Self-efficacy is significantly and positively correlated with Psychological Well-being Where ($r_s = 0.490$, $p < .001$). Similarly, Resilience is significantly and positively correlated with Psychological Well-being, ($r_s = 0.443$, $p < .001$)

Table 3: Spearman Correlation among study variables

Note ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Variables		CYBVICS	GSE	BRS	PWB
CYBVICS	r_s	1	-0.81	-0.120*	-0.278**
	Sig.		0.135	0.026	<.001
	N	346	346	346	346
GSE	r_s	-0.081	1	0.446**	0.490**
	Sig.	0.135		<.001	<.001
	N	346	346	346	346
BRS	r_s	-.120*	0.446**	1	0.443**
	Sig.	0.26	<.001		<.001
	N	346	346		346
PWB	r_s	-.278**	.490**	.443**	1
	Sig.	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	346	346	346	

5. Discussion

The current study, Examining the relationship between cyber-victimization, general self-efficacy, resilience, and psychological well-being among young adults, examined the directionality and nature of relationship between cyber-victimization, general self-efficacy, resilience and psychological well-being among a young adult population. The study also examined if there were significant differences in these variables across education levels. In terms of education, a Mann-Whitney U test was performed in order to compare the psychological well-being of postgraduate students with graduate students given that the data was not normally distributed and therefore a non-parametric test would be appropriate. Several statistically significant and theoretically important finding were uncovered which are all presented below.

Similar to past findings, this study found a significant and robust negative correlation between cyber-victimization and psychological well-being, which suggests that young adults who report more experiences of cyber-victimization including harassment, exclusion and bullying, also tend to report poorer psychological well-being, lower levels of life satisfaction and a higher degree of psychological distress and compromised functioning. This is consistent with findings from Cénat and colleagues (2020) who found a similar significant negative

association between cyber-victimization and psychological well-being. Cénat et al. Noted that the negative mental health outcomes can be attributed to the insidious and anonymous nature of online aggression, which creates the perception of not being safe or predictably interacting within one's own environment. These results, therefore, further supports that cyber-victimization is an actual environmental stressor that has negative impacts on the psychological functioning of young adults.

A significant positive correlation was found between general self-efficacy and psychological well-being which indicated that people who believe they can perform self-directed behaviours that can produce a certain outcome will have better mental health. This supports social cognitive theory proposed by Bandura (1997) that self-efficacy plays a significant role in the way individuals interpret events, as well as how they will respond and behave under certain circumstances. Those individuals who possess a greater sense of self-efficacy are also more likely to view situations as attainable, giving them a higher sense of locus of control and a more optimistic mindset which can then lead to greater levels of self-esteem and consequently higher psychological well-being. these findings are similar to findings from Huang et al. (2021) who found that high self-efficacious college students were more likely to view difficult situations as controllable rather than threatening and have a greater positive cognitive orientation, less anxiety and depression and higher levels of life satisfaction than low self-efficacious students. Individuals with high self-efficacy are also more likely to utilize effective strategies to overcome obstacles (i.e., adaptive problem focused coping skills) to reduce the impact of stress.

In the same way as self-efficacy, resilience was positively associated with psychological well-being which supports that the ability to positively recover from setbacks, maintain psychological equilibrium, and persevere under stress is crucial for good mental health in young adults. Resilient individuals engage in many adaptive socio-emotional skills to mediate the impacts of various life events including cognitive restructuring, positive reappraisal, and positive affective states which promote higher psychological well-being. Luo et al. (2025) study involving over 17,000 youth found resilience to be significantly positively correlated with well-being outcomes. They Stated that self-acceptance and life satisfaction were mediators for resilience and may serve as a generativity resource for these outcomes which in turn affects one's overall well-being.

Secondly, the study sought to examine if the variables, cyber-victimization, general self-efficacy, resilience and psychological well-being, were significantly different across educational level groups (graduate students and post-graduates). The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the groups. As per the findings, there was no significant difference in cyber-victimization, general self-efficacy, and resilience between graduate and postgraduate students. This suggests that these factors might remain constant among these groups in early adulthood.

There was, however, a statistically significant difference found in psychological well-being between graduate and

post-graduate students. Post-graduates experienced greater psychological well-being than graduates. This difference warrants considerable discussion. Higher education beyond a Master's Degree often provides opportunities for further intellectual exploration and clarification of individual identities, personal aims, and aspirations which are elements that Ryff (1989) suggested make up eudaimonic well-being. Furthermore, post-graduate students have developed additional skills in emotional regulation, have larger social networks and stronger coping repertoires as time moves forward. Also, differences in educational environments may influence well-being such as pedagogical style, social norms, institutional structures, and availability of mental health resources. Graduate level learning may produce additional stresses on one's mental health including academic demands, occupational ambiguity and life direction uncertainty which hinder psychological well-being. Post-graduates, in having successfully endured and moved past this phase, may now more accurately perceive and match their personal goals to their environments and report greater well-being as a result.

6. Conclusion

The relationships between young adults' psychological health, resilience, self-efficacy, and cyber-victimization were investigated in this study. The findings demonstrated a negative correlation between cyber-victimization and psychological well-being, while resilience and self-efficacy revealed a positive correlation. These findings expand our understanding of factors related to the psychological well-being of young adults in the digital age. In order to support and enhance the psychological wellbeing of young people, the results highlight the importance of developing resilience and self-efficacy in addition to actions to reduce cyber-victimization.

7. Implications

As a result of conducting this study, we have found that young adults experiences of cyber-victimization are negatively associated with psychological Well-being. This research will add to the influencing elements associated with the psychological health of young adults and support the need to establish resilience building programs, create and strengthen mental health resources for young adults, and provide resources for cyberbullying prevention efforts in schools to improve the overall psychological health of young adults.

8. Limitations

- 1) Self-report measures were used exclusively to collect data from participants and the transparency of responses can be influenced by social desirability, and how the participants view themselves.
- 2) The participants were all young adults thus lacking generalization of results to people of other age groups or cultural backgrounds.
- 3) The study did not include looking at possible variables that might influence the participant's experiences of cyber victimization as well as their psychological well-being, such as social support, family circumstances, personality characteristics, and the ways of social media usage.

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