



## Socio-Economic Implications of Cyberbullying: A Study of Kebbi Central Senatorial District, Kebbi State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This article investigates the socio-economic implications of cyberbullying: A study of Kebbi central senatorial district, Nigeria. This study, which is qualitative in nature, adopted a case study design which produce a detailed explanation of the nature of cyberbullying and how it impacted to the socio economic activities in the region. The rationale for adopting case study design is because case study is critical in providing detailed explanation of cyberbullying and provide solutions which require the attention of different stakeholders with different expertise and experience to be involved in the study area. The population of this research is the entire individuals from eight (8) local government. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting three (3) most affected local government areas out of eight (8) LGA's in Kebbi central, senatorial district while, the sample size of this research is three hundred (300) individuals with age ranges of 14-65, from the total population using Yamane (1967) formula for sample size generation. The source of data of this research is primary data and various instrument for data collection which includes; thirty-six (36) key informants interview (KII), twenty (20) focus group discussion (FGD), and twenty (20) in-depth interview (IDI). A total number of 234 questionnaires were distributed to the study area that consisted of various levels of respondents, which includes; Students, Teachers, Lecturers, Member of General public, Law enforcement Agency, Judiciary, traditional rulers and members of voluntary organizations in the study areas and also two Hundred (200) questionnaires were filled and returned successfully. The data obtain from Questionnaires was open and close-ended techniques. Therefore, various software such as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, IBM), Micro-soft Excel (EXCEL) was used in this research in order to provide accurate and reliable data. The finding of this study indicated that, socio-economic implications of cyberbullying has impacted the development of the society through; psychological, physiological or behavioural effects. Various recommendation has been posited therein.

**Keywords:** Cyberbullying, Socio-economic, Kebbi-central, Implication, Birni-kebbi

### Introduction

Modern technology is continuously evolving, and in recent times, it has manifested itself in a very serious social problem, namely cyberbullying. Technology is served as double-edged sword; on the one hand, it gives us connectivity, on the other it increases emotional stress (Michel, 2011). As such, internet users, including individuals from the age of 14-65, may be at the mercy of cyberbullies. The victims, might fall within psychological, behavioral or physiological stress, which could negate them to concentrate on their daily activities, and thus their socio-economic

development is adversely affected (Juliana, 2010). Unfortunately, little attention is given to this global problem by institutions of higher/lower learning, teachers, parents and emergency service providers. The depressive effect of cyberbullying prevents individuals from excelling from becoming the victim of cyberbullying (Lauren, 2011).

Obviously, cyberbullying has begun since the inception of computers in the 1950s and the internet. It was commercially exploited in the late 1980s. The Internet has revolutionized the way in which we see the world. Also, much of the routine,



mundane work has been made simple by the advent of the Internet. In particular, e-commerce has changed the patterns of marketing and sales behavior and the banking sector enabled its growth. In addition, the entrance of social media has brought people together. It has cut the boundaries and jurisdictions. There are many positive usages of the Internet. Many unscrupulous people started using it for criminal purposes. Notably, the founding fathers of the Internet did not envisage that it would become a medium of criminality, or it would create new forms of crime such as cyberbullying and cyberstalking among others. Although the Internet is an international space, it is only governed by American laws (Jaishankar, 2011).

Cyberbullying was not carried out by only schools or university students, but rather, it is a general phenomenon that is carried out by an unidentified entity. Unfortunately, little has been done to help those victims who are continuously trapped in the name of modernization and digitalization (Watson, 2010). Researchers agreed that the stressful impact of cyberbullying is escalating with the rapid expansion of technological advancement (Justin, 2011). Many victims of cyberbullies suffer silently because they are reluctant to complain to the authorities or their parents owing to the social stigma attached to victims of bullies (Susan, 2011). As such, parents, teachers and institutional authorities have to be on the lookout for such occurrences.

It is good to posit that humans have both rational and irrational tendencies which inform their actions and inactions. Irrational is self-defeating behaviour which prevents goal attainment. It leads to inner conflict, as well as conflict with others. It also affects the relationship, self-blame, jealousy, envy, ill-feeling, guilt, frustration, intolerance and depression (Irabor & Monday, 2021). The proneness of cyberbullying and its socio-economic implications that tend to endanger the Socio-economic, emotional, physiological and psychological consequences, to a great people of Kebbi state most especially in Kebbi central senatorial district. The menace has resulted in the loss of jobs by the working class, compulsory financing of bullies by the victim due to the fear of defamation of character among

others. Many unprecedented cyberbullying cases were often reported to the community, institutions and police stations. This research investigates local governments with proneness of cyberbullying which were purposively selected thus; Kalgo, Aliero, and Birnin Kebbi were assumed to be the areas with prevalence of cyberbullying menace. It is of great concern to stakeholders and parents in particular as it has led to the various problems such as poor relationships, isolation, suicidal ideation, depression, frustration, low self-esteem, as well as poor emotional and social adjustment among the populace. Cyber bullying is an online aggressive behaviour in the digital space. Bullying is a form of peer aggression which can be as damaging as any form of conventional aggression (Mickie, 2011). The problem investigated in this research is socio-economic implications of cyber bullying in Kebbi central senatorial district, Kebbi state Nigeria. Cyberbullies activities disturbs almost all spheres of human endeavor in the region. The institutions of learning, teachers, students, law enforcement, public members, government and non-governmental were not exempted from been a victim of cyberbullying. Cyber-bullying affect mental health of victims i.e psychologically/behavioral, physiological and emotional well-being of the victims. There is no exact amount to pay for restoration of mental health of cyberbullying victims. Therefore, the cost or restoration of mental health for victims of cyber bullying will be address and consider as major socio-economic implications of cyberbullying (Nasir 2024). It seems that technologies are in some ways creating more stress for all in the form of cyber bullying rather than to help them progress. Research findings have shown that young students who become victims of cyber bullies suffer great stress (Elizabeth, 2010). Hence there is an urgent need to understand the problems faced by the victims so that concrete and proactive measures can be taken by the authorities of institutions of learning, teachers and parents to address this global problem.

This research work would be of great importance to the Kebbi State Government in



order to measure the trend and pattern of the cyberbullying menace in the state for policymaking and the country at large. It is also pertinent to students who would be researching in the field of Cyber Criminology and Cybersecurity and cyberbullying, among others, in order to develop a theoretical frame work that would be of great importance to solve a practical problem for academic literature and educational purposes. The research would be useful to the Government Agencies, Law Enforcement agencies such as National Intelligence Agencies (NIA), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS), Department of State Security Service (DSS) National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Internet Service Providers (ISP), and students in other related fields.

However, this research intended to bridge the gap in knowledge in which various research such as Korede D. O, et al., (2018) "Cyberbullying as a social malaise in a Nigerian University, level of awareness and counseling and implications" and Mobina S. B. Jaffer (2012) "Cyberbullying hurts, respect for rights in the digital Age" among others, but none of these research investigate the Socio-economic Implications of Cyberbullying in Kebbi Central, Senatorial District, Kebbi State, Nigeria. The study would be of great help as it would provide lasting solutions for further research.

### **Literature Review**

Faryadi (2011). Conducted experimental research that investigates the emotional and physiological effects of cyber-bullying on the university students. The primary objective of the research is to investigate and identify the victims of cyber bullying and critically analyze their emotional state and frame of mind in order to provide them with a workable and feasible intervention in fighting cyber bullying. Faryadi adopted a triangulation method for quantitative, qualitative and descriptive method for effective investigation. Three hundred sixty-five (365) students participated in all questionnaires, interviews, checklists and observations. The

results of the study indicated that 35 (13%) of the respondents had suffered emotionally due to cyber bullying and 300 (85%) of the respondents indicated their views on how cyber bullying causes emotional and psychological stress. Further, majority of the respondents 255 (70%) agreed that cyber-bullying adversely affected their academic performance. Results further designated that 60 (16.6%) of the respondents specified that they had cyber-bullied someone inside the university at least 2 or 3 times a month while, 4 (1.1%) of the participants averred that they had cyber-bullied someone outside the university at least 2 or 3 times a month. It is interesting to note that majority of the students 75 (20.8%) signify that they have agreed that cyber-bullying often taking place at institutions of learning, companies, industries and business places among others.

Chan and Wong (2020), investigated the overlap between cyberbullying perpetration and victimisation among 1,893 adolescents. The prevalence of general, overt-aggressive, and relational-aggressive cyberbullying was examined, the study further, posited that psychosocial characteristics of cyber-bullying includes; self-esteem, prosocial behaviour, empathy, family attachment, perception of a harmonious school, sense of school belonging, and positive school experiences. The findings of the research revealed that different kinds of cyberbullying perpetration and victimisation were positively correlated, and further tests using multivariate analysis that confirmed the relationship between these two experiences. Logistic regressions suggested that cyberbullying perpetration could predict victimisation, regardless of the type of cyberbullying behaviour, and a considerable degree of overlap was found between different types of cyberbullying perpetration and victimisation based on the further results of bivariate probit models. The rho correlations from these unadjusted bivariate probit models suggested that the categories of general overt-aggressive, and relational-aggressive cyberbullying were significantly overlapped.

Charisse (2016) credited that cyberbullying has become an international public



health concern among adolescents, and as such, it deserves further study. The current literature related to the effects of cyberbullying on adolescent health across multiple studies worldwide and provides directions for future research. A review of the evidence suggests that cyberbullying poses a threat to adolescents' health and well-being. A plethora of correlational studies have demonstrated a cogent relationship between adolescents' involvement in cyberbullying and negative health indices. Adolescents who are targeted via cyberbullying report increased depressive effect, anxiety, loneliness, suicidal behavior, and somatic symptoms. Perpetrators of cyberbullying are more likely to report increased substance use, aggression, and delinquent behaviors. Mediating/moderating processes have been found to influence the relationship between cyberbullying and adolescent health. More longitudinal work is needed to increase the understanding of the effects of cyberbullying on adolescent health over time. Prevention and intervention efforts related to reducing cyberbullying and its associated harms are discussed (Nixon, 2016).

### **Socio-economic Implications Of Cyberbullying**

The role of the internet in the development of a nation's economy has well been established. Accordingly, Ehimen and Bola (2009) argued that the internet has created a geometric growth and accelerated windows of opportunities for businesses and the removal of economic barriers hitherto faced by nations of the world. Considering these limitless advantages of the use of internet, one can easily subscribe to the fact that it is an important tool for national development in a developing country like Nigeria. However, the internet based crimes has become a huge menace threatening the socio-economic and technological advancement of Kebbi Central and Nigeria large. Shehu (2014) maintains that socially, cybercrime activities such as cyberbullying, stalking, harassment, and blackmail and cyber terrorism are a menace to individual's right to privacy and fundamental freedom. Similarly, cybercrimes like pornography, child predation, online gambling, online prostitution and so on undermines morality

in society and puts the society at risks of breakdown of social norms and values. Cyberbullying has thrown up emergency millionaires or billionaires in Nigeria which is injurious to the socioeconomic development of the country.

Funds acquired illegally are not been used productively to promote the economy of the nation. The crime has diverted the attention of so many Nigerian youths from undertaking productive activities such as manufacturing, construction as well as large scale farming that would have grown the economy to such criminal activities because of the flamboyant life chances and life styles that it presents (Folashade and Abimbola, 2013). The prevalence of cyberbullying has also created a bad image for Kebbi central amongst the other local government as one of the most prevalence zone that has large number of cyberbullying cases in the State. This tarnished the image of innocent individuals within the region.

Cyberbullying also has an implication in the socioeconomic advancement of the State as information flowing from the region is been characterized as questionable because of the criminal element that make it unreliable, inaccurate and untrustworthy, (Iwarimie 2010). Indeed, one cannot overemphasize the economic sabotage resulting from cyberbullying in Kebbi State and Nigeria. According to Saulawa and Abubakar, (2014), in 2012, an estimated \$1 trillion was lost to cyber-related frauds globally, although only \$390 billion was reported for obvious reasons; and only recently a report by the South African based Institute of Digital Communication indicates that Nigeria is losing about \$ 80 million dollars yearly to software piracy alone. Similarly, Sesan, Soremi and Oluwafemi (2012) reports that in 2012 alone, an estimated customer loss of N2, 146,666,345,014.75(\$13,547,910,034.80) was incurred to cyber related crimes in Nigeria. In highlighting the consequences of cybercrime and cyberbullying in Nigeria, Folashade and Abimbola, (2013) posits that cyberbullying hinders the socio-economic development of the country as it engenders lack of trust and confidence in profitable transactions, promotes





denial of innocent Nigerians opportunities abroad and causes loss of employment and revenue loss. Also, the findings of the study by Maitanmi et al (2013) shows that cyberbullying impedes socio-economic development in of kebbi state and Nigeria as whole as it scares away foreign investors due to the low level of confidence

Jackson and Robert (2016) investigated the effects of cyberbullying and cyber related crimes. The findings research indicated that cyberbullying and cyber related crimes has aided other illicit activities in Nigeria such as intellectual plagiarism, disruption of public services, drug trafficking, and terrorism. From the foregoing, the effect of cyberbullying continues to be evident with many potential negative impacts on the socio-economic development of Kebbi central and kebbi state as a whole. Summarily, the implication of cyberbullying includes the following:

- i. Widespread cyberbullying has tarnished the image of Nigeria in the international community thereby making the country unsafe for foreign investors;
- ii. Cyberbullying has negatively impacted on confidence Nigerians have on the digital economy thus inhibiting economic growth;
- iii. Cyberbullying against businesses owners and organizations owners has the ability to damage organizational reputation and result in a loss of customers and revenue;
- iv. The need to develop measures to combat and respond to cyber-attacks imposes significant costs on businesses and organizations;
- v. Financial losses accrued by consumers and businesses resulting from the misplacement of information and harassment of investors impedes economic growth.
- vi. Nigeria's critical infrastructure may be targeted by harassing the invaluable officers and this can lead to immediate and long term economic losses.
- vii. Cyberbullying has the potentials to fuel other criminal activities and increases cost in time and resources for law enforcement agencies.

- viii. It can lead to loss of business assets and cost of government agencies and business in re-establishing credits histories, accounts and identities
- ix. Loss of personal financial resources and the subsequent emotional damage.

### **Categories of Cyberbullying**

There are numerous classifications of cyberbullying, Brenner (nd cited in Maitanmi et al 2013) classified cybercrimes into target cybercrime (computer as target), tool cybercrime (computer as tool of cybercrime) and computer incidental (computer playing minor role in the crime). This categorization of cybercrimes corroborates the aforementioned conceptualization of cybercrime as provided by Kamani (2011). In the light of the above cyber bullying can also be classified as follows:

- i. ***Cyberbullying Against Individual:*** The act is targeting against individuals, their persons, tarnish of reputation, fallacy text against the person, harassment text and inciting violence through literary write-up among others
- ii. ***Cyberbullying Against Individual's Property:*** Individual often fill harass, annoyed or angry if one or more of his property been tampered or destroyed. These properties include: harassment via e-mails, cyber stalking, discrimination of obscene materials, defamation advert on products, unauthorized control or access over computer system, indecent exposure, email spoofing, cheating and fraud, computer vandalism, transmitting virus, net-trespass, intellectual property crime, internet time
- iii. ***Cyberbullying Against Organizations:*** These are activities targeted against governments or non-governmental organisations, firms, companies, and corporate bodies. These include increasing anxiety, panic in the mind of the workers. The organisational bullies inflict pain in the mind of employees by putting employees under distress which



force them to stay away from the organisation.

- iv. **Cyberbullying Against Society:** These are activities targeted against the society at large, these includes; increasing anxiety, panic in the mind of the populace, pornographic and indecent exposure via social media, inciting violence words via social media i.e Facebook, Tik-talk or Wathup among others that could possibly cause emotional unrest to one another.

### **Characteristics and symptoms of cyber-bullying**

Faryadi (2011) cited six (6) characteristics of cyber bullies:

- a. Often involved in other antisocial activities such as drug use.
- b. Impulsive and easily angered
- c. Strong need to dominate other students.
- d. Show little empathy toward students who are victimized
- e. Often physically stronger than other students in the class.
- f. Often defiant and aggressive, including to parents and teachers.

Faryadi further iterated some symptoms of victims of cyber bullying which includes:

- a. Anxious, insecure, unhappy and have low self-esteem
- b. Cautious, sensitive, quiet, withdrawn and shy
- c. Depressed and engaged in suicidal ideation much more often than their peers
- d. Do not have a single good friend to discuss problems. e. Often physically weaker than their peers in the school.

### **Methodology**

Therefore, qualitative and quantitative techniques is considered to be employed to meet the study objectives and research questions. This study, which is qualitative and quantitative in nature, adopts a case study design to produce a detailed explanation of the cyberbullying process and gain a lot of information and literature. The rationale for adopting the case study design is because cyberbullying is a boundary-less or interstate phenomenon which could either be carried out

directly or indirectly. The case study design is critical in providing an opportunity to fully understand the socio-economic implications of cyberbullying and provide solutions which require the attention of different stakeholders with different expertise and experience to be involved in the study area. The instrument includes thirty-six (36) Key informants Interview (KII), twenty (20) Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and twenty (20) In-depth Interview (IDI). A total number of 234 questionnaires were distributed to the study area that consisted of various levels of respondents, which includes; Students, Teachers, Lecturers, Member of General public, Law enforcement Agency, Judiciary, traditional rulers and members of voluntary organizations in the study areas and also Two Hundred (200) were filled and returned successfully.

For the purpose of this study, a purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting the areas and respondents for the study. The rationale for employing a purposive sampling technique is that it gives the research the opportunity to sample respondents who are well knowledgeable and experienced people in the area of investigation (Creswell, 2013; and Bryman, 2016). Purposive sampling is among the most important ways of choosing the respondent in qualitative research. Sampling decision was employed in select participants who were once victims or experienced the phenomenon of cyberbullying. It is important to acknowledge that most of the areas selected in this research were areas with a proneness report of cyberbullying. These areas include; Birnin Kebbi, Jega, and Aliero. The three (3) LGAs are drawn from Kebbi State central senatorial district. The rationale for selecting the LGA was based on the prevalence of victims reported by the Traditional rulers, Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Courts, Educationists, Experts from the field, EFCC and ICPC



## Results

**Table1:** Respondents for Key Informant Interview (KII)

S/N	Study areas	Lecturer/Teachers	Student	DSS	Judges	Police	NSCDC	Public Member	Security Expert	Total
1	Algeria	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	12
2	Birmingham	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	12
3	Jega	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	12
Total		9	3	3	9	3	3	3	3	36

**Key informant interview;** is considered as a professional interview that is targeted to key individuals with specific experience about the topic of investigation Flick (2014). The information gathered from key informants could hardly be gained from other techniques of the research. The whole idea is that, the respondents were professionals and experience individuals that could subscribe to measures of averting the cyberbullying menace. In addition, thirty-six (36) key informants was interviewed. These include Teachers/Lecturers, Student, DSS, Judges, Police, NSCDC, Selected Public Members and security expert.

**Table2:**  
**Results obtained from In-depth Interview and Focus Group Discussion**

S/N	Socio-economic implication of cyberbullying	Implications/effect	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1	Psychological/Mental Health effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>feeling distressed/depression</li> <li>feel embarrassed</li> <li>fear for their safety</li> <li>low self-esteem</li> <li>Anxiety</li> <li>Humiliation</li> <li>Feeling loneliness</li> <li>Isolation</li> <li>Suicidal ideation</li> </ul>	35 15 10 10 30 30 10 20 15	12.5% 5% 3% 3% 10% 10% 3% 8% 5%
2	Physiological effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sleep disturbances</li> <li>Gastrointestinal Complications</li> <li>Disordered Eating</li> <li>possibility of attacking financial institution of the victims</li> <li>Disseminations of Fake information threatening TO harm the organisation or customer using bullies Apps and Applications such as; Bully Button, Take a Stand together, safe eyes mobile, know bullying, bully block etc.</li> <li>Ideation to loss job/status</li> </ul>	15 10 10 10 10 15	5% 3% 3% 3% 3% 5%
3	Behavioral effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumption of drugs, alcohol or substance for relief</li> <li>Skipping school/school dropout</li> <li>Carrying arms/weapon for retaliation</li> </ul>	25 10 20	7.5% 3% 8%
TOTAL			300	100%

The above table indicated the implication of cyberbullying to the socio-economic development of kebbi state. The effect could either be Psychological/Mental Health effect, physiological and behavioral effect. It Is obvious that, the well- being of humanity in every society is what promote the development of its economy.

## Limitations Of The Study

The results of this study are subjected to the following limitations: Firstly, this research conducted with individuals from 14-65, years with 300 samples. As thus, the results cannot be generalized. Further investigations are needed to examine how other individuals below 14 years old and above 65 years old are coping with cyber bullying. Secondly, further examinations are necessary with longer period of time as well as more samples are required to test whether cyber bullying indeed affected the socio-economic activities of the region. Thirdly, it is beyond the control of this research to avoid human factor such as bias to cyberspace and affected individuals, fourthly, literacy level of the respondents and in adequate finance by the researcher limited the research from making the research more better.

## Discussion

Cyberbullying have been a major concern of all internet users most especially those who rely on it as means of socioeconomic development i.e governmental and none governmental business entity through relevant agencies in collaboration with business organisations have made attempts to safeguard wellbeing of their personnel from being cyberbullies. However, reports of cyberbullies victimization persist with millions victims globally due to the fact that its easiest and fastness medium to bullies one another. This has necessitated series of studies on cyberbullying. A common denominator in these studies is the acknowledgement of cybercrime as part of the larger technology fallout which has fostered a new dimension of crime and risk. Nonetheless, the pace at which socio-economic activities thrive i.e business organisations subscribes to e-commerce irrespective of the dangers posed by cyberbullies activities led the current study to



investigate the socioeconomic implications of cyberbullying a study of kebbi central senatorial districts, Kebbi State.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study revealed that institutions of learning were not spared by the detrimental effects of cyber bullying. The authorities of universities, Polytechnics, Mono-technics, Colleges of Educations and Secondary School awarding institutions should take preventive measures to convert or eradicate the occurrences of cyberbullying in our society to the bearers' level. Victims of cyber bullies suffer from either Physiological, Psychological or behavioral effects. Government and non-governmental Institutions, Teachers, Law enforcement, Traditional rulers, Public members and parents must realize that cyberspace is boundary-less which is highly difficult to control the threat and therefore, protective measures should be employed to protect the socio-economic development of the society and country at large. The following are the recommendations that could possibly protect the socio-economic development from becoming more victims of cyber criminals thus, to: (a) Establishment of cyberbullying or cybercrime report centres in all Nigerian institutions, as such that it would be easier to lodge complain of any act or omission carried out by cybercriminals (b) Adequate laws and enforcement of such laws should be implemented and violators of such laws should not go unpunished (c) Government should create bullying prevention policies that includes; awareness and sensitization (d) Provision of policy that will compel all public members including students, teachers and parents to sign an undertaking to report any cases of cyberbullying or cybercrime. (e) Government should setup a special team that includes Professionals, Expert in ICT, Encrypted Software's and Applications that can be used by government entity to monitor and control the occurrences of cyberbullying or cybercrimes (f) Computer and mobile phone usage policies should be enforced consistently. (g) Encourage students to participate in programs that teach cyber-crimes and internet responsibilities.

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