

Cyberbullying on Social Media: Causes, Effects, Prevention and Treatment

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Abstract

This research discusses the phenomenon of cyberbullying on social media which has a significant impact on individual mental health. Cyberbullying is a form of bullying carried out through social media that occurs in the form of sending negative comments, aggressive messages, or spreading negative content on various social media platforms. This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The interview method was conducted on 6 subjects with an age range of 20-25 years. The purpose of this study is to analyse cyberbullying behaviour on social media, causal factors, impacts, prevention and handling of cyberbullying behaviour on social media. The results of this study indicate that cyberbullying behaviour on social media requires full self-awareness from each user and support from the surrounding environment. Positive thinking is a step and strategy that can help social media users to maintain emotional balance and reduce the adverse effects of cyberbullying behaviour on social media.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Social Media, Causes, Effects, Prevention, Treatment

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of cyberbullying on social media engages users in a new culture that can change the mindset and behaviour of individuals (Kang et al., 2023; Kizza, 2024; Oksanen et al., 2020). Behaviour that is carried out in the form of intimidation of others through social media such as slander, humiliation, and threatening someone is called cyberbullying (Arisanty & Wiradharma, 2022; Çakar-Mengü & Mengü, 2023; Rajbhandari & Rana, 2023).

Cyberbullying comes from two words; cyber and bullying (Jain, 2021; Smith et al., 2012). Cyberbullying is defined as online bullying conducted through social media (Akrim & Sulasmi, 2020; Bozyiğit et al., 2021; Forssell, 2020). This bullying can occur through

text messages, e-mail, instant messaging, online games, websites, chat rooms, or social networks (Bochaver & Khlomov, 2014; Rizza & Pereira, 2013; Tłuściak-Deliowska, 2018). Cyberbullying is bullying perpetrated through the internet and digital technology (Martins & Correia, 2020; Tas'adi et al., 2020). Cyberbullying can take many forms, such as defamation, ostracisation, anger, impersonation, deceit and stalking on social media (Adediran, 2021; El Asam & Samara, 2016). The aim is to annoy, threaten, humiliate, insult, socially ostracise or damage the reputation of others (Anyanwu & Egbule, 2025; Spector, 2011). This can trigger individuals towards antisocial behaviour, making it difficult to adjust to the environment.

Individuals who commit cyberbullying due to the urge to conform to group behaviour through social media are identified as a significant factor influencing individual involvement in cyberbullying (Oladimeji & Kyobe, 2021; Piccoli et al., 2020; Song & Oh, 2018). Cyberbullying is considered a serious problem in cyberspace because it is considered more violent than in the real world (Bochaver & Khlomov, 2014; Kintonova et al., 2021). This is due to the fact that social media can be easily accessed by all internet users around the world regardless of space and time for 24 hours, the internet network seems to never stop operating, messages in the form of photos, videos, or writings cannot be easily deleted, so other people may also have saved the message (Fahrimal, 2018; F. A. Putri, 2014; Rastati, 2016).

The impact of cyberbullying on mental health can experience feelings of emotional distress, anxiety, depression to self-harm and decreased self-esteem as a result of bullying that is faced continuously through social media (Bhatnagar & Narayan, 2024; Eyuboglu et al., 2021; Mursaleen et al., 2025). Social media is a tool for communicating, sharing stories, pictures, and videos, as well as sharing personal data or information (Meikle, 2016; Sukrillah et al., 2017). Information in any form can spread quickly, influencing the views, lifestyles and cultures of each individual (Choudhary et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2025). Through the use of social media, individuals can talk and sharpen their thoughts and thoughts about the real world (Awan & Gauntlett, 2013; Firth et al., 2019; Fraser & Dutta, 2010). Social media has a great influence on the lives of every individual. The use of social media has no time and space limitations. Every individual can communicate whenever and wherever they are. Individuals who were originally small can become big with social media, and vice versa. Social media also contributes to supporting cyberbullying, cyberbullying cannot be underestimated, so the numbers continue to increase (Kee et al., 2022; Margolis & Amanbekova, 2023, 2023).

Most social media users are teenagers and adults aged 18-28 years (90%) (Subramanian et al., 2024; Wiciak et al., 2024). Social media users from this age group have increased significantly. This can be seen from the data which states that in some countries such as Romania has high cyberbullying with 37.3% of perpetrators, Greece at 26.8%, Germany 24.3%, Poland 21.5% (Topan et al., 2025; Zavoianu & Pânișoară, 2020). This was also revealed by (Flander et al., 2014) who stated that 25.9% of social media users in Croatia committed cyberbullying and had also been victims of cyberbullying. Patchin and Hinduja (2022) also stated that the majority of social media users in the United States have experienced cyberbullying regardless of gender, race and religion.

The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kemenkominfo) revealed that the number of people using the internet in Indonesia has reached 82 million (Anjarwani et al., 2022; Fahlevi et al., 2019). Yanis' research (2022) also revealed that the results of the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) survey of

5,900 social media users found that 49% of Indonesians experienced cyberbullying, with victims of violence and bullying reaching 22.4% and perpetrators of violence and bullying reaching 25.5% of the total cases (APJII et al., 2014). Furthermore, Khairunnisa and Alfaruqy (2022) stated that 45% of 2,777 Indonesians reported having experienced cyberbullying. In addition, the study found that of the 1,207 people surveyed, the most common types of cyberbullying were through messaging apps (45%) and unauthorised photo or video sharing (41%) (Kibe et al., 2022; Niu et al., 2024). Furthermore, APJII conducted an Internet Penetration and Internet User Behaviour Survey, the results showed that 49% of 5,900 social media users in Indonesia had been victims of cyberbullying, either by ridicule or harassment on social media (Noval, 2024; P. D. L. Putri et al., 2020; Wigati et al., 2020). Based on these cases, researchers are interested in conducting research on cyberbullying behaviour on social media: causes, effects, prevention and treatment.

METHOD

Design

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological design. This design was selected to comprehensively explore the subjective meanings, lived experiences, and perceptions of participants regarding the phenomenon of cyberbullying on social media. Through a phenomenological lens, the research focuses on uncovering the essential structures of participants' direct experiences with indications, symptoms, and psychosocial impacts associated with social media use in relation to cyberbullying behaviors.

Participants

The study involved six participants selected through purposive sampling based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) aged 20–25 years, representing a vulnerable developmental stage; (2) residing in Indonesia; (3) maintaining personal social media accounts with more than 5,000 followers; (4) actively creating and sharing content related to education, daily life, campus/student activities, and culinary topics; and (5) utilizing one or more platforms—including YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and/or Facebook—as primary channels for content dissemination. Participants were chosen for their capacity to provide rich, in-depth insights into their experiences with social media engagement and potential exposure to cyberbullying.

Instruments

The researcher served as the key instrument (key instrument) in data collection. Supporting instruments included: (1) a non-participant observation guide to systematically document online activities, interaction patterns, and potential indicators of cyberbullying within participants' posts and comment sections; (2) a semi-structured in-depth interview protocol designed to explore participants' personal experiences, emotional responses, and coping strategies related to cyberbullying incidents; and (3) a documentation sheet for recording relevant excerpts, screenshots, and interview transcripts. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or online via Zoom Meeting and Google Meet, depending on participant preference and logistical feasibility. Data collected comprised both primary sources (directly from participants through observation, interviews, and documentation) and secondary

sources (peer-reviewed journals and literature on cyberbullying among individuals aged 20–25) (Ajayi, 2017; Prada-Ramallal et al., 2018).

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, comprising three iterative and interconnected stages: (1) Data Reduction: the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and organizing raw data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation to align with the research questions; (2) Data Display: the systematic arrangement of reduced data into descriptive narratives, matrices, or flowcharts to facilitate the identification of patterns, relationships, and emerging themes; and (3) Conclusion Drawing and Verification: the formulation of coherent explanations regarding participants' experiences, contextualized within relevant theoretical frameworks and supported by valid empirical evidence concerning the presence and impact of cyberbullying behaviors on social media (Li et al., 2018; Mezmir, 2020; Paulovich et al., 2025). Trustworthiness of the findings was enhanced through source and methodological triangulation throughout the analysis process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that takes place online, primarily through social media platforms, text messages, forums and online chat rooms. Unlike traditional bullying, which takes place in a physical environment, cyberbullying takes place in the digital world, allows the perpetrator to hide behind a screen or fake identity, and can take place constantly without time and space limits. This makes it more dangerous as victims can feel isolated, unsafe, even in their own homes, which should be a sanctuary.

The impact of cyberbullying can be very serious, especially for teenagers who are in a stage of self-discovery and vulnerable to the opinions of others. Victims of cyberbullying often experience mental disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and decreased self-confidence. Moreover, these psychological effects can be long-lasting and affect the victim's personality development and academic performance.

Factors causing cyberbullying behaviour on social media

Moral Separation

Separation in this case is the inability to regulate the individual self which is the reason for becoming a cyberbully because there is no guilt when violating morals (Chakan & Millenio, 2023; Konishi et al., 2023). This is because the perpetrators consider their actions as a normal thing that happens in society.

Subject One explained, *'Based on my analysis, the cause is because it does not meet expectations, for example, the content is bad, the content is just that'* (Subject. 1 R). Subject One stated that the cause of cyberbullying against him was 'because it does not match the content uploaded on social media' this can be attributed to the concept of moral separation. Based on this, the perpetrator feels entitled to make negative comments or criticise sharply because he assesses content that does not match his expectations or standards. The perpetrator feels this action is acceptable because they consider themselves to be 'correcting' or providing 'feedback' regarding the quality of the content, without considering the impact on the recipient.

'Based on my analysis, the reason is because they just want to comment, maybe

because there is nothing to comment on so they comment, or it could also be because they are excited (in terms of my post) so they comment' (Subject. 2 RGH). The second subject's argument that 'the reason is because they just want to comment, or it could also be because of the excitement in terms of the post', shows that the perpetrator feels an urge or 'excitement' to comment on the content. Based on the subject's argument, the perpetrator may feel a spontaneous urge to express dissatisfaction or comment because the post 'invites' a certain reaction. With this assumption, the perpetrator seems to justify cyberbullying as a legitimate response. Reasons such as 'just want to comment' or because 'greget' make the perpetrator behave as if there is no moral impact.

Internal Motivation

Internal motivation or the reason someone becomes a perpetrator of cyberbullying usually comes from growing inside a person who feels unhappy with the achievements of others, giving rise to an urge to do things that can bring others down (Kumar, 2024; Oktavia et al., 2023).

'The proof is one of them, sis, that they don't like our achievements, especially yesterday there were those who could not accept that I could be chosen as the runner up of the campus ambassador' (Subject. 5 ADF). The fifth subject's argument, which states that the internal motivation of the cyberbullying perpetrator based on envy or dislike of other people's achievements can encourage the perpetrator to attack individuals who are considered superior or get positive attention, in this case as campus ambassadors. Based on this context, the perpetrators feel compelled to commit cyberbullying as a way to channel their negative feelings, such as envy or dissatisfaction with the subject's success. This action allows the perpetrator to express feelings of dissatisfaction with their own circumstances or deflect their inability to accept the achievements of others. By making negative comments or giving demeaning criticism, the perpetrator may feel that they are able to 'compensate' or even 'lower' the subject's position in the eyes of others.

'I think there is a good intention to remind me, maybe in some posts there are mistakes. And well, there must also be bad intentions, for example, he doesn't like me rising up' (Subject. 6 NPS). The sixth subject's argument states that the perpetrator of cyberbullying is driven by feelings of envy or displeasure towards the success and popularity being gained by the subject. Based on this, the perpetrator's internal motivation appears in the form of dissatisfaction or jealousy which encourages them to attack the subject who is getting attention or appreciation. Cyberbullying perpetrators who feel disturbed by the 'rise' of the subject's status may use negative comments as a way to dampen or even bring down the subject's image. By making derogatory comments, the perpetrator seeks to disrupt the subject's success or at least reduce the value of his/her achievements in the public eye.

Conformity

Conformity is an influential aspect of cyberbullying. However, the closest people can be one of the perpetrators. Peers can be a factor in cyberbullying because individuals spend more time and interact with their friends and significant others (Kim et al., 2020; Velensia et al., 2021).

'From what I've heard from people around me, that someone badmouthed me and that person happened to have commented on me on social media, but never mind, they don't understand us either' (Subject. 5 ADF). Based on the fifth subject's argument stating that usually those who send negative comments are mostly from people close to

him using fake accounts, the conformity factor in this case refers to the tendency of some people to engage in negative actions, such as giving bad comments, due to pressure or influence from their social group or immediate environment. Through this situation, those close to the subject may feel compelled to criticise or denigrate the subject and choose to use fake accounts as identity protection. Fake accounts provide the freedom to express opinions without fear of social repercussions or relationship consequences. In this way, perpetrators can follow group patterns or conformity currents without direct risk to their personal reputation or relationships.

'Yes, there are some perpetrators who give negative comments to me are people I know and they are my own friends' (Subject. 6 ARN). Based on this sixth subject's argument, it was found that social conformity plays a significant role as one of the causes of cyberbullying, especially when the perpetrators are known individuals, such as close friends. Some other respondents also admitted that they experienced negative comments from close people, which suggests that social relationship dynamics can influence aggressive behaviour on social media. Pressure to be accepted in the group often encourages individuals to participate in acts of cyberbullying, even though they may not actually agree with the behaviour.

Anonymity

Anonymity can be a very instrumental factor in increasing cyberbullying behaviour because the perpetrator cannot be identified so it is easier to commit cyberbullying without feeling any fear. The existence of anonymity, the perpetrator will consider cyberbullying as an interesting thing because he can be more open in expressing himself (López & López, 2017; Widiasih, 2019).

'I haven't experienced the situation yet, but usually those who send negative comments are some of the closest people and there are also those who usually use fake accounts' (Subject. 5 ADF). The fifth subject's argument regarding the causes of cyberbullying related to anonymity stated that negative comments on social media usually come from two types of users: significant others and fake accounts. The anonymity provided by fake accounts gives perpetrators the freedom to make negative comments without fear of consequences, so they feel more emboldened to attack or criticise others. Anonymity tends to reduce individual responsibility, making it easier for them to commit negative acts, such as mocking or demeaning.

'If I observe these people, they don't have more followers than me, and even most of them use second accounts or fake accounts' (Subject. 2 RGH). The argument from the second subject shows that anonymity and the use of fake accounts are factors that play a role in cyberbullying. Based on the subject's view, the perpetrator often has a smaller number of followers than himself and tends to use fake accounts to make negative comments. Using fake accounts, perpetrators can hide their real identities, thus feeling safer to make negative comments without fear of being recognised or facing social consequences. This supports the view that anonymity in social media often encourages cyberbullying behaviour as perpetrators feel protected from direct social responsibility or judgement.

Social Media Intensity

The intensity of individuals in accessing social media is a factor that affects cyberbullying behaviour, especially when an individual posts a lot of their life on social media. In addition, the intensity of the type of social media that people use can be a trigger for

cyberbullying (Margolis & Amanbekova, 2023; Sobkin & Fedotova, 2021).

'Yes, on TikTok. Because in TikTok, if you upload content, the audience/viewers go up faster, so you are more vulnerable to cyberbullying. It could be because TikTok has more gen Z users' (Subject. 2 RGH). Based on the arguments presented by the second subject, it shows that the intensity of social media use, especially on one social media platform such as TikTok, plays a role in increasing the risk of cyberbullying because many other people access and use it. Being a highly algorithmic platform allows content to go viral faster than other platforms, so users often receive a lot of attention in a short period of time, including in the form of negative comments.

'Several times/repeatedly when I upload content about learning Arabic, there will be comments' (Subject. 4 ARNT). Based on the argument of the fourth subject, it shows that the intensity of social media use, especially with specific content such as Arabic language learning, can increase the risk of cyberbullying. The subject observed that every time the subject uploaded new content related to Arabic, there were always negative comments he received. This repetition of uploading activity creates a greater opportunity for other users to judge and comment on the content, especially since learning themes can attract different types of audiences with different views. In addition, educational content can trigger criticism from those with higher levels of knowledge or different views on the material presented, making it more vulnerable to criticising or patronising comments.

'There were several incidents, when I was an ambassador and an ambassador is required to be able to update on social media, and at that time I had an activity and one of my followers replied and commented on my appearance which did not exemplify a student' (Subject. 5 ADF). The argument expressed by the fifth subject indicates that the intensity of social media use, especially when engaging in activities that require regular content updates, can increase the risk of cyberbullying, as the subject is a campus ambassador who feels required to keep social media updated with certain activities or events. However, these activities elicit negative responses from followers, including criticism regarding her appearance. Active engagement on social media, especially in a public role such as a campus ambassador, often attracts the attention of many people with various backgrounds and perceptions and increases opportunities for audiences to judge, criticise or even personally attack.

Based on the conclusions, the intensity of use of social media platforms such as TikTok increases the likelihood of cyberbullying, especially as they allow content to go viral more quickly and attract a wide audience, which increases the chance of receiving a wide variety of responses, including non-constructive criticism. Individuals who spend a lot of time on social media are more vulnerable to cyberbullying (Peluchette et al., 2015). These factors suggest that cyberbullying is the result of complex psychological and social drivers, coupled with the nature and anonymity of social media that often facilitates such negative behaviours.

Impact of Cyberbullying Behaviour on Social Media Psychological and Emotional

The psychological impact caused by cyberbullying on social media is one of the most worrying aspects. The continuous intimidation, harassment, and humiliation behaviours that occur online can cause tremendous mental distress to the victims. Based on the interviews conducted, it is evident that the psychological impact experienced by the victims is not only temporary, but can also cause prolonged trauma that can interfere with

their emotional and mental well-being. Respondents described their experiences with various psychological manifestations, ranging from anxiety and depression to feelings of helplessness and excessive fear, as expressed by the respondents in the interviews.

'Psychological impact: I experience frustration, down, insecure, stress, and bad mood' (Subject 1. R). Subject One stated that cyberbullying made her feel frustrated and down, which affected her daily performance. These feelings of frustration and down came as a direct response to the verbal attacks received on social media. According to her, the negative comments she received were very disturbing and made her lose her enthusiasm in creating content. This shows how such attacks can directly affect the victim's emotional well-being.

'I was sad, crying too when I read the negative comments, I also felt hurt and until now I still remember the negative comments' (Subject 3. DD). The third subject stated that he felt a significant emotional impact from cyberbullying on social media. The negative comments he received can cause deep feelings of sadness and hurt. However, these emotions are not only temporary but can last for a long time affecting her mental and emotional well-being, because cyberbullying can also leave a heavy psychological imprint, so victims will continue to remember and feel the impact even though time has passed.

'It affects me a lot because yes, sometimes it makes me down because of the comments, stress and a lot of thoughts' (Subject 4. ARNT). The fourth subject stated how negative comments on social media can affect a person emotionally and psychologically. When she receives bad comments or insults (cyberbullying), this can make her feel depressed or 'down'. The impact is often in the form of excessive stress and many negative thoughts that interfere with daily life. Thus, the comments not only affect mood directly, but can also trigger persistent feelings of anxiety and discomfort.

'The psychological impact was that I kept thinking about the negative comments. But after that I thought that if I keep thinking about the negative comments, it will only hurt myself. Don't let these negative comments make me stop doing my hobby as a content creator. As for the physical impact, I don't have any. At the beginning, I was stressed out by negative comments, but the more I get here, the more I tend to be okay with negative comments'. (Subject 6. NPS).

The sixth subject revealed that when she receives negative comments, she often feels trapped in her mind about the comments. This can lead to prolonged anxiety and stress which affects his mental health significantly.

Decreased Self-Confidence

Cyberbullying on social media can have a great impact on one's self-confidence. Negative comments or messages can affect the way a person sees themselves. A decline in self-confidence due to cyberbullying often occurs when individuals begin to doubt their worth and abilities based on criticism and demeaning comments. This can lead to feelings of worthlessness, uncertainty, and difficulty in objectively assessing one's potential. As a result, individuals who experience cyberbullying will feel depressed, reluctant to participate in activities they enjoy, or even avoid social interactions altogether.

'about 85% because sometimes I think about it and it makes me stressed' (Subject 1. R). Subject One revealed that about 85% of the impact of cyberbullying causes a person to feel depressed and stressed. Cyberbullying can cause a significant

decrease in self-confidence as perpetrators often attack personal aspects or one's character on social media. This drop in confidence is often linked to feelings of helplessness and lack of control over the situation, which in turn exacerbates the effects of stress.

'About 95% of those negative comments really affected my confidence and self-esteem' (Subject 3. DD). The third subject also stated almost the same thing as the first subject, that negative comments also have a big influence on self-confidence, especially if he always gets negative comments.

'It really affects because yes, sometimes it makes me down because of these comments, stress and a lot of thoughts' (Subject 4. ARNT). The fourth subject revealed that negative comments received on social media can damage a person's self-confidence. If someone often gets criticism or bad comments, they can feel less valuable or not good enough.

Social Isolation

Cyberbullying on social media can have a profound impact on an individual's social isolation. When individuals are subjected to cyberbullying, they often face painful and degrading experiences. These experiences not only affect their mental health but can also cause them to feel alienated from their environment.

Social isolation often arises as a result of the shame, distrust, or discomfort brought about by the act of online bullying. A person who experiences cyberbullying may begin to avoid social interactions, both online and offline, because they feel unsafe or unwelcome. As a result, they can feel isolated and lonely, worsening their mental state and hindering their ability to build healthy relationships.

'No threats or intimidation for me personally. But if the object of my content is there, they are commented on because of their appearance (clothes or hairstyle (Long-haired) or the way they give responses when I ask questions (there are those whose answers are also going round and round (male) according to 'netizens', or their clothes are too tight (female) so they are commented on, well maybe someone knows so that the person in my content is tagged by his friends and becomes the subject of jokes, finally maybe mentally affected and sad and even crying so they ask to take down)'. (Subject 2. RGH).

The second subject stated that the negative comments were only directed at the other person in the content, as the content created attracted the attention of netizens, and they made negative comments on the appearance or the way the other person answered the questions in the content. For example, comments could touch on physical aspects such as clothing or hairstyle, or even the way of speaking. Often, negative comments or reactions from netizens can involve tagging people nearby who may feel depressed or isolated. This can exacerbate the situation by making a joke out of it, impacting the person's mental health. As a result of these negative comments and cyberbullying, the targeted person may feel socially isolated. They could feel shunned or ignored by their peers or the community, which could eventually lead to them asking for the content to be removed to avoid more pain or sadness.

'For me, sometimes I think too much about the comments, am I the one who is wrong or what, sometimes I get down and suddenly want to stop creating content' (Subject 4. ARNT). The fourth subject stated that when he often thinks of negative

comments or criticism from others, it can affect his mood and confidence. Feeling down or wanting to stop creating content shows the impact of cyberbullying, where individuals feel no longer motivated or even depressed. As a result, they may become increasingly socially isolated by avoiding interactions on social media or no longer engaging in activities that they previously enjoyed.

Physical

Cyberbullying on social media does not only impact mental health, but it can also affect one's physical health. When a person faces emotional distress from online attacks, such as negative comments and bullying, their body can experience significant stress. This stress can lead to a variety of physical health problems, including sleep disturbances, decreased appetite, or even more serious health problems such as headaches and heart problems. These physical impacts show that cyberbullying is not only damaging to emotional well-being, but can also have real and adverse health consequences.

'Physical impact; body tension, shoulders, neck and headaches' (Subject 1. R). Subject One stated that he not only felt the psychological impact, but also felt the physical impact, prolonged stress due to cyberbullying can cause headaches. Tension in the neck and shoulders often triggers a type of tension headache, which is common as a reaction to stress. Stress from cyberbullying can cause muscles in the body to tense up. When a person feels anxious or depressed due to an online attack, the muscles of the body, especially in the neck and back, can tighten in response to emotional stress.

Cyberbullying on social media has a very bad impact on the mental and emotional health of victims (Collantes et al., 2020). As expressed by respondents in this study. Cyberbullying often causes trauma and depression for its victims (Saltz et al., 2020). One respondent admitted to feeling "frustrated, down, insecure, stressed, and bad mood" every time she received negative comments. These emotional impacts of cyberbullying are often not just temporary, but leave long-term trauma that affects the victim's emotional well-being. Other respondents described feelings of deep sadness and hurt, as well as difficulty getting over the negative comments that continued to haunt their minds. In addition, some victims felt a decrease in self-esteem and self-confidence, leading them to avoid social interactions on social media or even in real life. One respondent admitted that cyberbullying made her feel unworthy and reduced her motivation to work. Physically, the impact of cyberbullying is also quite significant, such as experiencing headaches, stomachaches, insomnia, indigestion, and fatigue (Aqillah et al., 2025; Ginting & Sahlepi, 2024). This is evident from the statement of one of the respondents who felt that she had experienced headaches, neck tension, and body tension as a reaction to the ongoing stress. Thus, cyberbullying has a multidimensional impact that affects the psychological, emotional, social, and even physical health of the victim, and can leave a trail of trauma that affects the victim's life in the long term.

Prevention of cyberbullying behaviour on social media.

Increase Self-Awareness

Using social media requires self-awareness. Self-awareness is the key to preventing cyberbullying. Everyone is responsible for their actions. Committing to act responsibly in online interactions is an important step to prevent cyberbullying. Before taking action or saying anything via social media it is important to pause and think about the impact of what you are about to say.

'I consider it a good intention to remind me, maybe in some posts there are mistakes'. (Subject. 6 NPS). 'Based on the comments in the comments column, as I said before, maybe what I understand is different from what people out there understand or learn'. (Subject. 3 DD)

Based on the arguments expressed by the sixth and third subjects, it can be concluded that some of the posts uploaded provide different perspectives, resulting in negative assumptions from followers or readers. When disagreements arise, some people tend to use abusive, insulting, threatening language, and do not even try to understand the other person's point of view.

'Reading and analysing the comments in the comments section of my accounts. Based on my analysis, the reason is because they do not meet expectations, for example, the content is bad, the content is the same' (Subject. 1 R). The argument expressed by the first subject said that he realised the dissatisfaction of his audience, tried to understand the cause and found that poor quality and repetitive content were the main factors. This means that the first subject needs to evaluate the content it produces and endeavour to improve the quality and variety of the content to match the audience's expectations.

'Often, when I upload content about learning Arabic, and what is commented on is a typo in the content or caption on my content, not the mention. Well, it's also human, not free from mistakes and mistakes. I apologise because it was just a typo'. (Subject. 4 ARNT).

This argument explains that subject four often gets comments that focus on typos in the content or captions, not on the content. Subject four acknowledged that the error occurred due to human factors, and apologised for the mistake. This shows a professional attitude, as well as demonstrating that he is focused on the quality of the content and endeavours to continuously learn and improve. When one understands oneself better, one can build empathy, manage emotions healthily, and communicate effectively. This helps them to create a more positive and safe online environment for themselves and others.

External Support

External support can play an important role in preventing cyberbullying. While it cannot completely eliminate it, external support can help reduce the frequency, impact and intensity of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying prevention requires concerted efforts from individuals, families, institutions, and governments. Working together can create a more positive and safe cyberspace for everyone.

'Yes, I have support from the content community and also my husband. When I get this support, I feel calm and feel free, especially the support from my husband. Anyway, if I receive negative comments, sadness or whatever, I vent to my husband and that makes me feel good and excited to do activities and create content again'. (Subject. 1 R).

Based on the first subject's argument, it shows that the first subject has support from the closest people, such as her husband and the content community, which can

provide emotional strength, calmness, and enthusiasm to face challenges, such as negative comments. Having a place to vent, feeling heard, and getting a fighting spirit are key to emotional well-being and productivity in creating content.

'Yes, my family is very supportive, my parents and siblings and also my closest friends. The impact is that I am more enthusiastic and motivated to create the Arabic learning content because my family encourages me. It just feels like a relief'. (Subject 4 ARNT).

Likewise, the fourth subject after he received support from family, parents, siblings, and closest friends he had a big impact on his enthusiasm and motivation in creating Arabic learning content. The fourth subject felt supported and appreciated, which made the fourth subject feel more relieved and motivated to continue working well.

'So I was annoyed one time, because of those people, so I screenshot the comment but didn't reveal the person's identity, and I posted it on my social media story, and then many people replied that I had to be patient and keep my spirits up, which motivated me and made me feel good'. (Subject 5 ADF).

The argument from Subject Five describes how he overcame his annoyance due to negative comments on social media. He chose not to reveal the identity of the commenter, but shared a screenshot of the comment on his social media story. Instead, she sought support from her followers and used their positive responses as motivation to stay focused on her goals. This shows that the fifth subject had a healthy strategy to deal with negative comments and did not let them affect her spirit.

'I only got support from myself. When I get negative comments, I choose not to tell anyone because they usually just listen, so I just keep it to myself' (Subject 6 NPS). Unlike the other subjects, subject six understood that each individual has different ways of coping with negative comments, this argument shows that subject six chose to rely on self-support when facing negative comments. Subject six chose not to share his story with others because he felt that they would only listen without providing concrete solutions, so he preferred to hold his feelings to himself. This is the right strategy according to subject six to maintain her emotional balance. The most important thing is that subject six felt comfortable with the choices he made in dealing with the situation.

Avoiding Negative Content

Social media platforms can make it easier to spread negative content and allow cyberbullies to reach a wider audience. Choosing to avoid negative content is one way to protect oneself and create a more positive online environment. While it is important to avoid negative content, it is also important that we learn to choose positive content and use the reporting features available to help create a better online environment.

'What I do is ignore or delete the messages. because I think it disturbs my mental health' (Subject 1 R). Based on the argument of the first subject, it shows that she chooses not to react to negative comments in a negative way. She chose to ignore or delete the messages, which shows that negative comments can have an adverse effect on her mental health and chose to delete them to maintain emotional balance.

'What I do is I let them comment on my content, and I'm very ignorant of their comments. But what is mostly bullied is the object of my content, even to the point of mental illness, well I as a person who shares must care or be responsible for their mental health because they (the object of my content) ask to take down so I privacy or archive. I don't delete it because it will affect my account algorithm, but it is no longer visible publicly'. (Subject 2 RGH).

Based on the argument of the second subject choosing not to respond to negative comments directly, he realised that his content could impact the mental health of others and took steps to protect them. The second subject chose to privatise or archive content that could potentially harm the object of his content. This shows that he endeavours to protect their privacy and well-being.

While he prefers not to respond to negative comments directly, he has a strategy to protect his content objects and maintain a balance between freedom of expression and social responsibility. *'What I do is close the comment section so that not many people comment on my content'* (subject 3 DD). The third subject chose to close the comment section in order to prevent online debates or conflicts that could interfere with his mental health. *'As I said earlier, I deliberately switch off my social media comment section and reply stories and post less about my personal life'* (Subject 5 ADF). The fifth subject's argument shows that by switching off the comment section, switching off reply stories, and posting less about her personal life, subject five is trying to create distance between herself and her audience on social media. This could be a way to maintain her emotional balance.

Prevention of cyberbullying behaviour on social media requires full self-awareness from each user and support from the surrounding environment. Increasing self-awareness can be an important first step in preventing cyberbullying behaviour. Someone who has good self-awareness will be able to control their thoughts and actions as well as their ability to self-criticise (Silvia & O'Brien, 2004). Realising the impact of their actions, social media users can be more careful in their interactions. One of the respondents in this study said that he started to be more thoughtful in sharing content that might cause negative reactions from other users. Understanding that every post has the potential to trigger diverse responses, avoiding content that could lead to conflict is considered a preventive measure to reduce the risk of cyberbullying.

In addition, external support from close people, such as family and friends, is instrumental in helping victims cope with the stress of cyberbullying. This is a form of social support, where a person gets feedback from others so that he feels loved, valued, and respected. Social support can create a sense of security and provide a place for victims to share their feelings. For example, one respondent felt calm and helped because her husband always supported her when she experienced negative comments on social media. This support encouraged her to continue working even though she sometimes felt annoyed by hurtful comments. Support from loved ones not only provides emotional strength but also builds confidence to face challenges on social media.

Another preventive measure that can be taken is to avoid negative or provocative content on social media that can trigger unhealthy interactions. Negative content can be avoided by making digital literacy an important foundation. Digital literacy refers to a person's ability to find, evaluate, create, and utilise information on digital media wisely and intelligently (Widana, 2020). One respondent chose to delete comments or not respond to negative messages, with the aim of maintaining their mental health. They also

became more selective in choosing the content they posted and avoided sensitive topics or those that could spark debates. This allows victims to reduce their exposure to things that could negatively impact their emotions, while also creating a safer and more supportive online media environment.

Treatment of cyberbullying behaviour on social media.

Positive Thinking

Positive thinking is an important form of coping with cyberbullying behaviour. Although not always easy, positive thinking can help to overcome the negative impact of cyberbullying and maintain mental wellbeing. Positive thinking can help to build a healthy perspective on the situation and realise that cyberbullying does not reflect one's true worth.

'Positive thinking, sharing with the community, and being open/chatting with my husband so that the impact does not worsen my physical and psychological condition'. (Subject 1 R). This first subject's argument shows that the first subject deals with the negative impact of negative comments on social media by combining three main approaches of positive thinking, sharing experiences with the community, and open communication with her husband so that she can maintain her mental health.

'Ignoring, thinking positively and keeping self-control' (Subject 2 RGH). The argument from the second subject shows that he chose to ignore the comments, keep his thoughts positive, and control his emotions. The second subject tried to focus on positive things and did not let the negative comments affect her mood. If one constantly thinks about negative comments, then one will feel worse and worse. Positive thinking helps one focus on the good things in life, thus reducing the negative impact of cyberbullying.

Save Evidence of Cyberbullying

Saving this evidence can be a powerful tool to stop bullying behaviour, protect oneself, and even take legal action if needed. Evidence can help to protect oneself from false accusations or manipulation. If the perpetrator claims that someone is lying or exaggerating the situation, evidence can prove the truth.

'I have deleted it from the comment column, I took a screenshot' (Subject 3 DD). Based on the argument of the third subject, he has deleted the negative comments on his comment column but before that he had taken a screenshot of the comments. This shows that she has an awareness of the importance of saving evidence for possible further actions, such as reporting the incident to the authorities or social media platforms. *'It's in the comments column of my accounts'* (Subject 1 R). Based on the argument of the first subject, he chose to let the negative comment remain in his comment column as evidence.

Block the offender

Blocking the offender will stop them from sending negative messages, comments or content to someone. *'blocking accounts that are troubling'* (Subject 3 DD). Based on the argument of the third subject, he chose to block any accounts that are troubling. Accounts that always send negative comments on every content uploaded on social media.

'In my opinion, if it is still within reasonable limits, it may not have a big impact, but if it has hurt, there must be action, for example by blocking or mute' (Subject 5 ADF). Likewise with the fifth subject, he pointed out that by blocking the perpetrator or mute, he could stop contact with the cyberbully who had a big impact, let alone hurt him.

Cyberbullying on social media has become a serious problem because it has affected many individuals. This is inseparable from the rapid development of social media as a tool for communication and interaction that is easily accessible at any time, thereby increasing the tendency for cyberbullying behaviour to grow (Javed et al., 2025). Unlike bullying in the real world, cyberbullying can occur at any time and repeatedly, as perpetrators can remain anonymous, making them more daring to spread negative messages and comments without spatial or temporal constraints (Wagner, 2019). The impact of cyberbullying behaviour not only affects the mental and emotional health of victims but can also have physical consequences, such as stress and sleep disorders (Sarabadani & Morovati, 2022). Therefore, it is important for individuals experiencing cyberbullying to understand effective coping strategies to reduce negative impacts and protect themselves from repeated threats.

Positive thinking is a step and strategy that can help victims maintain emotional balance and reduce the negative impact of negative comments. Positive thinking can influence a person's life, such as living a happy life, always seeing the positive side of life, reducing stress and depression, and increasing self-esteem (Sahakian, 2024). One respondent stated that positive thinking and talking with their partner helped them cope with the feelings of distress caused by cyberbullying. This positive attitude provides the strength to remain focused on daily activities without allowing negative comments to ruin their mood. If cyberbullying behaviour continues for a long period of time, saving evidence of cyberbullying can be an effective step for victims to take. The provisions that can serve as a legal basis for criminal offences related to cyberbullying are outlined in Articles 310, 311, and 315 of the Criminal Code (KUHP) (Moeljatno, 2021). However, at present, the most appropriate legal basis for criminal acts of cyberbullying is Article 315, which states that "any defamation committed intentionally, whether in the form of verbal or written defamation, directed at a person, whether in public through spoken or written words, or directly to the person themselves through spoken words or actions, or through a letter sent or received by them, is punishable for minor defamation with imprisonment for a maximum of four months and two weeks or a fine of up to three hundred rupiah (Nasional et al., 2015).

Evidence can be used if the victim decides to report the cyberbullying incident to the authorities or social media platforms. Evidence in the form of screenshots or documentation of negative messages will facilitate the handling of the case if the victim needs to prove what happened. Some respondents admitted that they often save evidence of negative messages or comments they receive to protect themselves. Saving this evidence provides a sense of security for victims and provides a strong basis for taking legal action if the situation becomes more serious or if the perpetrator continues their actions.

Deleting and blocking the accounts of cyberbullies is also a common practice and is considered to be quite helpful (Ashktorab & Vitak, 2016). Research by Kwak et al., (2025) also states that blocking cyberbullies is the most preferred method, with a percentage of 46%. Blocking is one of the most effective ways to stop negative interactions by perpetrators on social media platforms and protect victims' private spaces from exposure to harmful comments or messages (Jhaver et al., 2018). Some respondents in this study felt relieved after blocking accounts that frequently posted negative comments. One respondent stated that they did not hesitate to block accounts that were considered disruptive to their peace of mind, as this allowed them to focus on positive content without unwanted distractions or reactions.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that cyberbullying on social media is an increasingly disturbing phenomenon that has a serious impact on the mental, emotional, and social health of its victims. Various forms of cyberbullying, such as insults, harassment, and intimidation, can easily occur on digital platforms due to anonymity and the vast reach of social media. As a result, victims of cyberbullying often experience significant mental stress, including feelings of anxiety, depression, and even long-term trauma that affects their self-confidence and social interactions. This highlights the importance of effective prevention and management measures, such as increasing social media users' awareness to interact more wisely and respect fellow digital platform users. Additionally, cyberbullying behaviour on social media requires full self-awareness from every user, as well as support from the surrounding environment. Adopting a positive mindset can serve as a step and strategy to help victims maintain emotional balance and reduce the negative impact of cyberbullying behaviour on social media.

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