

**ASSESSMENT OF THE USE OF SOCIAL
MEDIA AS TOOLS FOR BULLYING AMONG
KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work has been completed, read through and approved as meeting the requirement of the Department of Mass Communication, Institute of Information Communication Technology Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin in partial fulfillment for the award of National Diploma (ND) Mass Communication.

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DEDICATION

This work is sincerely dedicated to Almighty, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, for granting me life, health, and wisdom throughout the course of this study. His divine guidance has been my greatest strength.

I also dedicate this project to my beloved parents for their unwavering support, prayers, and encouragement, as well as to my entire family and well-wishers who stood by me with love and motivation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Certification	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	4
1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study	5
1.4 Research Questions	6
1.5 Significance of the Study	6
1.6 Scope of the Study	7
1.7 Operational Definition of Key Terms	7
CHAPTER TWO	9
LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Conceptual Framework	10
2.2.1 An Analysis of Social Media	10
2.2.2 Concept of Social Media	13
2.2.3 Classification of Social Media	20
2.2.4 Features of Social Media	23
2.2.6 Types of Bullying	29

2.2.7 Prevalence of Bullying	30
2.2.8 Bullying And School Environment	32
2.2.9 Bullying And Academic Performance of Students	33
2.2.10 Bullying And Mental Health	37
2.2.11 Cyberbullying	39
2.2.12 Social Media Use And Cyberbullying	43
2.2.13 Cyberbullying As Crime In Nigeria	45
2.3 theoretical Framework	47
2.3.1 Online Disinhibition Effect theory	47
2.3.2 Routine Activities Theory (RAT)	49
2.4 Empirical Review	51
CHAPTER THREE	55
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	55
3.0 Introduction	55
3.1 Research Design	55
3.2 Research Method	56
3.3 Population of the Study	56
3.4 Sample Size	57
3.5 Sampling Technique	57
3.6 Research Instrument	59
3.7 Validity of the Instrument	59
3.8 Reliability of the Instrument	59
3.9 Method of Administration of the Research Instrument	60
3.10 Method of Data Analysis	60

CHAPTER FOUR	61
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION	61
4.0 Introduction	61
4.1 Analysis of Field Performance of the Instrument	61
4.2 Analysis of Research Questions	70
4.3 Discussion of Findings	74
CHAPTER FIVE	75
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	75
5.1 Summary	75
5.2 Conclusion	76
5.3 Recommendations	77
REFERENCES	80

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The era in which we live is the era of knowledge explosion, the digital revolution, and rapid changes in all areas. Social networks find great success and popularity among members of society, linking human relations between countries and continents (Hanel, L. 2020). The world has become a small village that one can travel through its continents and countries by controlling some buttons on the keyboard of a computer or mobile device (Trolley Shields, 2016).

Social networking sites began to emerge in the late 1990s, with Classmates.com (1995) used to connect colleagues. A series of social networks emerged between the years 1999-2001 but could not continue. The real birth of social networking, as we know it today, came with the emergence of Friendster, which was a great success at the time. In the second half of the same year, the Sky rock network appeared in France as a blogging platform. At the beginning of 2005, the American My Space site exceeded the number of views of Google at that time and became one of the first and largest social networks in the world, competing with Facebook, which began to spread parallel to My Space but attracted large numbers of users worldwide (Wang & Nansel, 2019).

Since 2010, the use of mobile phones and the Internet has expanded substantially. Smartphone users worldwide climbed from 62.6 million in 2010 to 224.3 million. The spread of communication technology has connected 2.32 billion people, transforming how they interact. Approximately 88.5 percent of the U.S. population had access to the Internet, with about 324,118,787 million users. Individuals may now keep in contact with friends and family while meeting new

people from all over the globe, thanks to the development of new and better communication tools (Live Internet Stats, 2016).

However, this high degree of connection also has negative implications, such as the emergence of cyberbullying. As people's access to technology and social media grows, cyberbullying has become increasingly frequent, particularly among adults (Carter, 2015). Some of the hazards of modern communication tools are highlighted by stories of anonymous abuse and its terrible effects on victims.

Adesuru (2017) states that in today's society, there are several ways in which people are victimized by bullying. Some of the traditional face-to-face encounters of bullying usually start in neutral social settings such as playgrounds, classrooms, and schoolyards. These settings have been at the forefront of studies for quite some time; however, cyberbullying is a new form of bullying that has emerged and virtually caused a tidal wave of despair. Bullying is a negative behavior repeated over time and takes different forms, delivered directly or through technology. While its beginnings are still in school students, the evolution of this behavior is the result of industrial and technological development, along with the increase in the phenomenon of cyberbullying among adolescents, who use the Internet by 93% and 75% use smartphones and their various applications, which increases the negative effects on all aspects of growth (Schneider, Donnell, Stueve, & Couter, 2022).

Many of these acts primarily involve name-calling, threats, spreading rumors, sharing another person's private information, social isolation, and exclusion. It may be more subtle and covert and can be perpetrated faster and, in more environments, than traditional forms of bullying (Beran & Li, 2015).

Although different terms are used to refer to the phenomenon of what we designate here as 'cyberbullying'—electronic bullying, internet bullying, internet harassment, online harassment, etc. (e.g., Willard, 2006; David Ferdon and

Feldman, 2017; Kowalski, Limber, Agatston, 2018 and 2012; Kowalski and Limber, 2017; Ybarra, Espelage, and Mitchell, 2017)—the literature can agree on its main characteristics. Cyberbullying includes behaviors such as contempt in online chatrooms or intentionally harming another person by sending an offensive text or fabricated video. Electronic space is a powerful means of bullying, making perpetrators bolder because it enables them to stay anonymous, sometimes using fictitious accounts with names and images that are not real. Many discussions that take place are not supervised, making it difficult for victims to avoid those who have the potential to bully (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008).

The negative impacts of cyberbullying are numerous. Consequences of cyberbullying can include poor academic performance, school dropout, physical violence, and suicide. It is a method of bullying that is frequently hidden from adults (Willard, 2016a). According to Patchin and Hinduja (2018), cyberbullying is linked to serious effects such as low self-esteem, family problems, academic problems, school violence, and delinquent behavior. However, the worst consequences are suicide and violence. While cyberbullying has some of the same negative impacts as traditional face-to-face bullying, it can be done without any physical contact or knowledge of the perpetrator's identity (Willard, 2016).

These random acts of harassment go well beyond the scope of traditional face-to-face bullying because, unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying can occur not only at school but in the home and anywhere technology is accessible (Shariff & Hoff, 2017; Stover, 2016; Strom & Strom, 2015). Studies have suggested that although it may occur less frequently than face-to-face bullying, up to 70% of students in the United States have experienced cyberbullying (Juvonen & Gross, 2018; Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2019).

Hinduja & Patchin (2018) stated that cyberbullying is the unfortunate byproduct of the union of aggression and electronic communication, and its growth is giving cause for concern. While bullying among students is a recalcitrant problem in Nigerian tertiary institutions, research indicates that many students do not disclose bullying they experience or witness despite repeated efforts (Delara, 2012). The opportunity to conduct research on cyberbullying is timely due to its wide prevalence and the social concern that surrounds it. On this note, this study seeks to assess the impact of social media on bullying among students in Kwara State Polytechnic.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Cyberbullying is a serious problem that has become increasingly prevalent in recent years, as more people spend time on social media and other online platforms. According to Petrocelli (2015), cyberbullying involves the use of electronic communication to harass, intimidate, or threaten someone, often with the intent of causing them harm or distress. Victims of cyberbullying may experience a range of negative consequences, including psychological trauma, social isolation, and damage to their reputation and personal relationships.

The prevalence, nature, and negative social consequences of cyberbullying have led to growing public concern regarding its presence in the online environment. Because social media encourages users to exchange information within the community, as well as to use new features and applications that expose additional personal information (Ellison, 2017), it provides a new, effective, and efficient means to perform stalking behavior at the expense of a relatively large number of potential victims. First, the large network size, combined with numerous privacy

leaks in public networks, makes it extremely convenient for individuals to unethically, unlawfully, or immorally stalk others using social media tools.

According to Felix W. (2021), social media platforms have a unique role to play in preventing and addressing cyberbullying, given their widespread use and the fact that they are often the primary site of cyberbullying incidents. On this note, this study seeks to provide insight into the use of social media as tools for bullying among polytechnic students.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of social media as a tool for bullying among polytechnic students. Thus, the specific objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the level of exposure to bullying on social media among Kwara polytechnic students.
2. To investigate the factors promoting bullying behavior on social media among Kwara polytechnic students.
3. To ascertain the impact of social media bullying on the mental health and well-being of Kwara polytechnic students.
4. To investigate the attitude and perception of Kwara polytechnic students towards social media bullying.
5. To determine the level of application of media literacy on social media bullying among Kwara polytechnic students.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the level of exposure to bullying on social media among Kwara polytechnic students?
2. What are the factors promoting bullying behavior on social media among Kwara polytechnic students?
3. What are the impacts of social media bullying on the mental health and wellbeing of Kwara polytechnic students?
4. What are the attitudes and perceptions of Kwara polytechnic students towards social media bullying?
5. What is the level of application of media literacy on social media bullying among Kwara polytechnic students?

1.5 Significance of the Study

It is the belief of the researcher that this study will contribute valuable insights, awareness, and solutions to the phenomenon under study. This study will inform educational institutions, like Kwara Polytechnic, about the nature and extent of social media bullying among their students. Also, this study will bring awareness to the acts of cyberbullying and show its prevalence in activities involving students. The results of this study will underscore the effects of cyberbullying and shed more light on why cyberbullies choose cyberspace. It will also highlight the forms of psychological disturbances that victims of cyberbullying experience and various measures social media provides in curbing and discouraging cyberbullying. This study will be an addition to steps aimed at providing a safer online community by reducing or eliminating cyberbullying.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study covers the use of social media as tools for bullying among polytechnic students. The study will be carried out in Ilorin, Kwara State. Focus shall be on students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. Samples shall be taken from all five institutes in the institution. The institutes are: Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT), Institute of Finance and Management Studies (IFMS), Institute of Environmental Studies (IES), Institute of Applied Sciences (IAS), and Institute of Technology (IOT).

1.7 Operational Definition of Key Terms

It is essential to provide operational definitions for key terms in this study to ensure clarity and precision on various concepts used in this study. The following are the definitions of key terms used in this study:

- **Social Media:** Refers to digital platforms and online communication channels that facilitate user-generated content sharing, interaction, and networking. This includes, but is not limited to, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and online forums where students engage in virtual social interactions.
- **Bullying:** In the context of this study, refers to intentional and repetitive aggressive behaviors, either direct or indirect, carried out by individuals or groups through social media platforms. This includes actions that cause harm, fear, or distress to others, encompassing forms such as cyberbullying, online harassment, or digital intimidation.

- **Cyberbullying:** Inflammatory communication by individuals through electronic means, like posting threatening or embarrassing messages that are vulgar or harmful to the victim's image or emotions.
- **Tools for Bullying:** "Tools for bullying" encompass the various features, functionalities, and communication channels within social media platforms that individuals may exploit to engage in bullying behaviors. This includes text messages, comments, direct messages, images, videos, and other media shared or disseminated through social media.
- **Prevalence:** Refers to the frequency and extent of social media bullying incidents among Kwara Polytechnic students during a specified period. It involves quantifying the occurrence of bullying behaviors within the given context.
- **Media Literacy:** Involves the ability of Kwara Polytechnic students to critically analyze, evaluate, and interpret information encountered on social media. It includes skills related to recognizing misinformation, understanding digital ethics, and navigating online communication responsibly.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The credence of various media and communication channels allows members of the public to gain information and awareness on various matters, including issues such as epidemics that are spreading among society (Alan exal, 2016). Media channels and communications were previously divided into three categories: electronic media, such as television and radio, as well as print media, such as magazines, books, and newspapers (Hamid, 2016). The use of traditional media, such as print and electronic media, until the 1980s has now undergone transformation and evolution to the use of new media digital technology, such as the internet, digital television, computer software, online publications, video games, and social media networks, such as Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and others (Omar et al., 2015).

The evolution of media and communication usage reveals new media, referred to as more dominant in the context of its use by the community in this era, compared to the use of electronic media, print media, broadcast media, and other interpersonal media (Mustafa & Hamzah, 2011). In fact, social media has also been compared to having more benefits than electronic media or print media in terms of its ability to deliver information to the public more quickly (Salleh, 2016).

This chapter will present a review of relevant literature to the subject matter of investigation in this study. Akinwumiju (2017) describes the review of related literature as involving the systematic identification, location, and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem. The literature

review also helps to avoid unproductive approaches, achieve methodological insights, find recommendations for further research, and look for how to support grounded theory (Omopupa, 2016). This chapter will be divided into the following sections:

1. Conceptual Framework
2. Theoretical Framework
3. Empirical Review

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 An Analysis of Social Media

When we think of social media, we generally think of Facebook and Twitter. However, in reality, it is more than that (Razaq, A. 2019).

The earliest ways to send messages over long distances were probably both audio and visual. People used to communicate smoke signals by day and beacon fires by night in ancient China, Egypt, and Greece. Drums were used in many parts of the world to extend the range of the human voice for communication as well. The seeds of social media were sown during 550 BC when the regular postal system was established in Iran, where horse riders and horse-drawn wagons carried mail. Usually, mail consisted of governmental dispatches and was delivered from one place to another.

The 18th and 19th centuries were breakthrough periods where devices like the telegraph (1792), telephone (1890), and radio (1891) ushered in a new era of sending and receiving messages over long distances. The increasing number of express messages between businesses, financial and legal offices, and banks in growing cities, as well as busy street traffic, gave rise to new methods of telegram

and letter transportation. The pneumatic post was introduced to combat the shortcomings of the telegraphic network in Paris.

The invention of the telephone and radio took the meaning of communication to another level. The 20th century was marked by the growth and development of the internet. With the growth and development of the internet, there came an era of exchange of messages from one person to another digitally or via the web. Email, ARPANET, USENET, BBS (Bulletin Board System), IRC (Internet Relay Chat), Listserv, Blogger, Six Degrees, and Napster were some of the important sites for social interactions and sharing.

The 21st century saw a spurt in the growth of social networking sites with the launch of Friendster, Fotolog, Photobucket, Flickr, Orkut, Facebook, Ning, Digg, Twitter, Netlog, YouTube, etc. Social media has come a long way since the days of the telegraph and even the more recent days of internet relay chats (IRC), and it continues to evolve. In the last few years, social media has become a convention of the online landscape. Major social networks and social media websites make changes and improvements on a fairly regular basis, so it is sure to keep evolving in the coming years.

In 1979, Duke University graduate students Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis teamed up with the idea of networked communication over computers for the exchange of information. This idea was executed in 1980 (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) and "Usenet" was launched worldwide, which was the first genuine attempt at social networking. Various discussion groups were held covering a wide variety of topics from humanities, sciences, business, politics, computers, and other areas. The discussion forums on these websites were called "newsgroups" (Goldsborough, 2015).

By 1992, the Internet became one of the most popular networking tools, which linked researchers and educators. Marc Andreessen headed a team at NSF centers that successfully developed a browser to develop NCAMosaic, or popularly known as Mosaic. In less than 18 months of its introduction, Mosaic became the browser of choice for almost over a million users. This set off an exponential growth in the area of decentralizing information and connecting people, and led to the development of Microsoft's Internet Explorer (Andreessen, 2003, cited in Agboola, J.B. 2019).

Founded in October 1998 by Bruce Ableson and Susan Ableson, "Open Diary" was the next attempt at social networking. This website brought together people from various fields who wrote diaries or blogs, as we now call them, on a common platform to share their views and perspectives on various topics (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). As the Internet matured and became more widely available in the late 1990s, there was an explosion of social media websites.

In 1999, social media websites like Blogger and Face party appeared, and post-2000, Wikipedia, Picasa, Friendster, Flickr, and other sites were created. The number of active monthly users each of these social media sites generates is given below. The social networking site Facebook is currently one of the leaders in social media, with video sharing site YouTube a close second. The growth of social networking, a revolution in social networking, came with the advent of newer social networking websites based on Web 2.0.

In 2002, Friendster used the concept of degrees of separation. It promoted the idea of social networking by creating rich bonds among people who knew each other directly or via certain friends and provided a common platform for them for social interaction. With the success of Friendster, many other social networking sites

followed. LinkedIn, launched in 2003, created a professional platform for workbased interaction. It is more than a mere playground for teenagers and classmates. LinkedIn is a serious platform for working people who want to connect with other professionals and expand their contact networks. As of January 2014, LinkedIn reported 300 million registered users on its website (<https://www.linkedin.com/about-us>). MySpace, which was also launched in 2003, has almost 10 times fewer (36 million as of October 2013) monthly active users than LinkedIn.

However, Facebook, launched in 2004 for Harvard students and opened to the general public in 2006, is currently the most frequented social networking website. As of August 2023, Facebook claims 2.9 billion active users (<https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/>). To put this number in perspective, if Facebook were a country, it would be the most populous nation.

2.2.2 Concept of Social Media

Over the years, many scholars have been able to distinctively define and clarify the concept of social media. In their definitions and clarifications, the concept of social media has been used interchangeably with social networking sites. Likewise, in this section, the word will be used interchangeably.

Social media are elements of the new media and, according to Danny (2010), have become the highest activity on the internet today. The concept of "social media" or "social networking site" is broadly used to refer to websites that enable users to articulate a network of connections of people with whom they wish to share access to profile information, news, status updates, comments, photos, or other forms of content.

In defining social media, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) provided a general definition of social media in consideration of Web 2.0 and User-Generated Content. According to them, social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content. They also went further to describe social media as a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

Nwanton, Odoemalarnn, Orji-Egwu, Nwankwo, and Nweze (2015) define social media as those internet-based tools and services that allow users to engage with each other, generate content, distribute, and search for information online. Parr (2017) defines social media as the use of electronic and internet tools for the purpose of sharing and discussing information and experiences with other human beings in more efficient ways.

On the other hand, Jantsch (2018) considers social media as the use of technology combined with social interaction to create or co-create value. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (2017), social media is a form of electronic communication (as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos), while Dykeman (2018) acknowledges social media as "the means for any person to publish digital, creative content; provide and obtain real-time feedback via online discussions, commentary, and evaluations; and incorporate changes or corrections to the original content" (Dykeman, 2018).

Bryer and Zavatarro (2015) described social media as technologies that smooth the progress of social interaction, make possible collaboration, and enable deliberation across stakeholders. These technologies now include blogs, wikis, media (audio, photo, video, text) sharing tools, networking platforms, and virtual worlds. Social Media Online is primarily internet- and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information by users. The term, according to Andreas and Michael (2010), refers to "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content."

Drury (2018) describes social media as online resources that people use to share content: video, photos, images, text, ideas, insight, humor, opinion, gossip, and news. Safko and Brake (2019) further defined social media as "activities, practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media." Kietzmann, Silvestre, McCarthy, and Leylan (2012) describe social media as the platform that employs mobile and web-based technology to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify usergenerated content.

Davis, Canche, Deil-Amen, and Rios-Aguilar (2012) refer to social media technology (SMT) as web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to create, engage, and share new user-generated or existing content in digital environments through multi-way communication. Through this platform, individuals and organizations create profiles, share, and exchange information on various activities and interests. An interesting aspect of social media is that it is not limited to desktop or laptop computers but can be accessed through mobile

applications and smartphones, making it very accessible and easy to use. Examples of these social media platforms, both on the web and mobile applications, include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, blogs, etc.

According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), "social networking sites are webbased service platforms that enable individuals to create a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and navigate their list of contacts and those made by others within the system" (p. 21). These sites are used to interact with friends, peers, and others that are found in groups on these sites. The sharing of information ranges from news, debates, gossip, feelings or statements of mind, opinions, research, etc. Curtis (2011) affirms that social media appears in many forms, including blogs and microblogs, forums and message boards, social networks, wikis, virtual worlds, social bookmarking, and video sharing.

According to Junco (2018), social media are collections of internet websites, services, and practices that support collaboration, community building, participation, and sharing. Nwangwa and Omotere (2014) simply regard social media as comprising online applications for social networking sites, social bookmarking and sharing tools, social citation tools, blogging and microblogging tools, virtual worlds, e-conference presentation sharing tools, audio and video tools, e-project management tools, and research and writing collaboration tools; primarily developed to foster user-centered social interaction.

Social media can be seen as either web-based or application-based media of communication that allows registered individuals to share ideas, thoughts, opinions, interact, and collaborate with other registered users all over the world. The inclusion of application-based media of communication is largely due to the ability to make

use of social media on mobile gadgets such as smartphones, tablets, iPhones, Symbian, and Java phones.

Elshout (2012) writes that social networks form a good platform for organizing countervailing power by political activists and consumers. Social media is a form of electronic communication that facilitates interaction based on certain interests and characteristics. Boyd and Ellison (2007) state that social media are media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. They use web-based technologies to transform and broadcast media monologues into social dialogues. They support the democratization of knowledge and information and transform people from content consumers to content producers.

In the same vein, Olayinka (2013, p. 11) observes that the rapid growth of social media activities in the last few years is indicative of its entry into mainstream culture and its integration into the daily lives of many people because it disseminates information at a very high speed, is cheaper, and enhances immediate feedback as an interactive media. Social media are web-based and mobile technologies that facilitate interaction between organizations, communities, and individuals. Important characteristics are that the technologies are ubiquitous, communication is instantaneous, and they enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, and WeChat are just a few of the hundreds of applications that make participatory information sharing and social networking possible. These instruments are referred to as media because they are tools that can also be used for the storage and dissemination of information.

The scope of social networking sites as information sources has been discussed by different scholars (e.g., Dugan et al., 2018; Skeels & Grudin, 2019; Steinfield, DiMicco, Ellison, & Lampe, 2009; Morris et al., 2012). They noted that:

1. Only humans can provide certain types of information such as opinions, advice, and recommendations.
2. The information sources are personally known to the user to a greater or lesser extent, and are therefore trusted sources and have cognitive authority.
3. Users can provide localized (geographically specific) information and current or time-sensitive information.
4. Information provided by users is customized for the requester.
5. Social contacts can perform intermediary functions of researching, synthesizing, and packaging information.
6. Users are able to broadcast a question to a known group of people.
7. Users can obtain emotional and social support.

However, unlike traditional media like television and radio, most of the social media tools allow their users to interact, as "retweeting" on Twitter and "comment" options on Facebook illustrate. Looking at social media from a more practical point of view, Sweetser and Lariscy (2018) define social media as a "read-write Web, where the online audience moves beyond passive viewing of web content to actually contributing to the content."

One thing that is common in the definitions of social media reviewed in this work is the view that it is based on user-generated participation. The opportunity to enjoy user-to-user interaction distinguishes social media from traditional media, which is characterized by top-down news dissemination arrangements (Clark & Aufderheide, 2019).

Another attribute of social media that distinguishes it from traditional media is the choice it affords its users. Choice enables people to access the information they like to learn about through social media, eliminating the gatekeeper role of traditional media. On one hand, the choice offered by social media reduces the shared experience that viewers of particular traditional media channels usually have; on the other hand, it creates a network of individuals with like interests and similar preferences.

The two primary tools that have enabled people to socialize and connect with each other online are social networking sites and electronic messaging. More than half of Nigerian teens and young adults send electronic messages and use social networking sites, and more than one-third of all internet users engage in these activities (Gabriel & Bamidele, 2019).

In Nigeria, internet users are estimated, as of October 2017, at 70,101,452, with a 16% growth rate when compared with the 2013 figure, and it is 2.30% of the country's share of the world internet users (Internet Live Stats, 2018). Nigeria is also the third most active African country on Twitter (Mejabi & Fagbule, 2014). Most people who use social media tools access them mainly through computers and mobile devices such as phones and Tablet PCs.

Analysts suggest that the majority of phone purchases in the coming years will be more for using online networks rather than making phone calls (Baekdal, 2018). Politicians in Nigeria are joining the online community to communicate with their audiences because they believe they are a key demographic that shapes and influences perception. Thus, phone communication is now tending toward one-to-many sharing rather than the usual one-to-one conversation.

2.2.3 Classification of Social Media

Social media can be classified into the following categories:

1. **Social Networking Sites:** A social networking site provides a web-based platform for building social networks or social relations among people, e.g., shared interests or activities. They provide a means to interact over the internet, email, and now even mobile phones. The most popular websites offering social networking currently are MySpace (started in 2003), LinkedIn (started in 2003), Facebook (started in 2004), and Twitter (started in 2006). A social networking site allows a user to create profiles or personal homepages online and build up a social network. The profile page thus created is like the user's personalized webpage and contains profile information of the user like gender, religion, orientation, interests, place of birth, current location, marital status, books liked, etc. The page can be customized as the user wants and can include video clips, music files, or photos. Also included on the page is a list of friends that form the user's network. Typically, these friends are actual friends, acquaintances, and even strangers who may have sent a friend request, and the user has included them in his/her list.
2. **Blogs:** A blog (derived from the word "weblog") is an online journal where an individual, group, or corporation presents a record of activities, thoughts, or beliefs. There are many websites that allow users to create blogs without paying any fee, like WordPress.com, Blogspot.com, and Blogger.com. Anyone can create a blog on these websites, and these blogs can be accessed by anyone by typing the web address or URL (Uniform Resource Locator). Another popular subcategory of blogs is microblogging. A microblogging

site is like any blog except for its limits on the number of words that can be published in one message. Twitter.com is an example of microblogging.

3. **Content Generating and Sharing Sites:** These sites serve as sources of information for various topics. Photo-sharing sites like Flickr.com, Picasaweb.google.com, video sharing sites like YouTube.com, slide sharing sites like Slideshare.com, and document sharing sites like Docstoc.com all fall under this category. These sites serve as free content for all users of the internet. Users can search for content, download, and use the content available on these sites without any fee. The content is also generated by the users. This type of user-generated content is also known as crowdsourcing. Video and PowerPoint presentations can be shared and uploaded on YouTube and Slideshare. This is a major advantage for most people who are unable to access educational resources.
4. **User Appraisal Sites:** User appraisal sites serve as a platform for appraisals of various products and services. Though it is possible for consumers to express their views in any medium, user appraisal sites mainly deal with such reviews. Sites like www.mouthshut.com and www.pagalguy.com are prime examples of such websites. These websites serve as a starting point of the consumer's decision-making model for gathering information about products or services they are contemplating buying. As such, these sites serve as important word-of-mouth for consumers and a source of expressing postpurchase feedback.

However, there are already thousands of social media applications, and new ones are emerging. Social media is constantly evolving, and its uses are changing and expanding (Cohen, 2011). In addition, "social media is different things to

different people" (Ham, 2011). All these factors make it difficult to categorize social media applications.

Considering that social media comes in diverse forms, Adaja and Ayodele (2018) further classified social media into seven distinct categories:

1. Collaborative projects (for example, Wikipedia)
2. Blogs and Microblogs (for example, Twitter)
3. Content communities (for example, YouTube)
4. Social networking sites (for example, Facebook, Instagram)
5. Simple messaging platforms (for example, WhatsApp)
6. Virtual game worlds (for example, World of Warcraft)
7. Virtual social worlds (for example, Second Life)

Out of these seven categories of social media tools, four categories (blogs and microblogs, content communities, simple messaging platforms, collaborative projects, and social networking sites) are the most relevant applications of social media used among higher institutions.

On the other hand, Mangold and Faulds (2019) described social media more broadly. According to them, social media can encompass every software program or website with which a person shares ideas, thoughts, pictures, audio, music, video, and other content. They have subcategorized social media into fifteen different categories, which include the following (Mangold & Faulds, 2019):

1. Social Networking Sites (e.g., MySpace, Facebook, Faceparty)
2. Creative Works Sharing Sites:
 - Video sharing sites (YouTube)
 - Photo sharing sites (Flickr)
 - Music sharing sites (Jamendo)

- Content sharing combined with assistance (Piczo)
 - General intellectual property sharing sites (Creative Commons)
3. User-sponsored blogs (Cnet.com)
 4. Company-sponsored websites/blogs (Apple Weblog)
 5. Company-sponsored cause/help sites (click.2quit.com)
 6. Invitation-only social networks (ASmallWorld.net)
 7. Business networking sites (LinkedIn)
 8. Collaborative websites (Wikipedia)
 9. Virtual Worlds (Second Life)
 10. Commerce Communities (eBay, Amazon, Craigslist, iStockphoto)
 11. Podcasts
 12. News delivery sites (Current TV)
 13. Educational material sharing (MIT Open Course Ware, TED)
 14. Open Source Software communities (Linux, Mozilla)
 15. Social bookmarking sites allowing users to recommend online news stories, music, videos, etc.

2.2.4 Features of Social Media

With the maturation of Web 2.0 technology, social media has reached almost everyone around the world as long as they have electronic devices connected to the Internet. It has already been integrated into part of our daily lives. Nevertheless, when people are discussing the widely circulated term social media, very few have truly understood the essence of social media.

Understanding the characteristics of social media is not only important for individuals but also crucial for students. Even though thousands of articles and blog

posts have been discussing social media from different aspects, there is quite little theoretical literature that systematically describes the properties of social media. To my delight, several articles still provide great descriptions of social media characteristics. Mayfield (2018) pointed out five fundamental characteristics shared by almost all social media platforms: participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness.

Taprial and Kanwar (2016) identify five properties that are more powerful and distinguish social media from traditional media. They are accessibility, speed, interactivity, longevity, and reach. Based on the literature on social media, nine characteristics of social media can be summarized as follows:

1. **Community:** Community in social media shares the same features with other online and virtual communities, which are formed based on people who share the same interests or backgrounds. However, there are differences in which the network formed in social media is often an extension of the network in the real world, and trust in social media networks is usually higher than in other communities.
2. **Connectedness:** Social connectedness is defined as interpersonal, community, and general social ties (Teixeira, 2012). From Mayfield's point of view, connectedness is closer to integration in the sense that sites, resources, and people are connected through links and shared by users on various social media platforms.
3. **Openness:** Almost all social media platforms are free to join, and anyone can use social media as a medium to create, edit, communicate, consume, and comment on content (Mayfield, 2018). Social media creates an atmosphere that encourages participation and sharing of information.

4. **Speed:** One of the advantages of online social networks compared with reallife networks is the communication and spread speed. In contrast to traditional word-of-mouth (WOM), where opinions may disappear into thin air, online WOM spreads consistently, resulting in a viral effect. Content published on social media platforms is instantaneous and is available to everyone in your network as soon as it is published (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012).
5. **Accessibility:** Like traditional media, which relies on technology and platforms to function, the same applies to social media, which is the product of Web 2.0 technologies and user-generated content. With the development of different electronic devices, anyone can access social media anywhere and anytime as long as they are connected to the internet.
6. **Participation:** Burgoon et al. (2020) define participation as the extent to which two or more parties are actively engaged in the interaction, in contrast to lurking, passively observing, or monologues. As mentioned before, social media encourages participation and feedback. One party creates content and shares it on the platform to arouse the interest of the other party so that they will actively contribute and give feedback. From this point of view, the line between media and audience becomes blurred as everyone can become creators, communicators, readers, and consumers of content on the platforms, and each individual's identity is shifting all the time (Mayfield, 2018).
7. **Conversational:** Traditional media communicates in one way, in which content is created by media and distributed to the audience, while social media is based on user-generated content, which means everyone becomes the source for communication. This means two-way or multi-way

communication is formed in social media, which aims at fostering interaction among users and other parties.

2.2.5 Concept of Bullying

A major challenge in the research of bullying is the definition of bullying (Espelage et al., 2003). Several unique definitions for bullying exist, but not everyone agrees on it (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008). Research on bullying began over 40 years ago and was defined as aggressive behavior, which is conducted intentionally by an individual or group of people frequently for some time against victims who have no ability to defend themselves (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). Most scholars agree on the definition that bullying is an intentional aggressive act to harm another person and to cause a power imbalance between the aggressor and bullying victims (Dodge, 1991; Olweus, 1993; Rivers & Smith, 1994; Smith & Thompson, 1991). Also, bullying is defined as the dynamic interaction between the aggressor and the victim at which the power of the perpetrator increases while the power of the victim diminishes. As the victims lose their power, they are unable to cope with or respond to the problem (Menesini et al., 2012; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). Bullying involves engaging in repeated actions, such as physical contact, verbal assault, nonverbal gestures, or deliberate social exclusion, and is intentionally designed to inflict harm on individuals who are unable to defend themselves (Feldman, 2014). Nesbit (1999) defined bullying as the unprovoked abuse, which is repeated over an extended time to inflict distress upon a person perceived to be vulnerable in one way, exercising power.

Any deliberate attempt or act capable of inflicting harm on another can be classified as bullying. According to Ringrose (2008, p. 510), "Bullying can be defined as intentional behavior to harm another, repeatedly, where it is difficult for

the victim to defend himself or herself. It assumes an imbalance of power!" Bullying, say Robinson and Segal (2019), is repeated aggressive behavior that can be physical, verbal, or relational, in-person or online. The authors noted that bullies are often relentless, bullying over and over again for long periods of time. They classified bullying into physical, verbal, and relationship-based. According to them, physical bullying includes hitting, kicking, or pushing you (or even just threatening to do so), as well as stealing, hiding, or ruining your things, and hazing, harassment, or humiliation; while verbal bullying includes name-calling, teasing, taunting, insulting, or otherwise verbally abusing you. Relationship bullying, on the other hand, includes refusing to talk to you, excluding you from groups or activities, spreading lies or rumors about you, and making you do things you don't want to do.

According to Durdle (2008), bullying has emerged across studies in Europe and later Australia, where it is perceived to be recognized as a global problem. According to Arseoeaut et al. (2006), the victim of bullying is a risk factor for poor academic performance, especially in elementary and middle schools. Based on a 2009 report, it is known that 90% of students have been bullied, and their grades dropped (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). A previous literature review by Veeotra et al. (2004) noted that bullying and victimization are common in elementary and secondary schools worldwide. The estimated rates of bullying and victimization range from 15% to 25% in Australia (Rigby & Slee, 1991; Kliepera & Gasteiger Kliwpera, 1996), England (Whitney & Smith, 1993; Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schulz, 2001), Finland (Kumpulainen et al., 1998; Kumpulainen & Rasanen, 2000), Germany (Wolke et al., 2001), Norway (Olweus, 1978, 1993b), and the United States (Nansel et al., 2001, p. 672). A school survey in about 40 countries

found that Australian primary schools had higher incidences of bullying from junior high school, especially from grade 7 students (Mullis, Martin, & Foy, 2008).

Bullying is the act of intentionally harming someone, verbally, psychologically, or physically. Bullying is often repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power. The acts of bullying include hitting, pushing, or unwelcome physical contact, teasing and name-calling, reiterated omission of an individual from games and activities, sending threatening or mean-spirited messages in the form of text, chat, or voicemails, and spreading deleterious rumors (Olweus, 2005).

It could be a creator of physical use of force aiming at an individual, another person, or a specific group, which can result in injury, death, physical damage, and/or mental disorder. Bullying is also a state of discomfort that occurs in many parts of the world today (Bonke, 2005). Olweus (2001) defines bullying as a subcategory of interpersonal aggression characterized by intentionality, repetition, and an imbalance of power, with the abuse of power being the primary distinction between bullying and other forms of aggression. Bullying usually takes several forms, from direct physical harm (physical bullying) to verbal taunts and threats (verbal bullying); to exclusion, humiliation, and rumor-spreading (relational or social bullying); to electronic harassment using text, emails, or online mediums (cyberbullying). Although physical and cyberbullying is often of greatest concern, social and verbal bullying is the most common form experienced by students (Vaillancourt, 2010). Espelage (2004) sees bullying as an ecological phenomenon that is established and perpetuated over time as a result of the complex interplay between the individual child, family, peer group, community, and culture. Bullying is usually inherited by some individuals from their parents to achieve some goals

forcefully (Mitchell, 2015). Also, interaction in the culture, school, and other sociopolitical settings could cause others to learn bullying in one way or another.

2.2.6 Types of Bullying

There are five types of bullying, which include physical bullying, verbal bullying, social bullying, reactive victims, and cyberbullying. Each of them has various contexts based on how bullying is conducted by the perpetrators (McLellan & Seddon, 1997). Physical bullying is the most generic form of bullying that exists around the world and is the most prominent type of bullying in Nigeria, which occurs through stereotyping in schools (Elame, 2013). Physical bullying includes hitting or kicking the victim, taking, or damaging the victim's property. This type of bullying is very easy to identify, and all physical bullies are always known by the entire population in schools (Elame, 2013). Other types of school physical bullying include a broader range of physical bullying, defined as hitting, shoving, spitting, beating, stealing, or damaging property (White, 2008). Among the physical bullying that mostly occurs in Nigerian schools, some petty forms of bullying usually occur unnoticed, like punishment by senior students on junior ones, kneeling, and flogging (Elame, 2013).

Verbal bullying involves using specific names to mock, cause hurtful teasing, make racist comments, sexual harassment, and humiliation, or to threaten someone (Naidoo, Satorius, de Vries, & Taylor, 2016). This type of bullying is easy to inflict on other children. It occurs in the least amount of time available, and its effect is more devastating in some ways than physical bullying because it leaves no physical scars (Naidoo et al., 2016). Relational bullies, also known as social bullies, are common among peers, trying to exclude the victim from his or her social connections. This is linked with verbal bullying that occurs with children, mostly

girls, with the spread of nasty rumors about others (Stuart-Cassel, Terzian, & Bradshaw, 2013).

Reactive victims straddle the fence of being a bully and/or victim. They are often the most difficult to identify because, at first glance, they seem to be targeted by other bullies. However, reactive victims often taunt bullies and bully other people themselves. Such victims are defense-driven, and they use verbal or physical retaliation, including shouting and pushing (Burton, Florell, & Gore, 2013).

Cyberbullying involves the imbalance of power, aggression, and repetitive negative actions, but these occur online through instant messages, emails, chat-room posts, or texting (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008). The goal of cyberbullying is to socially embarrass or isolate the victim by having information witnessed publicly (Debue, Bolman, & Vollinkl, 2009).

2.2.7 Prevalence of Bullying

Bullying is a major problem around the globe. Bullying is observed across race, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. It is prevalent in all grades and all schools in Nigeria and can be mild, moderate, or even severe (Smith et al., 1999). Bullying has been the focus of recent international research, policy development, and student performance (Smith et al., 1999). The estimated prevalence of bullying usually depends on how bullying is perceived and who reports the incidence. For example, teachers and parents frequently report fewer cases of bullying behaviors than children and young people (Lodge & Baxter, 2014). In Australia, many incidences of bullying have been obtained from questionnaire data. In a large study conducted, 1 in 6 students (aged between 7 and 17 years) reported being bullied at least once a week, with greater numbers from primary and secondary schools than university students (Rigby, 1997). The example of primary and secondary school

students being more bullied than university students is similar to incidents that occurred in schools in the north and southwest regions of Nigeria (Smith et al., 1999).

An investigation by Juvonen (2011) showed that the incidences of bullying in schools result from victimization, which leads to school adjustment problems of academic achievement, school avoidance, and loneliness. Peer victimization and academic difficulty are also caused by elevated levels of depression due to bullying (Schwartz et al., 2011). Elevated levels of bullying have been witnessed, which are associated with academic disengagement and poor grades in school. Students who are more bullied fall in the range of rank order that receives low grades and engage less in academic tasks than others who are not bullied. Students usually stop classroom participation due to victimization by peers and fear of ridicule (Juvonen, 2011). Even a very small manipulation of social exclusion negatively affects a student's school performance.

Two multi-level models examined the direct link between peer victimization and academic performance to extend past research on peer victimization and academic outcomes. Data drawn from a long-term Australian study of bullying showed that 1 in 3 students between the ages of 10-11 years reported being bullied by peers, with name-calling far more common than physical bullying (Lodge & Baxter, 2013). But name-calling in the Nigerian setting in schools is not regarded as bullying. Most students see more of physical bullying, and this is what really plays a negative role in their academic performance (UNESCO, 2017).

Many young people who bully others have been bullied in the past (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). This is one of the origins of bullying in most areas in the world. Research has shown that children who bully are self-focused, highly competitive,

exhibitionistic, and aggressive (Salmivalli, Kaukianemi, & Lagerspetz, 1999). Other studies propose that children who bully lack empathy and tend to be manipulative and self-seeking in their interpersonal relationships (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996).

Bullying is a significant problem with an impact on the physical and psychological health of those who are bullied (Moon et al., 2011). Students who bully their peers at an early age may gain undue boldness and confidence to engage in more anti-social acts (Moon et al., 2011). In the world, there exist diverse ways of bullying, including verbal harassment, physical assault, and may be directed repeatedly towards victims on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or ability, which have negative effects on the victim (Olweus, 2007). The rate of bullying depends on who reports the present incident and how it occurred, but various researchers have come up with diverse ways of classifying bullying in the world. Given some of the problems associated with data collection, including access to data collection tools, the fact remains that bullying is taking place at unacceptable levels and is making school very unpleasant for many individuals.

2.2.8 Bullying and School Environment

The school environment is not only a safe haven for learning but a place where several activities take place (Smith, 2016). Relational leadership and ethics are complementary approaches applied in schools to regulate bullying (Bosu et al., 2011). For schools to be effective, the school climate, curriculum, resources, and leadership must be balanced to avoid bullying. The leadership skills and characteristics of the school authorities and key stakeholders are very important in the everyday functioning of the school and in influencing the incidence of bullying in the school environment (Cunliffe et al., 2011).

In the African continent, school authorities always face some challenges in executing their duties as they have no support from other agencies. Not only do these authorities have to ensure that children are reaching their potential, but they are also tasked with creating environments that are conducive for learning, by ensuring that these environments are orderly, courteous, and safe (Polanin et al., 2013). A conducive school climate is vital for the effectiveness of learning, as this will determine the level of trust (Maslowski, 2001). Trust within a school environment facilitates the processes necessary for the smooth functioning of the school and the prevention of bullying incidents. If trust is established, cooperation and communication will prevail, both of which are integral to productive relationships, which limits cases of school bullying. Leadership skills and leadership characteristics can mitigate bullying in schools and foster values-based behavior (Smit & Scherman, 2016). When school leaders adopt relational leadership and comply with ethical care, they can counteract overt and covert processes associated with school bullying. This, therefore, creates positive behaviors that contribute to social ways of behaving and exemplify equality and fairness (Smit & Scherman, 2016).

2.2.9 Bullying and Academic Performance of Students

There exists a strong correlation between bullying and academic performance, as evidenced by the student's loss of concentration during lectures. Schools and homes are not always safe due to bullying, and the act of bullying affects the emotional, social, and physical well-being of a school-aged child. The family and the school are the principal areas where bullying is common and practiced (Rigby, 2012). The family is usually the first environment where learning begins, and any sort of bullying that occurs at home affects the child through anger,

which would further be a threat to academic performance in any learning institution. Poor family cohesion, authoritarian parenting, physical abuse, and aggressive behaviors are other forms of bullying a child can learn from home and apply at school, which negatively impacts academic performance (Bond et al., 2009). The victims of abuse are usually disruptive, aggressive, and very violent, causing harm to everyone in the school environment and making studies extremely difficult (Fanti, 2013). Violent behaviors are common among children of low income in the inner city, with outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and poor educational achievement (Woolley, 2009). Both the victimized and the bully are hyperactive, have attention problems, and are always less accepted by their peers (Fanti, 2013). Any problem associated with bullying has a negative impact on students' academic performance.

Exposing students to violence in schools, neighborhoods, and families is a factor that negatively influences academic achievements. Violent exposure, witnessing violent events either in school or neighborhood, and the impacts it has on students' academic achievement are experiences faced by youths. The concentration effects and social disorganization theory are two theories that show how bullying among youths could occur. The concentration of inner cities brings concentration effects. Youths who are exposed to violent behaviors are more likely to engage in similar acts. Boys are always seen to be more aggressive and more violent than girls' responses to violence due to their exposure to depressive symptoms, while boys respond to violence as a coping strategy. It is evident that boys are highly provoked into responding to their peers aggressively than girls. Aggressiveness among boys could be attributed to the frequency in which they experience peer victimization (Espelage, 2004). Adolescents, during their transition to high school, are usually faced with many challenges when exposed to bullying,

which could either build up or affect their development. Exposure often leads to offenses carried back to the school and the community, and any violent behavior in the family will also be portrayed in the school.

It is important to note that not only the victims are usually affected by such bullying behavior, but also the perpetrators. According to Mallia (2009), everyone that is a bully has been bullied before. Students' ability to academically succeed is influenced by bullying as they feel unsafe and stay away from school. Bullied children are weak, shy, and anxious, and stay away from school due to victimization. Continuous victimization leads to poor academic performance (Rose, 2011).

Being bullied is associated with feeling unsafe in schools, loneliness, not belonging at school, and skipping school to avoid victimization. Bullying and victimization are associated with poor academic achievement in schools due to their effects on the students (Kokkinos, 2012). Students do not feel safe and lose interest in attending schools due to harassment from fellow peers. Victimization is negatively associated with poor academic performance in both males and females, as either of them will avoid school due to bullying threats or feel very depressed to study in an environment where they feel unsafe. Bullying and victimization could be directly or indirectly related to psychological maladjustment, school engagement, and peer acceptance, as well as other factors that could mediate these acts of bullying and victimization (Wang, 2011). Victims of bullying are usually exposed to problems such as emotional, behavioral, psychiatric disorders, and poor or impaired academic performance (Nakamoto, 2010). At the mental health level, victims of bullying are faced with depression, insomnia, feelings of loneliness, hopelessness, low self-esteem, suicidal ideation, and suicidal attempts. It is important to note that the negative consequences of bullying do not usually end at the incident itself but

often continue into adulthood, and can have negative effects on the life of the individual. Physical violence can trigger violent behavior, which can be passed to peers and teachers in the classroom and the learning environment at large since bullying is a life-changing experience. The results of all the effects of bullying usually end up with poor academic performance in schools.

Another trigger of bullying and physical violence is poor negotiation between parents in the family setting. The family is always the first learning contact for any child, and any violent behavior portrayed at home by the parent will easily be picked up by the child who grows with this character and always takes it to the school level, which further multiplies into more bullies and victims.

Normally, victimization from bullying leads to mental health problems, school absenteeism, and low self-esteem (Farrington, 2009). A study by Juvonen (2011) showed that boys had lower numerical scores of physical victimization, while with girls, all types of bullying affected their scores. When students engage in aggressive behaviors, problems arise, which include low academic performance, delinquent behaviors, and early school dropout. This is supported in research by Oxpinas (2015), which showed that the act of exclusion from other school activities is a social or delinquent behavior that exists in schools and is very well-known by students, teachers, and parents. Similarly, Jose (2017) established that peer victimization is a center for depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Peer victimization has all negative effects on school performance as children stay away from school due to victimization; children fear school socialization due to victimization, and this plays negatively on school engagement and academic performance.

2.2.10 Bullying and Mental Health

Bullying victimization and mental health have become a growing concern among school staff, teachers, parents, and local authorities because they are part of the school community (Olivers & Candappa, 2003). Thus, the enrollment of social networks that includes school staff, parents, and school authorities, which widens any kind of learning behavior in the school or at home, always leads to any form of bullying. This is common because of diversified family backgrounds, human characteristics, and human nature (Olivers & Candappa, 2003). This supports information from other existing research, which indicates that targeted children by bullies always show signs of distress, depression, and anxiety (Hawker & Boulton, 2000).

Arseneault (2010) examined some key factors as potential risks to mental health problems caused by bullying victimization. Individual characteristics and family factors predict children who become targets of bullies (Arseneault, 2010). Children with internalizing problems such as withdrawal and anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and reduced assertiveness have an increased risk of being bullied in childhood. Both internalizing and externalizing behaviors of bullying among youths result from modeling or copying them from family members who practiced them (Ruther et al., 2009). Exposure to bullying behaviors at home is also another factor that shows that family settings play a great role in bullying victimization (Brendgen et al., 2008). This is the first environment at which learning begins, and this is always where the first characteristics that any child takes to the social world are formed. Home is associated with increased bullying victimization like child maltreatment, domestic violence, parental depression, and low socioeconomic status. Other places outside of homes that have increased bullying victimization

include school overcrowding and the number of children receiving free meals. Being bullied is not a situational event, and it can last for a period of years. Childhood bullying victimization does not usually lead to adulthood bullying victimization as situations could change, or individuals could have several ways of coping with bullying.

The impact of being bullied does not end at either internalizing or externalizing problems; however, both the bully and the victim show externalizing problems of violent behavior and carrying weapons (Nansel et al., 2003). Besides the effects of bullying like depression and anxiety, other effects could occur, which involve headaches and abdominal pain, low self-esteem, and reduced social functioning. There is also a higher rate of individuals that are referred for psychiatric assessment because of observing bullying actions (Nansel et al., 2001). The effects of bullying at times could involve several individuals with distinct roles, including assistant bully, reinforcer, outsider, and defender. Any activity played by anyone always has a negative or mental health effect in the future (Salmivalli et al., 1996). It is also worth noting that a child who has witnessed domestic violence requires counseling to overcome whatever they went through to avoid further effects that may arise in any other social gathering that may involve bullying.

There always exists a bad behavioral effect with any child that witnesses interparental violence compared to non-witnesses. Several effects are seen in children exposed to community violence and neighborhood violence, with effects such as poor school behavior, symptoms of emotional disturbance, post-traumatic stress, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicidal tendencies in extreme cases. The continuous exposure to witnessing bullying and victimization can lead to a state of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes, which are negative aspects of

mental health. The individual witnessing the event may have been in the same situation before, which made the person go through psychological trauma, and it simply brings back that same event as observed (Rivers, 2009).

Perpetrators and victims of bullying are both affected in terms of poor social, emotional, and psychological health outcomes (Owusu, 2011). Some physical symptoms associated with bullying victimization include headaches, stomach upsets, and backaches, while psychological victimization is associated with nervousness, depression, helplessness, and loneliness. Also included among the long-term reactions are some short-term reactions of bullying victimization, which include irritability, ongoing sense of panic/fear, repeated memory of victimization, and impaired concentration. Adolescents exposed to bullying victimization face psychological effects, which include depression, suicidal ideation, and loneliness (Frisen, 2007).

2.2.11 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is simply the act of bullying someone online. It involves all forms of bullying stated above via the Internet or social media. It is the use of technology to bully a person or group. Cyberbullying can involve social, psychological, and even, in extreme cases, physical harm (Katz et al., 2014). The authors opined that young people can cyberbully other young people through abusive texts and emails, hurtful messages, images or videos, imitating others online, excluding others online, or through nasty online gossip and chat. It can cause shame, guilt, fear, withdrawal, loneliness, and depression.

Beran and Li (2005) described cyberbullying as the intentional act of online or digital intimidation, embarrassment, or harassment. There have always been winners and losers in the offline peer social stakes. So, it is no surprise that peer

interactions sometimes erupt into bullying online just as it does offline. Schneider, Smith, and O'Donnell (2013, p. 3) said, "Life online, like life offline, involves opportunities for enhancing relational closeness and enacting relational hostility." Where life online involves victimization, it is termed cyberbullying (Levy et al., 2012).

However, cyberbullying has some other identifiable features that distinguish it from offline bullying. These include technological expertise, potential for anonymity, relative distance, complex bystander roles, status gained indirectly, and difficulty escaping from harassment (Smith, 2012). The impact of cyberbullying is magnified by the invasion of the private domain (Price & Dalgleish, 2010). Tokunaga (2010, p. 277) states, "It follows you home from school." Because children and young people are often online, it can be hard for them to escape cyberbullying. Nasty messages, videos, and gossip can spread fast online and are hard to delete. Sometimes the attackers can be anonymous and hard to stop. This can make it harder for adults to see and manage. Cyberbullying incidents don't come as a surprise. School children confirm that cyberbullying is common (Smith, Steffgen, and Sittichai, 2013). It is becoming the easiest way to get back at someone. A person can be knocked down in front of a large number of people online. Many cyberbullies think that bullying others online is funny (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013).

According to Aftab (2009) and Ringrose (2006), traditional bullies fit one type of mold. They note that usually the bullies are bigger and stronger than their victims. They are prone to verbally attacking their victims. Aftab (2019) contends that cyberbullies come in four types: the vengeful angels, the social dominant hierarchical bully, the mean girl, and the inadvertent cyberbully. Similarly,

Chisholm (2014) identifies ten common types of cyberbullying that are frequently used online:

1. **Catfishing:** When individuals are tricked into emotional or romantic relationships over extended periods through fabricated identities.
2. **Cheating:** Used in multiplayer online gaming situations when gangs of players prevent entry into specific game sites.
3. **Flaming:** An antagonistic or argumentative style of communication used in an online setting, commonly used by males.
4. **Impersonation:** When someone is misrepresented or falsely represented in an online setting.
5. **Slamming:** When individuals, known and unknown to a victim, participate in online harassment.
6. **Ratting:** When a user remotely takes control of another person's computer or webcam via remote administrative tool software without gaining the permission or consent of the targeted individual.
7. **Relational Aggression:** When an individual spreads rumors, creates fake profiles, deletes targets from group lists, or posts cruel or threatening pictures or posts in order to refuse or exclude the target from a group.
8. **Sexting:** When embarrassing, humiliating, and sexually explicit photographs are intentionally distributed or circulated.
9. **Trolling:** When offensive messages or posts are made within an online community or forum in order to anger, frustrate, humiliate, or provoke a response from a target.
10. **Stalking:** When an individual follows or exhibits violence toward one target in an online setting.

Thus, online harassment or cyberbullying can include the aforementioned but is definitely not limited to such acts.

Externalizing behaviors were most predictive of cybervictim status. Increased awareness about the use of technology as a vehicle for bullying and identification of potential problems associated with cyberbullying and victimization will aid parents, educators, and psychologists in developing intervention and prevention strategies (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009). According to Calvert (2009, p. 2), cyberbullying was significantly associated with the use of proactive aggression, justification of violence, exposure to violence, and less perceived social support from friends. Other reasons for cyberbullying include envy, prejudice, and intolerance for disability, religion, gender, shame, pride, guilt, and anger. Hoff and Mitchell (2009) listed addictive technology behavior, peer pressure or influence, and family dynamics as causes of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullies may not realize the consequences for themselves of cyberbullying. The things teens post online now may reflect badly on them later in the future. Also, cyberbullies and their parents may face legal charges for cyberbullying. Teens may think that if they use a fake name, they won't get caught, but there are many ways to track someone who is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying can be very damaging to adolescents and teens. It can lead to anxiety, depression, and even suicide. Also, once things are circulated on the Internet, they may never disappear, resurfacing at later times to renew the pain of cyberbullying (Hinduja and Patchin, 2013).

Cyberbullying affects the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive functioning and well-being of the victims. Patchin and Hinduja (2006) gathered that 43% of victims of cyberbullying feel frustrated, 40% feel angry, more than

27% feel sad, and 27% confess that it affected them at home. Cyber victims are also prone to psychosomatic symptoms like headaches, abdominal pains, and sleeplessness. There is no limitation to potential perpetrators or victims of cyberbullying because of the array of sophisticated electronic communication devices that are readily available nowadays. Most of the youth who are actively engaged in the online environment report being contacted by someone they did not know through the Internet, and that this contact made them feel uncomfortable (Kowalski, 2012). There is a likelihood that those directly impacted by cyberbullying are also more likely to skip school, receive detentions or suspensions, and are even more likely to bring a weapon to school.

2.2.12 Social Media Use and Cyberbullying

Social media use (SMU) has become a normal part of the lives of young people (Livingstone & Cianfrone, 2014). Its benefits include the ability to communicate with friends, quickly access information and gain new knowledge, and stay in touch with adult mentors, including parents, family members, and teachers (Anderson et al., 2019). However, emerging problems associated with SMU include frequent or intense use, which may detract from opportunities to participate in other constructive activities, such as extracurricular and community events (Jiang & Peterson, 2012).

A recent international study concluded that although statistically significant, the effects of exposure to digital technology on adolescent well-being are modest and, in the authors' opinions, "insufficient to invoke the need for policy change" (Orben & Przybylski, 2019). In contrast, others have argued that "problematic SMU" (indicated by symptoms of addiction to social media) puts adolescents at risk for problems because it facilitates potential risks in online interactions with strangers

with harmful intentions (Sasson & Mesch, 2014) and contributes to addictive behaviors (Qiaolei et al., 2018), social withdrawal (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011), and impaired social functioning (Qiaolei et al., 2018).

Intense and problematic SMU exposes adolescents to online aggression, including cyberbullying (Kowalski & Giumetti, 2014). Contemporary social theories provide frameworks to understand these links. First, more frequent and intense SMU exposes adolescents to aggressive behavior, including the perpetration of cyberbullying (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 2012). Second, Routine Activities Theory (Jessor, 2016) posits that certain risk behaviors are clustered, and specific profiles of risk underlie vulnerability. Repeated exposure to online aggression can make the behaviors seem more acceptable through role modeling and reinforcement (BonielNissim & Sasson, 2018). Witnessing the social rewards of aggression or cyberbullying, such as increased social status, also reinforces the behavior (Blakemore & Mills, 2014), as young people become motivated to conform to group norms in their social environment. In addition, the lack of face-to-face cues associated with SMU hides the negative consequences of online aggression or cyberbullying. Therefore, without this critical feedback, the aggressive behavior may be more likely to recur (Olweus, 2013).

Furthermore, repeated exposure to online aggression or bullying may result in the "disinhibition effect." That is, these aggressive behaviors may become normalized to youth over time. Such effects are likely to increase the likelihood of engaging in cyberbullying or being cyber-victimized. Additionally, those who use electronic communications excessively may be differentially vulnerable children who experience psychosocial problems such as loneliness and social anxiety. These vulnerable children feel positive about being online but may lack the social

resources and skills to prevent being cyber-victimized at the moment when it is happening. Thus, frequent and problematic SMU may increase the likelihood of witnessing and emulating aggressive online behaviors, both as a perpetrator and as a victim. Cross-sectional analyses have shown that both intense and problematic SMU relate to increased cyberbullying and cyber victimization in adolescents (Prizant-Passal, 2016).

2.2.13 Cyberbullying as Crime in Nigeria

Cyberbullying is a criminal offense under various nations' anti-stalking, slander, and harassment laws (Attoh, 2016). A conviction can result in a restraining order, probation, or criminal penalties against the assailant, including jail time. The Nigerian government, therefore, has made laws that recognize cyberbullying as a crime. Specifically, the Nigerian Cyber Crime Prohibition Act, 2015, Section 24 states that: Any person who knowingly or intentionally sends a message or other matter by means of computer systems or network that:

1. is grossly offensive, pornographic, or of an indecent, obscene, or menacing character or causes any such message or matter to be so sent; or
2. he knows to be false, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience, danger, obstruction, insult, injury, criminal intimidation, enmity, hatred, ill will, or needless anxiety to another or causes such a message to be sent, commits an offense under this Act and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of not more than N7,000,000.00 or imprisonment for a term of not more than 3 years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

According to Goshit (2018), some forms of cyberbullying activities which are usually carried out by assailants on social media that are punishable under the law include sexual harassment, love obsession, revenge vendettas, and power

trips/ego trips. Victims of cyberbullying and cyber harassment must remember that the threats to their lives are real threats, and if not properly handled and reported to the relevant security agencies, parents, friends, teachers, and guardians, it can escalate into actual physical assaults and kidnapping.

Fukuchi (2011), cited in Onibokun (2015), argued that for effective prosecution of assailants, the current state of legislation makes it very difficult to prove a case of cyberbullying beyond a reasonable doubt. She proposed the use of "burden-shifting devices" as a tool to help hold perpetrators accountable for cyberbullying. One such burden-shifting device would include allowing certain inferences to be made when the offender engages in specific behavior. For example, in several states in the US, if an offender continues to contact a victim after the victim has asked the offender to cease contact, intent to harass may be presumed. Although she recognizes the constitutional challenges of this approach, she makes a cogent argument for the usefulness of incorporating these burden-shifting devices into cyberbullying legislation.

Unfortunately, the nature of the Nigerian society does not pay much attention to victims. As such, many victims stay quiet until physical harm is done. Individuals must be encouraged to report the slightest threat to their persons. Avenues must be created for people to share their experiences and seek help without the fear of being ridiculed or stigmatized. The success of every activity of cyberstalkers and harassers depends largely on the secrecy of their operations. They isolate their targets, and once targets or victims speak out and report such threats to relevant authorities, the operations of these criminals would have been jeopardized. Users of the Internet and all social media platforms must exercise discretion and use security settings provided by the ISPs. Parents/guardians must also monitor the use of social media

by their children. Civil society organizations and religious bodies must encourage members of society to speak out because cyberstalking and cyberharassment are silent killers and must be addressed before they escalate (Goshit, 2018).

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded on the following theories:

1. Online Disinhibition Effect Theory
2. Routine Activities Theory (RAT)

2.3.1 Online Disinhibition Effect Theory

The theory, propounded by John Suler (2004), states that as adolescents navigate among social media networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and chat rooms, others they encounter cannot easily determine if they are who they say they are. User names and email addresses are visible and assumed to be the person they claim to be. However, adolescents, according to Suler (2004), share their login names, email addresses, and even passwords, giving so-called friends access to their websites, Facebook pages, AOL instant messaging accounts, and chat rooms. In addition, as this theory states, anyone can use a person's online identity, supporting the creation of fake identities. Some even expect participants to take on fantasy identities. Suler (2004) continued by stating that the typical information available on a social networking site may not reveal much about a person, especially if the username is contrived and the email address is shared or tied to a fake identity.

There are two main categories of behaviors that fall under the online disinhibition effect theory. These two categories are benign disinhibition and toxic disinhibition (David, 2015). He argued that benign disinhibition describes behavior in which people might self-disclose more on the internet than they would in real life or go out of their way to help someone or show kindness, while toxic disinhibition

describes behavior that includes rude language, threats, and visiting places of pornography, crime, and violence on the internet—places the person might not go to in real life. The distinction between these two categories is not always clear. For example, a friendly email relationship might evolve into something more intimate in a way that might cause one of the correspondents to feel overly vulnerable or anxious. An exchange of seemingly hostile words, as another example, might be considered normal social behavior in certain internet subcultures.

Suler (2004) further breaks down six factors that cause online disinhibition:

1. **Dissociative Anonymity** - "You don't know me"
2. **Invisibility** - "You can't see me"
3. **Asynchronicity** - "See you later"
4. **Solipsistic Introjection** - "It's all in my head" 5. **Dissociative Imagination** - "It's just a game" 6. **Minimization of Status and Authority** - "Your rules don't apply here"

As stated earlier, people can hide some or all of their identity. Suler (2004) theorized that anonymity is the leading factor that creates an online disinhibition effect among adolescents. He stated that when adolescents are able to hide behind a pseudonym and act differently than they would in their real lives, they feel empowered and less vulnerable about acting out. This feeling of invisibility gives them the courage to go online and cyberbully their classmates and friends. Online disinhibition plays a role in the act of cyberbullying. Anonymity usually leads to meaner comments towards others (cyberbullying), but it alone doesn't cause cyberbullying.

Asynchronous communication allows the bully to say what they have to say and then log out like nothing happened, having to face no consequences outside of the internet. Empathy deficits allow the bully to post the messages in the first place;

the victim is reduced to a name on a computer screen. Also, racist, sexist, violent, and rude online comments are a direct result of anonymity. Those comments arise only when other people are also saying things like that; online users tend to keep the same tone, civility/incivility as others in online posts.

2.3.2 Routine Activities Theory (RAT)

Routine Activities Theory, propounded by Cohen and Felson (1979), is an approach that relates crime closely to the environment, studies it as an event, and underscores its ecological process. The analytic focus of the theory takes a macrolevel view and emphasizes broad-scale shifts in the patterns of victim and offender behavior. It focuses on specific crime events and offender behavior/decisions. RAT is based on the assumption that crime can be committed by anyone who has the opportunity. The theory also states that victims are given choices on whether to be victims mainly by not placing themselves in situations where a crime can be committed against them.

According to Cohen & Felson (1979), the routine activity theory focuses on the explanation of predatory crime. Predatory victimization is determined by the interaction of three variables, namely:

- i. The presence of at least one likely offender.
- ii. The presence of at least one suitable target.
- iii. The absence of a capable guardian who might prevent the crime.

Students no doubt belong to the category of high internet usage groups. They are for the most part technology-savvy and are usually active on social media and social networking sites. Because of their penchant for wide followership on social networking sites, they often indiscriminately extend and accept friendship invitations to strangers. They are also fond of posting some of their personal

information online. The obviously risky routine activities make them vulnerable to various forms of online victimization, including cyberstalking. It is increasingly so in Nigeria, where the social media active population is predominantly young people and growing by the minute.

In line with the tenets of the routine activity theory, people can actually minimize or prevent their vulnerability to cyberstalking victimization by making themselves less suitable targets through online target hardening. For example, they can use stronger passwords, control their privacy settings to restrict the information that others can view about them online, and use anti-spyware software. Therefore, by altering their routine online activities, people can significantly reduce the likelihood of their victimization.

To be able to take this important precaution, internet users need to be well aware of the modus operandi of cyberstalkers and the extent to which they are vulnerable to them. Also, they need to have the right concept of the phenomenon of cyberstalking to be able to perceive it as a problem.

In the context of bullying, Routine Activities Theory suggests that the occurrence of bullying incidents depends on the convergence of specific factors:

1. **Motivated Offenders:** Bullies are individuals who are motivated to engage in bullying behavior. They may have various reasons, such as seeking control, power, revenge, or gratification, through the harassment and intimidation of their victims. Motivated offenders may exploit the anonymity, ease of communication, and perceived lack of consequences in the online environment to engage in bullying behaviors.
2. **Suitable Targets:** Suitable targets refer to individuals who are vulnerable to bullying. Factors that make someone a suitable target for bullying can include

their online presence, personal characteristics, or specific circumstances. For example, individuals who frequently share personal information online, have a large online following, or have experienced previous incidents of bullying may be more likely to become targets.

3. **Absence of Capable Guardians:** Capable guardians are individuals or entities that can deter or prevent bullying incidents. In the online context, capable guardians may include platform moderators, law enforcement agencies, technology companies, or even supportive online communities. The absence of capable guardians can create an environment where bullies feel emboldened, as they perceive a reduced likelihood of being identified, reported, or facing consequences for their actions.

2.4 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Obidi and Ahaiwe (2021) conducted a study entitled "Cyber-Bullying: Assessment of its Awareness and Threats to Social Media Development," which centered on the undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria, using a sample of 396 spread across the fourteen faculties of the institution. According to findings, the majority of the target audience have knowledge of cyberbullying and are also aware that social media sites are avenues for it; online harassment, misinformation, cyberstalking, and sexting are to a larger extent the means through which respondents have been bullied. Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that cyberbullying is dangerous to the development of social media and can indeed threaten the development of social media.

Furthermore, a study by Patchin and Hinduja (2020) shows that young people under 18 are reportedly being ignored, disrespected, called names, threatened, picked on, made fun of, and having bad rumors spread about them on the internet.

These experiences might suggest little difference from face-to-face bullying.

Also, Okorie and Ekeanyanwu (2020) conducted an online survey among young Nigerians who are Twitter users. A sample of 100 respondents was purposively selected, comprising individuals with more than 300 followers on their account. The study found that 46% of the respondents have been cyber-bullied, while 87% had witnessed other persons cyber-bullied on Twitter. In addition, 55% agreed that they bully others on Twitter, while 44% indicated that they retaliate in verbal and visual forms whenever they are cyber-bullied. The study concluded that the proliferation of multimedia devices and ubiquitous internet access would increase the rate of cyberbullying, leading to self-exclusion and possible suicidal tendencies.

Similarly, Lakitta, Haralson, Batts, Brown, Cedric, Adrian, and Melissa (2019) conducted an online survey on cyberbullying on social media among Jackson State University students using a sample of 170 undergraduates (43 freshmen, 29 sophomores, 48 juniors, and 50 seniors) who volunteered to participate in the study. Findings revealed that the overall majority of participants have negative views about cyberbullying and that it makes them upset when witnessing others bullied or being bullied themselves. The study also found that most of the participants would report experiencing or witnessing cyberbullying to an adult, even in an era where most college students tend to find their own sense of autonomy. The researchers concluded that cyberbullying on social media among undergraduate college students is a problem that needs immediate attention. These occurrences can cause a student to lose perspective of who they are and can lead to suicide, violence, and school dropout. College and university officials should address this issue because of the increase in technology use and instances of cyberbullying.

Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2017), conducted a study on "Cyberbullying and Self-Esteem: A Meta-Analysis." *Journal of School Violence*, 16(2), 153-173. This meta-analysis examined the relationship between cyberbullying victimization and self-esteem among adolescents. The findings indicated a significant negative association between cyberbullying and self-esteem, suggesting that individuals who experience cyberbullying are more likely to have lower self-esteem.

In another study, Kowalski, R. M., Giumetti, G. W., Schroeder, A. N., & Lattanner, M. R. (2017), conducted a study on "Bullying in the Digital Age": A Critical Review and Meta-Analysis of Cyberbullying Research Among Youth. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140(4), 1073-1137. This comprehensive review and metaanalysis synthesized findings from multiple studies on cyberbullying among youth. The study found that cyberbullying prevalence rates vary across studies, but overall, cyberbullying is a significant problem affecting a substantial number of young people. The review also highlighted the negative psychological and emotional effects of cyberbullying on victims.

Similarly, Dredge, R., Gleeson, J., & de la Piedad Garcia, X. (2016), conducted another study on "Cyberbullying Perpetration and Victimization Among Adolescents": A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 65(3), 320-330. This systematic review examined longitudinal studies on cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among adolescents. The findings indicated that involvement in cyberbullying tends to be stable over time, with individuals often occupying consistent roles as perpetrators or victims. The study also highlighted the potential long-term consequences of cyberbullying involvement, such as mental health issues and academic problems.

Also, Kwan, G. C. E., & Skoric, M. M. (2015), in his study "Facebook Bullying: An Extension of Battles in School," revealed that traditional bullying perpetration was positively associated with cyberbullying perpetration on Facebook. The study suggests that Facebook may serve as an extension of offline bullying dynamics and highlights the importance of addressing both online and offline bullying behaviors. In sequel, Slonje, R., Smith, P. K., & Frisen, A. (2013), conducted another study on "The Nature of Cyberbullying and Strategies for Prevention," examining the characteristics and nature of cyberbullying, as well as prevention strategies. The study highlighted the diverse forms of cyberbullying, including direct harassment, indirect aggression, and identity-based bullying. The article also discussed preventive measures, such as promoting digital citizenship, encouraging reporting mechanisms, and fostering positive online norms.

In addition, Bocij, P. (2014) conducted a study on "Cyberstalking: A New Challenge for Criminal Law." *The Criminal Law Review*, 607-621. This study examines the legal and criminal justice implications of cyberstalking. It discusses the different forms of cyberstalking behaviors, the challenges in defining and prosecuting cyberstalkers, and the potential psychological and emotional harm experienced by victims.

In technological terms, Finn, J. (2014), conducted research on "Cyberstalking and the Technologies of Interpersonal Terrorism," *New Media & Society*, 6(1), 25-40. This research explores the use of technology in cyberstalking and highlights its similarities to traditional forms of stalking. It discusses the tactics and strategies employed by cyberstalkers, the impact on victims, and the need for legal and societal responses to address this issue. Similarly, Reyns, B. W., Henson, B., & Fisher, B. S. (2013), in his study "The Unintended Consequences of Digital Technology:

Exploring the Relationship Between Sexting and Cybervictimization." This study examines the relationship between sexting (the exchange of sexually explicit images or messages) and cyberstalking victimization. It explores how engaging in sexting behaviors may.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the various means and procedures employed in the process of data and information gathering. The study is carried out following some logical steps that will facilitate the achievement of the research goals and to explain the methods of study employed in this research work. Furthermore, the plan, structure, and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain answers to the research questions are organized under the following headings: Research design, Target population, Sample and sampling technique, Instrumentation, Validity and reliability, Sources of data, and Method of analysis.

3.1 Research Design

According to Cooper and Schindler (2006), research design is the strategy for study and the plan by which the strategy is to be carried out, specifying the methods and procedures for the data collection, measurement, and analysis of data. The selection of a certain research design in a given study should be based upon the problem of interest, resources available, the skills and training of the researcher, and the audience for the research (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007).

The researcher adopts a survey research design because it is a type of design where a group of people are studied by collecting information from them. Moreover, this type of design specifies how the researchers' data would be collected and analyzed. Therefore, the study design uses a data collection instrument like a questionnaire. Thus, the researcher adopted it in order to assist her in collecting primary data.

3.2 Research Method

An important factor that determines the research method to be used in any work is the nature of the problem under the study. Though there are many forms of research methodology, due to the nature of this research work, the researcher has chosen to use a survey research method (exploratory survey design) to carry out the research work. This will enable the researcher to gather information combined with the purpose of observing the population for critical analysis and retrieving factual information from the respondents.

It needs to be stated that this research work will be conducted to assess the use of social media as tools for bullying among polytechnic students. In essence, students in Kwara State Polytechnic will be the major respondents through which questionnaires will be administered and collated.

3.3 Population of the Study

According to Oloyede & Adejare (2012), "population can be referred to as living or non-living things; it may be people, animals, or things that the study is essentially carried out to investigate." Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) explained that the target population should have some observable characteristics to which the researcher intends to make a sweeping statement about the study results. The definition clarifies issues about the sample of the investigation as not homogeneous.

The population of this study covers students in Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. According to the Director of Students Affairs (2022), the population of students in Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, is 21,467. The institution has five institutes (Institute of Information and Communication Technology [IICT], Institute of Finance and Management Studies [IFMS], Institute of Applied Sciences [IAS], Institute of Environmental Studies [IES], and Institute of Technology [IOT]) and thirty-three (33) departments.

3.4 Sample Size

A sample is a section or part of an entire population of people or things which are studied to obtain information about the research variables. It implies a proportion that was taken as a representative of the whole population and from which conclusions are made based on the data they give, which is taken to be peculiar to all members of the whole population (Maduene, 2010). Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table was used to arrive at the sample size of this research work. Hence, the sample size of this study is 200.

3.5 Sampling Technique

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), sampling is the process of selecting a few cases in order to provide information that can be used to make judgments about a much larger number of cases. This simply means that while the sample is the number of respondents that will be selected to represent the entire population of study, sampling refers to the selection process (Denscombe, 2003).

This study will employ a multi-stage sampling technique in a bid to ensure that the selection of the respondents is done effectively. Multi-stage sampling is a sampling method that divides the population into groups (or clusters) for conducting research (Mill, 2014). It is a complex form of cluster sampling, sometimes also

known as multi-stage cluster sampling. During this sampling method, significant clusters of the selected people are split into sub-groups at various stages to make it simpler for primary data collection.

At stage one, systematic sampling technique will be used to select three (3) institutes from the list of five (5) institutes in Kwara State Polytechnic. This led to the selection of the Institute of Information and Communication Technology, Institute of Finance and Management Studies, and Institute of Applied Sciences.

At stage two, simple random sampling technique will be used to select two (2) departments from each of the three selected institutes in Kwara State Polytechnic. At stage three, convenient sampling technique will be used to select respondents from each of the two selected departments in the three institutes.

Using the above-stated multi-stage techniques, the sampling of respondents in this study will thus be orchestrated in the following order:

In the Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT), the Mass Communication Department and Computer Science Department will be selected. Forty-five respondents will be sampled in the former while forty respondents in the latter.

In the Institute of Finance and Management Studies (IFMS), the Marketing Department and Public Administration Department will be selected. Thirty-five respondents will be sampled in the former while thirty respondents in the latter.

In the Institute of Applied Sciences (IAS), the Science Laboratory Technology Department and Hospitality Department will be selected. Thirty respondents will be sampled in the former while twenty respondents in the latter.

3.6 Research Instrument

A research instrument is a tool used to collect, measure, and analyze data related to a researcher's interests. A structured closed-ended questionnaire will be adopted as the instrument for data collection in this study.

Saul McLeod (2015) defined a questionnaire as a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. The questionnaire will be divided into three (3) parts. Part A will focus on the introduction and familiarity of respondents to the topic under study, Part B will contain items designed to obtain data on the research topic, while Part C will seek the demographic profile of the respondents.

3.7 Validity of the Instrument

A study is reliable when repeated measurement of the same material results in similar decisions or conclusions (Winner and Dominick, 2013:156). To ascertain the validity of the instrument, expert validity will be employed. Hence, the researcher's supervisor, who is a communication expert, will scrutinize the instrument to ensure that it is valid and credible for measurement. In this way, the questionnaire will be tested for coherence, ability to elicit responses, comprehensibility, and consistency. Suggestions and corrections made by the supervisor will ensure its validity.

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study will be conducted to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. A pre-test of 10 copies (5%) of the questionnaire will be designed and administered to sampled 10 respondents in a place outside the study area but has the same

characteristics as the study area. Data collected will be analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha.

3.9 Method of Administration of the Research Instrument

The method of administration of the instrument for data collection includes techniques and procedures used to gather information for research purposes. These methods can range from simple self-reported surveys to more complex experiments and can involve either quantitative or qualitative approaches to data gathering (Creswell, J.W., 2013).

In this study, the research instrument (questionnaire) will be prepared via Google Form and administered online. This will be undertaken by the researcher for proper monitoring and recovery.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of systematically applying statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data. In terms of quantitative research approach, the data analysis method also follows a quantified approach whereby raw numeric data is statistically analyzed for making sense of the data and its comprehension, unlike in research, which follows a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research approaches usually adopt a nonstatistical approach for the analysis of the data since the data collected could hardly be quantified. The approach these types of research follow usually involves interpretation. The data collected in this study will be analyzed descriptively and inferentially using IBM SPSS-21, a social science package for data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is based on the presentation of data and analysis of the results obtained from respondents during the field survey. A total of one hundred (100) questionnaires were administered to respondents online through the instrumentation of Google Forms (c-questionnaire). All the questionnaire copies were completed and submitted online. The data obtained in the field survey were thus presented and analyzed below using the chi-square (χ^2) method.

4.1 ANALYSIS OF FIELD PERFORMANCE OF THE INSTRUMENT

4.1.1 Analysis of Respondents' Demographics

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	40	40%
Female	60	60%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: The table above shows that from 100 respondents who participated in the field survey, 40 (40%) are male while 60 (60%) are female. Hence, data were collected from a considerable percentage of both genders during the field survey, with female respondents having the higher percentage.

Table 2: Marital Status

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	31	31%
Single	69	69%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 31 of 100 respondents representing 31% of the total respondents are married while 69 of 100 respondents are single. This presentation indicates that data collected during the field survey are subjected to viewpoints of both married and single respondents, with single respondents having the highest percentage of participation.

Table 3: Age

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-29	75	75%
30-39	25	25%
40 & above	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presentation above, 75 of 100 respondents are between the ages of 20-29 years at the time of filling the questionnaire. 25 of 100 respondents are between the ages of 30-39 years, while no respondents from 40 years and above participated in the field survey. Hence, data were collected from respondents whose ages range from 20-39 years.

Table 4: Academic Qualifications

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
ND I	0	0%
ND II	17	17%
HND I	14	14%
HND II	69	69%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 69 of 100 respondents representing 69% of the total respondents were in HND II at the time they filled the questionnaire. 17 of 100 respondents were in ND II, 14 of 100 were HND I students, while no respondent was recorded in ND I class. Hence, data collection was limited to students in ND II, HND I, and HND II only.

Table 5: Religion

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Christian	53	53%
Muslim	45	45%
Others	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table displayed above, 53 of 100 respondents representing 53% of the total respondents are Christians at the time of filling the questionnaire. 45 of 100 respondents are Muslims at the time of filling the

questionnaire, while there were no respondents recorded from other religious backgrounds that participated in the field survey. This justifies that data collected during the field survey is devoid of disparity in viewpoints regarding religious differences and sentiments.

4.1.2 Analysis of Questions in the Research Instrument

Table 6: How frequently do you use social media platforms?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rarely	19	19%
Occasionally	29	29%
Frequently	35	35%
Very frequently	17	17%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 19 of 100 respondents representing 19% of the total respondents indicated that they rarely use social media platforms. 29 respondents use social media platforms occasionally, 35 respondents admitted that they use social media platforms frequently, and 17 respondents use social media platforms very frequently.

Table 7: Which social media platforms do you use regularly?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	42	42%
Twitter	21	21%

Instagram	21	21%
Snapchat	16	16%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: The table above shows that 42 of 100 respondents representing 42% of the total respondents use Facebook regularly. 21 respondents use Twitter and Instagram respectively, while 16 respondents use Snapchat regularly. The population of respondents that use Facebook is, however, greater than those who use other social media platforms.

Table 8: Do you use social media for academic purposes?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	73	73%
No	27	27%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 73 of 100 respondents representing 73% of the total population submitted that they use social media platforms for academic purposes, while 27 respondents stated that they use social media for other purposes rather than academic.

Table 9: Have you ever witnessed or experienced bullying on social media in Kwara State Polytechnic?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	56	56%

No	44	44%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 56 of 100 respondents representing 56% of the total respondents submitted that they have witnessed bullying on social media in Kwara State Polytechnic, while 44 respondents have not witnessed bullying on social media in the institution. The percentage of respondents that witnessed bullying or have experienced bullying on social media among Kwara State Polytechnic students is higher than those who have not been exposed to such.

Table 10: What forms of bullying have you observed or experienced on social media?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Harassment	30	30%
Cyberbullying	32	32%
Spread of false information	38	38%
Impersonation	0	0%
Exclusion	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 30 respondents indicated that they are exposed to harassment as a form of bullying. 32 filled that they are exposed to cyberbullying. 38 respondents admitted that they are exposed to the spread of false

information, while none of the respondents is exposed to impersonation or exclusion from bullying.

Table 11: How would you describe the severity of bullying incidents on social media in Kwara State Polytechnic?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mild	61	61%
Moderate	23	23%
Severe	16	16%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table above, 61 of 100 respondents representing 61% of the total respondents described the severity of bullying incidents on social media among Kwara State Polytechnic students as mild. 23 respondents described it as moderate, while 16 respondents described it as severe.

Table 12: If you witnessed or experienced bullying on social media, did you report it to any authority figure or platform administrator?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	51	51%
No	49	49%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 51 of 100 respondents representing 51% of the total respondents submitted that they report bullying to authority or platform administrator, while 49 of the respondents do not report at all.

Table 13: What challenges do you think students face in reporting instances of bullying on social media?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Physical attack	17	17%
Neglect	61	61%
Support	22	22%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 17 of 100 respondents submitted that students always face physical attacks when reporting instances of bullying on social media. 61 of the respondents admitted that they are neglected while 22 respondents indicated that they are supported.

Table 14: How do you cope with or respond to instances of bullying on social media?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Report	29	29%
Silence/Ignore	53	53%
Retaliate	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 29 of 100 respondents submitted that they respond to instances of bullying on social media by reporting. 53 respondents said they keep silence or ignore the act, while 18 respondents stated that they will retaliate.

Table 15: Do you think there is enough awareness about the consequences of bullying on social media at Kwara State Polytechnic?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	49	49%
No	51	51%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 49 respondents supported that there is enough awareness about the consequences of bullying on social media at Kwara State Polytechnic, while 51 respondents opposed the claim that awareness about bullying and its consequences among Kwara State Polytechnic students on social media is enough.

Table 16: Should there be educational programs or workshops on responsible social media use to prevent bullying?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	82	82%
No	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 82 of 100 respondents admitted that there should be educational programs or workshops on responsible social media use to prevent bullying among Kwara State Polytechnic students, while 18 of the respondents opposed such educational programs or workshops directed to prevent bullying.

Table 17: Are you aware of any reporting mechanisms or policies in place at Kwara State Polytechnic for addressing social media bullying incidents?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	67	67%
No	33	33%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: The table above shows that 67 of 100 respondents are aware of reporting mechanisms or policies put in place in Kwara State Polytechnic to address social media bullying incidents, while 33 respondents are not aware of the reporting mechanism.

Table 18: If yes, have you ever reported a social media bullying incident?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	62	62%
No	38	38%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Analysis: From the table presented above, 62 of 100 respondents indicated that they have reported a social media bullying incident, while 38 respondents stated that they have never reported social media bullying incidents.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question One: What is the level of exposure to bullying on social media among Kwara polytechnic students?

Tables 9, 10, and 11 provide analysis to research question one.

In Table 9, respondents were asked if they have ever experienced bullying on social media in Kwara State Polytechnic. The results show that 56 of 100 respondents, representing 56% of the total respondents, have witnessed bullying on social media in Kwara State Polytechnic. The percentage of respondents that witnessed bullying or have experienced bullying on social media among Kwara State Polytechnic students is higher than those who have not been exposed to such.

In Table 10, the question seeks to determine the form of bullying Kwara State Polytechnic students are more exposed to. Results from the field survey show that 30 respondents are exposed to harassment as a form of bullying, 32 respondents are exposed to cyberbullying, and 38 respondents are exposed to false information. Lastly, in Table 11, respondents were asked how they would describe the severity of bullying incidents on social media. 61 of 100 respondents, representing 61% of the total respondents, described it as mild. 23 respondents described it as moderate, while 16 respondents described it as severe.

Research Question Two: What are the factors promoting bullying behavior on social media among Kwara polytechnic students?

Research question two seeks to provide reasons for bullying behavior on social media. This answer was retrieved through an open-ended questionnaire administered to respondents. Some of the data collected through this means indicated that the following factors promote bullying on social media:

- **Anonymity:** Online platforms often provide a veil of anonymity, allowing bullies to hide behind fake identities, making it easier for them to harass others without fear of consequences.

- **Accessibility and Connectivity:** The widespread use of the internet and social media platforms means that bullies can reach their victims anytime and anywhere, making it difficult for victims to escape the harassment.
- **Lack of Supervision:** Many parents and guardians may not be fully aware of their children's online activities or may not understand the technology well enough to monitor it effectively, leaving children vulnerable to cyberbullying.
- **Digital Footprint:** Once something is posted online, it can be very difficult to remove it completely. This permanence can amplify the effects of cyberbullying, as hurtful content can resurface repeatedly, causing prolonged distress to the victim.
- **Inadequate Policies and Enforcement:** Some online platforms may have lax policies or ineffective enforcement mechanisms for dealing with cyberbullying, allowing it to thrive within their communities.

Research Question Three: What are the impacts of social media bullying on the mental health and well-being of Kwara polytechnic students?

Table 13 answered research question three. Respondents were asked the challenges they face while reporting bullying instances. Data collected during the field survey shows that 17 of 100 respondents always face physical attacks when reporting instances of bullying on social media. 61 of the respondents are neglected while 22 respondents are only supported. The percentage of supported victims is very low compared to those that are neglected and attacked physically; hence, those who are not supported may face serious mental health deterioration.

Research Question Four: What are the attitudes and perceptions of Kwara polytechnic students towards social media bullying?

Tables 12, 14, 15, 16, and 18 provided answers to research question four and the analysis is as follows. 51 of 100 respondents, representing 51% of the total respondents, submitted that they always report bullying to authority or platform administrators while 49 of the respondents do not report at all. 29 of 100 respondents submitted that they respond to instances of bullying on social media by reporting. 53 respondents said they keep silence or ignore the act, while 18 respondents stated that they will retaliate. 49 respondents supported that there is enough awareness about the consequences of bullying on social media at Kwara State Polytechnic, while 51 respondents opposed the claim that awareness about bullying and its consequences among Kwara State Polytechnic students on social media is enough. 82 of 100 respondents admitted that there should be educational programs or workshops on responsible social media use to prevent bullying among Kwara State Polytechnic students, while 18 of the respondents opposed such educational programs or workshops directed to prevent bullying. 62 of 100 respondents indicated that they have reported a social media bullying incident, while 38 respondents stated that they have never reported social media bullying incidents.

Research Question Five: What is the level of application of media literacy on social media bullying among Kwara polytechnic students?

Table 17 answered research question five. 67 of 100 respondents are aware of reporting mechanisms or policies put in place in Kwara State Polytechnic for addressing social media bullying incidents, while 33 respondents are not aware of the reporting mechanism. Hence, a considerable percentage of Kwara State Polytechnic students are aware of mechanisms for reporting bullying cases online, and this is influenced by their level of media literacy.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The use of social media has become increasingly prevalent among students, offering numerous benefits in communication, networking, and access to information. However, alongside these advantages, there's a darker side: the potential for social media to be used as a tool for bullying. This issue has garnered significant attention in recent years, especially in educational settings like polytechnics. This discussion will explore findings on the use of social media as tools for bullying among polytechnic students in respect to the above-analyzed data.

This study found that social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp are commonly used by students for both positive interactions and negative behaviors like cyberbullying. These platforms provide anonymity and a wide audience, making them conducive to various forms of harassment, including spreading rumors, sharing embarrassing photos or videos, and engaging in verbal abuse.

Furthermore, the study reveals that cyberbullying on social media can have profound psychological and emotional effects on victims, leading to low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and even suicidal thoughts. Moreover, the pervasive nature of social media means that the harassment can continue outside of school hours, intensifying its impact on victims' lives.

The study also identifies several factors contributing to the prevalence of social media bullying among polytechnic students, including the lack of awareness about responsible online behavior, the desire for peer acceptance, and the absence of effective mechanisms for addressing cyberbullying incidents within the educational institution.

To combat this issue, interventions such as educational programs on digital citizenship and online etiquette, counseling services for victims, and disciplinary measures for perpetrators are recommended. Additionally, fostering a culture of empathy, respect, and inclusivity both online and offline can help create a safer and more supportive environment for all students.

In conclusion, while social media offers numerous benefits, its misuse as a tool for bullying poses significant challenges for polytechnic students. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach involving education, support services, and proactive measures to promote positive online interactions and mitigate the harmful effects of cyberbullying.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

The study investigates "the use of social media as tools for bullying among polytechnic students." The study was organized into five chapters. The first chapter covers the introduction of the study, background to the study, statement of the problem which exposed the issues the study identified and seeks to resolve, research questions, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, and operational definitions of terms.

Chapter two focused on the conceptual framework, theoretical framework, and empirical review of literature. The researcher adopts the Online Disinhibition Effect Theory and Routine Activities Theory (RAT). The third chapter focuses on the research method. The researcher used quantitative research methods and

conducted a survey among Kwara State Polytechnic students, focusing on their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors regarding bullying on social media. A closed-ended questionnaire was adopted as the instrument for data collection, and Google Forms was utilized to administer the instrument to respondents through electronic means.

Chapter four presented the data analysis and discussion of the findings. The analysis was done in tabular form using chi-square (χ^2) method of data analysis. Finally, chapter five discussed the summary of the study, the conclusion of the study based on the outcome of the findings, and recommendations of the study. According to the analysis done, there are more female (60%) participants during the survey than male (40%) participants, and the majority of the participants (69%) are single.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The proliferation of social media platforms has undeniably revolutionized communication and connectivity, particularly among polytechnic students. However, this technological advancement has also provided a fertile ground for the insidious phenomenon of cyberbullying. Through the lens of a case study conducted at Kwara State Polytechnic, the detrimental effects of social media as tools for bullying among students have been brought to light.

The evidence gleaned from the study underscores the alarming prevalence of cyberbullying within the student populace. The anonymity afforded by social media platforms emboldens perpetrators to unleash verbal abuse, harassment, and intimidation on their peers with impunity. The consequences of such malicious behavior are far-reaching, encompassing psychological distress, diminished academic performance, and even, in extreme cases, suicidal ideation.

Moreover, the pervasive nature of social media ensures that the distress inflicted by cyberbullying transcends the confines of physical space and time.

Victims find themselves relentlessly pursued by their tormentors, with no respite from the onslaught of derogatory messages and hurtful comments. Consequently, the sanctity of the academic environment is compromised, impeding students' ability to thrive and flourish in their educational pursuits.

In light of these findings, it is imperative for educational institutions like Kwara State Polytechnic to adopt a multifaceted approach to combatting cyberbullying. This entails not only raising awareness about the pernicious effects of online harassment but also fostering a culture of empathy, respect, and digital responsibility among students. Additionally, robust support systems should be put in place to assist victims in coping with the psychological trauma inflicted by cyberbullying.

Ultimately, the onus lies not only on educational institutions but also on society at large to confront the scourge of cyberbullying. By fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding, and by harnessing the positive potential of social media for constructive communication and collaboration, we can strive towards creating a safer and more inclusive online environment for polytechnic students and future generations alike.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Social media platforms have become integral parts of modern communication, but they also pose significant risks, especially in educational settings. Bullying through social media among polytechnic students, as evidenced in the case study of Kwara Polytechnic, is a concerning issue. In light of the above-analyzed data and discussion of findings, the researcher thus recommends the following:

i. Education and Awareness Campaigns:

- Government and polytechnic management should implement comprehensive educational programs to raise awareness about the various forms of social media bullying.
 - Organize workshops, seminars, and lectures targeting both students and faculty to educate them on the consequences of cyberbullying.
 - Encourage open discussions in classrooms and student forums to foster a culture of empathy and mutual respect.
- ii. **Development of School Policies:**
- Establish clear and enforceable policies specifically addressing social media behavior and cyberbullying within the polytechnic.
 - Collaborate with student councils and administrative bodies to draft and implement these policies, ensuring they reflect the concerns and needs of the student body.
 - Regularly review and update policies to adapt to evolving trends and technologies in social media.
- iii. **Support Systems:**
- Provide counseling services and mental health support for victims of social media bullying.
 - Train faculty and staff to recognize signs of distress related to cyberbullying and provide appropriate assistance.
 - Foster a supportive environment where students feel comfortable reporting incidents of bullying without fear of retaliation.
- iv. **Digital Citizenship Programs:**
- Integrate digital citizenship courses into the curriculum to teach students responsible and ethical online behavior.

- Emphasize the importance of empathy, critical thinking, and respectful communication in digital interactions.
- Encourage students to become active participants in promoting positive online communities and bystander intervention.

v. Parental Involvement:

- Engage parents in discussions about the risks of social media and the importance of monitoring their children's online activities. Encourage open communication and provide resources for parents to support their children effectively.

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