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Relationship between prevalence of Cyberbullying and Psychological Wellbeing of Adolescents' in Selected Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya

By

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Abstract
This article presents the findings of a study done in Nairobi County to investigate the relationship between the frequency of cyberbullying and psychological wellbeing of adolescents in selected secondary schools in the County. The study adopted 'Ex Post Facto' Design. As the teens nowadays use digital technology to interact with one another, cyberbullying has become a global and regional concern. Teenagers' psychological health has become a concern as a result of the ongoing shifts in the types and patterns of cyberbullying. The study population consisted of all the adolescents in selected secondary schools aged between 13 and 18 years of age. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample of 318 adolescents, 5 principals and 5 teacher-counselors. The research instruments were questionnaires. In particular, the study modified Hinduja and Patchin's (2010) cyberbullying questionnaire to measure the frequency of cyberbullying and its relationships with adolescents' psychological wellbeing after experiencing one form or other of cyberbullying. Interview schedules were used to gather information from the teacher-counselors on frequency of cyberbullying and also on the quality of adolescents' psychological wellbeing. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 25 and presented using frequency tables and percentages. The results revealed that the frequency of cyberbullying was dynamic and affected the quality adolescents' wellbeing in the selected secondary schools in Nairobi County. The findings showed that 198 (62.3%) of the adolescents demonstrated varying degree of embarrassment and disappointment after cyberbullying experience of four to five days a week. Additionally, there was a statistically significant relationship between cyberbullying frequency and psychological wellbeing of the adolescents in the selected secondary schools. The study recommends for the school principals, class teachers, teacher counselors and parents should work together in educating them on cyber bullying issues in order to foster assertiveness and resilience.

Key words: Kenya, Cyberbullying, psychological wellbeing, Prevalence, Adolescents, Cyberbullies, Victims

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By

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1.0 Introduction

Around the world, most secondary schools have expressed worry about cyberbullying as a social problem, especially when it comes to adolescents who lack resilience and coping mechanisms. Bullying, according to the Education Hub (2022), usually involves cruel, persistent acts that arise from the abuse of authority and occur in social relationships. This power may be associated with physical prowess, disparities in self-esteem, popularity, peer group standing, or, in particular, technological expertise (Olweus, 2013. Although according to Smith (2012) cyberbullying can appear to account for only 25% to 30% of all bullying, its frequency and consequences as well as well suicidal attempts linked to online victimization, media outlets have dubbed this type of relational aggression as "epidemic" (Hase, Goldberg, Smith, Stuck & Campain, 2015). A staff writer (2022) on cyberbullying in schools reported that Cyberbullying is when someone uses technology, such as text messages, social networking sites, emails, and online messages, to harass, torment, threaten, or degrade another person. They do this by sending sex messages, spreading rumors, using derogatory names, sending harsh messages, and excluding people from online groups while posing as someone else without considering the impact on the victim's mental health.

Nevertheless, UNESCO (2022) during the international day against violence and bullying affirmed that children and young people, who are affected by bullying, cyberbullying in this matter, find it difficult to concentrate in class. In Kenya, the findings by Mathew, Kagwe and Tucholski (2019), indicate that among the sampled students 14% engaged in cyberbullying activities and 23% engaged in cybervictimization behaviors. According to a more current study by Ndetei, Mutiso, Shandy et al. (2024), cyberbullying was highly prevalent among high school students. Of those who were cyberbullies and those who were cyberbullied, 45.3% had suicidal thoughts, and only 13.8% did not try suicide. Therefore this study provides informantion on the relationship between prevalence of cyberbullying and psychological wellbeing of the adolescents in selected secondary schools in Nairobi County.

1.1 The Purpose of the Study

This study sought to determine the relationship between prevalence of cyberbullying the psychological wellbeing of adolescents in secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Prevalence of Cyberbullying and Psychological Wellbeing of the Adolescents in Secondary Schools

In this twenty first century, cyber bullying prevalence rates vary greatly over the world. Price and Dalgeish (2010) in Australia conducted a study on experiences, impacts and coping strategies among a sample of 548 young Australian. The results indicated that, cyberbullying is most prevalent during transition ages between primary and secondary school particularly with the onset of adolescence. During this period, the adolescents interact a lot with their

peers and consequently, the environments such as twitter, Facebook, and other social networking sites have now become platforms for cyberbullying. Safaria (2016) investigated the prevalence and impact of cyber bullying of the Indonesian junior high school students.

The results revealed that, 26(25.5%) of the students experienced cyber bullying occasionally or twice, 21(20.6%) experienced it twice or three times, 28(27.5%) experienced it often, (four to five times) while 13(12.7%) experienced it almost every day. Nevertheless, the study found that, there was 65.6% of variance in psychological distress attributed to cyber bullying. This indicated that, the participants who often experienced cyber bullying had higher psychological distress compared with those who had never experienced. Therefore, this study served as the foundation for the current investigation, which sought to determine the relationship between the prevalence of cyber bullying and adolescents' psychological well-being.

In Ontario, Kim, Kimber, Boyle, Georgiades (2019) conducted a secondary data analysis from student drug health survey. The study examined the sex differences in the association between cyberbullying victimization and mental health, substance use, and suicidal ideation in adolescents. The study revealed that, when compared to male adolescents, female adolescents reported considerably greater rates of victimization from cyberbullying (once, 9.4%; twice or more, 13.3%) than did male adolescents (once, 8.3%; twice or more, 7.8%). While the study portrays some similarity with the current study, it investigated secondary data unlike the current study, which dealt with a more current and reliable primary data. However, despite of this disparity, the negative outcomes of cyber victimization are long life for all the victims. Furthermore, the study found that both the male and female adolescents who experienced cyberbullying victimization had higher odds of experiencing psychological distress, considering suicide, and engaging in delinquent behavior.

Besides, Brochados, Soaress and Fragas (2017) conducted a scoping review on studies of cyberbullying, prevalence among the adolescents. The results indicated that the highest median prevalence was 23.8% varying between 1.9% and 65.0% in Canada, 23% varying between 11.2% and 56.9% in China while the lowest median prevalence was from Australia (5.9%), Sweden (5.2%) and German (6.3%) respectively. In addition, Zhu, Huang Evans and Zhang (2021) in China did a comprehensive review on cyber bullying among the adolescents. The study revealed that the prevalence rate of cyber perpetration ranged from six to 43.3% while cyber-bullying victimization ranged from 13.9% to 57.5%.

Specifically, the study indicated that, Spain had the highest prevalence of victimization 41 (57.5%), followed by Malaysia with 37(52.2%), Israel 42(45%), China 43(44.5%) while Canada had the lowest 13.9%. This could be due to cyber bullying awareness and the culture among the sampled population. From this perspective, it is worthy concluding that cyberbullying has an impact on the adolescents' thoughts, emotions and actions to an extent that, instead of concentrating on positive affect that are likely to boost their self-esteem and self-acceptance, once cyber bullied they trivialize and become desensitized to the regular coarse language in cyber space (Katz & Rigternk, 2012).

In Korea, Lee and Shin (2017) from a sample of 4000 adolescents selected using multistage cluster sampling found that, 34% of the adolescents were involved in cyber bullying. Out of these, 6.3% were involved in cyberbullying as bullies, 14.6% as victims while 13.1% were both bullies and victims. However, boys were more aggressive than girls were. Consequently, they reported higher percentages of cyber bullying perpetration than girls did. Correspondingly, the psychological distress associated with cyber bullying such as depression anxiety, substance abuse and other antisocial behaviors influxes the life of the

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victims. Consistently, Khan, Limbana, Zahid, Eskander and Jahan (2020) in their study on traits, trends and trajectory revealed that, the victims of cyber bullying displayed higher incidences of suicide, unsafe sexual behaviors and social and psychological disturbance in life compared non-victims.

In trying to understand more about cyber bullying and its prevalence among the adolescents in South Africa, Cilliers (2021) surveyed 150 University students in Eastern Cape Province.

The study demonstrated that, one third of the students have been victims of cyber bullying. Based on the existing argument that cyber bullying is related psychological distress and poor mental health, Ndebele and Msiza (2014) in South Africa, conducted a study on analysis of the prevalence and the effects of bullying at remote rural schools. The study found that, 64.5% victims of cyber bullying felt embarrassed and could not concentrate on their studies while others were quiet and shy. To add on this, a survey conducted among the young people aged between 15- 21 years reinforced these arguments that, 19% had been cyberbullied once or twice a week with 10% being victims of every day cyber bullying.

The study however, revealed that, higher percentages of those who had been cyber bullied in various forms were females (Scholtz, Turha & Johnston, 2015). Furthermore, Olasanmi, Agbaje and Adeyemi (2020) on their study on prevalence and prevention strategies of cyberbullying among 150 Nigerian university students aged between 14-29 years. The study found that 53.9% of the students reported being cyberbullied, 24.1% cyberbullied others while 56% knew someone who was cyber bullying. This shows that, cyberbullying is a threat to many adolescents since the victims of cyberbullying may manifest depression, badness, anxiety and difficulty with relationships substance abuse, self-inflicted suicide, and school dropout (Nwufo & Nwoke, 2018).

In Kenya, Makori and Agufana (2020) observed that, cyber bullying is a common event in educational institutions. This does not exclude the secondary school institutions. Agreeably, Okoth (2014) in Kisumu demonstrated that, the prevalence of bullying stood at 31.1% with a high of 42.2% from mixed schools while the girl schools registered the least (28.6%). However, technology bullying was having 18.2% . The concern of the current study was to establish the relationship between the prevalence of cyber bullying and the psychological wellbeing of the adolescents in secondary schools.

As indicated in Makori and Agufana (2020), cyber bullying might attack people's self-esteem. In their study, the students who experienced cyberbullying reported had reported having frustration, depression, sadness and boredom while others felt as if people had invaded their privacy with others revealing that they felt heart breaking and rejected by the society. This means that cyberbullying may throw the adolescents to loneliness and a feeling that cyberbullying is inescapable. This study revealed important information thatwas vital in the current study.

3. Research Methodology

3..1 Research Design

The two investigational designs were *ex-post-facto* and survey. *Ex-Post-Facto* design was used to model the study because cyberbullying manifestation had already taken place and could not be controlled, while survey design allowed the researcher to specifically describe the relationship between cyberbullying tactics and the psychological health of the adolescents. So, to ascertain the appropriate countermeasures, a retrospective analysis of cyberbullying was carried out.

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3.2 Study population

The population of the study consisted of all 5200 secondary school students from the five selected schools, whose ages ranged from 13 to 18. Adopting this category was inspired by the fact that adolescents are at a developmental stage where they are more aggressive and interact with peers more frequently than their parents and close friends. Additionally, they might use online media to further their social agenda, which might result in cyberbullying. The study specifically chose the five principals and the five teacher counselors from the five secondary schools. A professional counselor, a police officer, an IT expert, a former high school student who had graduated one year before to the study, a pastor, and a parent were also chosen by the researchers based on their expertise in these fields.

3.3 Sampling Procedures

318 adolescent students were chosen using simple random sampling. Additionally, the researchers chose 5 school principals and 5 teacher counselors from the selected schools using purposive selection. Focus group discussants (a professional counselor, a police officer, an IT expert, a former high school student, and a parent were likewise chosen through the use of purposeful sampling.

3.4 Research Instrumentation

In investigating the relationship between prevalence of cyberbullying and ' psychological wellbeing of the adolescents in secondary schools, the study modified the cyberbullying questionnaire developed by Hinduja and Patchin (2010). Five-point Liker scale items required the participants to give their opinion on how frequent the experienced a psychological issue. Information on prevalence of cyberbullying were also included were in the interview schedules and focus group discussion.

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4.1 Study Results

Table 1: Prevalence of Cyberbullying and Psychological Wellbeing of the Adolescents in Secondary Schools

	1		2		3		4		5	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Most cyber bullies felt they had not improved in their academics after being involved in cyber bullying in the past one month	55	17.3	78	24.5	47	14.8	60	18.9	77	24.2
Most bystanders become warm and affectionate for the victims after witnessing an everyday cyber bullying	99	31.1	103	32.4	78	24.5	18	5.7	17	5.3
Most victims who have been cyber bullied for the past one year display loneliness and have poor social skills	36	11.3	44	13.8	35	11	73	23	120	37.7
Most victims experience embarrassment and disappointment after being cyber bullied for the last four to five days a week	79	24.8	80	25.2	39	12.3	53	16.7	65	20.4
Most adolescents who have experienced cyber bullying for the past two weeks as cyber bully-victims displayed confidence and were positive	76	23.9	59	18.6	39	12.3	38	11.9	101	31.8

Key, *%- Percentage, Frequency1- Always, 2- Often , 3- Sometimes 4- Rarely, 5- Never*
Source: Field Data 2025

As indicated in Table1 , the results showed that 55 (17.3%) of the cyber victims who had been involved in cyber bullying for the past one month reported always not feeling to have improved in academics. In addition, 78(24.5%) often had not improved while 77 (24.2%) had never. Secondly, the adolescents in Nairobi county reported that, 99(31.1%) of the bystanders always became warm and affectionate for the victims of cyber bullying after witnessing an everyday bullying. The results also indicated that, 103 (32.4%) were often warm and affectionate while 18(5.7%) and 17(5.3%) were rarely and never warm and affectionate respectively. This implied that most of the adolescents who witnessed their peers being cyber bullied would offer warmth and affection to the victims. However, it is worthy anticipating that when the bystanders fail to demonstrate sincere and heart felt love on the

victims of cyber bullying, they may respond by distancing themselves from the group hence increasing the frustrations and difficulties in maintaining close relationships.

Besides, as indicated in Table 1, the study found that 36(11.3%) of the adolescents who were victims of cyber bullying for the past one year always displayed some form of loneliness and had poor social skills. This could raise concern particularly to the stakeholders although 44(13.8%) and 120(37.7%) had often and rarely displayed loneliness and poor social skills respectively. It is an indication that when cyberbullying increases loneliness among the victims, it might adversely affect their mutual interaction and communication with their others including their teachers, family members and friends.

Secondly, the findings revealed that above one fifth of the adolescents 79(24.8%) who were victims of cyber bullying for the past two months always felt embarrassed and disappointed. Such embarrassment and disappointment would ruin their academics. However, the results indicated that, 80(25.2%) and 39(12.3%) would often or sometimes become embarrassed and disappointed. This implies that majority of the adolescents would become embarrassed or disappointed because of the peer concept identity and acceptance. Finally the results showed that, 76(23.9%) of the adolescents in Nairobi county who had experienced cyber bullying as cyber bully- victims for the past two weeks always maintained confidence and were positive about themselves.

However, 101(37.8%) had never while 59(18.9%) and 39 (12.3%) had it often and sometimes respectively. This indicated that, cyber bullying affected confidence and self-esteem of both the bullies and the victims. From the interview with the school principals and teacher counselors, the study reported that the prevalence of cyber bullying in schools was minimal. They argued that in few cases some adolescents use mobile phones sneaked into schools to call or send SMS to their peers or friends. However, they could send hurting messages to their peers. In light with this, one out of the five teacher counselors reported that,

> One day during the evening classes a form one student was brought to my office in tears because he had been sent his photograph while sitting on the school rubbish pit on his Face book account. He reported that as they waited for the computer teacher, he decided to go through the messages in my Face book only to see my photograph in tattered clothes" he was hurt and could not even concentrate with the lesson (Female Teacher Counsellor 2).

However, from the interview the study displayed that the adolescents were able to show love to their peers, they could assist them in need and related well with them indicating that they were able to withstand the stressful experience of cyber bullying. However, from the five sampled teacher counsellors, one of them while responding to the question regarding the prevalence of cyber bullying and psychological wellbeing of the adolescents affirmed that,

> Some students would show a lot of affection towards the wellbeing of others particularly their peers while, others would feel lonely due to home problems and the guidance and counselling department would help them (Female Teacher Counsellor 3).

This indicated that some adolescents would portray feelings of loneliness after being cyber bullied. Therefore, it implied that, there could be cyber bullying in schools, which the school principals and the teacher counsellors had not established. Nevertheless, higher number of the

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principals and the teacher counsellors did not report any occurrence of cyber bullying in their schools. This could perhaps indicate that they were not observant in terms of the students' interaction and presence of cyber bullying. This would therefore explain why the issues of cyber bullying had not been included in the school rules and regulations as indicated in the document review analysis.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for the Frequency of Cyberbullying and Psychological Wellbeing in Secondary Schools

	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Most cyber bullies felt they had not improved in their academics after involved in cyber bullying for the past one month	317	1	5	3.08	1.45
Most bystanders become warm and affectionate for the victims after witnessing an everyday cyber bullying	315	1	5	2.21	1.11
Most victims who have been cyber bullied for the past couple of weeks display loneliness and have poor social skills	308	1	5	3.64	1.41
Most victims experience embarrassment and disappointment after being cyber bullied for the last four to five days a week	316	1	5	2.83	1.49
Most adolescents who have experienced cyber bullying for the past two weeks as cyber bully- victims display confidence and were positive about themselves	313	1	5	3.09	1.60

Source: Field Data 2025

From the study findings indicated in Table 2, the mean for the adolescents who indicated that, they did not improve in their academics after being involved in cyber bullying for one month was 3.08 and standard deviation of 1.45. This implies that, the adolescents in Nairobi County would sometimes feel that they had not improved in their academics. In addition, the study obtained a mean of 2.83 and a standard deviation of 1.49 as concerns the adolescents who experienced embarrassment and disappointment after being cyber bullied four to five days a week. The results indicated that the adolescents were often embarrassed and disappointed after being cyber bullied implying that the more the adolescents are cyber bullied the more, they feel embarrassed and disappointed. The implication in this was that, when adolescents experience embarrassment and disappointments, they too may not share their concerns with others and thus, they become frustrated and might respond with

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retaliation or depress themselves. However, the study found that most bystanders become warm and affectionate on the victims every time they witness them being cyber bullied. This indicates that most of the bystanders empathize with the victims.

Further, the study conducted a Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient for the hypothesis that: There was no statistically significant relationship between the prevalence of cyber bullying and psychological wellbeing of the adolescents in secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix For the Frequency of Cyberbullying and Psychological Wellbeing of the Adolescents in Secondary Schools

		1	2
1	Prevalence of cyber bullying	1	
2	Psychological wellbeing	-.098	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Critical region .087

N318, Degree of freedom 316,
Source: Field Data 2025

As observed in Table 3, the study calculated Pearson correlation for the relationship between the frequency of cyber bullying and psychological wellbeing of the adolescents in Nairobi County. The results showed that there was negative correlation between the frequency of cyber bullying and psychological wellbeing of the adolescents in Nairobi County as indicated by the Pearson correlation coefficient (r (316) = -.098< .087). The results registered a significant negative relationship which indicates that, as the prevalence of cyber bullying increased the psychological wellbeing of the adolescents in secondary schools decreased significantly. Nevertheless, the correlation was strong and reliable.

The study therefore concluded that, the coefficient r = -.098, degrees of freedom (316) and significant value p (.05) demonstrated that, there was statistically negative significant relationship between the prevalence of cyber bullying and psychological wellbeing of the adolescents in secondary schools. This implied that the more the adolescents in Nairobi County are cyber bullied the greater the effects on their psychological wellbeing. From the findings, the study revealed that there was a strong and negative correlations between the frequency of cyber bullying and psychological wellbeing of the adolescents in secondary schools (r (0.098) indicating that, prevalence of cyber bullying may manifest in ways which includes psychological distress. This finding corroborates with earlier statistics in the current study where the victims of cyber bullying expressed embarrassment and disappointments after they were cyber bullied four to five times a week.

Consistently, Safaria (2016) found that 26(25.5%) of the students experienced cyberbullying occasionally or twice, 21(20.6%) experienced it twice or three times, 28(27.5%) experienced it often (four to five times) while 13(12.7%) experienced it almost every day. These results reinforced the study conducted by Lim and Lee (2021) that almost all the victims of cyber bullying experience certain degree of social and psychological distress. Hindujah and Patchin (2014) added that, cyber bullying make the victims feel worthless, afraid, embarrassed to go to school, increased low self-esteem, family problems, school violence and other delinquent behaviors. Agreeably, the currents results showed that, 55 (17.3%) of the cyber bullies who had been involved in cyberbullying for the past one

month always felt they had not improved in academics. This is an indication that, cyber bullying has internalizing effects that may cause the adolescents to develop a sense of giving up thus interfering with their personal growth initiative either for the perpetrators, victims or by standers.

Delightfully, Kumari and Sharma (2016) affirmed that victims of cyberbullying remained in doubt, they did not dare to give their opinion, were easily influenced by others and they neither dared to try new things consequently, they may end giving up in life. For instance, Farhangpour et al (2019) demonstrated that, out of the students who were involved in cyber, bullying as victims 53% began to skip school and 32% had registered a dislike in school going students while 24% confirmed that their school performance had dropped and 35% had to repeat a grade after the incident of cyber bullying. This implies that when the adolescents are involved in cyber bullying, it affects not only their growth initiative but also their interpersonal relationships, self-worth and acceptance, mood and the functionality of their daily life. On the other hand, Patchin and Hinduja (2010) added that the students who were either victims or offenders of cyber bullying recorded significantly lower self-esteem than those who had never experienced cyber bullying.

Contrarily, Martinez-Monteagudo, Delgado, Ingles, and Escortell (2020) indicated with data that, while the impacts of cyber bullying tend to be more prevalent in the victims, higher risk of psychosocial and emotional imbalances is also evident with the aggressors and noninvolved. In giving the evidence, the study found that, the adolescents who were rarely victims, bully and were not involved in cyber bullying reported higher levels of fear of negative evaluations and greater social avoidance in new situations as compared to those in bully-victim profile. Nevertheless as displayed in Table 1 , the current demonstrated that 99(31.1%) of the bystanders who had witnessed an everyday cyberbullying always became warm and affectionate to the victims unlike the prior observation made by Martinez-Monteagudo et al. (2020).

A mean of 2.21 and standard deviation of 1.11 in the current study supported the argument implying that the adolescents who were not involved in cyber bullying but witnessed it as by standers empathized with the victims by giving the warm support. Although the bystanders were warm and affectionate to the victims of cyber bullying, Martinez- Monteagudo, et al (2020) found that adolescents who are intensely involved in cyber bullying behaviors and who are aggressors or victims are more distressed, socially uncomfortable and more likely to avoid most social situations in which they are expected to relate with their peers. This was in line with Kowalski and Limber, (2013) that the students who experienced cyber bullying were detached from their friends indicating that they may fail to heed to the support given by the bystanders and the bystanders on the other hand may fear becoming victims hence they may shelve their help towards those involved.

Additionally, Chukwuere et al (2021) in their study on selected African countries found that, 8.9% of the victims distanced themselves and unfriended those who bullied them, 84.9% had their self-esteem affected which later made them isolate themselves from their peers thus withdrawing from the social media. This perhaps might be that, the adolescents who are frequent victims of cyber bulling become incapable of alleviating negative cyber bullying feelings and strains. However, Chukwuere et al (2021) did not display the association between the frequency of cyber bullying and the students' psychological wellbeing. From strain theory perspective, Curry and Zavala (2020) observed that, negative emotions grow and becomes the basis of strain between individuals particularly if the person sees it as unjust and thus, the strain might develop into negative emotions like anxiety, anger,

loneliness and depression. In reinforcing these arguments, Nwufo and Nwoke (2018) affirmed that, the victims of cyber bullying might manifest depression, badness, anxiety and difficulty with relationships, substance abuse, self-inflicted suicide, and school dropout. This perhaps could be that they find cyberbullying inescapable hence develop why me attitude instead of seeking support.

Consistently, Makori and Agufana (2020) noted that, students who experienced cyber bullying report having frustration, depression, sadness and boredom while others felt as if people had invaded their privacy with others revealing that they felt heart breaking and rejected implying that, cyber bullying has great impact on the adolescents regardless of the social support system. The study therefore calls for the schools and families to establish proper social support system by creating safe and secure environment where the adolescents would share their concerns or fall back after cyber bullying. From the current study findings, the results revealed a mean of 3.64 and a standard deviation of 1.41 indicating that the victims of cyber bullying would sometimes be lonely and would too have poor social skills. This is an indication that cyber bullying would bring about distrust of the people particularly adolescents in the schools and beyond.

Furthermore, descriptive statistics indicated that, 44(13.8%) of the adolescents would often display loneliness and poor social skills after being victims of cyber bullying for one year. The study would imply the prevalence of cyber bullying magnified the psychological effects. Although a study by Yesilyurt, Arslan and Arslan, (2021) noted that, through technology, adolescents make friends, maintain social relationships in virtual environments and express their feelings and thoughts easily, Ryan and Curwen (2013) noted that, majority of the cyber victims would experience negative moods, which interfered with healthy conversation with others. Consistently, Ortega, Elipe, Mora-Merchan, Genta, Brighi, Guarini, Smith, and Tippett (2012) demonstrated that issues such as feeling angry, not bothered, upset, embarrassed, worrying, depression and loneliness were likely to prevent the adolescents from establishing healthy conversations with others including the peers, parents and teachers. The results reinforced the report from one of the participants in the focus group discussion of the current study that, some adolescents after cyber bullying withdraw, retreat to isolation, end up in depression, and finally commit suicide because they do not want to interact with the others.

This means that cyber bullying `would to affect the adolescents' trust in social relationships. Therefore, since the there is great consistency with the adolescents' relationship and social wellbeing and their behavior even after they leave school, there is need for a close relationship with parents, teachers and classmates in order to increase social motivation and support. From the current study findings, the results also revealed that, 80 (25.2%) of the adolescents who experienced cyber bullying as victims would feel embarrassed and disappointed after being cyber bullied four to five days a week. These results found reinforcement from Nixon (2014) who found that cyber bullying causes the victims feel exposed, embarrassed and overwhelmed. This might be because cyber bullying occurs in the cyberspace and anonymous thus, when it occurs it may leave its victims feeling humiliated and saddened with no one to give hand. Consistently, during the interview with the principals, one of them reported that,

> Students do report disappointments especially when they have not performed well academically and due to other home related challenges (Principal 3)

Agreeably, one out of the five teacher counselors reported that most of adolescents experienced disappointments emanating from the parents particularly when they failed to meet the parents' obligations and expectations. However both the principals and teacher counselors did not attribute the student's disappointment with cyber bullying. During the interview they both negated that they had not witnessed cyber bullying in their schools. Nevertheless, the results from the focus group discussion established that, the extent to which cyber bullying cause harm depend on one's background, socialization and preparedness in handling crisis. The study quoted one of the participants out of the five who participated in the group saying,

> Adolescents with self-esteem issues will be more negatively affected by the frequency of cyber bullying than those who do not have self-esteem issues. This makes them to withdraw and retreat to isolation and end up depressed with symptoms of committing suicide (Female Teacher Counsellor 3).

Correspondingly, the prevalence of cyber bullying increased psychological distress such as depression anxiety, substance abuse and other antisocial behaviors in the life of the victims. Consistently, Mitchell, Jones, Turner, Shattuck and Wolak (2016) found that, adolescents who frequently experienced cyber bullying felt extremely upset, angry, were worried, sad and thus, they could not trust any person. This implied that the distress one experiences after cyber bullying might be detrimental to their psychological wellbeing. From the findings the study established that 76(23.9%) of the adolescents in Nairobi county who had experienced cyber bullying as cyber bully- victims for the past two weeks always maintained confidence and were positive about themselves. This meant that they would think positively about themselves and others. However, the results were contradicted by Darney, et al (2013) that, persistent bullying eroded the victim's self-confidence thus, throwing them into low self-confidence, low self-esteem, nervousness and a feeling of being unsafe.

In the same line, Cassidy, Faucher and Jackson (2017) investigated on cyber bullying and its impacts of students, faculty and administrators. The study quoted one of the fourth-year male students during an interview saying, the following:

> I am a male and was placed in work team, which included another female student. Several messages were sent to me by this student, which made me feel as though I am inept at interacting with women. It was also, implied by her communications to me that there is something pathological about being a 22-year-old male who has never had a girlfriend. Overall, these communications made my confidence in interacting with women regress significantly, something I have struggled with since my teens, p.7.

This reinforced Verma and Kumari (2016) that, adolescents who did not have enough self-confidence remained in doubt; they dared not give their opinion, were easily influenced by others and did not even dare try new things. It seems that, some of the victims of cyber bullying would start blaming themselves for what had happened thus, as cyber bullying became more prevalent, the victims would begin to believe what the bullies had said about them and developed inadequacies as a result (Cassidy et al, 2017). This implied that cyber bullying would affect the adolescents' perception about self.

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5.1 Conclusion

The results showed that there was a strong relationship between the prevalence of cyberbullying and psychological wellbeing of the adolescents in secondary schools. Thus, adolescents who experience frequent cyberbullying are likely to manifest who in ways which includes psychological distress, embarrassment and disappointment.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that it is the responsibility of the school principals, class teachers, teacher counselors and parents work together in addressing the prevalence of cyberbullying and educate the adolescents on the vice in order to foster assertiveness and resilience.

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