RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CYBER BULLYING, ALEXITHYMIA, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

BY

Hafsa Ullah

BAHRIA UNIVERSITY

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

2017

Relationship between Cyber Bullying, Alexithymia, and Psychological Distress among University Students

By

Hafsa Ullah

Approved by

_____

(Ms. Amira Amjad)

Supervisor

_____

(Ms. Shazia Yousaf)

Co. Supervisor

_____

External Examiner

_____

(Dr. Uzma Masroor)

HOD.DPP

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CYBER BULLYIN, ALEXITHYMIA, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

SUBMITTED

BY

HAFSA UALLAH

IS ACCEPTED BY THE BAHRIA UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE

DEGREE OF MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

2017

APPROVED BY

Ms. Amira Amjad

SENIOR LECTURER

Ms. Shazia Yousaf

LECTURER

DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

BAHRIA UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD CAMPUS

Dated: _____

ALL THE PROCEDURES FOLLOWED AND MATERIAL USED WERE REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH (HERC), BAHRIA UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

THIS THESIS SUBMITTED

BY

HAFSA ULLAH

IS ACCEPTED BY THE BAHRIA UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE

DEGREE OF MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

2017

_____

EXAMINER

Dated: _____

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

This is certified that the intellectual contents of the thesis Relationship between Cyber bullying, Aexithymia, and Psychological distress among University students are the product of my own research work except, as cited property and accurately in the acknowledgements and references, the material taken from such sources as research journals, books, internet, etc. solely to support, elaborate, compare and extend the earlier work. Further, this work has not been submitted by me previously for any degree, nor it shall be submitted by me in the future for obtaining any degree from this University, or any other university or institution. The incorrectness of this information, if proved at any stage, shall authorities the University to cancel my degree.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name of the Research Student: Hafsa Ullah

Bahria University

Discovering Knowledge

Thesis Completion Certificate

Scholar's Name: Hafsa Ullah Registration No. 01-265152-006

Programme of Study: MS Clinical Psychology

Thesis Title: 'Relationship Between Cyber Bullying, Alexithymia, and Psychological distress among University students.'

It is to certify that the above student's thesis has been completed to my satisfaction and, to my belief, its standard is appropriate for submission for Evaluation. I have also conducted plagiarism test of this thesis using HEC prescribed software and found similarity index at 16% that is within the permissible limit set by the HEC for the MS/MPhil degree thesis. I have also found the thesis in a format recognized by the BU for the MS/MPhil thesis.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: _____

Date: _____ Name: _____Ms. Amira Amjad_____

CO Supervisor's Signature:

Date: _____ Name: _____Ms. Shazia Yousaf_____

Bahria University

Discovering Knowledge

Author's Declaration

I Hafsa Ullah hereby state that my MS thesis titled “Relationship between Cyber bullying, Alexithymia, and Psychological distress among University Students.” is my own work and has not been submitted previously by me for taking any degree from this university Bahria University Islamabad campus or anywhere else in the country/world.

At any time if my statement is found to be incorrect even after my Graduate the university has the right to withdraw/cancel my MS degree.

Name of scholar: Hafsa Ullah

Date: _____

Bahria University

Discovering Knowledge

Plagiarism Undertaking

1, Hafsa Ullah solemnly declare that research work presented in the thesis titled 'Relationship between Cyber bullying, Alexithymia, and Psychological distress among university students.'

is solely my research work with no significant contribution from any other person. Small contribution / help wherever taken has been duly acknowledged and that complete thesis has been written by me.

I understand the zero-tolerance policy of the HEC and Bahria University towards plagiarism. Therefore, I as an Author of the above titled thesis declare that no portion of my thesis has been plagiarized and any material used as reference is properly referred / cited.

I undertake that if I am found guilty of any formal plagiarism in the above titled thesis even after award of MS degree, the university reserves the right to withdraw / revolve my MS degree and that HEC and the University has the right to publish my name on the HEC / University website on which names of students are placed who submitted plagiarized thesis.

Student / Author's Sign:

_____

Name of the Student: Hafsa Ullah

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents for their endless love, affection and faith in me. I also dedicate this thesis to my respected teachers who are the nation builders.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All praises to Allah Almighty who created the universe and knows whatever is in it, hidden or evident, and who bestowed upon me the intellectual ability and wisdom to search for its secrets. I feel much pleasure in expressing my heartiest gratitude to my ever-affectionate supervisor Ms. Amira Amjad and Co. supervisor Ms. Shazia Yusuf for their dynamic and friendly supervision and whose inspiring attitude made it very easy to undertake this project. It was only through their guidance that my efforts were fruitful. I express my heartiest and sincerest gratitude to my Post Graduate Coordinator Dr. Noshi Irum Zaman for her valuable suggestions and supportive attitude during the course of my studies. To me, there is nothing better than having good friends, so great pride is with me while thanking my friend: Umar Aziz. Words are lacking to express my humble obligation for my affectionate brothers and my sisters for their sacred prayers and gracious behavior. Last but certainly not least, deepest appreciations are extended to my beloved Parents, for my success is really the fruit of their devoted prayers and encouragement.

Hafsa Ullah

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Topic	Page No.
CHAPTER – I	
Introduction	1-14
Cyber Victimization	4
Alexithymia	6
Psychological Distress	9
Clinical features of psychological distress	10
Diverse theoretical psychological distress models	13
CHAPTER – II	
Literature Review	15-25
Rational	24
CHAPTER – III	
Methodology	26
Objective	26
Hypotheses	26
Research Design	26

Sample 26

Inclusion criteria 28

Exclusion Criteria 28

Assessment Measures 28

Demographic form 28

Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20) 29

The Revised Cyber Bullying Inventory 29

The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale 29

Operational Definitions 30

Procedure 31

CHAPTER – IV

Results 32-46

CHAPTER – V

Discussion 47-52

Conclusion 52

Limitations 52

Suggestions 52

Future Implication 53

CHAPTER – VI

References 54-67

LIST OF TABLES

Table-1	Frequencies and Percentages of the Demographic characteristics of sample (n=140)	27
Table-2	Psychometric Properties of the Major Study Variables (N=140)	33
Table-3	Person Product Moment correlation among Difficulty identifying feelings, Difficulty describing feelings, Externally oriented thinking, Alexithymia, Cyber Victimization, and Cyber Bullying (N=140)	34
Table- 4	Person Product Moment correlation between Age, Difficulty identifying feelings, Difficulty describing feelings, Externally oriented thinking, Alexithymia, Cyber Victimization, and Cyber Bullying (N=140)	35
Table-5	Mean, Standard deviation, and t-values across gender of participants on Alexithymia (subscales), Cyber bullying, cyber victimization and Psychological distress (N=140)	36
Table-6	Mean, Standard deviation, and t-values across Education of participants on Alexithymia (subscales), Cyber bullying, cyber victimization and Psychological distress (N=140)	37
Table-7	ANOVA of Daily internet usage duration on Alexithymia (subscales), Cyber bullying, cyber victimization and	38

Psychological distress

(N=140)

Table-8 Mean differences across Daily internet usage duration on Alexithymia (subscales), Cyber bullying, cyber victimization and Psychological distress (N=140) 43

Table-9 Predicators of Psychological Distress (N=140) 45

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure-1	Mean of Difficulty Identifying feelings and Approx. Daily internet use duration (N=140)	40
Figure-2	Mean of Cyber victimization and Approx. Daily internet use duration (N=140)	41
Figure-3	Mean of Cyber bullying and Approx. Daily internet use duration (N=140)	42

ABBREVIATIONS

DIF	Difficulty Identifying Feelings
DDF	Difficulty Describing Feelings
EOT	Externally oriented thinking
TAS	Toronto Alexithymia Scale
K10	Kesseler Psychological Distress Scale

LIST OF ANNEXURES

Annexure	A	Informed Consent Form	68
Annexure	B	Demographic Information Sheet	69
Annexure	C	Toronto Alexithymia Scale	70
Annexure	D	The Kesseler Psychological distress scale	71
Annexure	E	The Revised Cyber Bullying Inventory	72
Annexure	F	Permission letters for using tools	72

Abstract

The present study aims to explore the relationship between Cyber bullying, Alexithymia, and Psychological distress among university students. The sample selected (N=140) consisted of 75 males and 65 females with the age range 18 to 22 years with M= 20.99 and SD= 1.08. The scale used in the study were Toronto Alexithymia scale-20 with alpha .81 consisting of three subscales difficulty identifying feelings, difficulty describing feelings, and externally oriented thinking with alpha .78, .75, and .71 respectively. Revised Cyber bullying inventory (RCBI) with alpha .75 consisting of two subscales cyber victimization and cyber bullying having alpha .73 and .81 respectively. And Kesseler psychological distress scale-10 with alpha .92 was used. The results of the study indicated a positive significant relationship between Cyber bullying, Alexithymia, and Psychological distress. Gender differences were found as males were more involved in cyber bullying than females. It was revealed that bachelor's degree program student had more difficulty in identifying feelings than students enrolled in master degree program. The result also showed that cyber bullying is a predictor of psychological distress.

Key words: Cyber bullying, Alexithymia, Psychological distress