



Sensitization of Online Users for Social Resilience: A Case-based Analysis of Learning Outcomes

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Abstract: *The article is based on the learning outcomes of a sensitization session held with students enrolled in eleven universities of the twin cities under a project titled Sensitization of Youth for Socially Resilient Communities in the Digitalizing World. The objectives were to sensitize youth for safe digital behaviour, spread the message of respecting human values, personal space, and privacy in digital communication, communicate the harassment policy concerns, and promote the emerging normative order for respecting cultural diversity and harmony for self-actualization behavioural change. Around 500 students directly participated in online and in-person sessions. The findings are based on the post-session assessment results recorded from 374 responses. The project outcome reflects a better understanding of the notion of privacy, personal space, cyber-bullying, cyber-crimes, online sexual assaults, types & legislation against harassment through a US-Pakistan diplomatic soft intervention and initiative for Pakistani youth.*

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Introduction

Social resilience builds on scientific knowledge from the established concept of social vulnerability and offers a fresh perspective on today's challenge of global change (Keck & Sankdapolrak, 2013). Digital media is restructuring almost every part of our world. It fuels business novelties that are delivering growing information and participation. This contributes directly to improving society, making our cities more intelligent, simplifying transport networks, and making energy, such as energy and food, far more efficient. As a concept by Adger (2000, 361), social resilience is well-thought-out, as the skills of groups to endure peripheral shudders to their

communal set-up. With a comparable understanding in observance integrated the definition of resilience into their notion of vulnerability and described it as the capacity of the system to [...] respond": these replies write, "whether independent or scheduled, private or public, discrete or organized, planned or calculated, short-term, anticipatory or reactive in nature, and their outcome" (Turner et al., 2003; 8077). The pace of digitalization has catalyzed the process of social change. The constantly ascending figures in Online users is one such indicator.

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Against this context, it may be argued that resilience is a mixture of some aspects with 'coping strategies' and 'adaptive ability'. The study of the society's resilience is therefore aimed at understanding the processes by which a system will respond not only to the problems currently in observance but also unpredictable and uncertain (Kates & Clark, 1996; Streets & Streets & Streets & Glantz, 2000). It was made this clear by describing social resilience as the dimensions to consume, modify the capability to pact with shocks or disruptions ([Glavovic et al., 2003](#)). Therefore, in the current context, social resilience refers to the adaptability of technological change.

With unsafe social media usage and irresponsible digital behaviour, online abuse is increasing massively. Sometimes, we are not even aware of the social boundaries to keep intact while communicating online. Foul language is the most common way of online abuse which is faced by young people. Nearly half the percentage of the youngsters reported that they were given insulting names through mobile phone usage or online medium. More than 25% of the youngsters said they heard fake rumours about themselves or became the subject of physical abuse by unknown people. The percentages were different for different incidents ([Anderson, 2018](#)).

With digitalization, online abuse has also started. It does not seem like conventional examples of dating abuse, bullying and sexual harassment are very rare. Nearly four-in-ten Americans have directly encountered online abuse, and 62 per cent deem it a significant concern. Some want internet providers to do better, but they remain split about reconciling online freedom of expression and security issues (Duggan, 2017). The texting culture due to excessive use of mobile communication suggests an average of sixty messages a day. Messaging is also performed by using other mediums like Facebook. All media groups have intense digital usage (Rainie, Lenhart, & Smith, 2011). Although there has been the ubiquitous use of messaging yet, it is trendy. Less than 50% of teenagers surveyed at the Massachusetts Violence Reduction Center (MARC) identified text messages as their most communal form of contact, but by 2014 that percentage had risen to 65% ([Englander, 2014](#)).

The sessions held by the US alumni under a thematic grant for sensitization sessions aimed at assessing the level of safe media usage by the educated youth. These sessions sought to inculcate safe digital behaviour, spread the message of respecting human values, personal space and privacy in digital communication, communicate the harassment policy concerns, and promote the emerging normative order for respecting cultural diversity and harmony for self-actualization and behavioural change. The analysis is based on the post-session responses of the young participants enrolled in the universities of twin cities. The youth sensitized in these guest lectures is playing a snowball effect by multiplying the impact upon sharing this information with their friends and families. The students serve as a catalyst in promoting the message of respecting human values, gender difference, personal space, privacy, and apt digital communication and interfaith harmony through organizing youth awareness and sensitization sessions. The students sensitized during the project serve as anti-harassment advocates registered in the project database shall likely be available for further interventions. Through Sensitization sessions, self-actualization on unsafe online behaviour and advocacy on anti-harassment rules and policy in the digitized world is achieved.

The surveys revealed the informational lag on the subject and stressed the significance of raising awareness on the issues emerging from digitalization. Students have learned the importance of personal space and privacy. The youth engaged directly or indirectly in the sessions are well versed with the notion of harassment and what accounts for it. The project's direct beneficiaries, university students, and the indirect beneficiaries, their siblings, friends, and families, to understand the anti-harassment policy in universities and laws about cyber-crimes in Pakistan. The Alumni Small Grant provided them with an opportunity for teaming up as an organization to raise awareness among university students on a much-needed dimension of digitalization. The issues about the abuse of digital media, bullying, and harassment in teenagers have been addressed with the participating group. The data gathered from pre

and post-survey feedback suggest that most of the students were unknowingly convicted of cyber-crime. Some of them were being harassed or faced harassment both on-campus and online.

Cyber defence strategies are typically laid out in written documents to guard a person or organization's cyber environment. It supports the group of methods used to protect unauthorized access to the security of networks, programs, and records. This applies to the collection of systems and procedures, which can also be referred to as information technology defense. The sector is becoming increasingly important due to the growing reliance on computer networks, including mobile phones, televisions, and the numerous small devices that form the Internet of Things. It is defended against cyber-attacks by internet-connected devices, including infrastructure, applications, and files. Protection encompasses cybersecurity and physical security in a computing sense, all of which organizations use to defend from unwanted access to data centres and other computerized systems. Surveillance, which is meant to protect the secrecy, honesty, and availability of data, is a part of cybersecurity (Seemba et al., 2018). The cyber cell of the investigating agencies in Pakistan is being established, and their laws are also formulated. Unfortunately, they are often not communicated to the youngsters due to which they usually end up being a culprit of cyber-crimes and get entangled in unwanted situations.

Objectives

The idea of the project was to sensitize the youth, especially the online users, for en-culturing them with better and healthy human values to meet the emerging challenges resulting from the digitalizing world through a swift technological transition. Support the local educational institutions to build long-term, self-sustaining relationships and institutional linkages with Pakistani university students by capacity building program as needed. It was a step towards contributing to the growth of the community and developing positive values amongst the youth of the targeted areas, which will help them grow into socio-culturally resilient communities. It aimed to enhance youths' engagement with positive messages and tolerant perspectives to

strengthen and amplify community-based efforts in this domain—demonstration of shared values, which builds respect and trust and increases effective communication among genders. We also communicated the harassment policy concerns to the students to address the issues faced by academia. Through this, we promoted the emerging normative order for respecting cultural diversity and harmony in the twin cities' public and private university students.

Literature Review

If we look at the evolution of resilience, over many generations, human beings have developed socio-technical practices to protect them from vulnerabilities and to respond to shocks (Stark, 2014). But there came a time when advanced technological, cultural shocks emerging from the lagging techno-cultural adaptation will be the foci of social resilience. The modern technological revolution has transformed social patterns and will remain to change them, which not only impacts customer behavior and requirements but also online behaviour generally (Badenhorst, 2020). Responsible online behaviour is the need of the hour. Digital media (text messages, networking activities, digital images, etc.) may have undertaken a consequent role in peer violence before the turn of this century, but technologies became a primary form of youth contact in 2014. A 2011 Pew survey showed that nearly all adolescents use cyberspace, and almost 80% own a mobile handset. Networking is virtually widespread: a 2014 survey of the same group mentioned here (400-plus less than 20-year-old at Bridgewater State University's Massachusetts Aggression Prevention Center) found that 97% had a Facebook (social networking) account (Englander, In Progress).

Glavovic et al. (2003; 290f) suggest that social resilience is profoundly impacted by infrastructure that permits people to access assets, benefit from interactions, and establish meaningful ways of coping with everyday problems. Thus, social resilience can be defined based on these considerations as the willingness of people to access resources in the direction not only to cope with and respond to unfavourable circumstances (i.e., reactive ability) but also to look for and build alternatives (i.e., constructive

ability) and thereby to develop increased skills (i.e., positive outcomes) in coping with a hazard ([Obrist et al. 2010a, 289](#)). The paper addresses issues posed by an amounting number of online users and resilience in this regard.

Social resilience, however, is inherently a multilevel construct, revealed by capacities of individuals, but also groups, to foster, engage in, and sustain positive social relationships and to endure and recover from stressors and social isolation ([Cacioppo, Reis & Zautra, 2011](#)). During digitalization, urban culture is present. We see a wide variety of diverse activities subject to digital transformation in nearly all aspects of social life. We access data and consume entertainment, socialize, purchase, and present ourselves has transformed the internet and social media channels. We are creating innovative modern business models focused on the new gold of customers and processing data and are faced with them. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has been achieved by producing innovative business models. The data is processed in the framework of applications and machines programmed to have significant incorporation. Different objects go through stages of evolution and implementation. Clearly, all these indicators and activities are linked to information safety, fairness, and how governance and regulation handle these modern digitalization wonders ([Musik & Bogner, 2019](#)).

Digital communications are primarily used for constructive encounters, but they are also a medium for youth abuse and threats without contest. However, data shows that peers could be overlooked as a significant source of cyber risks by some adults. Research by the University of New Hampshire showed (together with other studies) that the bulk of digital abuse (70%) originated from friends, not adult outsiders ([Finkelhor, 2011](#)). Two-thirds saw peer cyberbullying as the most potent online threat in the 2014 survey of 421 college freshmen (mentioned above). Still, only 6 per cent saw adult predators that way. The majority of freshmen also indicated that in their experience, adults overestimate the risk of predators and underestimate the risk of peers ([Englander, In Progress](#)). A type of bullying or harassment is cyberbullying or cyberstalking by electronic

means. Cyberbullying and cyberharassment are frequently referred to as online bullying. As the digital world has evolved and technology has improved, it has become increasingly popular, especially among adolescents ([Smith et al., 2008](#)).

Methodology

The case presented in the paper is based on the learning outcomes of a series of sensitization sessions aimed at inculcating responsible digital behaviour in the youth. A series of sensitization sessions were carefully planned and held with eleven universities of the twin cities in person and online, depending upon the pandemic SoPs of interaction. The sessions were held from September to December 2020. The Number of Direct Beneficiaries was 550, whereas the Number of In-direct Beneficiaries was 5500 approx. Two forms were designed to assess the participants' pre and post-session knowledge of safe digital media usage. A KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practices) survey pertaining to online media usage was designed to evaluate the pre-session awareness level of the youngsters engaged with online media. Keeping in view the recurrent pandemic waves and ease of data management, these forms were designed on Google forms foreseeing the probability of switching to online sessions where required. The pre-session KAP survey was filled by 458 participants, whereas the Post Session Learning Outcomes were served by 374 participants.

However, approximately 550 students directly participated in online and in-person sessions from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi, Bahria University, Islamabad, COMSATS University, Islamabad, Air University, Islamabad, Fatima Jinnah University, Islamabad, National University of Modern Languages University, Islamabad, NUCES-FAST University, Islamabad, International Islamic Universities, Islamabad, Riphah International Islamic University, Rawalpindi and National University of Medical Sciences, Rawalpindi. The pandemic COVID-19 had reduced human interaction; hence only three in-person sessions were carried out, rest of the sessions with eight universities were held online. The participants

were 18-26 years old university students enrolled in Graduate and Post Graduate programs.

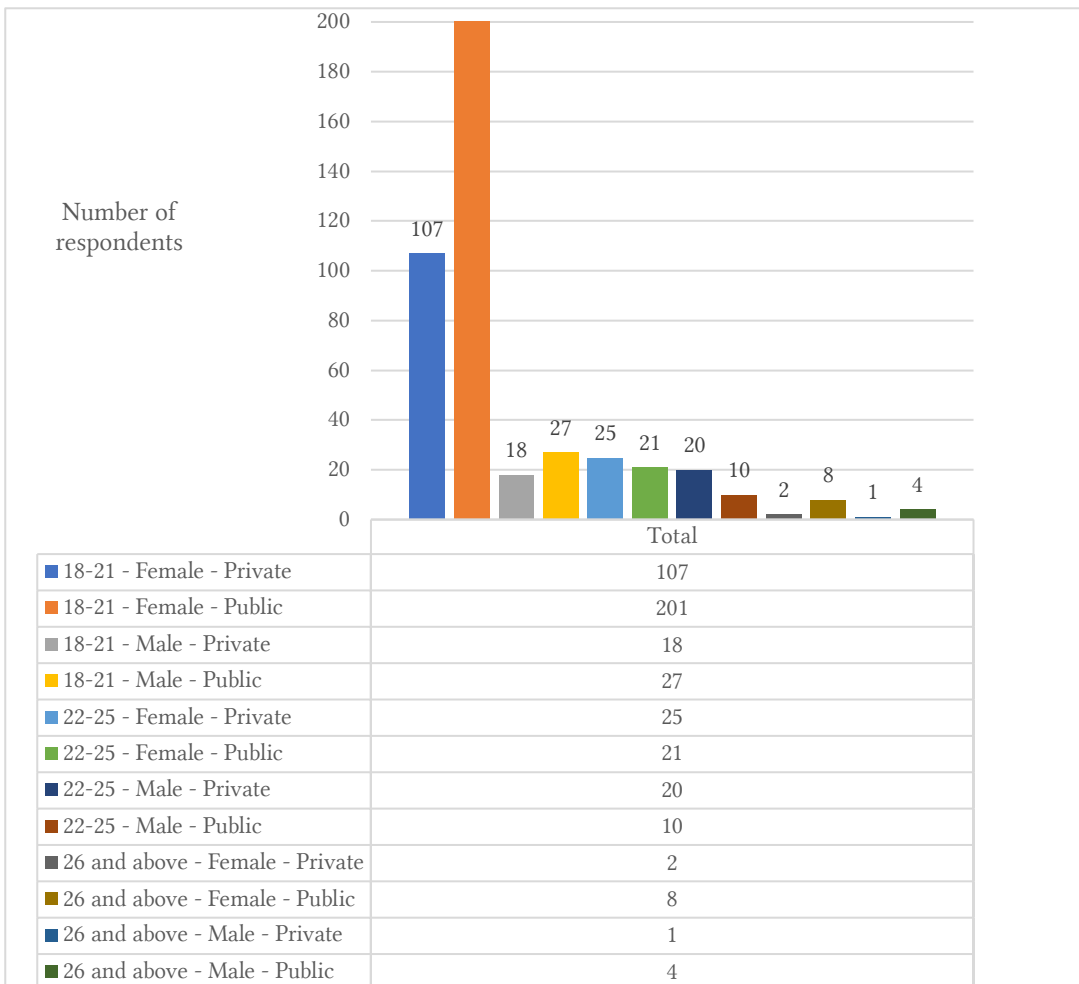
Result & Discussion

These sessions have left the youth with a better understanding of the repercussions of trespassing an individual's personal space by getting acquainted with the legislation on harassment. The students are sensitized enough to understand the notion of personal space and have learned to avoid acts they are committing unintentionally. Such sessions provide an opportunity for teaming up to raise awareness among university students on a much-needed dimension of digitalization. The issues of abuse of digital media, bullying, and

harassment in teenagers were addressed. The students are sensitized enough to understand the notion of personal space and have learned to avoid acts they are committing unintentionally.

It was observed that almost 83% of youngsters attended the session entirely and filled out the pre-session assessment form. 550 students enrolled in the sessions, whereas 458 participated in the KAP survey by filling out the google forms. 81% of students, i.e., 374, attended the training and later recorded their responses through the learning outcome google forms. The following table is based on gender-wise, sectoral (Public & Private).

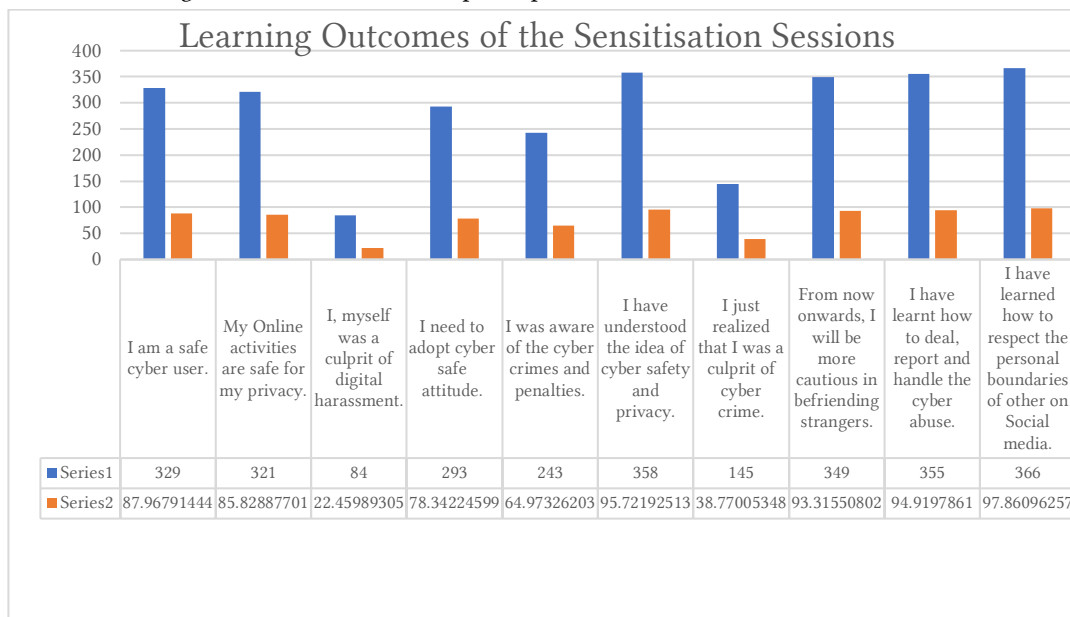
Table 1. Gender, Age, and Sectoral Representation of the Respondents



The participants were both from public and private universities. They were enrolled in both general and specialized universities of Information technology, Natural, and Social sciences. The data suggests that 79% of participants belong to the age group of 18-21. Out

of them, 85% were females, 12% were male participants, and 3% did not disclose their gender. 17% of participants' age ranges between 22-25 years. 60% were females, 39% were males, and 1% did not share their gender. Whereas only 4% of participants were above 26 years of age.

Table 2. Learning Outcomes of the session participants.



(X-axis determines the number of responses in blue, whereas the percentages of each answer are coloured in orange mentioned on Y-axis as series 2 data.)

After completing this online sensitization session, 81% of students who participated in the post-session assessment shared their learning outcomes. The participants were educated and tech-savvy. They had already switched to the online learning mode in their respective universities due to the pandemic. The data from the table above suggests that 89% of participants believe that they use cyberspace safely, which means that they were aware of keeping their profiles customized and passwords safe. After attending the session, 87% reported that their online activities are safe for themselves and others. Still, 13% of the educated youth realized that their digital behaviour was neither secure for themselves nor others.

The modern usage of online media has blurred the boundaries of personal space. Youngsters are often engaged in harassment

without even realizing that they are trespassing through the social boundaries of others. The data affirms it since 23% accepted that they were involved in online harassment. After learning the protocols of safe digital media usage, 49% of participants realized that there still is a need for safer digital media usage. The participants' responses reflected that 65% of them were aware of the cyber crimes and penalties, whereas 35% were not. One of the most pertinent learning outcomes is that 97% of participants have now learned privacy in digital media usage and cyber safety. Some scholars say that anonymity, viral scope, and intrusiveness may intensify its adverse effect (Coyne et al., 2017). This has, however, yet to be empirically investigated. So far, research studies show that cyberbullying may affect the well-being of workers that are not clarified by conventional bullying. Cyberbullying experience

has been linked, above and above traditional bullying, with depression (Tennant et al., 2015) and work insecurity (Coyne et al., 2017).

There is a misperception of harassment specific to the female gender. It was shared with the participants that same gender and opposite gender-based harassment are getting common now. Online media is widely used for harassing people. The explanation of sexual harassment is primarily a misnomer. Much sexual assault includes disrespect, not lust, not romance (Berdahl, 2007). Sexual harassment consists of the use of visible or implied sexual implications and the unwanted or improper acts of profits in return for sensual errands (Paludi et al., 1991). Sharing provocative, explicit, and abusive images or content comes under the definition of harassment. Sexual harassment encompasses several acts, from oral misbehaviours to sexual violence or abuse (Dziech & Weiner, 1990).

After learning about cybercrimes and what comes under cyber-crimes, 39% of the participants shared that they were intentionally or unintentionally the culprits. 94% of the youngsters released that they need to be extra careful while befriending strangers. 97% of participants shared that now they have learned to deal with, report, and handle cyber abuse. 99% shared that they have learned to respect the personal boundaries of others on social media. On the other hand, some argue that it is not when online or offline bullying exists that determines the nature of the action, but rather the behaviour that is being implemented (e.g., name-calling, exclusion) (Bauman and Newman, 2013). Students shared their personal experiences of being victimized by cyberbullying and cyberstalking during the sessions, which severely destroyed their self-integrity and esteem. They can be counselled and connected to the relevant agencies. Through publications, dissemination of knowledge on pervasiveness, extent, control, and measures to curb digital abuse can be spread among the masses. Creating safe cyberculture through awareness-raising workshops and sessions with schools and colleges level students can be initiated.

The data gathered from pre and post-survey feedback suggest that most of the students were

unknowingly convicted of cyber-crime. Some of them were being harassed or faced harassment both on-campus and online. Digital harassment is often an ignored dimension, which can equally be stressful. Theme-based research, training, and sensitization sessions for youngsters to keep them acquainted with the knowledge that is the need of the hour but not a part of their curriculum. The team members reflected that 'Digital harassment is often an ignored dimension, which can equally be stressful and sensitization sessions provide us with an opportunity to plan and conduct awareness-raising sessions with students. Such programs can be beneficial if extended to universities for organizing theme-based research and training sessions for university students to keep them acquainted with the knowledge that is the need of the hour but not a part of their curriculum'.

Conclusion

The capacity of a group to respond to an assault is based on many variables. Digital media is taking over the normative order very swiftly. The pace of digital transformation has multiplied a lot in recent years, especially after the pandemic that has pushed the entire normative order through a change in social, cultural, and educational interaction patterns. Social resilience in this digitalizing world could only be achieved once we have sensitized our new generation for responsible online behaviours by acquainting them with the emerging values of the new normal. Awareness-raising sessions and workshops apart from the mainstream curriculum allow room for interaction with the youth and draw their attention to the emerging issues posed by the excessive and often irresponsible or casual behaviour that may put them or others in an awkward situation. Usually, there is a need to make them realize where the pace of technology leaves a lag with the socio-cultural system to get along at par. Also, through such sessions, we can ensure that victims seek access to the relevant institutions where they can be handled with integrity and fairness, interconnected and mutually respectful manner, which will contribute to socially resilient communities in the digitalizing world.

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