

## An Examination of Cyberbullying and Strategies for Prevention



Dinh Trung Dung<sup>1</sup>, Nguyen Thanh Tuan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> People's Police Academy, Hanoi, Vietnam

**ABSTRACT:** While the Internet has undeniably revolutionized global affairs, it has also become a platform for cyberbullying, a grave manifestation of inappropriate conduct among young people. A growing number of literature has begun to document the prevalence, predictors, and outcomes of cyberbullying, which affects a significant portion of today's youth. The objective of this article is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the current cyberbullying research.

**KEYWORD:** Cyberbullying, Crime prevention, Bullying, Crime detection, Internet

### 1. INTRODUCTION

While social media platforms have facilitated unrestricted virtual connections among users, they have also provided opportunities for those who exploit them to engage in cyberbullying. Wrongful conduct and cyberbullying are currently recognized as significant problems in the digital realm, with the potential to cause severe harm to the victims' mental and physical well-being. Cyberbullying may be more feasible to execute in comparison to other forms of bullying due to the absence of direct confrontation with the target and the reduced likelihood of detection. However, currently, some online bullying behaviors that exceed the limit will become illegal and subject to legal liability.

### 2. CONCEPT CYBERBULLYING

Many people may believe they have a complete understanding of cyberbullying and are capable of identifying it. In spite of this, there is considerable variation in the definition and analysis of cyberbullying, even among cyberbullying researchers. Certain researchers employ extremely inclusive definitions of the issue, which encompass every conceivable encounter with online aggression in any form. Certain perspectives exclusively concentrate on particular forms of damage, such as physical threats to safety or humiliation, neglecting to encompass other detrimental manifestations like insults, name-calling, and social exclusion. Some individuals encompass every possible medium and location where cyberbullying can transpire.<sup>1</sup>

The term "bullying" is commonly defined as a deliberate and aggressive action or conduct that is executed repeatedly and persistently over an extended period of time by an individual or group against a defenseless victim. Traditional forms of bullying encompass various primary categories, including physical, verbal, relational, and indirect threats.

According to Smith et al., cyberbullying is "a deliberate, aggressive act perpetrated repeatedly or over an extended period of time via electronic means of communication by an individual or group against a vulnerable victim who is unable to defend themselves". Teenagers are particularly susceptible to cyberbullying because they mistakenly perceive it as a threat.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. COMPARISON BETWEEN CYBERBULLYING AND TRADITIONAL BULLYING

Cyberbullying shares three fundamental characteristics that set it apart from traditional bullying: it is an aggressive act that transpires among individuals with an imbalance of power; and the behavior is frequently replicated. Although traditional

<sup>1</sup> Sabella, R. A., Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2013). Cyberbullying myths and realities. *Computers in Human behavior*, 29(6), 2703-2711.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S., & Tippett, N. (2008). Cyberbullying: Its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry*, 49(4), 376-385.

## **An Examination of Cyberbullying and Strategies for Prevention**

bullying and cyberbullying share some similarities, they are fundamentally dissimilar in numerous ways. Frequently, cyberbullying perpetrators believe that they are operating invisibly.

Individuals say and do things anonymously that they would not say or do in person, according to research. The provision of anonymity in cyberbullying substantially expands the range of potential perpetrators in comparison to conventional abuse. For instance, individuals who engage in cyberbullying are not required to be concerned with whether or not their physical stature surpasses that of their target.

Additionally, anonymity has a negative impact. In the case of face-to-face bullying, the victim can perceive the consequences of the bully's actions. Certain offenders may be deterred from engaging in further abuse from the mere awareness that their victim has been harmed. Cyberbullying operates in a manner that prevents perpetrators from directly perceiving the victim's reaction to their actions. Opportunities for regret and empathy are thus substantially diminished.

Another distinction between cyberbullying and traditional bullying is the level of victim accessibility. During the school day, traditional bullying occurs most frequently at schools. Conversely, those who partake in cyberbullying have the ability to execute their malicious actions at any hour of the day, every day of the week. They have the ability to construct websites, send text messages, and publish messages about others on the Internet at any time of day or night. Moreover, due to the inherent characteristics of the platforms via which cyberbullying transpires, its potential audience is considerably larger than that of conventional tormenting. An instance of school bullying may be witnessed by a mere dozen individuals, while insulting online remarks may be viewed by thousands.

In comparison to traditional bullying, the reward for engaging in cyberbullying is frequently delayed due to the nature of the technology used to perpetrate cyberbullying. The instantaneous consequences of cyberbullying are not apparent to the targeted individual. The timing of the victim's response may be influenced by when they become cognizant of the cyberbullying, which may occur when they check their text message or visit the website. The observed temporal discrepancy implies that the two forms of abuse may be motivated by distinct factors. Thus, the motivations behind cyberbullying tend to be more internal, while those underlying traditional bullying tend to be more social.

### **4. WHAT CAUSES CYBERBULLYING TO OCCUR?**

#### ***Indirect form of revenge***

Some individuals experience psychological repercussions as a result of the pressures of daily life, which may include consistent tension, fatigue, adversity, or bullying. One may develop a proclivity to take out rage on others. Individuals have the ability to retaliate against those who have bullied or obliquely bullied them via social networks. Additionally, individuals who perceive their lives to have been marred by an excessive number of negative events have endured sufficient mental and physical suffering; consequently, they desire to spare others from facing similar challenges.

#### ***No fear of being discovered***

Typically, perpetrators of cyberbullying conceal their identities intentionally and establish a large number of fake accounts to reduce the likelihood of being identified. Simultaneously, attribution of online violence to malicious actors proves challenging due to the fact that they never employ their own precise information.

As a result, the perpetrator will consistently experience a sense of security, as exposure is a formidable obstacle, enabling them to act arbitrarily in pursuit of their personal desires. Furthermore, many individuals are incredibly at ease when they observe the victim in a state of bewilderment, terror, and ceaseless pursuit of the offender. This occasionally induces them to escalate their levels of exhilaration and consistently heighten the gravity of their behaviors in an effort to dishonor and degrade the dignity and honor of others.

#### ***Desire for power***

Individuals who engage in cyberbullying via social networks maintain an unwavering self-perception of correctness, which empowers them to pass judgment, offer criticism, and disparage others. They believe they are capable of distinguishing right from wrong or that the victim merits to endure such suffering.

Furthermore, in certain instances, online bullies justify their behavior by believing that if they abstain, others will follow suit; thus, they believe they have the authority to openly ridicule and disparage others. These individuals will experience immense gratification and joy when they comprehend the frailties of others; they take pleasure in witnessing others in distress, anguish, and pain.

## **An Examination of Cyberbullying and Strategies for Prevention**

### ***Desire to express oneself***

It has been determined through statistical analysis that adolescents and young people comprise the majority of online bullies. During this developmental stage, children invariably harbor an innate yearning to mature into adults, which they manifest through aggressive behavior and bullying. More specifically, they will become even more complacent when their bullying conduct is extolled. Simultaneously, victims of cyberbullying will experience heightened levels of excitement and joy when they are fearful and perplexed.

### ***A form of online recreation***

Numerous individuals provoke others through their actions without realizing that they are causing harm to others. They regard this as a frivolous endeavor, an innocuous pastime designed to bring them happiness. They tend to reprimand others and consider it a "success" of their own, possibly because their lives are uninteresting, devoid of flavor, and receive little sharing or attention from others.

## **5. BASIC FORMS OF CYBERBULLYING**

### ***Online harassment***

Cyberbullying is the most prevalent type of cyber violence. Contributing to this form entails the dissemination of harassing, threatening, or insulting messages, remarks, or images. Harassers may even engage in private information disclosure, pursue others on social media, or assume the identities of others. Not only do these actions induce tension and anxiety in the victim, but they also have an adverse impact on the victim's self-esteem and personal growth.

### ***Online bullying***

Frequently, cyberbullying occurs on social networks. Bullies do not confine themselves to disseminating false information, defaming, or insulting others via social networks; they can also probe into private lives and publish defamatory images or videos. Including the use of technology to monitor the location and activities of the victim. The victim of these behaviors may experience severe emotional and spiritual distress as a result.

### ***Propagating violence***

Additionally, violent propaganda constitutes a type of cyber violence. Engaging in the production or dissemination of material that encourages or fosters violent conduct. Such behaviors have the potential to escalate instances of physical aggression and foster hazardous digital environments.

### ***Invasion of privacy***

Invading privacy occurs when one posts or shares the private information of another without their consent. Individuals will acquire and monitor information on purpose with the intention of using it to deceive or threaten their victims. The aforementioned behaviors have the potential to engender profound skepticism and disrupt the social and emotional connections of the target.

## **6. THE CONSEQUENCES OF CYBERBULLYING**

Prior studies have established a statistically significant correlation between instances of cyberbullying and diminished self-esteem.<sup>3</sup> It has been documented that victims of cyberbullying may experience a range of psychological and somatic disorders, which may occasionally result in self-harm.<sup>4</sup>

At present, cyberbullying is capable of inflicting significantly more harm than traditional forms of tormenting. Cyberbullying victims may encounter attackers who are unaware of their identities; defamatory, demeaning, and disruptive content can be easily disseminated and frequently persists for an extended period of time. Although it is a common misconception that cyberbullying primarily affects adolescents, the reality is that cyberbullying can affect individuals of any age

Consequences of cyberbullying include:

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<sup>3</sup> Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2010). Cyberbullying and self-esteem. *Journal of school health*, 80(12), 614-621.

<sup>4</sup> Xu, J. M., Jun, K. S., Zhu, X., & Bellmore, A. (2012, June). Learning from bullying traces in social media. In *Proceedings of the 2012 conference of the North American chapter of the association for computational linguistics: Human language technologies* (pp. 656-666).

## **An Examination of Cyberbullying and Strategies for Prevention**

*Emotional issues:* Following bullying, victims frequently experience feelings of insecurity, lack of confidence, and diminished self-esteem, as well as increased levels of fear, sadness, and anger. A great number of individuals are susceptible to panic and excessive anxiety.

*Psychological stress disorders:* Individuals who are targeted by cyberbullying will perpetually experience feelings of insecurity and depression, accompanied by symptoms including migraines, dizziness, insomnia, and more. It may transpire in severe circumstances, resulting in self-harm, anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, and potentially even suicide.

*Having many troubles in life:* Insulting, defamatory, and humiliating content that is readily disseminated on social networking sites can have a significant impact on the victim's daily life. They might be susceptible to academic expulsion, job termination, or encounter numerous obstacles in maintaining relationships.

*Suicide:* Victims who endure constant suffering and incessant social network pressures are prone to developing negative thoughts, which increases their risk of perpetrating the act. Frequently, as a means of establishing their innocence and candor, they resolved to terminate all discussions by pursuing death. Statistics indicate that social network bullies are two to nine times more likely to contemplate suicide than the general population.

In recent years, there have been a number of high-profile incidents involving young adults and adolescents who have committed suicide in part as a result of cyberbullying and abuse. Empirical evidence suggests that youth involvement in bullying, whether as an abuser or a victim, significantly elevates the likelihood of encountering risk factors that are linked to suicidal ideation, attempted suicide, and completed suicides.

### **7. IDENTIFY CHILDREN WHO ARE EXPERIENCING CYBERBULLYING**

A child being bullied online can cause negative effects related to mental health. Parents can observe the following 4 factors:

*Thoughts:* Children frequently express themselves through words, thoughts, and complaints when they have been threatened, bullied, slandered, or stoned by others, or when they feel inferior, bad, or embarrassed...

*Emotions:* The presence of extended-lasting anxiety, sadness, tension, or anger, particularly in relation to the utilization or mention of social networking sites.

*Behavior:* children engage in compulsive monitoring of social networks or abruptly discontinue their usage of internet-connected devices (e.g., phones, computers); alter their dietary and sleeping patterns; exhibit self-destructive or suicidal tendencies.

*Related factors:* Children often skip school and refuse to go to school; learning outcome goes down.

The prevalence of cyberbullying in Vietnam: The General Statistics Office estimates that there are approximately 27 million minors under the age of 18 in Vietnam in 2021. According to data provided by the Institute for Management of Sustainable Development (MSD), 96.9% of minors have access to the Internet.

An additional set of data indicates that approximately 36.5% of children have encountered violent-themed content and images on the internet. Over thirteen percent of minors are exposed to explicit sexual content. Additionally, the proliferation of the Covid-19 pandemic has heightened the vulnerability of children to cyberbullying involving explicit and violent material.

According to the 2022 report by Interpol, and UNICEF, 1% of Vietnamese children who use the Internet are enticed to transmit photos and videos of their private areas. In addition, 2% of Vietnamese minors who participated in the survey had requests for sexual chat online, and 1% of them had sensitive images shared without their consent. Notably, 0.3% of Vietnamese children were requested to pay or present gifts in exchange for sexual acts while using the Internet.<sup>5</sup>

### **8. STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION**

Many cyberbullying victims are so terrified of having to disable all social media access that they refrain from using the internet for an extended period of time. However, Internet access, like many other aspects of existence, has numerous advantages. There are hazards involved that require your attention and precautionary measures.

#### ***Raising awareness***

Awareness-raising regarding cyber security is a crucial initial step. It is imperative that guardians furnish their offspring with precise and rational knowledge pertaining to the perils associated with cyber violence, elucidating its profound ramifications

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<sup>5</sup> <https://vietnamnet.vn/hon-400-bao-cao-ve-viec-xam-hai-tre-em-tren-moi-truong-mang-nam-2022-i5015252.html>

## **An Examination of Cyberbullying and Strategies for Prevention**

on their intellectual and emotional beings. Concurrently, parents ought to consistently underscore to their offspring the significance of exercising prudence when divulging personal information on social networks, and to abstain from doing so unless a reputable source can be identified.

The younger a child is, the greater the need for parental oversight and regulation of their online activities. Parents can further enhance the information security of their children's devices by implementing security software, information filters, and reporting tools on their children's computers and mobile devices.

### ***Successful academic policies***

It is critical that guidance professionals examine and comprehend their school's policy regarding cyberbullying in order to respond to such behaviors within the framework specified by the policy.

### ***Educating parents and school personnel***

Additionally, school counselors can play a crucial role in facilitating the provision of necessary professional development or training to school staff, parents, and custodians, with the aim of mitigating the prevalence of cyberbullying among students. Adults, including educators and guardians, must fundamentally stay abreast of new technologies in order to comprehend how students conduct online communication and how cyberbullying occurs. School adults offer limited assistance, according to the findings of one study; this may be due to their lack of knowledge and training regarding how to address the issue. By furnishing caretakers with technological and human/relational solutions, school counselors can augment the manner in which they inform and safeguard their children in collaboration with parent/teacher associations and community organizations. This is particularly critical in light of the evidence suggesting the presence of a familial pattern of bullying, in which multiple children from the same family (and occasionally from within the same school) are identified as bullies. One potential approach to mitigating cyberbullying is through the promotion of interpersonal connections that foster trust and facilitate transparent channels of communication.

Additionally, school counselors should encourage parents to monitor their children's online activities and make an effort to comprehend the technologies they employ. Additionally, parents have the ability to oversee their children's online activities by participating in these environments alongside them.

In addition, school counselors have the capacity to facilitate collaboration between educators and youth advocates in order to disseminate information to parents regarding technological remedies that could potentially deter inappropriate conduct or gather evidence of cyberbullying.

### ***Educating students***

An effort should be made to offer student training, which is also referred to as classroom guidance, in conjunction with other educators. This training should address the issue of cyberbullying by incorporating student competencies that assist young people in understanding the legal and personal ramifications of cyberbullying, enhancing their ability to resolve social issues and control their anger, promoting prosocial conduct, and developing greater empathy towards victims. It is imperative that students who become aware of or observe cyberbullying being practiced against others also acquire knowledge regarding their own obligations and the most effective means of providing mutual support.

### ***Adaptive services***

Community mental health workers, school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and those who can provide personal/social counseling services should offer responsive services to both cyberbullies and their targets. This pertains to particular endeavors that are specifically planned to address the immediate needs and concerns of students, including crisis response and individual or small-group counseling.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

As society has become more accustomed to utilizing the internet in their daily lives in the twenty-first century, both the speed and integrity of the internet have become routine. Cyberbullying is a pervasive global issue that is experiencing significant growth on an international scale. Cyberbullying is a significant issue that has detrimental effects on children. The current article presents a current and comprehensive analysis of the matter. This paper puts forth several recommendations to address this phenomenon more effectively. These include increasing awareness, implementing effective academic policies, educating parents and school personnel, and providing adaptive services./.

## An Examination of Cyberbullying and Strategies for Prevention

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