

EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND HANDLE CYBERBULLYING IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

The use of the internet has triggered the rise of cyberbullying among adolescents, leading to severe emotional impacts. This study examines strategies for preventing and handling such threats in schools to protect students from such threats. The research method is a literature review, with data collection through documentation techniques. Data analysis is done through reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The research findings: To prevent cyberbullying, schools can implement awareness programs, integrate digital ethics into the curriculum, and offer teacher training. Open communication between schools, parents, and students is essential for identifying and addressing cyberbullying. Developing social skills, empathy, and conflict resolution also helps students manage online behavior, fostering a safer digital environment. Handling cyberbullying cases requires clear reporting procedures, thorough investigations, and fair sanctions. Schools should provide emotional support to victims and integrate anti-cyberbullying education. Teachers and staff must support victims while enforcing strict measures for perpetrators. Parents play a key role by supervising online activities, providing emotional support, and collaborating with schools to address and prevent cyberbullying effectively. Conclusion: Collaboration among schools, teachers, parents, and students is essential in preventing cyberbullying through emotional support, digital education, and reporting procedures.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Cyberbullying has become a common negative impact experienced by adolescents. Data from 2021 shows that 45.35% of Indonesian students were victims of cyberbullying. In 2022, UNICEF recorded that 45% of Indonesian children experienced it. In Europe, the highest cases occurred in Romania (37.3%), Greece (26.8%), and Poland (21.5%) in the last 12 months (Dewi et al., 2020). According to Gimenez et al. (2015), victims of cyberbullying tend to feel sad and withdraw, while perpetrators who are also victims experience emotional pain and fear

(Nursanti, 2019). Cyberbullying is classified as a criminal offense under the Indonesian Criminal Code, Article 310, paragraphs (1) and (2), as well as the ITE Law, Article 27, paragraph (3), regarding electronic insults and defamation (Imani et al., 2021).

Cyberbullying in schools as a social justice issue is discussed through the roles of advocacy, ethics, psychologists, counselors, evidence-based interventions, risk assessments, as well as policy options and handling practices (Elbedour et al., 2020). Effective prevention programs for cyberbullying are being developed globally, focusing on education, collaboration, interactive content, and understanding school protocols in handling electronic violence (Jeleč et al., 2020). Common causes of cyberbullying include teasing targets and sending mocking messages. Popular solutions include avoiding social media footprints and associating with supportive friends. Perpetrators often fail to realize the consequences (Thumronglaohapun, 2022).

Witnessing cyberbullying is associated with symptoms of depression and social anxiety, with significant moderation effects from bullying in schools, highlighting the importance of support programs to reduce mental health risks (Doumas & Mitgett, 2021). Developing a curriculum to address cyberbullying, strengthen student skills, and establish legal provisions related to its handling reveals limitations in school-based prevention in Vietnam due to a lack of knowledge and experience (Mai et al., 2023). Most strategies currently developed focus on educational aspects, involving schools and families, while other approaches use digital technology to prevent and reduce cyberbullying more comprehensively (Tozzo et al., 2022).

Cyberbullying affects the classroom environment and student health, making prevention programs necessary to improve students' self-confidence, provide assistance, and enforce clear school rules to impose sanctions in cases of cyberbullying (Thinnes, 2019). Cyber-Friendly Schools (CFS) have been shown to reduce involvement in cyber-victimization and bullying, even though teachers only implemented a third of the content. School-based interventions combined with other bullying prevention programs are more effective in reducing cyber-victimization than traditional programs (Cross, 2016). The alarming prevalence of cyberbullying in secondary schools, with multilevel analysis showing the effectiveness of programs in reducing cyberbullying behavior in intervention classes compared to control group classes (Wölfer et al., 2014).

This research explores strategies and policies for preventing and handling cyberbullying in school environments. The background of this research is the increasing use of digital technology among students, which also increases the potential for cyberbullying. The main objectives of this study include identifying risk factors that trigger cyberbullying behavior, evaluating the effectiveness of prevention methods implemented in schools, and formulating policy recommendations to strengthen student protection. The impact of cyberbullying identified in this research includes emotional disturbances such as fear, sadness, and even withdrawal from social environments. The findings of this study indicate that many schools still lack an integrated approach to handling this issue. Teacher training, improving students' digital literacy, and collaboration with parents are needed to create a safe learning environment from cyberbullying threats.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method to examine

strategies for preventing and handling cyberbullying in schools to protect students. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to deeply understand the phenomenon under investigation through existing literature. In this case, the data collected comes from various written sources, such as books, scientific articles, and documentation relevant to the research topic. The data collection process relies on sources that provide credible and comprehensive information regarding school strategies to prevent and address issues that may harm students. Data analysis uses the condensation technique, which requires the researcher to filter and identify the most relevant and essential information from the collected sources. Subsequently, data presentation is done by organizing the findings systematically and clearly to provide a coherent overview of the prevention and handling strategies. The data conclusion is made by formulating the findings in a narrative form that reveals the essence of practical strategies and provides recommendations for policies and further school actions to improve student protection.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Definition of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a form of harassment or intimidation that occurs electronically or through digital media. It involves behavior intended to hurt, degrade, or embarrass others through text messages, emails, social media, or other online platforms. Cyberbullying can include insults, spreading false rumors, threats, or other forms of abuse, all carried out via the internet (Bunga, 2019). Victims of cyberbullying often experience severe emotional, psychological, and social impacts, which can affect their overall well-being. Factors Influencing Cyberbullying: First, Online Anonymity – The presence of anonymity on online platforms allows cyberbullies to hide their identities, increasing the likelihood of aggressive and irresponsible behavior. Second, Lack of Parental Supervision – The lack of supervision by parents or caregivers over children's online activities can provide opportunities for cyberbullies to operate undetected. Third, Lack of Concern and Empathy – A lack of empathy or understanding of the emotional impact of words and actions in the online world can encourage cyberbullying behavior. Fourth, Imitative Behavior – Children and adolescents tend to imitate the behaviors they observe, especially if such behaviors appear to be accepted among peers or on social media (Hidajat et al., 2015). Fifth, Social Differences and Power Dynamics – The existence of social differences, including differences in social status, race, religion, or sexual orientation, can trigger cyberbullying behavior by those who feel stronger or superior (Frensh, 2022). Sixth, Mental and Emotional Disturbances – Both perpetrators and victims of cyberbullying may suffer from mental or emotional disorders that influence their behavior in the online world.

2. Prevention of Cyberbullying

a. Education and Awareness Programs

In efforts to prevent cyberbullying, schools can implement comprehensive education and awareness programs. One effective strategy is to hold awareness campaigns to educate students about the risks and impacts of cyberbullying (Iffah & Nurianti, 2023). The campaign material includes information on recognizing signs of cyberbullying, how to report incidents, and the legal consequences of such behavior.



Additionally, cyberbullying can be integrated into the curriculum, allowing students to understand digital ethics, respect others online, and learn how to resolve conflicts constructively. To strengthen students' understanding, special training programs can be provided to help them recognize, prevent, and address cyberbullying situations (Hanum et al., 2022). It is also essential for teachers to receive training that enables them to identify signs of cyberbullying and respond appropriately, creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. By combining awareness campaigns, curriculum integration, and training for students and teachers, schools can foster a community aware of the risks of cyberbullying and prepared to engage in its prevention and resolution.

Hierarchical logistic regression indicates that after the intervention, students better understood their roles in cyberbullying, and the teacher-based *Relazioni per crescere* (RPC) program increased awareness and coping strategies for addressing cyberbullying in schools (Guarini et al., 2019). Programs such as Surf-Fair can reduce cyberbullying, but the effectiveness conditions remain unclear, as studies in German schools showed no reduction in cyberbullying incidents but improvements in coping strategies. Case Study 2 found no significant effects, highlighting challenges in evaluation (Pieschl et al., 2017). Research findings showed a significant decrease in cybervictimization and cyberaggression and an increase in helping behaviors and perceptions of support from teachers in the intervention group, confirming the effectiveness of the Prev@cib 2.0 program in preventing cyberbullying among adolescents and emphasizing the importance of involving the entire educational community in preventing this issue (Ortega-Barón et al., 2022).

b. Open Communication Patterns

The importance of open communication patterns in preventing cyberbullying cannot be ignored. A welcoming school is crucial in fostering an inclusive and open culture. In such an environment, students feel comfortable reporting cyberbullying incidents to teachers or school staff without fear of retaliation, creating opportunities for them to discuss their experiences. Additionally, the role of parents is also vital. Parents should be encouraged to communicate openly about their online experiences with their children. Building trust and a strong understanding between parents and children can help them support each other and identify signs of cyberbullying (Mutma, 2019). A safe and supportive environment can be created through collaboration between schools, parents, and students, ensuring everyone feels heard and protected in this complex digital world.

c. Skills Development

To address cyberbullying, education needs to focus on developing students' skills. Educational programs should include aspects of social skills and empathy development. Students should be taught how to respect and understand others' feelings, creating a friendlier and more empathetic environment. It is also important to teach positive and constructive conflict resolution skills (Rifauddin & Halida, 2018). By understanding how to handle difficult situations effectively, students can reduce the likelihood of conflicts escalating into cyberbullying. Furthermore, involving students in discussions about the ethical use of technology and social media also plays a crucial role

(Fitria & Efendi, 2022). Students can become responsible technology users by understanding the consequences of their online behavior and creating a safer and more positive online community. Through this skills development, students can build healthy relationships and develop a deeper understanding of digital ethics, helping to create a better virtual world for all.

Schools can create a supportive, safe, and respectful online environment by integrating education and awareness, open communication patterns, and developing social skills in the cyberbullying prevention approach. This protects students from the dangers of cyberbullying and shapes positive behaviors that will benefit their future lives. The concerning prevalence of cyberbullying in secondary schools, however, a multilevel analysis indicates the effectiveness of programs in reducing cyberbullying behaviors in intervention classrooms compared to control group classrooms, suggesting that this program holds promise for preventing cyberbullying in schools (Wölfer et al., 2014). The Cyberbullying Awareness and Education (CBAE) web-based program aims to raise awareness of cyberbullying among adolescents and parents. The study shows that after participating in the program for 5 weeks, there was an increase in awareness and a significant decrease in cyberbullying behaviors, making it a practical approach for prevention (Uludaşdemir & Küçük, 2024).

3. Handling Cyberbullying Cases

a. Reporting and Handling Procedures

When addressing cyberbullying cases, schools need to have clear and accessible reporting procedures for students. Students should be informed about how to report cyberbullying incidents safely and without fear of retaliation. After receiving a report, the school needs to conduct a thorough investigation to understand the context of the case. The handling of the case must be fair and in line with school policies, including imposing strict sanctions on the perpetrators of cyberbullying. This approach ensures that every cyberbullying incident is taken seriously and sends a strong message that such behavior will not be tolerated within the school environment. With transparent procedures and firm case handling, schools can create a safe and supportive environment for all students.

b. Role of Schools and Teachers

In responding to cyberbullying cases, supporting the victims plays a central role. Teachers and school staff are responsible for providing emotional support to the victims of cyberbullying. It is crucial for victims to feel heard and protected by the school, creating a safe and supportive environment for them to recover. Additionally, preventive education is equally important. Schools should regularly train students on digital ethics, cyberbullying, and how to handle and report such cases. Teachers also play a vital role by supporting anti-cyberbullying programs, integrating this material into their curriculum to foster a deep understanding among students (Triwulandari & Jatiningsih, 2023). Strict sanctions in line with the school's policies must be enforced in handling the perpetrators. Additionally, rehabilitative approaches such as counseling or programs that help perpetrators understand the consequences of their actions can also be implemented. Through victim support, comprehensive preventive education, and firm

yet educational handling of perpetrators, schools can create a safe, supportive, and cyberbullying-free environment.

c. Role of Parents

The importance of parental involvement in handling cases of cyberbullying affecting their children cannot be ignored. Parents must actively participate in the process by communicating openly with the school, supporting the measures taken by the school, and working together to find the best solutions for their children. Additionally, monitoring their children's online activities is crucial. Parents must carefully supervise their children's online activities, ensuring they use the internet safely and responsibly. Teaching children about boundaries when using social media and digital devices is also essential to this approach. In addition to supervision, emotional support from parents is necessary, especially for children who are victims of cyberbullying. Building trust by listening to and understanding their children's experiences can help them feel safer and more supported in dealing with difficult situations. Through proactive involvement, wise supervision, and constant emotional support, parents can play a crucial role in helping their children cope with and overcome cyberbullying.

D. CONCLUSION

In addressing the challenges of cyberbullying, collaboration among schools, teachers, parents, and students is essential for both prevention and intervention. Establishing clear reporting procedures and a fair case-handling process within schools helps create a safe environment where students can report incidents without fear of retaliation. Schools can implement education and awareness programs, including awareness campaigns, curriculum integration, and teacher training, to equip students and staff with the skills to recognize, prevent, and address cyberbullying effectively. Open communication between schools, students, and parents fosters trust and encourages a supportive environment. Additionally, skills development programs focusing on empathy, respect, and conflict resolution are crucial in preventing cyberbullying. Programs like CBAE have effectively reduced cyberbullying behaviors and promoted responsible online conduct.

Handling cyberbullying cases requires transparent reporting procedures, thorough investigations, and the application of fair sanctions. Teachers play a pivotal role in offering emotional support to victims and incorporating lessons on digital ethics and cyberbullying prevention into their curriculum. Parents, too, are vital in monitoring their children's online activities, teaching responsible internet use, and providing emotional support. Through active collaboration between schools and parents, along with robust victim support systems and strict sanctions for perpetrators, a safe and supportive environment can be created, effectively addressing and preventing cyberbullying.

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