

Behind Every Notification: The Mediating Role of Social Media Addiction in Cyber Victimization and Suicide Ideation Among First Year College Students

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ABSTRACT

Social media among first year college students can offer positive and negative effects. Such social media now shed lights to various opportunity to earn online and increase the society's digital knowledge. Hence, different contents are available through social media, and this does not limit to sensitive contents that can trigger trauma and bad experience. Also, constant use of social media may affect students' self-esteem due to constant comparing to others and being isolated to the real world. This may contribute to the increase vulnerability of college students to mental health difficulty that may also contribute to suicide ideation. Findings revealed that first year college students within Metro Manila demonstrated moderate to high levels of social media addiction and cyber victimization. Also, most

of the students have high levels of suicide ideation. There is a significant positive correlation ($r=0.623$, $p<.01$) between the students' levels of cyber victimization and suicide ideation. While, there is also a significant indirect effect (Estimate = 1.196, $p < .001$) between the students' levels of cyber victimization and suicide ideation. The students' levels of cyber victimization significantly increases their levels of suicide ideation through social media addiction. Hence, cyber victimization does not directly predict suicide ideation (Estimate = 0.455, $p = .203$). It is recommended to further study various factors that may contribute to suicide ideation and to use other research methods such as qualitative and longitudinal study.

Keywords: *Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Social Media Addiction, Cyber Victimization, Suicide Ideation, College Students.*

INTRODUCTION

The idea of living in a digital world is to connect people across the globe, yet for many adolescents and young adults it has also become a source of mental abuse. As communication occurs through online platforms such as Facebook, Thread, X, and Instagram, experiences of humiliation, harassment, and exclusion are no longer limited to classrooms but continuously through screens. These experiences of cyber victimization have developed with concerns in deteriorating mental health and increasing suicide ideation.

The rising threat to people's mental health is reflected in suicide cases globally. According from the World Health Organization (WHO) (2025), over 720,000 people commit suicide in 2021 among ages 15-29 individuals, making it the third leading cause of death among this group. Moreover, the reported reasons for suicide generally emerge from traumatic events, isolation, and mental health challenges (WHO, 2025). Beyond these deaths are millions who experience suicide ideation and attempts, many whom never received mental health support. In addition, the United Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2023) estimated that

more than 33% of young people in 30 countries reported to be cyber victims, while 1 in 5 students skipped school because of being cyber bullied and experienced violence online. These findings highlight the suicide ideation cannot be understood solely through individual vulnerabilities but must also be studied within broader digital environments. These issues are no longer merely a social issue but a global mental health concern requiring attention.

The Philippines remains one of the world's most active social media-using countries, with approximately 90.8 million active social media users in 2025, representing the 83.8% of the Filipinos (Respicio & Co, 2025). Moreover, age ranging from 25-34 years old are the largest users of social media, followed by age ranging from 18-24 years old (Howe, 2026). This growing Filipino active social media user have intensified the vulnerability to psychological consequences of harmful online experiences including cyber victimization and social media addiction. Recent national developments further emphasize the seriousness of this issue. The Department of Education (DepEd, 2025) declared bullying as a national priority and strengthened nationwide anti-bullying initiative. Reports from the DepEd also indicated bullying cases from 2,268 cases to 2,500 cases, highlighting the need to safeguard learners' psychological well-being.

The country's concern over youth's mental health has become more pronounced when several tragic incidents happened involving Filipino young people such as youth suicide, reports on self-harm, and recent school violence. Reuters (2026) reported that a shooting at San Jose National High School in Tacloban City resulted in three student fatalities and more than 20 injuries, which became a national topic and discussions on well-being and violence prevention. Moreover, during the investigation, it was disclosed that the students involved had experienced prolonged bullying. The government of the Philippines expressed concern regarding the exposure to online violence and possible influence of social media on vulnerable younger generation (Reuters, 2026). As reported by the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO, 2026) that many cases of suicide among Filipino youth are linked to emotional distress, relationship problems, or personal loss. Moreover, it was highlighted the risks associated with digital platforms as more young people are exposed to the digital world. While digital platforms provide connection and entertainment, excessive use, especially when exposed to harmful contents and cyber victimization, increases vulnerability to mental health abuse (NCRPO, 2026). Sigales (2026) reported that the suicide cases in Metro Manila more than doubled in the first quarter of the year, stating the 111 cases recorded compared to 33 cases recorded last year's first quarter. It was also reported one the of causes of these cases is emotional distress (Sigales, 2026).

Despite the well-established connection between cyber victimization and suicide ideation, an important question remains unanswered: Why do some cyber victims develop suicide ideation while others do not? Torun, Akgenc, and Oz's (2026) study on the mediating effect of cyber victimization on the relationship between social media addiction and psychological well-being proves that these three variables can be connected with each other. Hence, The mediating function of social media addiction in the connection between cyber victimization and suicide ideation is still poorly understood and have not studied yet, despite the increased attention in these phenomena. The study seeks to find the potential intervening mechanism of social media addiction, the excessive and compulsive use of social media platforms despite experiencing daily life impairment. Young adults who experience cyber victimization may continue to rely on social media to seek sense of relatedness, reassurance, or emotional support. Ironically, the same platforms that exposes young adults to victimization may become their coping mechanism, that leads to repetitive patterns of social media use. Over time, excessive dependence on social media platforms intensifies emotional distress, social isolation, and hopelessness, increasing vulnerability to suicide ideation.

The study is helpful not only in today's generation where socialization is done online and bullying became cyber but also to the cyberpsychology and clinical psychology. This study looked for the intertwine of technology on human behavior. Moreover, the study could contribute to the understanding and

development of assessment and treatment interventions on mental health challenges that involves cyber victimization. The study serves as an awareness to the community regarding social media addiction, cyberbullying, and suicide ideation which contributes to the sustainable development goal 3, the good health and well-being. Lastly, this study seeks the mediating role of social media addiction in the influence of cyber victimization to suicide ideation.

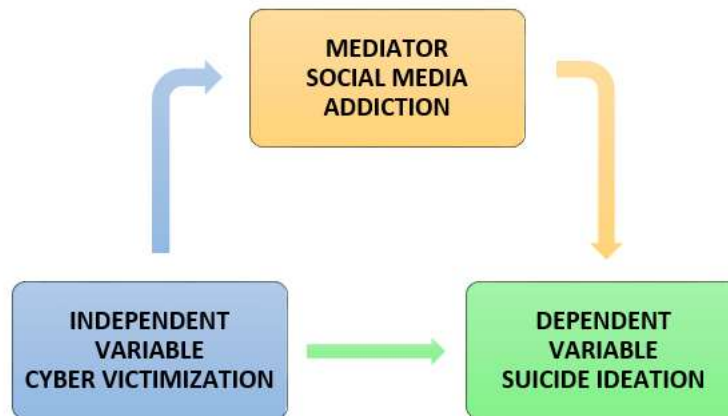


Figure 1. *Conceptual Paradigm of Study*

The framework presents that social media addiction mediates cyber victimization and suicide ideation among first year college students. This framework was based on evidence suggesting that the psychological effects of cyber victimization do not always directly influence suicide ideation, but may be accompanied by various multiple factors, one of these could be social media addiction.

METHODS

This study used a quantitative, non-experimental research design utilizing mediation analysis on non-random samples from Metro Manila, which determined whether the influence of cyber victimization to suicide ideation is mediated by social media addiction. Quantitative research design was appropriate because the study sought to measure the statistical associations among cyber victimization, social media addiction, and suicide ideation through structured data collection and analysis of numerical data (Sreekumar, 2026).

Moreover, the study utilized correlational analysis to determine the occurring relationships among variables (Sreekumar, 2026). To further examine the underlying mechanism among these associations, mediation analysis was conducted. This examined whether the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable functions indirectly through a mediator variable (David & Sava, 2015). In the present study, social media addiction was examined as a potential mediator in the influence of cyber victimization to suicide ideation.

The use of mediation analysis was deemed appropriate because of the primary objective of the study was to test whether social media addiction serves as a mechanism through the influence of cyber victimization to suicide ideation. The mediation analysis tests the estimation of indirect, direct, and total effects that provides an understanding of the mechanism underlying cyber victimization and suicide addition (Bounthavong, 2024). Moreover, previous studies have consistently found association between cyber victimization and social media addiction, as well as between social media addiction and suicide ideation. Literatures also suggests that cyber victims may engage in social media use as a maladaptive

coping mechanism, which may increase the vulnerability to suicide ideation. Given these findings, mediation analysis was selected as the appropriate statistical analysis for this study.

Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

The participants in this study came from the population of the Metro Manila area. Purposive sampling technique and G*Power analysis was used to determine the sample size of the participants as it better provided relevant data. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique mostly used in qualitative research hence can also be used in quantitative research (Hassan, 2024). The use of purposive sampling technique is relevant to the research as it sought to investigate a specific population that are relevant to the research variables. Since not all are exposed to social media and cyber victimization, selected participants who met the criteria increases the likelihood of obtaining data that addresses the objective of the study.

Furthermore, the G*Power 3.1 was used to determine the minimum sample size to obtain a statistically significant effect (Faul et al., 2009). An a priori power analysis was performed with the following details, F-test and the linear multiple regression, fixed model, R² increase statistical procedure. Moreover, it was performed using a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$), an alpha level of .05, and a desired statistical power of .95, following Cohen's (1988) recommendations. With this, the G*Power analysis required a minimum sample size of 107 participants to have a statistically significant effect. However, the study obtained 116 participants, which exceeded the minimum sample size and thereby provided enough statistical power.

Description of Respondents

The participants in this study consisted of 116 first year college students within Metro Manila. They were determined because they represent a developmental age group who may have high social media engagement and increased cyber victimization and mental health challenges. Moreover, most studies as shown in the Chapter II, focused on adolescents, general population of students, mixed levels, young adulthood, overlooking the unique transitional phase of students entering higher education. First year students face academic, psychological, biological, and social adjustments, and this is more than enough to study them rather in more established college populations (Westerman, n.d.).

The participants must meet the following criteria:

1. A Filipino citizen;
2. A first-year college student enrolled in any of the following types of institutions:
 - a. Private school;
 - b. Non-sectarian school;
 - c. Catholic school; or
 - d. Public school;
3. Currently residing in Metro Manila; and
4. A victim of cyberbullying.

The participants of the study are excluded to:

1. Other digital addictions such as internet gaming and internet browsing.
2. Married and/or single parent individual because this could be another factor that impacts suicide ideation.
3. Individuals who are clinically diagnosed with mental health disorders that are associated with suicide ideation. This will minimize the influence of pre-existing clinical conditions on the variables.

4. Individuals who are residing outside Metro Manila.

The qualified participants were determined using the Personal Data Sheet which consist of self-report question to determine whether participants have experienced being a cyber victim and Cyber Victimization Scale Questionnaires to know the level of the participants' cyber victimization. In circumstances of observance with harmful behaviors such as risk of suicide attempts on participants, reporting and/or referral to authorities were executed.

Research Instruments

This study utilized instruments that will help in measuring the variables. These are Personal Data Sheet, Cyber Bullying Victimization Scale (Lee, Abell, Holmes, 2015), Social Media Scale (Tutgan-Unal and Deniz, 2015), and Suicide Ideation Attribution Scale (Harris, Haddock, Peters, & Gooding, 2021).

Personal Data Sheet

The demographic questionnaire is a self-report survey that served in finding out whether the participants are fit on the criterion, such as their school, citizenship, age, present address, and if they are once a victim of cyberbullying. Moreover, the self-report questionnaire also determined whether participants are officially diagnosed with other mental health disorder associated with symptoms of suicide ideation.

Social Media Addiction Scale

The Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS) is a five-point Likert scale developed by Tutgan-Unal and Deniz (2015) to further assess the levels of addiction on social media of university students with age ranging from 17 to 45. While the instrument is used to measure level of social media addiction of university students, it is not intended to use for clinical diagnosis. The SMAS consists of 41 items with 4 factors namely occupation, mood modification, relapse, and conflict. Moreover, the SMAS had a Cronbach alpha value of .967 which is relatively high and had a correlation coefficient of .752 with Facebook Addiction Scale and .667 with Generalized Problematic Internet Use when correlated with SMAS which can be considered as a valid and reliable scale to assess the social media addiction tendencies.

Cyber Bullying Victimization Scale

The Cyber Bullying Victimization Scale consists of two scale encompassing cyberbullying perpetration (CBP) and cyberbullying victimization (CBV) developed among students with age ranging from 18 to 25 by Lee, Abell, Holmes (2015). These two scales are designed to assess the aggressive behavior of the person leading towards having harmful behaviors to others and the other one is to assess whether the person is a victim or a subject of cyberbullying. Moreover, the CBP consists of 20 items and the CBV contains 27 items both using a five-point Likert scale. Also, the two scales had a Cronbach alpha value of .93 (CBP) and .95 (CBV). While establishing a high convergent validity correlating CBP with AQ subscales ($p < .01$) and CBV with MPVS subscales ($p < .01$).

Suicide Ideation Attribution Scale

The Suicide Ideation Attribution Scale (SIDAS) is a five-item scale that aims to measure the severity and frequency of suicide ideation for the past months (Harris, Haddock, Peters, & Gooding, 2021). The SIDAS is highly correlated with other scales such as Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation ($r = .72$), Defeat ($r = .49$) and Entrapment Scale ($r = .52$), and Beck Hopelessness Scale ($r = .52$). Moreover, the SIDAS had a Cronbach alpha value of .89 and a test-retest reliability of .73 which is relatively high.

Data-Gathering Procedure

To ensure the authenticity of datasets and the standardized procedure in the study, the participants were determined using purposive sampling since the target population are those who are a subject of cyberbullying. Moreover, this sampling technique is essential when limitation on participants arise because of the qualifications. The following processes were followed in data gathering:

1. Accomplishment and approval of Ethics Clearance and Informed Consent Form. This is important given the sensitive nature of the study.
2. Preparation of Personal Data Sheet to determine the participants' qualification and personal information including name, age, school, nationality, place of residence, civil status, and participants' experience from cyber victimization.
3. Usage of necessary instruments for data gathering:
 - a. To get the level of the participants' social media addiction, the Social Media Addiction Scale (2015) was utilized.
 - b. To get the level of the participants' suicide ideation, the Suicide Ideation Attribution Scale (2021) was utilized.
 - c. To get the level of the participants' cyber victimization, the Cyber Bullying Victimization Scale (2015) was utilized.
4. Moreover, the data-gathering was through online google forms. The participants were given a consent form before answering the questionnaires. It consist of the topic and purpose of the study and it was indicated that the participants have the right to withdraw from the study anytime if it imposes harm to the participants. Moreover, mental health hotlines were also included in the consent form.
5. Online platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram were used to seek qualified participants on this study through a provided QR code and link.
6. The participation on this study was entirely voluntary. Hence, questions before participating in the study were accommodated to further assist and guide the participants.
7. The participants were given 30-60 minutes to answer the Personal Data Sheet, the 41-item Social Media Addiction Scale, the 5-item Suicide Ideation Attribution Scale, and the 27-item Cyber Bullying Victimization Scale. To support participant well-being and minimize potential distress, a brief breathing exercise was included midway of the Social Media Addiction Scale questionnaire.
8. After completing the target number of sample participants, data cleaning was conducted to filter out the data.
9. Participants who successfully participated in the study received a free raffle draw worth 300 pesos as a token of appreciation which was sent through Gcash.
10. After 6 months, all the information gathered will be completely disposed from the researcher's iCloud.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. *Mean and Standard Deviation of Cyber Victimization (CV), Social Media Addiction (SMA), and Suicide Ideation (SI)*

	Cyber Victimization (CV)	Social Media Addiction (SMA)	Suicide Ideation (SI)
N	116	116	116
Mean	3.51	3.64	5.12
Standard Deviation	0.837	0.740	2.22

The table 1 shows that the results in the standard deviations of CV and SMA are low which means that the scores are clustered around the mean. While the SI had higher standard deviation which means that the scores are more spread out from the mean. Approximately 85 females and 31 males with a total of 116 1st year college students.

Results showed that first year college students had a mean score of 3.51 (SD = 0.837) for cyber victimization and 3.64 mean score (SD = 0.740) for social media addiction. This indicates that students reported moderate to relatively high levels of cyber victimization and suicide ideation.

Furthermore, students had a mean score of 5.12 (SD = 2.22) for suicide ideation which suggests a moderate level of suicide ideation since the items in this questionnaire were rated on a scale ranging from 0 to 10. However, the standard deviation indicates variability in students' experiences, indicating that some students may reported lower levels of suicide ideation, and others experienced higher levels of suicide ideation. Among the three variables, suicide ideation (M=5.12, SD=2.22) reported the highest mean score, highlighting the importance of the roles of cyber victimization and social media addiction into suicide ideation among first year college students.

This suggests that first-year college students are at risk of social media addiction and mental health problems during their transition to college. This is parallel with Filipino young adults and adolescents who subsequently use social media and are more vulnerable to mental health distress (Fajardo and Tadena, 2020). Moreover, as stated by Kuss and Griffiths (2020) that excessive usage of social media affects the emotional toll of individuals especially when they are exposed to negative interactions. Higher education institutions should consider preventive initiative, such as awareness programs, psychoeducational programs on mental health, and interventions from guidance counselors. This will help reduce the potential consequences associated with cyber victimization and social media addiction.

Table 2. *The Level of Cyber Victimization of 1st Year College Students*

The level of cyberbullying victimization was measured using the Cyberbullying Victimization Scale (CBV) developed by Lee et al (2015). The instrument consists of 27 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Rarely) to 5 (Very Often). There are no established cut-off scores provided by the original authors; thus, interpretation was based on the mean score and standard deviation, consistent with Likert scale conventions.

Range Scores	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
36-72	Low	16	13.8%
73-117	Moderate	78	67.2%
118-135	High	22	19.0%
Total		116	100%

Table 2 shows that 22 of students (19.0%) have high levels of cyber victimization, 78 students (67.2%) have moderate levels of cyber victimization, and 16 students (13.8%) have low levels of cyber victimization. Overall, the findings suggest a moderate level of cyber victimization.

Most of the students scored moderate in cyber victimization but everyone experienced cyber victimization. This shows how traditional bullying have evolved into cyber bullying where a lot of students are experiencing right now. Moreover, Sargent et al (2016) discovered that cyber victimization increases the symptoms of depression among first-year college students. Also, the Barlett and Gentile Cyberbullying Model (Barlett & Gentile 2012) explains the mechanisms of cyberbullying and that it composes that perpetrators know that identity and physical strength are not important to cyberbullying unlike in traditional bullying. They then identified that young people are more at risk and likely to experience being a cyber victim.

This also supports the study of Lee et al. (2023) that cyber victimization is prevalent among young individuals because of the accessibility to digital platforms such as social media and as stated by Salazar and Laya (2021) that youths are the most active in social media. Moreover, being a victim of cyberbullying

can result to questioning self-worth and lowering of sense of relatedness. The consequence of the unmet needs posit fear of missing out that then trigger to engage more on social media (Elsayed, 2025).

Table 3. *The Level of Social Media Addiction of 1st Year College Students*

The level of social media addiction was measured using the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS) developed by Tutgan-Unal and Deniz (2015). The scale consists of 41 items, rated on a 5-point likert scale (1-5), with total scores ranging from 41 to 205. Scores were interpreted based on established cut-off points, where 41-73 indicates no addiction, 74-106 indicates lesser levels, 107-139 indicates moderate levels, 140-172 indicated high levels, and 173–205 indicates very high levels of social media addiction

Range Scores	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
41-73	No Addiction	1	0.86%
74-106	Less	9	7.76%
107-139	Moderate	32	27.59%
140-172	High	44	37.93%
173-205	Very High	30	25.86%
Total		116	100%

Table 3 shows that 44 students (37.93%) have high level of social media addiction, 32 students (27.59%) have moderate level of social media addiction, 30 students (25.86%) have very high level of social media addiction, 9 students (7.76%) have less level of social media addiction, and only 1 student (0.86%) have no level of social media addiction. Collectively, 74 students (63.79%) were classified within high to very high level of social media addiction, which shows that a substantial proportion of students have high levels of social media addiction.

This implicates that most of the first-year college students are using social media excessively even it impairs daily functioning. The low self-esteem and unmet sense of relatedness caused by cyber bullying, academic stress, and adjustments from transition to the college life are some of the factors that driven the students to compulsively engage on social media platforms. Moreover, the rewards, anticipations, and motivation the students are getting from endless scrolling through algorithms set by the platform tailored to the students' preferences makes the excessive use of social media on loop, digital dopamine, as West (2025) described.

As discussed by Cai, Wang, & Jin (2026), social media addiction was identified as a contributor to the mental health of students as it gives out information overload, excessive comparison, and even instant gratification, that can trigger anxiety and loneliness. Among college students, excessive use of social media addiction weakens their resilience to negative situations, that contribute to their mental health. This could be another exploration of mediation pathways.

This finding is consistent with Dhir et al. (2020), in Asian countries, adolescents and young adults are more vulnerable to prolonged use of social media because of peer pressure and the need for acceptance, as embedded to the Asian culture. These findings also highlight the excessive use of social media among first year college students and suggest further study on cyber victimization and suicide ideation.

Table 4. *The Level of Suicide Ideation of 1st Year College Students*

The level of suicide ideation was measured using the Suicide Ideation Attributes Scale (SIDAS) developed by Harris, Haddock, Peters, & Gooding (2021). The scale consists of five items rated on an 11-point scale (0–10), with total scores ranging from 0 to 50. Scores were interpreted based on established cut-off points, where 0 indicates no suicide ideation, 1–20 indicates low levels, and 21–50 indicates high levels of suicide ideation.

Range Scores	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
0	No Suicide Ideation	0	0.0%

1-20	Low Level of Suicide Ideation	43	37.1%
21-50	High Level of Suicide Ideation	73	62.9%
Total		116	100%

Table 4 presents that 73 students (62.9%) have high levels of suicide ideation and 43 students (37.1%) have low levels of suicide ideation. The findings indicate that the students is predominantly characterized by a high level of suicide ideation, with the remainder under low level of suicide ideation.

The results highlight the need to focus on the mental health of students as majority of them scored high levels of suicide ideation. The significant transition to college enables students to be living away from home that lessen their access from the support of their friends and family. Independency open a whole new environment for the students allowing them to firsthand experience different things such as alcohol and vices, this does not limit to the access of digital platforms. Moreno, Estevez, Garcia, and Velasco (2025) found that university students of health sciences had higher risk of suicide ideation. It was found out that being in a first or second year, lower self-esteem, and higher levels on anxiety and depression are more at risk of suicide ideation.

The findings support Mitchell et al. (2018), who studied the contribution of being a cyber victim to the thwarted belongingness that leads to a more serious mental challenges such as depression and suicide ideation. Moreover, Cao et al. (2025) explained that cyber victims are more likely to develop and be vulnerable to suicidal thoughts and hopelessness. In addition, Salazar and Laya (2021) discuss the emphasis on the most active social media users globally which found among Filipino youths, leading them to emotional distress.

Table 5. *Correlations Between Cyber Victimization and Suicide Ideation*

	Pearson r
Cyber Victimization Suicide Ideation	0.623**

The table above shows that there is a significant positive relationship ($r=0.623$, $p<.001$) between cyber victimization and suicide ideation. This suggests that higher levels of cyber victimization are associated with higher levels of suicide ideation among the students. In contrast, lower levels of cyber victimization are associated with lower levels of suicide ideation. Moreover, the significance level ($p < .001$) indicates that the relationship is highly significant, and is unlikely to occur by chance.

The result showed that first year college students who experienced cyber victimization are more vulnerable to the risk of suicide ideation. This finding does not establish a causal relationship, hence it highlights the need to recognize that cyber victimization is a potential indicator of a mental health vulnerability. As the previous studies implied the navigation of first-year college students through developmental transitions, academic stress, and social relatedness need—additional cyber victimization can further intensify the distress and compromise their mental well being.

Similarly, Chu et al. (2022) found that cyber victimization increases suicidal ideation among college students through poor self-evaluation. Also, the interpersonal theory of suicide as explained by Mitchell et al. (2018) that suicide ideation increases when feelings of rejection and loneliness increases, as driven by experiences of cyber victimization. This provides empirical support for the hypothesis of the relationship between the two variables.

Table 6. *Mediation Analysis of Social Media Addiction Between Cyber Victimization and Suicide Ideation*

Mediation Estimates					
Effect	Estimate	SE	Z	p-value	% Mediation
Indirect	1.196	0.315	3.79	<.001	72.4
Direct	0.455	0.358	1.27	.203	27.6

Total	1.651	0.192	8.58	<.001	100.0
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Table 6 shows the mediation analysis using MedMod in Jamovi examining the mediating role of social media addiction on the influence of cyber victimization to suicide ideation. The cyber victimization significantly increases suicide ideation through social media addiction (Estimate = 1.196, SE = 0.315, Z = 3.79, $p < .001$). Further, the 95% CI ranged from 0.578 to 1.810, and did not include zero, which suggests that the indirect effect is statistically significant.

Hence, cyber victimization does not directly predict suicide ideation (Estimate = 0.455, SE = 0.358, Z = 1.27, $p = .203$). The total effect of cyber victimization on suicide ideation was significant (Estimate = 1.651, SE = 0.192, Z = 8.58, $p < .001$), with a 95% CI (1.274 – 2.030). This suggests that cyber victimization is significantly associated with suicide ideation prior to inclusion of the mediator. Lastly, 72.4% of the total effect of cyber victimization on suicide ideation was through social media addiction, and only 27.6% was remained as a direct effect. Although the assumption of multivariate normality was violated, mediation analysis was conducted using Maximum Likelihood estimation with bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals (1,000 bootstrap samples). Bootstrapping is now considered the preferred method for testing indirect (mediation) effects because it does not assume normality of the sampling distribution of the indirect effect, and it produces bias-corrected confidence interval (Hayes, 2022; MacKinnon et al., 2004; Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

First year college students who experienced cyber victimization continue to excessively use social media platforms despite experiencing psychological distress. Instead of stopping themselves from harmful digital platforms, they repeatedly check and scroll through social media, looking at peers' activities, seeking validation, or having the illusion of escapism resulting to a looped use of social media platforms, that is used for cyber bullying. This endless cycle intensifies to a negative emotions increasing students' vulnerability to suicide ideation. Kee, Anwar, and Vranjes (2024) found out that cyber victims had higher risk of suicide ideation because stress, anxiety, and exhaustion mediated cyber victimization and depression, then, depression mediated cyber victimization and suicide ideation among Malaysian youth. This further explains that there are a lot of factors that can contribute to suicide ideation and it is important to look for another pathway through this association.

Addressing cyberbullying alone is not sufficient to lessen the students' risks to suicide ideation if social media addiction is not addressed. Therefore, universities may adopt a comprehensive intervention approach that integrates cyber victimization prevention with digital and mental health awareness such as programs on healthy social media use, self-regulations, and healthy coping strategies when faced with combination of negative online experience, academic stress, and adapting on environment. Kang et al. (2023) explained that prolonged use of social media among college students predicts suicide ideation, especially when accompanied by mental distress. Moreover, excessive use or engagement in social media increases the exposure to sensitive topics and cyber victimization, making individuals more vulnerable emotionally and psychologically (Li and Zhang, 2020). Overall, there is a significant indirect effect through social media addiction between cyber victimization and suicide ideation of 1st year college students within Metro Manila.

Social media plays a significant role in cyber victims' tendency to develop higher level of suicide ideation. With the wide range of content uploaded on social media, including unfiltered and sensitive material, individuals may be exposed to triggers that intensify their negative experiences and thoughts of self-harm. Although experiencing cyberbullying is related on suicide ideation, it does not directly influence how individuals consider taking their own lives hence excessive use of social media can intensify the level of suicide ideation of those cyber victims.

The findings indicated that social media addiction mediates the influence of cyber victimization to suicide ideation. Specifically, cyber victimization was found to increase levels of social media addiction that contributes to increased levels of suicide ideation. This findings is important because it unveils a

potential additional psychological mechanism that translate the harmful effects of cyber victimization to suicide ideations.

Instead of serving social media engagement as a coping mechanism, excessive use may expose cyber victims to continued negative online experience, emotional distress, maladaptive coping mechanism, and social comparison. Conversely, the influence of cyber victimization may not be limited to victimization itself but also through problematic use of social media.

According to Marchant et al. (2017), high level of internet use especially scrolling through self-harm websites contributes to the potential self-harm or suicide behavior of young people. The contents on social media can act as a trigger, especially for cyber victims who are already vulnerable. Cyber victims who are exposed to these contents related to suicide or self-harm behaviors may more likely be influenced in engaging in these behaviors (Nesi, 2020). Moreover, the systematic review of Keles, McCrae, and Grealish (2020) on the influence of social media on anxiety, psychological distress, and depression discussed that most of the studies shows that there is no relationship between social media usage and other mental health symptoms but instead predicted the symptoms. These findings can be explained by mediators, moderators, and confounders similar to the findings of this study.

Anchored on the Self Determination Theory (SDT) of Ryan and Deci (2000) explained the human behavior's three drives which are competence, relatedness, and autonomy. The sense of accomplishment from having the three drives results in increase of motivation but when thwarted, there could be a decrease in motivation and well-being. The people who experienced series of online harassments may shift their focus on social media usage as a way of coping mechanism. Additionally, Primack et al. (2018) discussed in their study that adolescents who have higher levels of social media use feels more socially isolated. Online harassments and excessive social media use contributes to the feelings of being pressured, controlled, social comparison that leads to diminished self-efficacy, and undermined social support that leads to a more serious note on well-being. With this, Knap (2024) used SDT in interventions for suicide patients, it was understood that the act of suicide for patients is lessened when their needs are satisfied. The concept of Self Determination Theory posits that the behavior of human being lies behind the fulfillment or frustration of the three basic psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Social media satisfies the sense of relatedness of cyber victims who have experienced humiliation and rejection. However, use of social media is not a real satisfaction but merely a short relief that leads to repeated checking and seeking for validation and prolonged usage. The prolonged use of social media becomes maladaptive and because the three basic psychological needs remain unmet, the cyber victims become vulnerable to psychological distress thereby increasing the suicide ideation. Moreover, the non-significant of the direct effect of cyber victimization on suicide ideation further highlights the role of social media addiction. This suggests that interventions that focuses on cyber victimization may be insufficient if the students' problematic social media use remains unaddressed. Programs about promotion of healthy social media engagement and adaptive coping mechanisms may help reduce the adverse psychological consequences associated with cyber victimization. The findings highlight the need for schools, mental health professionals, and parents to recognize social media addiction as a potential risk factors among cyber victims. Furthermore, the early recognition of interventions for social media addiction may reduce the increased vulnerability to suicide ideations, and improve well-being.

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