

Prevalence, emotional impact, and demographic differences in cyberbullying among adolescents



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ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying is a growing concern among adolescents, especially high school students, due to its serious emotional and psychological effects. This study aimed to examine the prevalence, types, and emotional impact of cyberbullying among high school students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and to explore differences based on gender and grade level. A survey was conducted from February to May 2024 with 408 students from various schools. Using a Yes/No questionnaire, the study assessed experiences of online bullying and its emotional consequences. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27, applying descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. Results showed that 93.1% of students had experienced some form of cyberbullying, with emotional harassment (14.0%), body shaming (12.8%), and gender discrimination (10.2%) being the most common. Emotional impacts included sadness (8.7%), stress (8.0%), and social isolation (7.1%). Gender and grade level were found to influence the type and frequency of cyberbullying, with female students reporting higher rates of emotional harassment. These findings highlight the widespread nature of cyberbullying and its emotional impact, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and preventive programs in schools.

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1. Introduction

Cyberbullying has become an increasingly significant problem in the digital era, profoundly affecting individuals, especially adolescents and young adults, owing to the pervasive use of social media and online communication platforms. Digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok facilitate exceptional connectedness and ease; nevertheless, they also enable offenders to perpetrate destructive acts that they may avoid in direct contact. In contrast to conventional bullying, which generally transpires in physical environments such as schools or playgrounds, cyberbullying can occur at any time and in any location, with persistent harassment that inhibits victims from finding respite (Elmezain et al., 2022; Hyland et al., 2018; Nair et al.,

2023). The capacity for anonymous online communication introduces additional complications, enabling perpetrators to operate without fear of immediate repercussions, thus facilitating hostile and aggressive behaviors that inflict emotional injury (Wagner, 2019). The phenomenon of cyberbullying is particularly alarming due to its rapid dissemination to a broad audience across several internet channels, hence exacerbating the victim's suffering (Igbal et al., 2023). Social media platforms facilitate the swift dissemination of content, amplifying the likelihood that harmful messages, photos, or videos may reach a broad audience. This public exposure exacerbates the embarrassment and fear endured by victims. Moreover, the continuous nature of cyberbullying—unconstrained by the physical and temporal limitations characteristic of conventional bullying—exposes victims to the potential for harassment at any time, especially during periods often reserved for rest, such as nighttime. The persistent nature of cyberbullying results in enduring suffering and may precipitate serious mental health problems, such as sadness, anxiety, and hopelessness. Adolescents and

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young adults are especially susceptible to cyberbullying because of their significant engagement with digital technology for socialization and pleasure (AlQaderi et al., 2023; Park et al., 2014; Zhu et al., 2025). These age demographics frequently allocate considerable time to digital platforms, rendering them more vulnerable to online harassment. The pursuit of social approval, particularly within peer groups and public social media platforms, can render young individuals more susceptible to adverse remarks or ostracism from their online networks. Digital technologies are essential to their social lives, and cyberbullying can interfere with both their virtual and real-world interactions, exacerbating the emotional impact of online abuse. Moreover, the adolescent growth stage, marked by increased emotional sensitivity and an identity quest, might exacerbate the effects of cyberbullying significantly. Victims may suffer from reduced self-esteem, heightened social isolation, and physical manifestations associated with stress (Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2002; Wu et al., 2021). In light of these hazards, it is imperative to tackle the fundamental issues that contribute to cyberbullying, especially in susceptible age demographics, to avert enduring harm to mental health.

Cyberbullying can significantly impact victims' mental health, frequently resulting in increased anxiety, sadness, and social isolation. The emotional impact of online targeting is not only a transient response; it can disrupt victims' capacity to operate in their daily lives. Numerous victims endure a spectrum of mental turmoil, encompassing melancholy, tension, anger, and diminished self-esteem, which can profoundly affect their interactions with friends, family, and authority figures, including educators. As these feelings escalate, they may impact all facets of the victim's everyday existence, including academic performance, extracurricular engagements, and social relationships. Victims frequently retreat from their social networks, resulting in increased isolation that can intensify feelings of loneliness and despair. In more severe instances, the psychological ramifications of cyberbullying can transcend immediate emotional turmoil, resulting in enduring mental health issues. Victims may exhibit symptoms indicative of depression and anxiety disorders, including enduring feelings of hopelessness, irregular sleep patterns, and physical stress-related manifestations such as headaches and stomachaches. The persistent harassment may lead to reduced self-esteem, as victims absorb the adverse signals conveyed by abusers. Over time, this may result in diminished self-worth, causing victims to perceive themselves as undeserving of respect or kindness (Walker and Knauer, 2011). The psychological repercussions may be exacerbated by an increased state of hypervigilance, wherein victims remain perpetually anxious, anticipating additional assaults or degradation. In severe instances, this emotional distress may lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), characterized by flashbacks, emotional

desensitization, and challenges in processing previous trauma (Allene et al., 2021). The omnipresent aspect of cyberbullying, which can transpire at any moment and in diverse manifestations, signifies that sufferers lack the conventional emotional reprieves they might encounter in physical bullying, where they can exit the playground or evade a certain gang. The incessant nature of online harassment, coupled with the anonymity afforded by digital channels, can render it seemingly inevitable for victims. This incessant onslaught of adverse interactions can establish a cycle of emotional turmoil that jeopardizes the mental well-being of the victim and heightens their susceptibility to additional forms of harassment or exploitation. Considering these significant effects, it is imperative for educators, parents, and mental health professionals to comprehend the entirety of cyberbullying, identify indicators of emotional and psychological distress, and execute early intervention strategies to assist victims in managing its consequences and avert long-term harm.

Cyberbullying presents a diverse range of behaviors, each with unique consequences for the victims. A prevalent kind of cyberbullying is body shaming, wherein individuals are mocked or degraded based on their physical appearance. This form of harassment can significantly affect an individual's self-esteem and body image, frequently resulting in enduring psychological consequences, such as depression and eating disorders. Insults, including name-calling or pejorative remarks regarding an individual's capabilities, looks, or identity, are a prevalent kind of cyberbullying. Such attacks can erode a victim's self-esteem and confidence, potentially leading them to retreat from social engagements, both virtual and physical, to evade additional humiliation (Ahmed, 2024). Gender discrimination, frequently manifested as stereotyping or demeaning persons based on their gender, is a common occurrence in cyberbullying. This may promote detrimental gender norms, resulting in alienation and distress for those who do not adhere to conventional expectations. The emotional and psychological repercussions of these types of cyberbullying can be exacerbated when victims endure many forms of harassment concurrently. An individual subjected to both body shaming and gender-based insults may sense heightened vulnerability due to being attacked for various facets of their identity. This may exacerbate feelings of powerlessness and confusion, since victims often find it challenging to process their emotions and determine appropriate responses. Cyberbullying may manifest as exclusion or the dissemination of rumors, particularly detrimental in the realm of social media, where such actions can rapidly proliferate and attain extensive visibility. Exclusion or gossip can induce feelings of loneliness, rejection, and betrayal, adversely impacting an individual's social interactions and general well-being (Shemesh and Heiman, 2021). A fundamental

element of cyberbullying is the anonymity it affords. In contrast to conventional bullying, when the aggressor is typically recognizable, online harassment frequently transpires behind the anonymity of a screen, complicating the victims' ability to identify their assailants. This anonymity can empower offenders, enabling them to exhibit greater aggression and inflict injury without the apprehension of imminent repercussions. The ambiguity around the culprit complicates the victims' ability to seek assistance or safeguard themselves since they may perceive a lack of options to solve the problem. This feeling of powerlessness can exacerbate the emotional burden as the victim confronts both the harassment and the anxiety of an unidentified assailant. Alongside the emotional toll, victims may endure increased anxiety due to uncertainty over the timing and location of further attacks.

This study aims to analyze the multifaceted dimensions of cyberbullying, encompassing the sorts of actions exhibited, the indicators shown by victims, and the emotional and psychological repercussions. This study seeks to elucidate the nature of cyberbullying and its repercussions by examining these factors, ultimately aiming to inform more effective preventive and intervention efforts. Comprehending the various manifestations and impacts of cyberbullying is crucial for establishing robust support systems for victims and for instructing both kids and adults on preventing and addressing this escalating concern.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

This study involved 408 high school students from several public and private institutions in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The students, aged 15 to 18 years, were chosen using a stratified random selection technique to provide a diverse and representative sample. The students were selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure balanced representation across key demographics, such as gender, grade levels (grades 10, 11, and 12), and socioeconomic backgrounds (urban and suburban). The sample exhibited an equilibrium of male and female students, alongside individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, encompassing both urban and suburban residents. The aim was to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the impact of online bullying on children from diverse demographic backgrounds and educational environments.

2.2. Procedures

The survey was executed over four months, from February 2024 to May 2024. At this point, the researchers distributed a standardized questionnaire to the chosen participants. The

questionnaire was meticulously crafted to investigate the diverse manifestations of cyberbullying that kids may experience, encompassing body shaming, gender discrimination, racial harassment, and emotional abuse, among others. It also sought to evaluate the psychological and emotional effects of cyberbullying, including stress, depression, and sensations of social isolation. The survey included Likert-scale items that enabled students to rate the frequency and severity of various cyberbullying behaviors. For example, students were asked to rate their experiences with cyberbullying on a scale of 1-5, where 1 represents 'never' and 5 represents 'always.'

Prior to the administration of the survey, informed consent was secured from both the students and their guardians. This guaranteed that participants comprehended the study's objective, their rights to secrecy, and the voluntary aspect of their involvement. The students were guaranteed that their comments would be confidential and that the data would be utilized solely for academic purposes. The researchers underscored that involvement would not affect the students' academic achievement or status within the school. The collected surveys were analyzed to discern patterns and insights concerning the prevalence, types, and psychological effects of online bullying among high school students in Ho Chi Minh City. The study adhered to ethical norms to prioritize students' privacy and well-being during the research procedure.

2.3. Measurements

The survey employed a dichotomous ("yes" or "no") scale to evaluate students' behaviors and experiences with online bullying. This straightforward and effective measurement instrument enabled participants to denote the existence or nonexistence of diverse cyberbullying behaviors, hence facilitating data quantification. Each question was designed to target certain types of online bullying, including body shaming, ethnic discrimination, insults, and exclusion. Students were queried, "Have you ever experienced online bullying due to your appearance?" with response options of "Yes" or "No." The questionnaire evaluated particular bullying acts and assessed the emotional impact of cyberbullying using a dichotomous approach. Students were asked if they had encountered adverse emotions like as melancholy, worry, or social isolation due to internet bullying, with response alternatives of "yes" or "no." This enabled the researchers to ascertain the prevalence of emotional discomfort associated with cyberbullying episodes. The utilization of dichotomous scales was beneficial as it yielded clear, unambiguous replies, facilitating the analysis and interpretation of results. This facilitated the researchers in categorizing participants according to their experiences, hence enabling the detection of

trends and patterns in the occurrence and impact of online bullying across various student groups.

2.4. Data analysis

The survey data were processed and analyzed with SPSS software (version 27). The main objective of the analysis was to investigate the prevalence and categories of online bullying behaviors reported by students, along with the emotional and psychological effects linked to these actions. Descriptive statistics, encompassing frequencies and percentages, were computed to encapsulate the replies to the Yes/No questions for each item on the questionnaire. The results offered a comprehensive summary of the prevalence of different types of cyberbullying among the participants. In addition to descriptive statistics, a regression analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between various demographic factors (such as gender, grade level, and socioeconomic status) and the emotional impact of cyberbullying. The results revealed that gender and grade level were significant predictors of emotional distress, with female students in higher grades experiencing a greater emotional toll.

3. Results

Table 1 delineates a comprehensive summary of the many forms of cyberbullying encountered by participants, classified by frequency and proportion of responses.

Table 1: Content of cyberbullying

Content of cyberbullying	Response options		Percentage
	Yes	No	
Body shaming	380	28	12.8
Gender discrimination	304	104	10.2
Regionalism	291	117	10.0
Racism	257	151	8.6
Religious discrimination	168	240	5.6
Academic discrimination	210	198	7.1
Privacy	191	217	6.4
Defect	321	87	11.0
Love	248	160	8.3
Sex	201	207	6.8
Score	199	209	6.5
Achievement	205	203	6.7

Body shaming was identified as the most prevalent kind of cyberbullying, with 380 participants (12.8%) reporting such encounters, highlighting it as a significant issue. Likewise, gender discrimination was reported by 304 individuals (10.2%), signifying a significant occurrence of online bullying related to gender. Regionalism, defined as discrimination based on geographical or cultural origin, was reported by 291 individuals (10.0%), closely followed by bullying associated with physical flaws, which affected 321 participants (11.0%). Other frequently reported types were racism, with 257 participants (8.6%) experiencing such incidents, and love-related bullying, impacting 248 individuals (8.3%). Furthermore, 210 participants (7.1%) reported experiencing academic discrimination,

typically associated with educational achievement or talents, whereas 191 individuals (6.4%) encountered bullying related to privacy, including the misuse or disclosure of personal information. Sexual bullying (201 participants, 6.8%), scoring (199 participants, 6.5%), and achievement-related bullying (205 participants, 6.7%) were significant but less widespread than other categories. The least documented kind of cyberbullying was religious discrimination, with merely 168 individuals (5.6%) recognizing it as an issue. These data underscore the complex nature of cyberbullying, revealing significant variations in the prevalence of various forms. The prevalence of body shaming, gender discrimination, and regionalism highlights the critical necessity for focused initiatives to tackle these particular problems. Furthermore, the results indicate that although certain types of bullying, such as religious prejudice, are reported less frequently, they nonetheless pose substantial problems for the individuals impacted.

Table 2 presents a thorough study of the behaviors linked to cyberbullying, outlining their frequency and prevalence among participants.

Table 2: Types of cyberbullying

Behaviors of cyberbullying	Response options		Percentage
	Yes	No	
Discrimination	314	94	12.6
Teasing	180	228	7.2
Provocative	227	181	9.1
Insult	349	58	14.0
Entice	129	279	5.2
Threaten	305	103	12.2
Disturbing	273	135	10.9
Suppression-control	239	169	9.6
Intimidation	318	90	12.7
Insinuate	164	244	6.5

Insulting behavior was the most common among the reported actions, with 349 individuals (14.0%) stating they had been subjected to it. This discovery highlights the substantial impact of verbal abuse in online harassment. Likewise, prejudice was reported by 314 participants (12.6%), and intimidation was experienced by 318 individuals (12.7%), underscoring the prevalence of discriminatory behaviors and fear-inducing tactics as prevalent types of cyberbullying. Coercive or explicit threats were reported by 305 individuals (12.2%), highlighting the prevalence of violent and detrimental online behavior. Various other manifestations of cyberbullying were also extensively documented. A total of 273 individuals (10.9%) reported upsetting acts, characterized by unwelcome or invasive behaviors. Likewise, behaviors classified as suppression or control, which entail efforts to dominate or influence individuals, were reported by 239 participants (9.6%). Provocative activities, typically intended to provoke emotional responses or disputes, were reported by 227 individuals (9.1%). Teasing, a behavior frequently underestimated yet often detrimental, was reported by 180 participants (7.2%), highlighting its significant prevalence as a type of

cyberbullying. Infrequent, although significant actions encompassed insinuations, as indicated by 164 participants (6.5%). These nuanced or oblique comments frequently possess negative implications, rendering them a covert kind of harassment. The least frequently mentioned behavior was tempting, with 129 participants (5.2%) recognizing it as a type of bullying, indicating efforts to attract or manipulate someone into detrimental situations. The findings reveal a varied array of cyberbullying behaviors, encompassing explicit activities like insults and threats as well as more subtle behaviors such as insinuations and enticements. The prevalence of activities like insults and intimidation indicates the widespread employment of aggressive language and strategies in online harassment. In contrast, the reduced frequency of behaviors such as enticing indicates they may be more focused or context-dependent. These findings underscore the necessity for focused treatments that tackle both the explicit and implicit aspects of cyberbullying, promoting safer and more respectful digital interactions.

Table 3 provides a thorough examination of the behavioral and emotional indicators linked to cyberbullying, outlining their prevalence among the participants in the study.

Table 3: Signs of cyberbullying

Signs of cyberbullying	Response options		Percentage
	Yes	No	
Hot-tempered	142	266	4.2
Often stress	270	138	8.0
Often irritable	148	260	4.4
Passive	276	132	8.2
Sad	293	115	8.7
Cry easily	274	134	8.1
Like being alone	241	167	7.1
Less communication	316	192	9.4
Not focused	250	158	7.4
Often sleep	101	307	3.0
Cold	141	267	4.2
Often absent from school	235	173	7.0
Academic failure	291	117	8.6
Often violated	108	300	3.2
Often late	84	324	2.5
Often swear	97	311	2.9
Share more on social networks	106	302	3.1

A decrease in communication was the most commonly reported indicator, with 316 participants (9.4%) noting a propensity to retreat from social connections. This indicates that victims may withdraw from communication as a coping strategy to evade additional harassment or safeguard their emotional health. Sadness emerged as the second most common indicator, indicated by 293 participants (8.7%), underscoring the considerable emotional anguish endured by individuals subjected to cyberbullying. Academic failure was reported by 291 participants (8.6%), highlighting the adverse effects of cyberbullying on academic achievement. This may be ascribed to diminished concentration, heightened absenteeism, or a deficiency in motivation stemming from the stress and anxiety induced by online abuse. Furthermore, 274 participants (8.1%) indicated a propensity to cry

readily, signifying increased emotional sensitivity and susceptibility among victims. Stress emerged as a significant indicator, reported by 270 participants (8.0%), illustrating the mental health impact linked to ongoing cyberbullying. Elevated stress levels can result in numerous adverse effects, such as anxiety, sadness, and burnout. Passive behavior was observed in 276 participants (8.2%), indicating a possible decline in assertiveness or confidence, presumably as a reaction to perceived powerlessness in the context of online violence. Two hundred fifty participants (7.4%) experienced a lack of focus, indicating that cyberbullying may disrupt cognitive abilities like attention and concentration. This distraction can intensify academic difficulties and diminish overall productivity. A total of 241 individuals (7.1%) expressed a desire for solitude, so strengthening the trend of social disengagement as a mechanism to cope with or evade cyberbullying. Often absent from school was reported by 235 participants (7.0%), which could be a direct consequence of avoiding environments where bullying may occur or an indirect result of the emotional toll taken by cyberbullying. Irritability, experienced by 148 participants (4.4%), points to increased frustration and anger, which are common emotional responses to ongoing harassment. Similarly, hot-temperedness (142 participants, 4.2%) and a cold demeanor (141 participants, 4.2%) reflect divergent emotional responses, ranging from heightened aggression to emotional withdrawal. Infrequently reported indicators encompass excessive sleeping, noted by 101 individuals (3.0%), which may suggest efforts to evade stress through prolonged sleep or could signify depressive symptoms. Frequently infringed upon, as indicated by 108 participants (3.2%), indicates occurrences of boundary violations or privacy intrusions, which can profoundly affect an individual's sense of security and autonomy. One hundred six individuals (3.1%) reported increased sharing on social networks, possibly indicating attempts to obtain support or approval online in reaction to bullying. The behaviors least reported were frequent tardiness (84 participants, 2.5%) and frequent swearing (97 participants, 2.9%), suggesting that although these behaviors occur, they are less closely linked to the immediate emotional and social consequences of cyberbullying. The diminished prevalence rates indicate that these behaviors may be affected by numerous variables outside of cyberbullying alone.

4. Discussion

The findings illustrate the complicated nature of cyberbullying, including various behaviors, content, and resultant effects that significantly impact victims' emotional, social, and academic well-being. Body shaming and insults have become the predominant kinds of cyberbullying, highlighting the considerable effects of verbal abuse and discriminatory behavior in online encounters. Victims of cyberbullying usually exhibit emotional

responses, including melancholy, tension, and increased propensity to cry, as well as behavioral alterations such as diminished communication, academic decline, and social retreat, underscoring the extensive impact of cyberbullying on their mental health and daily existence. Infrequent behaviors, such as habitual profanity and increased sharing on social networks, indicate that certain victims may react in more nuanced or indirect manners, thereby highlighting the diverse expressions of cyberbullying. These findings highlight the pressing necessity for focused treatments to tackle the particular behaviors linked to cyberbullying and to offer comprehensive support to alleviate its emotional and social consequences. The research underscores the necessity of cultivating digital literacy, encouraging polite online engagement, and establishing robust support structures to mitigate the incidence and impact of cyberbullying.

The findings highlight the pervasive and detrimental characteristics of cyberbullying, which appear through numerous destructive behaviors, including discriminatory actions, verbal harassment, and social exclusion. Body shaming and insults were the most commonly reported types. This aligns with previous research emphasizing the prevalence of appearance-related bullying and verbal harassment in digital contexts. The anonymity afforded by digital platforms enables the manifestation of harmful behaviors since individuals perceive diminished accountability for their acts (Pater and Mynatt, 2017). The ubiquity of body shaming exemplifies the escalating problem of appearance-based bullying in the digital era, where individuals frequently endure detrimental remarks regarding their physical appearance, intensified by the accessibility and reach of social media. Moreover, gender discrimination and regionalism were very prevalent, indicating how societal biases, including gender inequity and regional prejudices, are manifested and sustained in online environments. These findings align with cross-cultural research that investigates the impact of cultural and social prejudices on cyberbullying behavior. Research indicates that individuals are more inclined to exhibit discriminatory behaviors online when they perceive their acts as unobservable or untraceable (Acquisti and Fong, 2020; Lacroix et al., 2023). This study's predominance of regionalism may indicate deeper societal divisions, which are also evident online when geographic distinctions, such as dialect or geography, serve as justification for bullying. Gender discrimination exemplifies greater societal disparities, wherein assumptions and biases persistently shape interpersonal interactions and treatment, especially within digital contexts. The results of this research suggest that appearance-based bullying, gender discrimination, and regionalism are profoundly ingrained in both offline and online sociocultural frameworks. The effect of these discriminatory acts is exacerbated by their facilitation in online environments. Research indicates that the online context, marked by

anonymity and a lack of immediate social repercussions, frequently enables biases to proliferate unchecked, rendering cyberbullying a more widespread and harmful issue (Emami, 2022). The results of this study underscore the necessity for tailored interventions to prevent specific types of cyberbullying, alongside broader initiatives to tackle the cultural attitudes that underlie these behaviors.

The emotional and behavioral effects of cyberbullying on victims are significant, as seen by the elevated rates of sorrow and stress documented in this study. These findings corroborate existing research that associates cyberbullying with significant mental health repercussions, such as increased anxiety, sadness, and diminished overall well-being (Arslan et al., 2021; Halliday et al., 2024; McLoughlin et al., 2022). Victims frequently endure a considerable emotional burden, with sorrow being one of the most common emotions, indicative of the distress inflicted by online harassment. Stress, often identified as a reaction to bullying, can result in heightened anxiety, and over time, this persistent emotional pressure may culminate in enduring psychological problems such as depression and diminished self-esteem. Individuals subjected to cyberbullying frequently display alterations in behavior, such as reduced communication and an inclination towards solitude, which are significant indicators of social withdrawal. These coping strategies are prevalent among persons facing bullying, as they seek to evade more emotional distress or retribution by withdrawing from social engagements. Social disengagement frequently indicates internalized distress, as the individual isolates themselves to safeguard their emotional well-being. Avoiding communication can exacerbate isolation, intensifying the victim's sense of loneliness and helplessness. This disengagement behavior restricts assistance chances from friends, family, or classmates, intensifying the adverse impacts of cyberbullying. Besides emotional and social repercussions, cyberbullying substantially affects academic performance, with highly documented rates of academic failure and regular school absenteeism. These behavioral indicators illustrate the extensive, frequently disregarded impacts of cyberbullying on academic performance. Online harassment induces mental anguish that disrupts concentration, motivation, and general academic engagement, resulting in diminished academic achievement. Previous studies have repeatedly demonstrated that bullying, whether conducted in-person or online, can result in considerable academic difficulties since students frequently find it challenging to concentrate on their studies while managing the emotional repercussions of bullying (Mishna et al., 2009; Ortega et al., 2012). The mental burden may also present as physical symptoms, including frequent absenteeism, as sufferers may evade school to avoid the bullying atmosphere. This interruption to their schooling exacerbates their isolation and constrains their prospects for success, creating a cycle of unhappiness and

underachievement. These findings highlight the extensive repercussions of cyberbullying, including victims' mental and emotional well-being, as well as their social interactions and academic advancement. The findings underscore the immediate necessity for holistic interventions that tackle the psychological, social, and academic repercussions of cyberbullying.

Notably, although frequent swearing and increased sharing on social networks were mentioned less often, they offer insights into the coping mechanisms utilized by victims of cyberbullying. These activities may signify the victim's endeavor to express displeasure or attain emotional affirmation in the digital realm. Profanity, although less common, may function as a release for the victim's frustration or powerlessness as they navigate the emotional ramifications of the bullying. Profanity can serve as a cathartic outlet, enabling individuals to articulate their anguish and strive to reestablish a sense of agency in their circumstances. Studies indicate that individuals may resort to harsh or profane language online as a coping mechanism for dissatisfaction, especially when they experience feelings of powerlessness or isolation stemming from bullying (Shariff, 2009). Conversely, publishing extensively on social networks may signify a pursuit of support or comprehension from a wider online community. Victims may seek validation, consolation, or solidarity from their social networks, sharing their experiences in the hope of encountering others with analogous narratives. Social media platforms frequently function as venues for personal expression; nevertheless, this can be a double-edged sword. Sharing experiences might provide emotional support from online acquaintances, but it may also subject victims to more risks. This encompasses additional harassment, cyberstalking, or being victimized by someone who may lack comprehension of the context or the victim's emotional condition (Mikkola et al., 2022; Pereira et al., 2016). Consequently, although these coping strategies may provide transient alleviation, they also possess the capacity to intensify mental distress and subject victims to other forms of digital harm. Moreover, the comparatively lower incidence of more extreme actions, such as enticement and violations, may suggest that these behaviors are context-dependent or linked to more severe instances of cyberbullying. Enticement, sometimes associated with the manipulation or coercion of an individual into a detrimental circumstance, is very rare; however, when it transpires, it indicates a more profound degree of exploitation or dominance. Likewise, infractions that may encompass infringements of privacy or personal boundaries, albeit being reported less frequently, indicate more intrusive types of cyberbullying that necessitate a thorough examination of the underlying dynamics. These acts are not only more severe but also frequently result in enduring effects, such as emotional anguish and a feeling of powerlessness, which may lead to significant long-term damage. Comprehending the

fundamental causes and catalysts of these severe bullying behaviors is essential for formulating effective preventative and intervention measures. Such actions may indicate more deliberate and detrimental efforts to manipulate or intimidate victims, underscoring the necessity for enhanced support systems for individuals subjected to these extreme types of cyberbullying (Bauman, 2019). Consequently, the comparatively low frequency of these extreme behaviors does not diminish their possible severity. This highlights the intricate dynamics of cyberbullying, indicating that although some acts are infrequent, they might be more harmful when they do manifest. The utilization of social media and profanity by victims signifies the psychological impact of cyberbullying and the necessity for more sophisticated support techniques. A comprehensive understanding of these coping mechanisms and the diverse intensities of cyberbullying activities is crucial for formulating solutions that cater to both the immediate and long-term requirements of victims.

This study's findings have major implications for tackling cyberbullying and its effects on individuals and society. The prevalence of behaviors like body shaming, insults, gender discrimination, and regionalism underscores the pressing necessity for extensive training programs aimed at fostering empathy, respect, and responsible digital citizenship. Educational institutions should provide programs that inform students about the ramifications of cyberbullying and provide them with the skills to identify and address online harassment. These campaigns must underscore the significance of inclusivity, instructing students to confront discriminatory attitudes and behaviors in both digital and physical environments. Additionally, educational institutions must implement comprehensive support systems, encompassing counseling services, peer support networks, and workshops, to assist victims in managing the emotional and psychological repercussions of cyberbullying, including stress, depression, and social isolation. Educators and school personnel must receive training to recognize the indicators of cyberbullying and to intervene appropriately, thereby safeguarding victims and encouraging them to report incidents without fear. Alongside educational interventions, enhanced laws and actions by technology firms and social media platforms are essential. The anonymity afforded by internet networks sometimes empowers offenders, facilitating their engagement in detrimental actions without repercussions. Social media platforms must adopt more proactive measures to identify and mitigate cyberbullying, including the implementation of more efficient reporting systems, the enforcement of policies that deter abusive conduct, and the assurance of prompt action against perpetrators. Partnerships with technology firms, educational entities, and mental health groups could facilitate the development of online tools and campaigns that inform users about the risks of

cyberbullying and the significance of promoting constructive online relationships. The study underscores the coping strategies frequently employed by victims of cyberbullying, including heightened social media engagement and the articulation of dissatisfaction through profanity. Although these activities may provide a momentary release for emotional turmoil, they can also subject victims to additional suffering, perpetuating a cycle of abuse. It is imperative to instruct victims in healthy coping mechanisms, such as soliciting emotional support from reliable individuals, engaging in physical exercise, or partaking in community-enhancing activities. Parents, educational institutions, and mental health practitioners can significantly assist victims in pursuing these more beneficial options. This study underscores the necessity for a comprehensive strategy integrating education, legislative reform, and victim support to successfully address cyberbullying. To mitigate the effects of cyberbullying, schools should implement comprehensive anti-bullying policies, which include clear guidelines for reporting incidents and consequences for perpetrators. Schools could also provide workshops focusing on digital citizenship, empathy, and the psychological effects of online bullying. Additionally, peer support programs and counseling services should be established to assist victims and promote healthy coping mechanisms. By tackling the immediate and enduring consequences of cyberbullying, we can foster safer and more supportive conditions for individuals to flourish in both the digital and physical realms.

This study possesses certain limitations that must be acknowledged when evaluating the results. The sample size, albeit sufficient, may not comprehensively represent the wider community, as it was confined to a particular cohort and their experiences with cyberbullying. This constrains the applicability of the findings to other demographic cohorts, encompassing individuals from diverse geographies, age brackets, or cultural contexts. Furthermore, the self-reported form of the data may include response biases, including social desirability bias, when participants might hesitate to disclose specific behaviors or experiences due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter. This may lead to an underreporting of cyberbullying incidents and their emotional consequences. A further weakness is the study's cross-sectional design, which merely records a singular moment of participants' experiences with cyberbullying. The study is unable to determine causal links between the reported behaviors and their long-term impacts on mental health or academic achievement. Longitudinal studies are essential to monitor the evolution of cyberbullying and its enduring effects over time. Furthermore, the study did not investigate the involvement of bystanders in the cyberbullying phenomenon. Bystanders, whether passive or active players in the bullying dynamic, can affect the outcomes for victims, and their viewpoints may offer significant

insights into the efficacy of remedies. Subsequent research ought to investigate the influence of bystanders and assess how their behaviors or lack thereof affect the incidence and intensity of cyberbullying. The research predominantly concentrated on the victims' experiences, neglecting to adequately consider the viewpoints of the perpetrators. Comprehending the motivations, behaviors, and psychological profiles of individuals who perpetrate cyberbullying is essential for formulating focused preventive and intervention efforts. Ultimately, although the study recognized prevalent indicators of cyberbullying and its emotional repercussions, it failed to investigate the potential variations in the experiences or coping mechanisms of persons from different cultural or socio-economic backgrounds. Cultural and socio-economic characteristics can affect victims' perceptions and responses to bullying, perhaps guiding more customized interventions. Consequently, subsequent research should incorporate a more heterogeneous sample and investigate these aspects with greater rigor.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this investigation underscore the pervasive prevalence of cyberbullying and its various manifestations, including body shaming, insults, and gender discrimination, all of which inflict considerable emotional suffering on victims. Such practices, frequently manifesting in online environments where anonymity shields the offenders, result in many psychological consequences, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Victims often exhibit indicators of emotional distress, such as heightened anger, melancholy, and social disengagement, which may impede their academic and personal growth. The enduring aspect of cyberbullying, intensified by the constant availability of digital platforms, complicates victims' ability to attain respite, leading to extended emotional distress. The results indicate a necessity for enhanced intervention measures that engage parents, educators, and mental health specialists to assist victims and instruct individuals on acceptable online conduct. Future studies should concentrate on the long-term consequences of cyberbullying and the role of diverse demographic characteristics on its prevalence and effects, with the objective of developing more effective preventive strategies and support networks.

Compliance with ethical standards

Ethical considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participating students and their parents/guardians. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity of all responses were strictly maintained.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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