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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTION REGULATION AND CYBER VICTIMIZATION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS "ROLE OF SELF-DISCLOSURE"

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Abstract

This study investigates the intricate interplay between emotion regulation strategies and cyber victimization among university students, with a focus on the moderating role of self-disclosure. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between emotional regulation and cyber victimization among university students. A quantitative co-relational research study with a simple random sampling technique was used for this purpose. It was hypothesized that there was significant relationship between self-disclosure and cyber victimization among university students. A sample of two hundred and Ninety One University students was selected with demographic information i.e. gender, age, and education. Results indicated emotional intelligence (EM) indirectly lowers cyber victimization (CV) through self-disclosure (SD).Emotional Regulation scale (Gross and john, 2003), Cyber Victimization scale by (Riaz & Hassan, 2018) and Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ; Journal, 1971) was used. Analysis was conducted using statistical software such as SPSS 25. The finding will be beneficial for further research, as well as the implications of the findings and the study's limitations are also used.

Keywords. *Emotional regulation, cyber victimization, self- disclosure, university students.*

Introduction

The proliferation of internet usage has led to the emergence of cyber victimization as a significant concern among university students. Cyber victimization encompasses various forms of online harassment, including cyber-bullying, online stalking, and unwanted exposure to sensitive information, which can have detrimental effects on individuals' psychological well-being and academic performance (Hinduja& Patchin, 2018). While research has extensively explored the factors contributing to cyber victimization, the role of emotion regulation strategies, particularly self-disclosure, remains relatively underexplored in the university student population (Moeller et al., 2018).

Emotion regulation refers to the processes individuals use to monitor, evaluate, and modify their emotional reactions to adapt to situational demands effectively. Self-disclosure involves revealing personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences to others. Both emotion regulation and self-disclosure play crucial roles in shaping individuals' responses to interpersonal conflicts and stressors, including experiences of cyber victimization (Gross, 2015). The relationship between emotion regulation, self-disclosure, and cyber victimization among university students is essential for several reasons. Firstly, university students are particularly vulnerable to cyber victimization due to their extensive use of online platforms for socializing, academic purposes, and entertainment. Secondly, effective emotion regulation strategies, such as adaptive self-disclosure, may mitigate the negative impact of cyber victimization on students' mental health and well-being (Joinson & Paine, 2007).

Given the prevalence of online communication, researchers have proposed a model specific to emotion regulation in digital environments. This is suggests that the online context presents unique challenges and opportunities for emotion regulation due to features like anonymity, reduced nonverbal cues, and the asynchronous nature of communication (Tandoc & Ferrucci, 2020).

Cyber victimization is a relatively new type of victimization that has evolved as a result of technological advancements. Offenders communicate electronically using emails, text messages, and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. Many online offenses can be referred to as "cyber-victimization," including cyber bullying, cyber harassment, and cyber talking (Dreßing et al., 2014). According to Khateeb et al. (2017), all of these offenses have serious consequences and leave victims scurrying for help. The term "cyber bullying" is commonly used when the victimization is believed to involve power imbalances between the perpetrator and the victim (Sentenac et al., 2011). Cyber bullying has been documented in both the workplace and schools (Einarsen & Nielsen, 2015). Inchley et al. (2020) found that 13% and 10% of youths

worldwide experienced cyber bullying as victims, respectively. Nevertheless, in recent years, there has been a rise in the average worldwide occurrence of cyber bullying and cyber victimization among young individuals. A Spanish survey revealed a noteworthy surge of more than 20% in cyber bullying cases among Spanish adolescents from 2020 to 2021, in comparison to the preceding two years (Fundación et al., 2005). Therefore, further extensive research is required to gain a deeper comprehension of the occurrence of adolescent cyber bullying and suggest proactive measures (Zhu et al., 2021). Self-reported cyber bullying was examined among 328 Pakistani university students. Almost 90% of the participants were cyber-bullied

Self-disclosure is the intentional sharing of personal data, thoughts, feelings, or experiences with others (Derlega et al., 2013). Emotion regulation involves strategies individuals use to manage and modify their emotional experiences and expressions. Self-disclosure, on the other hand, refers to the act of revealing personal information, thoughts, and emotions to others. Self-disclosure can also impact emotion regulation. Sharing emotions with others can provide a sense of relief and validation, leading to improved emotional well-being. When individuals disclose their emotions, they might receive supportive responses that help them regulate their emotions effectively (Reis & Shaver, 1988).

The relationship between emotion regulation and self-disclosure might be moderated by factors such as cultural norms, personality traits, and the context of the interaction. The role of self-disclosure in the context of cyber victimization is crucial. Engaging in self-disclosure about negative online experiences can offer students an avenue for seeking social support and processing their emotions. Positive self-disclosure, which involves sharing feelings with supportive individuals, might enhance emotion regulation and resilience, helping students navigate the emotional impact of cyber victimization (Yoo & Tibbits, 2017). Self-disclosure can also act as a moderator in the relationship between emotion regulation and cyber victimization outcomes. For instance, students who are adept at emotion regulation and also engage in positive self-disclosure might experience lower levels of emotional distress when faced with online victimization compared to those who do not effectively disclose their emotions (Jang et al., 2019).

Literature View

Chen et al. (2021) revealed that, in their sample, sorrow moderated the association between peer victimization and Smartphone addiction. Our objective is to replicate this study among American college students. This group is less

aware of cyber-victimization experiences and the absence of parental monitoring and support for internet use may make this a perilous developmental period for them. Prior study has frequently explored cyber bullying behavior from the victim's perspective. Geng et al. (2022) found that among cyber bullying victims with poor self-compassion, childhood trauma predicted cyber-victimization. Dilma (2021) rated cyber bullying at 22.5%, whereas Byrne (2021) found cyber victimization at 55.3%. These findings are consistent with the current study's findings and provide credibility to the notion that cyber bullying is a serious problem among college students. Alternatively, there are other causes for the discrepancies in rates. This means that differences may be found based on how frequently and for how long an activity is undertaken. Furthermore, prevalence rates of cyber bullying and victimization vary due to the use of different evaluation tools and research techniques, as well as the participants' diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. Effective emotion management strategies have been connected to less retaliation, more pro-social behavior, and higher academic success (Ozdemir et al., 2021).

Arato et al. (2020) found that persons who engage in cyber bullying typically use both maladaptive and adaptive emotion regulation approaches to regulate their unpleasant sentiments. Research suggests that individuals with low emotional competence are more likely to experience cyber bullying and victimization (Marin et al., 2020).It has been demonstrated that university students who are cyber-victimized suffer severe psychological consequences. Yıldırım and Dogan (2020) found that it is associated with increased stress, anxiety, depression, and lower self-esteem. Emotion management is critical for mitigating these psychological consequences. Adaptive approaches reduce the negative impact of cyber victimization, but maladaptive tactics worsen its (Yıldırım et al., 2020).When it comes to university students becoming victims of cyber-bullying, research has stressed the need of several emotional regulation approaches. Adaptive strategies, such as problem-solving and cognitive reappraisal, have been associated to better psychological health and reduced cyber-victimization (Başer & Güneri, 2020). Previous research has found a link between conventional peer victimization, which happens in person and is not induced by electronic devices, and mobile phone addiction (Liu et al., 2020).

Gül et al.'s (2018) study to establish the prevalence of cyber-victimization and cyber-bullying, with 150 participants and it was discovered that 53.3% of them were cyber-bullies. As a result, studies on cyber bullying victims have received a lot of attention, and further study is needed to completely understand this problem (Gül et al. 2018). However, Gül et al. (2018) shown that the perpetrator of cyber bullying, as well as the cybervictim, has inadequate emotion

management. Numerous studies have shown how frequent cyber bullying is among young people and adolescents. Patchin and Hinduja (2018) discovered that 34% of young people have experienced cyber bullying at some point in their lives, based on a meta-analysis of 112 publications. Many risk factors are linked to online victimization. These include mental health, age, gender, and internet usage. For example, Hinduja and Patchin (2018) observed that females are more likely than boys to be victims of cyber bullying, and that girls who engage in harmful online behaviors are more vulnerable. Victims of cyber bullying may have harmful psychological consequences. It has been linked to greater than usual rates of anxiety, loneliness, and depression. This study addresses the contemporary issue of cyber victimization, which has become more prevalent among college students.

Hypothesis

1) *There was significant relationship between emotional regulation and cyber victimization among university students.*
2) *There was significant relationship between self-disclosure and cyber victimization among university students.*
3) *Self disclosure was mediating the role between Emotional Regulation and cyber victimization.*
4) *Students were differing on Emotional Regulation, Cyber victimization and Self disclosure in terms of their demographic variables.*

Material and Methods

The purpose of the study that follows was to Relationship between Emotion Regulation and Cyber Victimization among University Students "Role of Self-Disclosure". The goal of the study is to determine the relationship between emotional regulation and cyber victimization among university students. It aims to determine to identify demographic factors regarding cyber victimization, emotional regulation and self-disclosure among university students. The age range has been chosen as 18 to 40 years. The sample was taken from various public and private universities of Multan. The demographic information sheet was prepared which provides the required information about participants. Demographic information included Age, Gender, Education, family system. University students who were 18-40 years old were included. Males and females were added to the present study. Participants from both urban and rural areas were included. Participants from nuclear and joint family systems were included.

Permission to use the scales was obtained from the concerned author. The data was collected from students through a simple random sampling technique. Information on the study's scope and objectives was provided to participants.

After the briefing, they were given a questionnaire and instructions about how to fill out a questionnaire. The dignity, rights, and welfare of all research participants were respected during the conduct of this study. Participants were given the assurance that any information they shared would remain private. It was explained to the participants that they could leave the study at any moment.

Nature of the study

This research is based on a quantitative co-relational research design was used.

Population

The population that was selected for the study was 291 university students. The population comprised of girls and boys. Because the study uses mixed method approach and through online questionnaires were filled.

Sample

The sample that was selected to conduct the research comprised of 291 university students.

Research Tool

The research used a survey questionnaire as a tool to gather relevant data. Researchers approached this according to the information needed. A standardized questionnaire was created to collect the student's responses. The questions in the survey questionnaire were close ended. To answer close ended questions of the survey questionnaire Likert scale was used. The demographic information will include age, gender, marital status, and education, as well as three scales was used for emotional regulation, self-disclosure, and cyber victimization. Cronbach's alpha reliability were assessed.

Emotional regulation scale

In 2003, Gross and John devised an instrument consisting of 10 quick application items and a self-report component. The two emotional regulation options that the instrument offers are emotional suppression and cognitive evaluation. Each question is answered by respondents using a 7-point Likert scale, with 7 representing "strongly disagree" and 1 representing "strongly agree. This scale's reliability is.60

Cyber victimization scale

Cyber victimization scale was given by (Riaz& Hassan; 2018). The cyber victimization scale constructed and validated for present is a self-reportLikert type scale comprised of 28 items. Response categories used are every time =5 often=4 sometimes =3 once/twice =2 and almost never =1. Reliability of cyber victimization scale .82

Self-disclosure scale

The Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ; Jourard, 1971) is a self-report measure developed by Jourard and Lasakow in 1958. This is where the self-

disclosure scale began. Respondents score each of the twenty items on a 7-point Likert scale, with 7 signifying strongly disagree and 7 representing strongly agreeing.

Data Collection

Online surveys can be utilized to collect quantitative data from the participants. The survey should include measures of emotional regulation, self-disclosure, cyber victimization experiences, and relevant demographic information. Validated scales such as the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, Self-Disclosure Scale, and Cyber Victimization Questionnaire can be used.

Analysis of Data

The responses were evaluated statistically using SPSS v25. To quantify the relationship between variables, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and independent t-test will be utilized. Correlation analysis will also be performed to determine the association between the variables. The demographic information will include age, gender, marital status, and education, as well as three scales for emotional regulation, self-disclosure, and cyber victimization. Cronbach's alpha reliability will be assessed.

Data Analysis/Survey tool Questionnaire

This study examined the Relationship between Emotion Regulation and Cyber Victimization among University Students "Role of Self-Disclosure", using a survey questionnaire and graphs.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of Participants (N = 291)

Demographic Variable		*f*	*%*
Age			
	20-22	*83*	*28.5*
	23-25	*139*	*76.3*
	26-28	*48*	*16.5*
	29-33	*21*	*7.2*
Gender			
	Male	*146*	*50.2*

	Female	*145*	*49.8*
Education Status			
	Undergraduate	*147*	*50.5*
	Masters	*144*	*49.5*
No of Siblings			
	0-2	*84*	*28.9*
	3-5	*174*	*59.8*
	6-8	*32*	*11.0*
	9-11	*1*	*3*
Family System			
	Nuclear	*146*	*50.2*
	Extended Family	*145*	*49.9*
Work Experience			
	0-2	*97*	*33.3*
	3-5	*159*	*54.6*
	6-9	*35*	*6.0*

Note: f=Frequency, %=Percentage, M=Mean, S.D. =Standard Deviation

Table 2

Range		
Variable	***K***	***A***
EmotionalRegulationScale	*10*	*.935*
Cyber Victimization Scale	*28*	*.897*
Self-Disclosure Scale	*20*	*.971*

Note: k = number of items, M = Mean, a = Cronbach's alpha

The table displays the descriptive statistics and internal consistency reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the main variables assessed in the study. The

emotional regulation scale consists of 10 items, and the scale's overall reliability is high, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .935. The Cyber Victimization scale comprises 28 items, and its internal consistency reliability is significant, as evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha of .897. The Self-Disclosure Scale, with 20 items, exhibits a very good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .971.

Table 3

Mediation Path Coefficients for Emotional Regulation, cyber victimization and Self disclosure

	Originals ample (O)	***Sample mean (M)***	***Standard deviation (STDEV)***	***T statistics (|O/STDEV|)***	***value s***	***.5%***	***7 .5 %***
EMTOTAL>CVTotal	*0.005*	*-0.003*	*0.073*	*0.074*	*0.941*	*-0.144*	*.141*
EMTOTAL -> SD	*0.603*	*0.601*	*0.049*	*12.229*	*0.000*	*0.499*	*.692*
SD>CVTotal	*-0.422*	*-0.426*	*0.068*	*6.165*	*0.000*	*-0.568*	*-0.297*

This table displays an examination of path coefficients and direct path connections in a mediation model, providing insight into the connections between Emotional Regulation (EMTOTAL), Cyber Victimization (CV Total) and Self-Disclosure (SD). The T statistics of 0.074 and a P value of 0.941 for the path from EMTOTAL to CVTotal suggest that there is no statistical significance. The confidence interval (-0.144 to 0.141) encompasses the value of zero, indicating that there may not be a substantial impact exerted by this approach.

In contrast, the connection between EMTOTAL and SD is characterized by a strong and statistically significant link, as indicated by a T statistics value of 12.229 and a P value of 0.000. The confidence interval (0.499 to 0.692) excludes zero, suggesting a strong and positive correlation between Emotional Regulation and Self-Disclosure.

Similarly, the relationship between SD and CVTotal is statistically significant, as indicated by a T statistics value of 6.165 and a P value of 0.000. The confidence interval (-0.568 to -0.297) indicates that the connection between Self-Disclosure and Cyber Victimization is significantly negative, as it does not include zero.

To summaries, the table highlights the significance of Emotional Regulation and Self- Disclosure in comprehending Cyber Victimization. Although there is no substantial direct association between Emotional Regulation and Cyber Victimization, the meaningful relationships are emphasized through the indirect channels including Self-Disclosure. The findings offer vital insights into the mediation processes within the study, highlighting the separate functions of Emotional Regulation and Self-Disclosure in the context of Cyber Victimization.

Table 4

Analysis of Variance across Age

Variable	***20-22***		***23-25***		***26-28***		***29-33***		***Partial η²***	
	Range		***Range***		***Range***		***Range***			
		D		***D***	***M***	***D***	***M***	***SD***		
Mtotal	*6.55*	*3.35*	*8.71*	*2.90*	*7.43*	*4.27*	*6.76*	*2.47*	*522*	*66*
Vtotal	*37*	*5.03*	*.28*	*6.80*	*.70*	*4.19*	*23*	*8.95*	*1*	*8*
D	*06*	*8.78*	*98*	*93*	*.00*	*01*	*66*	*.30*	*0*	

The table presents an ANOVA study comparing different age groups (20-22, 23-25, 26 -28, 29-33) for three variables: Emotional Regulation (EM total), Cyber Victimization (CV total), and Self-Disclosure (SD). The report includes the means (M) and standard deviations (SD) for each age group, as well as the ANOVA findings, which consist of the F statistic, p-value, and partial eta-squared (Partial η^2). Regarding Emotional Regulation (EM total), no notable variations were found among different age groups ($F = 0.522$, $p = 0.66$, Partial $\eta^2 = 0.37$). The averages and standard deviations for EM total show little fluctuations, indicating a stable level of Emotional Regulation across several age groups. Similarly, there are no significant differences in Cyber Victimization (CV total) among different age groups ($F = 0.21$, $p = 0.88$, Partial $\eta^2 = 0.37$). The means and standard deviations for CV total demonstrate a high degree of consistency, suggesting a constant level of Cyber Victimization across the indicated age ranges.

However, Self-Disclosure (SD) does not show any notable variations among different age groups ($F = 1.0$, $p = 0.37$, Partial $\eta^2 = 0.37$). The averages and standard deviations for SD exhibit minimal variation, indicating a similar level of Self-Disclosure across different age categories.

In summary, the ANOVA analysis reveals that there are no statistically significant disparities in Emotional Regulation, Cyber Victimization, and Self-Disclosure among the indicated age groups. The partial eta-squared values indicate that age does not explain a significant amount of the variability in these

variables. These findings enhance our understanding of how psychological factors are distributed among different age groups in the population under study.

Table 5

The indirect effect of emotional intelligence (EM) on cyber victimization (CV) through self- disclosure (SD) measured by partial least squares-structural equation modeling.

Path	*Original Sample (O)*	*Mean (M)*	*Standard Deviation (STDEV)*	*t- statistic*	*p-value*	*95%Confidence Interval*
IndirectEffect(EMTOTAL -> SD ->CvTotal)	*N/A*	*-0.261*	*0.055*	***2.549***	***0.011***	***[0.195, 0.315]***

The Table shows that emotional intelligence (EM) had a good impact on cyber victimization (CV) through self -disclosure (SD). Even though EM didn't have a big direct effect on CV, it did have an indirect effect on CV through its good effect on SD. In turn, SD had a big negative impact on CV, which suggests that people who reveal more about themselves are less likely to be cyber bullied.

In particular, it was calculated that EM had an indirect effect on CV through SD of 2.549 (p = 0.011). This means that for every unit increase in the EM score, the expected increase in the SD score was 2.549 units. This caused the CV score to drop by 2.549 units. The indirect effect's 95% confidence interval was between 0.195 and 0.315. This means that the effect seen is statistically significant and not likely to be due to chance.

These results show that improving emotional intelligence can help people share more about them, which can ultimately make them less likely to become cyber victims. This shows that interventions based on emotional intelligence could not only improve people's mental health but also make them safer and healthier online.

Discussion

This study looks into the complicated connections between controlling your emotions, being a cyber victim, disclosing personal information, and different demographic factors. The goal of the study is to help us learn more about the psychological factors that affect how people experience life in the digital age. This part talks about the main results of the study and how each variable's role and effect fits into the bigger picture of previous research.

Looking at how people of different ages control their emotion and aged 26–28 had much better emotional regulation than those aged 23–25." This finding fits

with earlier study that focused on how emotional regulation changes over time (Smith et al., 2019). The differences seen with age may be due to development processes or different ways that people in their mid- to late-20s deal with stress. The current study's result that emotional intelligence (EM) indirectly lowers cyber victimization (CV) through self-disclosure (SD) is in line with other studies that have shown how EM can protect people online. The observed interaction by self-disclosure makes these links even stronger

Anghel and Menesini (2022) emphasized how important it is to be socially aware and empathetic in order to have good relationships online. People with a lot of emotional intelligence can better understand and respond to how other people are feeling online, which makes it safer and more polite for everyone.

Wang et al. (2021) looked into how gender affects the relationship between EM and cyber bullying. They found that EM was safer for girls than for boys, which suggests that this relationship may have gender-specific aspects.

Wang et al. (2020) discovered that teens that had higher EM were less likely to be cyber bullied. This suggests that having good social and emotional skills helps people handle online interactions better and stay away from situations that could make them victims. Studies by Schneider et al. (2021) and Lee et al. (2022) also showed that EM makes people more self-aware and empathetic, which lead to better online conversation and a lower chance of having bad experiences online.

Conclusion

This study examined the connections between emotional intelligence (EM), self-disclosure (SD), and cyber victimization (CV) among university students. The results demonstrated a notable indirect impact of emotional intelligence on self-disclosure. This suggests that higher levels of emotional intelligence lead to decreased cyber victimization by promoting greater openness about oneself. These findings emphasize the efficacy of emotional intelligence treatments in fostering online safety and well-being among different ages. Subsequent investigations could delve into the precise processes that drive this indirect influence and assess the lasting consequences of interventions targeting emotional intelligence in terms of mitigating cyber victimization and fostering favorable online conduct.

Limitations/Suggestions

The findings are limited by the small sample size. Convenient sampling was employed to contain data from participants, so the sample may not be typical of all users. It does not give equal opportunity of selection. Rule of thumb is less rigorous than other sample size calculation methods and may not have produced a representative sample of married people. All data in the study came from self-report questionnaires and self-reported statistics may be biased since individuals may lie.

Implications

The study's results are important for both researchers and people who work in the area of digital psychology. Understanding how emotional control, cyber bullying, and self-disclosure change with age can help people come up with more effective ways to improve their digital well- being. Also, find possible risk factors connected to certain demographic factors opens the door for future study that will go into more detail about the underlying factors that affect how people experience the internet. This study adds the understanding of how psychological and social factors interact in the digital world. The results helps to understand people's experiences in the digital age more fully by revealing the complex connections between controlling emotions, being a cyber victim, talking about yourself online, and demographics.

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