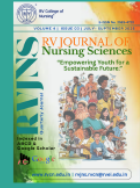




RV College of
Nursing®

RV JOURNAL OF NURSING SCIENCES

VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 3 | JULY - SEPTEMBER 2025 E-ISSN No. 2583-472X
rvjns.rvcn@rvei.edu.in | Email: rvjns.rvcn@rvei.edu.in



A Correlational Study to Assess the Impact of Virtual Intimidation on Mental Health among Students at Selected Colleges, Bangalore, Karnataka

Ms Monica C Y^{a1}, Ms. Jasmine Johnson^{a2}, Ms. Haisha Ishack^{a3}, Ms Jayanthi S^{a4}, Mrs Gauthami H^{b1}

^{a4}4th Year BSc Nursing, RV College of Nursing, Bangalore. ^b Associate Professor, RV College of Nursing.

Email Id: monimonica182001@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 20 December 2024

Received in revised form

03 April 2025

Available online 10 July 2025

Keywords:

Virtual Intimidation

Cyber Bullying

Mental Health

Social Media

Students

ABSTRACT

Virtual intimidation also known as cyberbullying has emerged as a significant mental health concern in digital age. Virtual intimidation occurs through digital platforms such as social media, messaging apps and online forums allowing perpetrators to target individuals anonymously and persistently. The correlational study aimed to assess the impact of virtual intimidation on mental health among students at selected colleges in Bangalore. A total of 76 students were participated based on convenient sampling technique to select the samples and data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The study objectives included identification of degree of virtual intimidation, assessment of mental health of students and correlation between virtual intimidation and mental health. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that, more than half of the students (58%) had moderate degree of virtual intimidation, majority of students (68%) had moderate level of mental health. There is a significant moderate positive relation between virtual intimidation and mental health among students.

Introduction

Social media and technology have completely changed how people interact, communicate and socialize. But there are drawbacks to this digital environment as well, chief among them being virtual intimidation sometimes referred to as cyberbullying. Concern over this problem has spread throughout academic settings especially among college students. The term virtual intimidation refers to a variety of negative actions carried out via digital channels such as threats, stalking and harassment.

Virtual intimidation is a serious social issue. Therefore, its critical to learn more about the mechanism of bullying as well as resilience factors that may shield victims. Furthermore, resources that might teach potential victims to become more resilient must be made available.

The current study tests a newly created virtual environment that places participants in the role of a victim who is being mistreated by a superior in order to support both of these objectives. The systematic study summarized the effects of social network usage on mental health. Embarrassment over the issue can lead to people hiding online bullying from their friends and family in real life, further fuelling feelings of isolation, depression, and anxiety. A lack of awareness and support can also create a barrier for the victims to open up about their problems and lead to unstable mental health.

Need for the study

The increasing use of digital platforms among students has led to a rise in virtual intimidation, which can have significant psychological consequences. Understanding the correlation between virtual intimidation and mental health is crucial in identifying the extent of its impact on student's well-being, including stress, anxiety, depression, and self-esteem issues.

This study is necessary to provide empirical evidence on how virtual intimidation affects mental health, aiding educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals in developing effective interventions and support systems. By assessing this relationship, the study aims to contribute in creating safer digital environments and promoting student well-being.

Objectives of the study

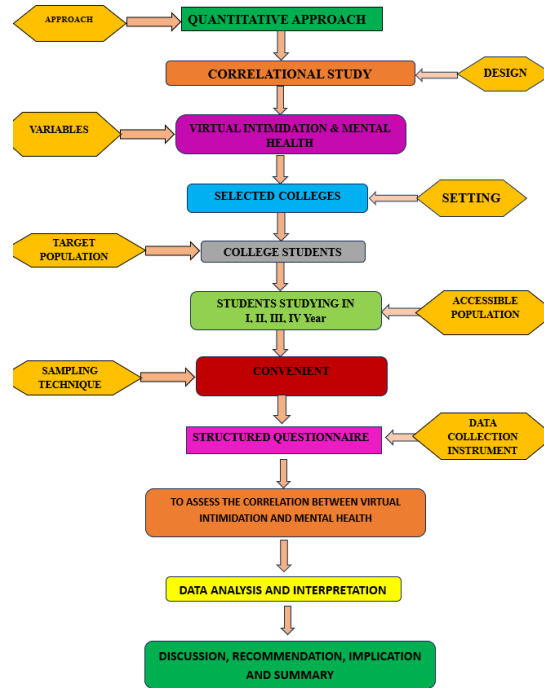
- To assess the degree of virtual intimidation among the students at selected colleges.
- To determine the mental health of the students at selected colleges.
- To analyse the correlation between virtual intimidation and mental health among adolescents of selected colleges.

Hypothesis

H₁: There will be a significant correlation between virtual intimidation and mental health.

The research approach adopted for the study was quantitative approach and the design was Non-experimental correlational research design. The study was conducted on adolescents at the selected colleges and who fulfils the

inclusion criteria are included in the study. The samples are selected using convenient sampling technique. The tool consists of three sections **Section A-** Socio-Demographic data, **Section B-** Virtual Intimidation & **Section C-** Mental Health. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.



Results And Interpretation

Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of selected socio-demographic variables of B.Sc. Nursing students.

Sl. No	Demographic Variables	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1	Age in years		
	a. 18-20 years	06	7.9
	b. 20-21 years	42	55.3
	c. 22-24 years	28	36.8
2.	Gender		
	a. Male	22	28.9
	b. Female	54	71.1
3.	Religion		
	a. Hindu	35	46.1
	b. Muslim	07	09.2
	c. Christian	34	44.7
4.	Type of family		
	a. Nuclear	67	88.2
	b. Joint	09	11.8
5.	Student resident status		
	a. Home	08	10.5
	b. Hostel	45	59.2
	c. P G	23	30.3
6.	Place of residence		
	a. Urban	54	71.1
	b. Rural	22	28.9

7.	Involvement in using smart phone		
	a. Passive	66	86.8
	b. Active	10	13.2
8.	Hours spent in using smart phone		
	a. 1-2 hours	15	19.7
	b. 2-3 hours	23	30.3
	c. 3-4 hours	14	18.4
	d. More than 4 hours	24	31.6
9.	Previous knowledge on virtual intimidation		
	a. Yes	26	34.2
	b. No	50	65.8
10.	Source of information on virtual intimidation		
	a. Mass media	20	76.9
	b. Friends and relative	4	15.4
	c. Books	2	7.7
11.	Previous knowledge on mental health		
	a. Yes	60	78.9
	b. No	16	21.1
12.	Source of information on mental health		
	a. Mass media	30	50
	b. Friends and relative	18	30
	c. Books	12	20

Table 2 Frequency and Percentage Distribution to assess the degree of virtual intimidation

Sl. No	Virtual Intimidation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Mild	23	30.3
2.	Moderate	44	57.9
3.	Severe	9	11.8

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage Distribution to assess Mental Health

Sl. No	Mental Health	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Good Mental Health	18	23.7
2.	Moderate Mental Health	52	68.4
3.	Poor Mental Health	06	07.9

Table 4. Correlation between Virtual intimidation & mental health.

Sl. No	Virtual Intimidation	Frequency Percentage F (%)	Mental Health	Frequency Percentage F (%)	Pearson Correlation coefficient(r)	P value
1.	Mild	23 (30.3%)	Good Mental Health	18 (23.7%)	+0.378	0.001
2.	Moderate	44 (57.9%)	Moderate Mental Health	52 (68.4%)		
3.	Severe	9 (11.8%)	Poor Mental Health	6 (7.9%)		

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table shows that the P value is 0.001(<0.01) and Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.378 (between 0.3-0.7) so, there is a significant moderate positive relationship between Virtual Intimidation and mental health among students.

Conclusion

The study highlights the significant impact of virtual intimidation on student's mental health, revealing its association with emotional distress and psychological challenges. With the rise of digital interactions, the need for preventive measures, digital literacy and strong support systems is crucial. Educational institutions and policymakers must implement strategies to create a safer online environment, promote awareness and provide mental health resources. Addressing cyberbullying proactively will help foster a healthier and more supportive academic

atmosphere for students. Facing virtual intimidation has easy access to professional help. Schools and universities should enhance counseling resources, ensuring that students

Peer support groups can also be established to provide victims with a safe space to share their experiences and coping strategies.

Recommendation of the study

To address the impact of virtual intimidation on students' mental health, educational institutions should implement awareness programs that help students recognize and respond to online harassment, including cyberbullying.

Workshops on digital etiquette and responsible online behaviour can empower students to engage in safer online interactions. Additionally, strengthening mental health support services is crucial.

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