

Research Article

From Bullying to Cyberbullying: Educational Impacts and Prevention Strategies in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying has become a critical issue in the digital era, significantly impacting the mental health and social well-being of adolescents. This study aims to analyze the transformation of bullying from traditional school environments to cyberspace, with a focus on its psychological, academic, and social impacts, as well as prevention strategies. Using a comprehensive literature review, the study synthesizes findings from various sources, particularly those relevant to the Indonesian context. The results reveal that cyberbullying contributes to severe mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and social isolation, alongside reduced academic performance. Key contributing factors include anonymity in digital interactions, lack of digital etiquette education, and cultural acceptance of violence. The study emphasizes the need for holistic prevention strategies involving schools, parents, and communities, including education on digital citizenship, strict anti-bullying policies, and psychological support for victims. This research provides valuable insights for developing effective interventions and fostering a safer digital environment for adolescents.

Keywords: Adolescent Mental Health; Cyberbullying; Digital Citizenship

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1. Introduction

Bullying is defined as intentional and repeated aggressive behavior directed toward individuals or groups perceived as weaker (Irawan, 2024; Nirwana, 2024). This phenomenon occurs not only in school environments but also in workplaces, communities, and digital spaces. With the advancement of digital technology, bullying increasingly manifests as cyberbullying, characterized by unique features such as anonymity, broad reach, and more persistent impacts compared to traditional bullying (Kashy-Rosenbaum, 2022). Studies indicate that bullying, including cyberbullying, has significant long-term effects on victims' mental health, such as depression, anxiety, and social isolation. Although existing literature highlights the adverse consequences of cyberbullying, research focusing on the transformation of bullying from school settings to digital platforms, particularly in the Indonesian context, remains limited. This article seeks to address this gap by exploring the contributing factors, psychological impacts, and prevention strategies specific to the local context.

Research has shown that bullying has serious long-term impacts on the mental and physical health of victims, including an increased risk of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Zhang et al., 2021). Furthermore, bullying can lead to a decline in academic performance and behavioral issues that persist into adulthood (Dahu & Karoba, 2024). In Indonesia, a UNICEF report (2019) revealed that one in three children experiences some form of bullying, including intimidation, social rejection, or cyberbullying. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2021

further supports this finding, indicating that approximately 30% of Indonesian students have experienced bullying, either physically or verbally.

The transformation of bullying from traditional environments to cyberspace has exacerbated its impacts. Social media, as a new arena for interaction, amplifies the reach and anonymity of perpetrators, making prevention efforts increasingly complex. Factors such as a lack of digital etiquette education, a culture of violence, and insufficient parental supervision further heighten the risks. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of this transition in a localized context is crucial for developing more effective prevention strategies (Arslan, Yildirim & Wong, 2021).

Traditional bullying, which often occurs in school settings, is increasingly moving online, known as cyberbullying. According to Pew Research Center (Center, 2018), more than 40% of teenagers report experiencing bullying on online platforms, suggesting that cyberspace has become a new arena for aggressive behaviour. According to a report from the Ministry of Communication and Information, more than 30% of adolescents in Indonesia experience bullying on online platforms (Kominfo, 2022). The increased use of social media has resulted in the evolution of bullying into cyberbullying, which can have the same damaging effects as traditional bullying. Therefore, it is important to understand the dynamics of bullying and find solutions to address this issue in various aspects of people's lives.

Cases of cyberbullying that occur in Indonesia often involve the dissemination of personal information, insults and threats that negatively impact the victim's mental health. For example, in 2022, a female student in Jakarta was victimised after her personal video went viral and received many negative comments from netizens, causing significant psychological impact (Rachmawati, 2022). In addition, a case where students in Surabaya were bullied in a WhatsApp group shows how a communication platform that is supposed to be a tool for interaction can become a means for bullying. Victims feel depressed and isolated, leading to higher mental health risks (Susanto, 2023).

The impact of cyberbullying can be devastating. Research shows that victims of cyberbullying experience higher levels of depression, anxiety and mental health problems compared to victims of traditional bullying. In addition, the social and academic impacts are no less significant, with victims often experiencing reduced performance at school and social isolation.

The transformation of bullying from the school environment to cyberspace demands greater attention from governments, schools and communities to create a safe environment for children and young people. Education on digital etiquette and online child protection is crucial to addressing this issue. Given the importance of understanding the dynamics of bullying in the digital age, this article aims to explore the transformation of bullying from school to cyberspace, as well as its implications and prevention strategies.

Cyberbullying is a form of aggression perpetrated through digital media, including social media, text messaging, and other online platforms. This definition covers a wide range of behaviours, such as insults, threats, dissemination of personal information, and social rejection. Some of the distinctive features of cyberbullying that distinguish it from traditional bullying are: (1) anonymity, where the perpetrator hides behind a false identity that makes the perpetrator more courageous to commit aggressive acts, (2) permanence, where content posted on the internet can be stored and widely disseminated, so that the impact of bullying actions can last longer; and (3) reach, where cyberbullying can reach a larger audience and faster than bullying that occurs in person.

Cyberbullying can happen anytime and to anyone. The recent increase in cyberbullying cases is influenced by the high use of social media, lack of education about digital ethics, lack of supervision and the role of parents in assisting children, and the culture of violence in the environment (Noya, Taihuttu, & Kiriwenno, 2024). The occurrence of cyberbullying can have a tremendous impact on both the perpetrator and the victim. Some of the goals and motivations of someone committing cyberbullying include: (1) seeking power and dominance, (2) gaining social acceptance, (3) expression of negative emotions, (4) distraction from personal problems, (5) lack of social skills, (6) cultural or environmental demands, (7) seeking entertainment, and (8) desire to control others (Monks et al., 2016; , Sorrentino et al., 2018). Perpetrators who successfully cyberbully their victims will have: (1) pride or power, (2) guilt or remorse, (3) anger or frustration, (4) anxiety, or even (5) alienation. Meanwhile, the impacts of cyberbullying that can be experienced by victims include: (1) mental health disorders, (2) influence on academic performance, and (3) social isolation (Bhat, 2022; Sari, 2023; Tariq, 2021). There is a need for attention and strict action against the perpetrators of cyberbullying given the enormous impact of cyberbullying on victims and perpetrators. To minimise the occurrence of cyberbullying, especially among students, preventive and comprehensive efforts need to be made by schools, parents, and the community. Preventive and comprehensive efforts that can be made include: (1) providing education to raise awareness of the dangers and adverse effects of cyberbullying, (2) the existence of school policies that include reporting procedures and consequences for bullying perpetrators as well as support for victims, (3) providing psychological support for victims with the assistance of counsellors, (4) the existence of a platform or application for reporting bullying actions, and (5) fostering and encouraging a sense of empathy and tolerance. Through these approaches and efforts, it is expected to reduce cyberbullying cases among students and create a safer environment.

2. Method

This study employed a literature review methodology to comprehensively analyze and synthesize existing research on the transformation of bullying from traditional school environments to cyberspace, focusing on its impacts and prevention strategies. The sources of literature included peer-reviewed journal articles, books, institutional reports, and official government documents published within the last ten years to ensure relevance and reliability. Data collection was conducted through academic databases such as Scopus, PubMed, and Google Scholar, using keywords such as "bullying," "cyberbullying," "mental health," and "prevention." Only studies directly related to the Indonesian context or providing global insights into the transformation of bullying were included.

The analysis involved content analysis and thematic synthesis, which categorized data into key themes such as the psychological, academic, and social impacts of cyberbullying, contributing factors, and prevention measures. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were clearly defined to enhance the quality of the review, focusing on studies with robust methodologies and high citation impact. Ethical considerations were adhered to by respecting copyright regulations and proper citation practices.

This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of bullying, identifies gaps in current prevention efforts, and lays the groundwork for proposing practical, evidence-based solutions tailored to Indonesia's unique socio-cultural context.

3. Result and Discussion

Physical and psychological bullying is a serious social problem that occurs among children, adolescents, and even adults. In recent years, there has been a transformation of bullying that is influenced by technological advances and social culture. The digitalization of digital technology has become an integral part of our daily lives, affecting the way we communicate, work, learn and interact with the world. This transformation brings significant changes in various aspects, including economic, social, educational, and cultural. Digitalization provides many benefits, such as easy access to information and the availability of faster and easier communication platforms. This has resulted in significant changes in the aspects of social interaction between people. This change brings new challenges, one of which is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is the evolution of traditional bullying in the form of physical and verbal acts of violence into bullying that is carried out through digital media, including social media, text messages, and other online platforms. Cyberbullying can take the form of sending abusive, intimidating, or ridiculing messages, spreading rumours, or digital exclusion.

In the last five years, there has been an increase in cyberbullying cases. Based on a report from the Ministry of Education and Culture (RI, 2021), it is known that around 40% of students at the primary and secondary school levels reported having experienced bullying, both physically and digitally. The results of a survey conducted by UNICEF (UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 2021: On My Mind: Promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health, 2021) stated that 33% of students in Indonesia reported experiencing cyberbullying. This statement is reinforced by research conducted by Gadjah Mada University (UGM, 2022) where it was found that 25% of high school students admitted to experiencing cyberbullying during the 2021-2022 academic year. In the report of the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI, 2021), out of 1200 reports received in 2021, 35% of cases were related to cyberbullying. This cyberbullying case can occur in adolescent boys and girls. Based on a survey ((PII), 2021), it was found that 45% of female students and 40% of male students at the secondary school level experienced bullying. Quantitative data shows that cyberbullying is a significant problem in Indonesian schools, with a high prevalence among students. The following is a graph of the proportion of bullying cases that occurred in the school environment based on data from the Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI) in January-July 2023).

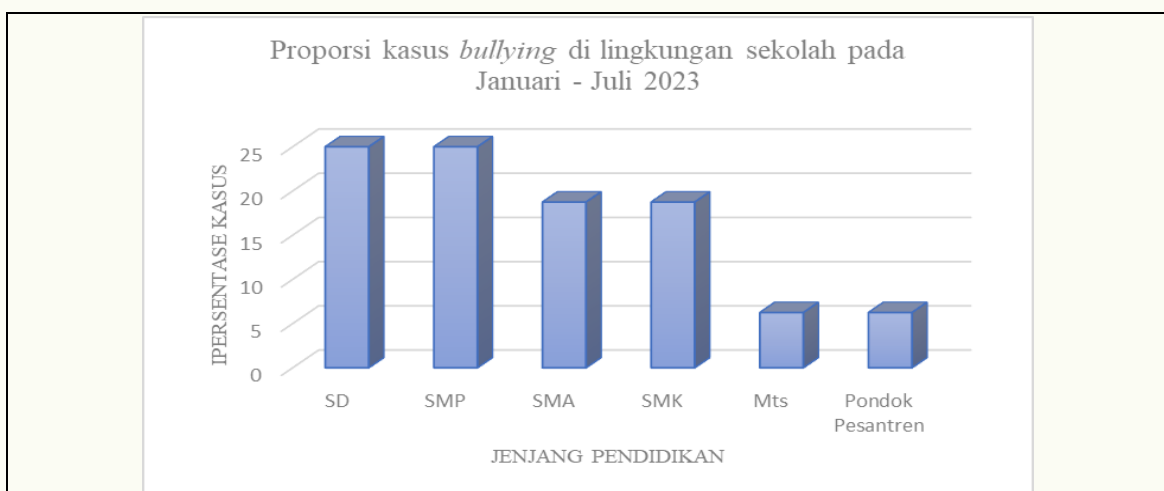


Figure 1. Image 1 Proportion of bullying cases in the school environment in January-July 2023 based on data from the Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI, 2021)

Based on a survey conducted by Wijayanti on 2,777 respondents in Indonesia, it is known that 97% of respondents have experienced digital violence, whether cyberbullying, online harassment, or other harmful actions. This highlights the pervasive nature of digital violence, which is often rooted in traditional forms of bullying. Supporting this, data from the Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI) for January–July 2023 reveals that bullying cases are most prevalent at the elementary and junior high school levels, each accounting for over 25% of reported cases. This suggests that younger students, who are still developing social and emotional resilience, are particularly vulnerable to both offline and online forms of bullying

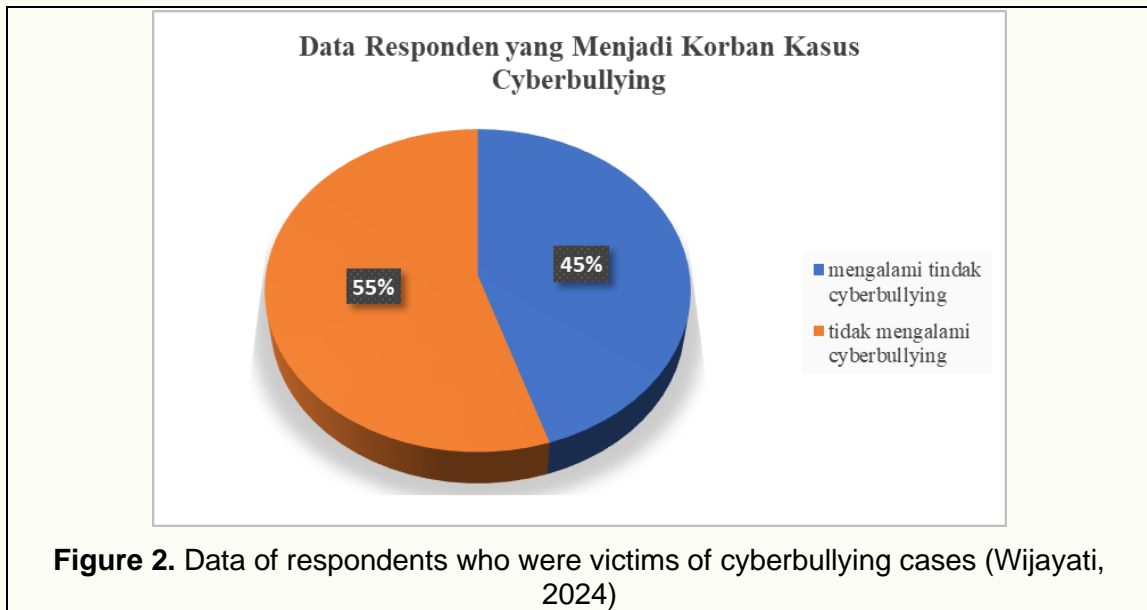


Figure 2. Data of respondents who were victims of cyberbullying cases (Wijayanti, 2024)

Furthermore, the extent of cyberbullying is highlighted in the data visualized in the pie chart above. Based on responses from 2,777 individuals, 45% reported experiencing cyberbullying, while 55% did not. This data reinforces the earlier findings of Wijayanti's survey, which identified digital violence, including cyberbullying, as a pervasive issue affecting a significant portion of respondents. The chart underscores that nearly half of those surveyed have directly faced harmful online behaviors, reflecting the urgent need for effective prevention strategies and support systems to address the psychological and social impacts of cyberbullying

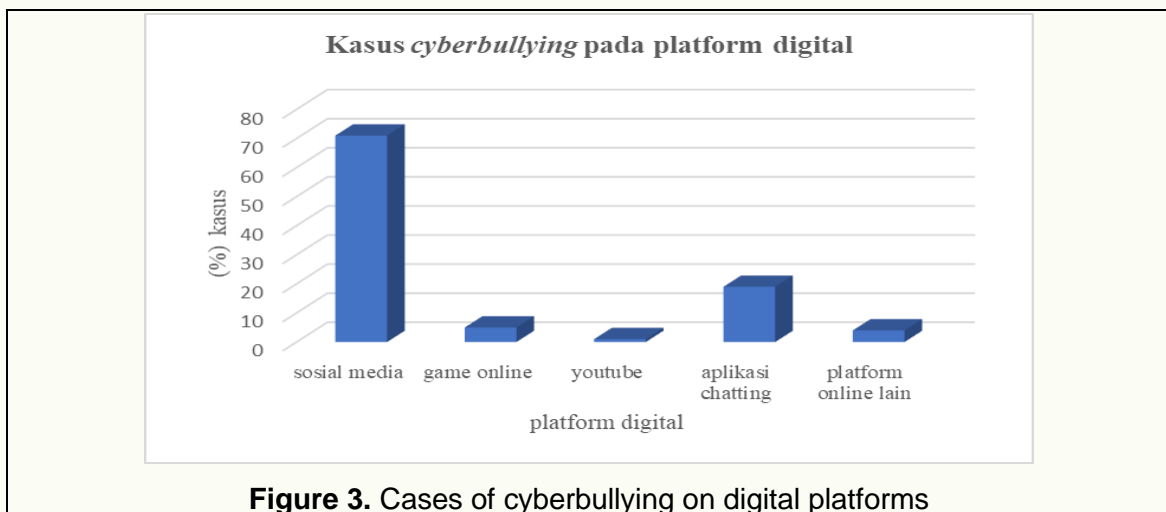


Figure 3. Cases of cyberbullying on digital platforms

The issue of cyberbullying is further detailed in the bar chart above, which illustrates the platforms most associated with these harmful behaviors. Social media emerges as the primary arena, accounting for nearly 80% of reported cases. This is followed by messaging apps (approximately 30%) and other platforms such as online games and YouTube, each contributing smaller proportions to the overall landscape.

When viewed alongside the pie chart, which shows 45% of respondents experiencing cyberbullying, and the data on the prevalence of bullying across educational levels, it becomes evident that social media serves as the dominant enabler of cyberbullying. This reflects the high level of interaction and engagement on these platforms, often coupled with a lack of accountability and oversight. Together, these visuals paint a comprehensive picture of how cyberbullying proliferates in digital spaces, emphasizing the need for platform-specific interventions to curb its prevalence

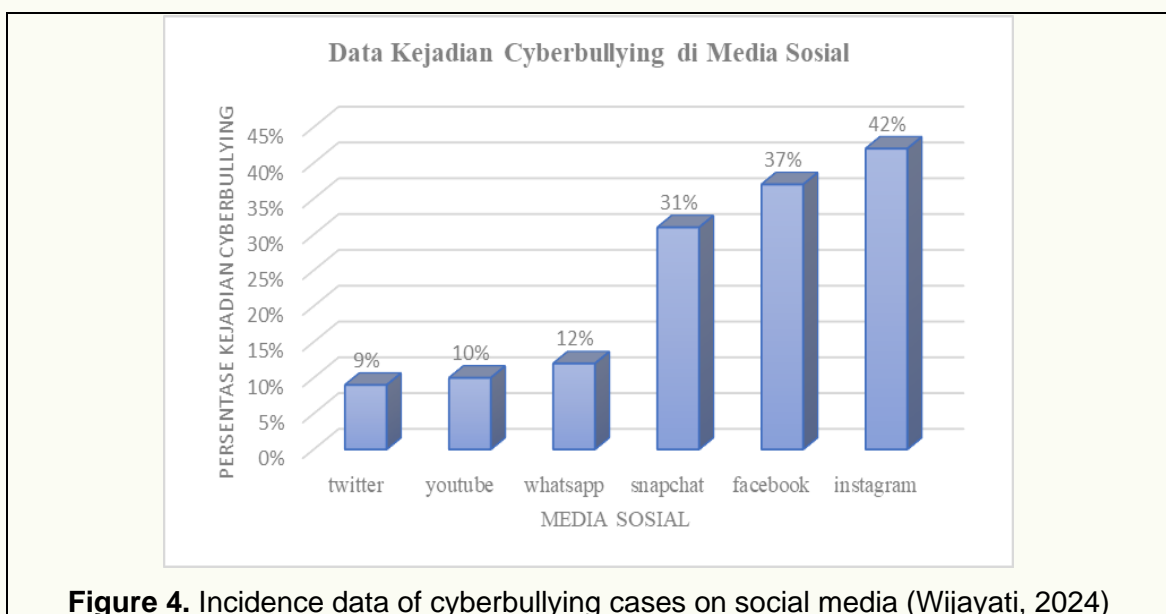


Figure 4. Incidence data of cyberbullying cases on social media (Wijayati, 2024)

Further analysis of cyberbullying incidents on specific social media platforms is presented in the bar chart above. Instagram leads with 42% of reported cases, followed by Facebook at 37% and Snapchat at 31%. WhatsApp, YouTube, and Twitter have lower proportions, accounting for 12%, 10%, and 9% respectively.

These findings underscore Instagram and Facebook as the primary platforms for cyberbullying, likely due to their high user engagement and the nature of content sharing, which often includes public comments and interactions. This data aligns with the previous chart showing social media as the dominant arena for cyberbullying, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions on these platforms. Efforts such as enhanced moderation, stricter reporting systems, and digital literacy programs focusing on these social media channels could significantly reduce the prevalence of cyberbullying

In Indonesia, cyberbullying among children and adolescents is influenced by various psychological and social factors. One major factor is the anonymity in cyberspace, which allows internet users to interact without accountability, encouraging perpetrators to act aggressively without fear of being recognized or punished (Syahid et al., 2023). The lack of education on digital etiquette also contributes significantly, as

many children and teenagers do not understand the consequences of their online actions, leading to harmful behaviors (Umar, 2024). Social media plays a significant role, as its viral nature facilitates the rapid spread of negative messages and rumors, exacerbating the victim's situation (Erdoğan & Koçyiğit, 2021). Adolescents' mental health crises, such as depression and anxiety, further compound the problem, as frustration and dissatisfaction are often redirected into bullying behaviors (Lee et al., 2023). Additionally, a culture of violence within families or communities normalizes aggressive behaviors, making bullying seem acceptable (Doumas & Midgett, 2020; Situmorang, 2019). The school environment also plays a critical role, particularly when it lacks supervision or strict anti-bullying policies, which can exacerbate the issue. Finally, social pressures and competition, combined with the rapid development of technology, provide opportunities for bullying behaviors to escalate, as teenagers often misuse digital platforms due to insufficient guidance.

The impacts of cyberbullying are profound, particularly for victims. Mental health issues such as hopelessness, loss of interest in daily activities, and excessive fear often lead to depression and other mental disorders (Jabeen & Ehsan, 2023). Victims may also face social isolation, avoiding interactions with peers to prevent further bullying. Their academic performance frequently suffers, as psychological stress interferes with concentration and motivation (Adiyanti et al., 2019). Some victims resort to self-harm behaviors to cope with emotional pain, while others experience physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach problems, and sleep disturbances (Azaria, 2023; Lu et al., 2022). Furthermore, reputational damage caused by the dissemination of negative content can diminish self-confidence, leading to identity crises and difficulty trusting others (Asih, 2023; Shaker, 2024). Addressing these impacts requires comprehensive interventions that consider both psychological and social dimensions to mitigate the consequences of cyberbullying.

Cases in Indonesia highlight the severity of this issue. For instance, a 15-year-old in Sulawesi committed suicide after enduring cyberbullying on social media, where he received constant insults and threats from peers (Kompas, 2023). Similarly, a junior high school student in East Java ended his life in 2021 after being targeted with abusive messages online. Other victims, like Rina, Dika, and Anisa, suffered prolonged psychological harm due to repeated cyberbullying incidents involving insults, unauthorized dissemination of personal photos, and slurs (Kompas, 2021; News, 2022; News T., 2023). These examples illustrate the urgent need for serious interventions and support systems to help victims recover from the trauma they endure.

In addition to the severe impacts on victims, cyberbullying also has significant consequences for perpetrators. While perpetrators may initially feel powerful or dominant, they often experience long-term repercussions, including mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, stress, and guilt. Prolonged guilt may escalate into serious psychological disorders. Furthermore, engaging in cyberbullying can increase aggressive tendencies, reflecting deeper emotional issues or dissatisfaction. Over time, this aggression can lead to social isolation, as peers and adults stigmatize them as "bullies," resulting in a loss of meaningful relationships. Academically, perpetrators may struggle with focus and concentration due to stress or regret, impacting their performance in school. In severe cases, legal consequences may arise, particularly if

their actions violate child protection laws or defamation laws, which can further damage their reputation and limit future opportunities.

To mitigate cyberbullying, comprehensive prevention strategies are necessary. Schools must implement clear policies that define cyberbullying and outline strict consequences for perpetrators while providing support for victims (Thornberg, 2021; Espelage, 2020). Education and training programs for students, teachers, and parents are critical to raising awareness about cyberbullying and equipping stakeholders with tools to prevent and address it. Moreover, fostering open communication and creating safe reporting mechanisms can encourage students to discuss their experiences. Collaboration with parents and community organizations is essential to build a supportive environment, while responsible use of technology can be promoted through monitoring tools and privacy-compliant systems (Wijayati, 2024). Regular policy evaluation ensures that prevention programs remain effective and adaptable to new challenges. By addressing both the causes and consequences of cyberbullying through collaborative efforts among schools, families, and communities, it is possible to create a safer digital environment and reduce the prevalence of harmful online behaviors.

4. Conclusion

The transformation of bullying from traditional environments to cyberspace presents a critical challenge in the digital era, with cyberbullying emerging as a significant issue among adolescents. This study highlights the severe psychological, academic, and social impacts of cyberbullying, including depression, anxiety, social isolation, and reduced academic performance. Key factors driving this phenomenon include the anonymity of online interactions, lack of digital etiquette education, cultural acceptance of violence, and insufficient parental and institutional oversight. Furthermore, the findings reveal that perpetrators are also affected, experiencing mental health issues, social isolation, and reputational damage.

Addressing this issue requires collaborative efforts among schools, parents, communities, and policymakers. Schools must strengthen anti-bullying policies and integrate digital literacy into their curricula, equipping students with the skills to navigate online spaces responsibly. Parents and communities should foster empathy and open communication, creating a supportive environment for adolescents. Technology providers also play a crucial role in enhancing reporting mechanisms and moderating harmful content.

Future research should explore the long-term psychological and social impacts of cyberbullying, focusing on both victims and perpetrators. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of current prevention strategies, ensuring that interventions remain adaptable to the rapidly evolving digital landscape. By leveraging these strategies and continuing to expand research efforts, it is possible to mitigate the prevalence of cyberbullying and foster a safer digital environment for adolescents.

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