



Cyberbullying as an Emergent Phenomenon of Violence in the Digital Environment

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Abstract:

Cyberbullying, also known as online violent behavior, is a repetitive verbal or physical attack over a period of time. It is a behavior that gives the perpetrator a sense of power by harming the victim in different ways. Cyberbullying seeks to threaten or provoke the targeted individuals, tarnish their reputation, spread falsehoods about someone, or share embarrassing through digital technologies such as social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms, and mobile phones. Cyberbullying takes various forms, including disseminating lies, sharing compromising photos on social media, sending hurtful messages or threats, impersonating someone, and sending messages or publishing content on behalf of another person.

Cyberbullying is a serious electronic crime that can have negative psychological and emotional impacts on the victim.

Keywords: Electronic crime, digital space, physical and psychological harm, social media.

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**Introduction:**

With technological advancement, bullying¹ extended to the internet through electronic communication channels. However, the continuous proliferation of social media platforms and their intensive use by students for connecting with friends and other purposes has made the concept of digital bullying or cyberbullying prevalent and intense. It has gone beyond schools and teenagers, reaching other vulnerable groups due to the use of the internet to inflict harm on others, even indirectly.

Cyberbullying² is one of the most serious forms of bullying and is regarded as a manifestation of hate speech³, which has increasingly extended in recent years. It is an aggressive behavior rooted in violence, often perpetrated by anonymous individuals. Besides, the internet permits inflicting harm and mistreatment on others under false identities and misleading personal information, making it difficult for victims to identify the perpetrators. Moreover, the ease of spreading materials against the victim contributes to its rapid and widespread dissemination.

Digital bullying involves employing technology and social media to harass, intimidate, or humiliate individuals or groups by disseminating harmful content about them. This includes sharing and exchanging personal information and images of a person, exposing them to harm, humiliation, and embarrassment, using digital devices such as mobile phones and computers, applications and social media platforms. This type of behavior causes considerable psychological damage, particularly regarding its rapid and pervasive nature, and creates difficulties for victims to escape its impact.

Notably, this type of bullying can be harmful due to the ease of spreading rumors and the inability to mitigate the damage once it is published on the internet. This is compounded by the absence of central authority on the internet, allowing the bully to remain anonymous regarding the victim or those responsible. The bully may also use the internet to assert dominance over others.

Cyberbullying is a complex issue with emotional, behavioral, social, and academic consequences, posing dangers and harm to both the bully and the victim. This includes bullying behaviors using phones or social media platforms such as Facebook.

Olweus refers to bullying as an ancient and well-known phenomenon, and despite many researchers observing this phenomenon, they only conducted field studies on bullying behavior in the 1970s. Their focus was primarily on some schools in the Scandinavian countries. In the

¹ The first person to mention the term "bullying" in schools was the Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus in 1978. He studied the problems faced by bullies and their victims, focusing his research on Scandinavian schools. Since then, bullying has become an important subject of interest. For more information, refer to: Musaad Abu Al-Diyar, "Psychology of Bullying: Between Theory and Treatment," 2nd edition, Kuwait National Library, Kuwait, 2012, p. 19.

² There are various terms used to refer to cyberbullying, including electronic intimidation, extortion, cyber-harm, digital harassment, online harassment, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, and electronic bullying. For more information on this matter, please refer to: Amr Abdelhamid, "Cyberbullying: A Danger Facing Our Children," Step Magazine, Issue 35, Arab Council for Childhood and Development, Egypt, 2019, p. 24.

³ The constitutional amendment for the year 2020, issued by Presidential Decree 20-442 dated December 30, 2020, published in the Official Gazette number 82 issued on December 30, 2020; the Algerian legislator attended to combat discrimination and hatred in accordance with Article 54/10 thereof.



early 1980s, studies on bullying among schoolchildren started to attract more attention from other countries, including the United States.¹

Moreover, there is no dedicated policy for protection against bullying; however, existing laws provide some protection. Civil rights and anti-discrimination laws should be in place to safeguard society and also protect specific groups of individuals who have experienced harassment and discrimination. Bullying can be based on gender, race, or sexual orientation, thus, countries must have strategies, including laws and policies, to address cyberbullying, which has become widespread and surpassed the effects of traditional bullying.

Hence, the following question is raised: **What does cyberbullying entail? To what extent have criminal legislations been able to monitor, protect, and confront this phenomenon and overcome it?**

The study is divided into two chapters to delve into the study's topic and answer the raised problem statement. In the **first chapter**, we discuss the conceptual framework of cyberbullying, and in the **second chapter**, we present the provisions related to cyberbullying.

Chapter One: Conceptual Framework of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is related to the virtual reality, and escaping from it. Overcoming its consequences is challenging for the victim, especially when it involves posting offensive photos or comments. This issue is further exacerbated when such messages are published to a broad and large audience in the context of electronic bullying. Deleting these posts is complex, as the victim lacks the opportunity to defend himself, unable to block these publications from view as they may be shared rapidly and immediately.

Therefore, our focus in this chapter will be limited to defining cyberbullying (**Section One**), then delve into its characteristics and elements (**Section Two**), and finally identify the methods of cyberbullying (**Section Three**).

First Section: Definition of Cyberbullying

Electronic bullying is a form of aggression that uses social media² to harm another person through repeated hostile actions. While bullying is not a new phenomenon, cyberbullying has emerged as the latest manifestation of this behavior.

In this context, we will address the terminological, jurisprudential, and legal definitions of cyberbullying, respectively.

First Sub Section: Terminological Definition of Cyberbullying

Several terms, including online bullying and cyberbullying, refer to cyberbullying³. It denotes intentional hostile behavior directed against another person through communication

¹ Musaad Abu Al-Diyar, previous reference, p. 17.

² Social media is defined as: "Electronic websites that provide internet applications and services to their users, allowing them to create personal pages that are displayed to the public within a specific website or system. They provide information exchange services and allow users to easily participate and contribute to the creation or addition of pages." See Khalid Ghasan Youssef Al-Muqaddadi, *The Social Networks Revolution*, Dar Al-Nafaes, Amman, Jordan, 2013, p.24.

³ In English, "bullying" is used to describe the act of tormenting or intimidating someone. While there is no direct equivalent term in Arabic, there is a consensus on the definition of bullying. It can be physical, verbal, or emotional, and it is directed against another person. Reference: Musaad Abu Al-Diyar, previously cited reference, p.29.



channels to cause harm. It is a unique phenomenon in the 21st century that signifies using electronic space to convey aggressive messages to another person.

The term "bullying" linguistically derives from the word (namir), meaning anger and ill temperament, resembling an angry tiger. *Bullying* is defined as a form of deliberate harm and harassment inflicted by an individual or a group on someone through the frequent use of verbal insults or causing physical, psychological, and social harm by exploiting their power and authority, taking advantage of the victim's vulnerability and their inability to stop them.¹

It is worth mentioning that in legal dictionaries, *cyberbullying* is defined as actions that employ information and communication technologies to support intentional, repetitive, and aggressive behavior by an individual or a group aiming to harm another person or others, using communication technologies to harm others intentionally, including internet services, mobile technologies such as web pages and discussion groups, and instant messaging or short text messages to cause harm to another person.²

***In psychology**, *bullying* is defined as one of the forms of aggressive behavior in which an individual intentionally and repeatedly causes discomfort to another person, whether through physical or verbal means, using words or other actions, while the person being bullied is unable to defend themselves.

From another perspective, **the Department of Education in the state of Victoria, Australia**, defines cyberbullying as: "Violence that occurs through the use of modern technology: the internet and smartphones, usually associated with traditional Violence which may involve in spreading rumors or inappropriate words about the victim, sending text messages containing offensive language, publishing private information about the victim, creating an internet page that defames the victim, or socially isolating him on social media."³

***In sociology**, it is defined as causing harm to someone verbally, physically, or mentally.⁴

It is also defined as: "Deliberate aggressive acts by an individual or a group of individuals, using electronic communication methods repeatedly against a victim who cannot defend himself."

- Or it is: "Any behavior carried out through the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to use modern communication tools and information technology, along with their various applications, aiming at deliberate and repeated harm to an individual or a group of individuals."⁵

¹ Lamia Tala, "Cyberbullying: A Psychosociological Impact Analysis," Journal of Media and Society, Volume 05, Issue 02, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Hama Lakhder University, El Oued, Algeria, December 2021, p. 573.

² Diaa Muslim Abdul Amir Ghaibi, "Legal Protection against Cyberbullying during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Comparative Analytical Study," Journal of Kufa for Legal and Political Sciences, Volume 13, Issue 47, Part 02, College of Law, University of Kufa, Iraq, December 2020, p. 97.

³ Mahmoud Omar Ahmed Eid, "The Reality of Cyberbullying on Social Networking Sites among University Students: A Case Study of Fayoum University," Educational Journal, Issue 65, Faculty of Education, Sohag University, Egypt, September 2019, pp. 573-574.

⁴ Karim Ahlihil, "Digital Crimes in the Modern Age - Cyberbullying as a Model," Al-Bahith Journal for Legal and Judicial Studies, Issue 51, Al-Rashad Library, Settati, Morocco, February 2023, p. 69.

⁵ Mahmoud Kamil Mohamed Kamil, "Cyberbullying and Self-Esteem among a Sample of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Teenage Students," Master's thesis in Education, Faculty of Education - Department of Psychological Health, Tanta University, Egypt, 2018, p. 22.



- It is also: "Deliberate and repetitive harm that occurs through the use of computers, mobile phones, and other electronic devices."¹

- In the same context, the Saudi Visual and Audible Media Authority sees it as: "A term used when both parties or at least one of them is a child or a teenager, through the use of technology and visual media, involving intimidation, practicing threats, using offensive and demeaning phrases, and inciting hatred or mockery."²

Second Sub Section: Legal Definition of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined as: "Inflicting harm on an individual physically, psychologically, emotionally, or verbally. It also includes threatening physical harm with weapons, extortion, violating civil rights, assault, beating, involvement in gangs, attempted murder, or threats."³

Or it is causing physical, psychological, or emotional harm, harassment, embarrassment, or mockery by a bully to a victim who is weaker or younger, for any reason, and repeatedly⁴.

- Dehaan believes that bullying⁵ includes mocking and stealing money from the victim and mistreatment of students by their peers inside the classroom. He thinks that bullying may share some characteristics with aggressive behavior.

- Barash added that bullying is an attack directed at another person, whether it is verbal or material aggression.⁶

- Banks Ron defined *bullying* as: "Harassment and intimidation by a bully, aimed at creating a psychological atmosphere for the victim characterized by excitement, mockery, threats, beating, and theft, carried out by one or more parties against one or more victims."⁷

- Huebner also adds that bullying is a way to control the other person, involving continuous physical or verbal harassment between two individuals differing in strength, where the stronger person uses physical, psychological, emotional, and verbal techniques to humiliate, embarrass, and subjugate someone⁸.

- **Tokionaga** describes cyberbullying as a behavior carried out through the internet, electronic media, or digital means by an individual or group. It involves repeated communication

¹ Wafaa Mohamed, "Cyberbullying among Pre-University Students Addicted to Social Networking Sites: A Field Study in Sohag City," *Journal of Human and Social Sciences*, Volume 09, Issue 03, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mohamed Khider University, Biskra, Algeria, July 2020, p. 363.

² Amr Abdelhamid, previously cited reference, p. 27.

³ Ali Moussa Al-Sabheen, Mohammed Farhan Al-Qudah, "Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents," 1st edition, Center for Studies and Research, Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, Riyadh, 2013, p. 08.

⁴ Wafaa Mohammad, previous reference, p. 363.

⁵ The first person to coin the term "cyberbullying" is Bill Belsey, a Canadian teacher and anti-bullying activist. He defined it as "the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, intended to harm others." For more details, please refer to: Hanane Asadkhawaj, "School Bullying and its Relationship with Social Skills among Primary School Students in Jeddah City," *Journal of Educational and Psychological Sciences*, Volume 13, Issue 04, University of Bahrain, Bahrain, December 2012, p. 190.

⁶ Musaad Abu Al-Diyar, previous reference, p. 31.

⁷ Adnan Jalab Manijal Al-Jayashi, "The Impact of Bullying on News Work in Iraqi Media Institutions: A Field Survey Study," *Journal of Adab Al-Kufa*, Volume 01, Issue 40, College of Arts, University of Kufa, Iraq, 2019, p. 698.

⁸ Musaad Abu Al-Diyar, previous reference, p. 33



containing hostile or aggressive messages aimed at causing harm to others. The identity of the bully may be unknown or known to the victim¹.

- *Cyberbullying* is also defined as repetitive behavior intending to harm another person physically, verbally, socially, or sexually by one or multiple individuals. It seeks to control and humiliate the victim, gaining illegitimate benefits through social media. The severity of cyberbullying is measured using the Cyberbullying Scale employed in the current study².

These definitions highlight the elements of intentional harm and repetition. The recurring nature is evident in the bully uploading and disseminating content intended to harm the victim, followed by resharing.

The distinction between cyberbullying and other forms of bullying lies in the tools employed, with cyberbullying relying on information and communication technology for bullying actions. Additionally, the intent of the cyberbully is directed at causing harm to a specific individual in various aspects.³

Third Sub Section: Legal Definition of Cyberbullying

It is worth noting that the legal formulation of the issue of bullying is attributed to two individuals starting in 2001: the American lawyer Nancy Willard and the Canadian schoolteacher Bill Belsey, who created the first website, cyberbullying.org, in 2008 dedicated to cyberbullying.⁴

Based on this, we will refer to the definition of cyberbullying within the framework of international organizations and its definition in comparative and national legislation.

First - Definition of Cyberbullying within the Framework of International Organizations:

- **The World Health Organization** defined *bullying* as: "A multifaceted form of mistreatment characterized by repeated exposure to physical or symbolic harm, including harassment, ridicule, mockery, threats, harassment, humiliation, coercion, social exclusion, and rumors."

- **UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund**, defined *bullying* as: "A recurring pattern of behavior, not an isolated incident, usually initiated by children who perceive themselves in a higher social position, or in a position of power such as larger or physically stronger children, or those perceived to be popular among their peers⁵."

Second - Definition of Cyberbullying in Legislation:

Eventhough UAE legislation does not explicitly address electronic bullying, it comprehensively deals with it in various laws, such as the Child Rights Law of 2016, Federal

¹ Houria Charki, Ahmed Daoudi, "Strategies to Confront Cyberbullying in the School Environment: A Study of the Opinions of Teachers and Educational Supervisors," *Rawafid Journal*, Volume 07, Issue 01, University Center Belhadj Bouchaib, Ain Temouchent, Algeria, April 2023, p. 614.

² Amal Youssef Abdullah Al-Ammar, "Attitudes towards Emerging Patterns of Cyberbullying and Its Relationship with Internet Addiction in Light of Some Demographic Variables among Applied Education Students in Kuwait," *Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, Issue 18, Part 02, Faculty of Arts, Sciences, and Education for Girls, Ain Shams University, Egypt, 2017, p. 336.

³ Khaled ben Haif Khalaf Al-Raqas, "Cyberbullying and its Relationship to the Propensity for Extremism among a Sample of University Students," *Arab Journal for Scientific Publishing*, Issue 29, Volume 02, Research and Development Center for Human Resources, Rama, Jordan, 2021, p. 451.

⁴ Daa Muslim Abdul Amir Ghaybi, previous reference, p. 97.

⁵ Turki Al-Shalaqi, "The Phenomenon of School Bullying from the Perspective of Teachers: A Study in Public Education Schools in Hail City," *Academic Journal for Research and Scientific Publishing*, Issue 12, College of Sciences and Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia, 05/04/2020, p. 19.



Decree No. 34 of 2021 on Combating Rumors and Cyber Crimes, and Law No. 51 of 2006 on Combating Human Trafficking Crimes. These laws contain provisions specifying the protection of children from the internet and stipulating deterrent penalties for digital bullying and the sexual exploitation of children.¹

- **The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) in the United States** defines cyberbullying as: "The use of the internet, mobile phones, or other devices to send or post text or images with the intent to harm or embarrass another person."²

- In this context, the Algerian legislator did not explicitly refer to cyberbullying, considering it more of a social phenomenon than a legal one. Instead, the terms "discrimination crime" and "hate speech" were adopted to express the offense of cyberbullying implicitly within its various forms.

- It is worth noting that Belgian legislator defined *moral harassment* under Article 442 of the Belgian Penal Code as: "**Any arbitrary and repeated behavior manifested in all gestures, writings, harassment, and intimidation that aims to undermine human dignity, endanger physical or mental safety, or cause harm... punishable by imprisonment for a period not less than one year and a fine determined by the judge**".³

- Meanwhile, the Italian legislator defined *bullying* under Article 01 of the Italian Anti-Cyberbullying Law against Minors, known as Law 71 of May 29, 2017, as: "**Any form of continuous aggression, pressure, harassment, extortion, insult, defamation, identity theft, alteration or manipulation of electronic data, and the dissemination of deviant content that contradicts the respect for human dignity and its guarantees, or diminishes its value or mocks it**".⁴

We also find that the Egyptian legislator defined bullying in Law 2020-189 under Article 309 bis⁵ as: "**Any act of bullying includes every statement, display of power, or dominance by the offender, or exploitation of the victim's weakness... or to a situation the offender believes is harmful to the victim, such as spying, race, religion, physical characteristics, health, mental condition, or social status, with the intention of intimidating, ridiculing, degrading, or excluding the victim from their social environment**".⁶

The French legislator has enacted a law to combat online hate speech and address bullying behaviors both procedurally and substantively, posing a direct threat and harm to French society⁷.

In this context, *cyberbullying* is procedurally defined as: "Repeated and intentional behavior preceded by a negative intent from a cyberbully or a group of individuals, aimed at causing harm, threat, embarrassment, or humiliation to another individual or others, directly or indirectly. It occurs using computers, mobile phones, or other electronic communication means.

¹ Adnan Jalab Manijal Al-Jayashi, previous reference, p. 699.

² Khaled bin Haif Khalaf Al-Raqas, previous reference, p. 450.

³ Ahmed Abdullah Al-Tayyar, "The Crime of Bullying in Egyptian and Comparative Legislation: France, Germany, Italy, and England," *Journal of the Faculty of Law for Legal and Economic Research*, Issue 01, Faculty of Law, Alexandria University, Egypt, 2020, p. 1508.

⁴ Ahmed Abdullah Al-Tayyar, previous reference, pp. 1510-1511.

⁵ Law No. 189 of 2020, amending certain provisions of the Penal Code issued by Law No. 58 of 1937, Official Gazette No. 36 (bis), issued on September 5, 2020.

⁶ Karim Ahlihal, previous reference, p. 72.

⁷ Law No. 2020-766 of June 24, 2020, aiming to combat hate speech on the internet, Official Journal of the French Republic (JORF) No. 156 of June 25, 2020.



It is measured by the degree to which an individual (bully) scores on the cyberbullying scale, as used in the current study, based on the total responses to the scale's items¹."

It is important to note that bullying is divided into four basic types of abuse: **emotional-relational, verbal, physical, and electronic abuse**. Physical bullying involves hostile physical actions such as hitting and pushing, and relational bullying involves social exclusion, spreading rumors, and aims to make others outcasts. In contrast, verbal bullying is characterized by verbal assaults like insults and verbal harassment. Cyberbullying, also known as peer aggression, involves using technology such as text messages, emails, and social media to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target someone².

Based on the above, bullying relies on three criminal elements which must be met for criminal liability to be established. It distinguishes itself from ordinary criminal acts and does not have a clear interpretation or produce its effects if one of them is lacking. These elements are intentional intent, repetition, power imbalance, and variation between the perpetrator and the victim.³

Bullying differs from aggressive behavior in two aspects: the imbalance of power between the bully and the victim and repetition. It is difficult for the victim to defend himself due to physical or psychological weakness or the prevalence of multiple bullies⁴.

There are differences between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, including:

- Cyberbullying occurs indirectly, relying on technological expertise, while traditional bullying happens directly.
- The audience for cyberbullying is more significant compared to traditional bullying, which usually involves a smaller number of people driven by a desire to display power.⁵
- Cyberbullying allows perpetrators to harass victims at any time, reducing accountability compared to face-to-face bullying. The electronic means used in cyberbullying also enable the bully to target and harass the victim more easily.⁶
- Cyberbullying does not involve face-to-face confrontation, providing the bully with a greater chance to remain anonymous compared to traditional bullying. The lack of confrontation also makes it easier for the perpetrator to hide their identity on the internet.
- Cyberbullying is not limited to a specific individual or group organizing deviant behavior. The anonymity provided by electronic means allows the bully to reach the

¹ Mahmoud Kamil Mohamed Kamil, previous reference, p. 23.

² Marwa Salah El-Din Abdullah, "The Theory of Cyberbullying: An Empirical Test of its Social Hypotheses," *Ain Shams Humanities Annals*, Volume 51, Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, Egypt, March 2023, pp. 285-286.

³ Ahmed Abdullah Al-Tayyar, previous reference, p. 1543.

⁴ Kareman Mohammed Ibrahim Zuhair, "Social Skills as a Mediator of the Relationship between Self-Esteem and Bullying among Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder," Master's thesis in Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Menoufia University, Egypt, 2018, p. 32.

⁵ Julia Saleh Khataybeh, Ola Abdul Kareem Al-Huwayan, "Family Disintegration and its Relationship to Cyberbullying among Adolescent Students in Private Schools in Amman City," *Journal of Islamic University for Educational and Psychological Studies*, Volume 29, Issue 01, Islamic University, Gaza, Palestine, 2021, p. 786.

⁶ Farida Mohamed Karim, "Cyberbullying among Adolescents: A Case Study of Algeria," *Journal of Special Education and Rehabilitation*, Volume 11, Issue 39, Part 02, Special Education and Rehabilitation Institute, Egypt, November 2020, p. 34.



victim through various channels, extending beyond the school environment and overcoming time and place limitations.¹

- The motivations behind traditional and cyberbullying differ, with traditional bullying often motivated by a desire to display power, while cyberbullying may result from an inability to assert power in person.
- The number of viewers is higher in cyberbullying compared to traditional bullying².

Second Section: Characteristics of Cyberbullying and its Elements

Cyberbullying is considered bullying that uses digital means, meaning the exploitation of technologies and online platforms to create targeted behavior towards an individual, causing repeated and intentional psychological, social, or even physical harm³. Based on this, we will discuss the characteristics of cyberbullying, followed by its elements.

First Sub Section: Cyberbullying Characteristics:

With technological advancements, electronic bullying, which occurs through the internet, social media, and mobile phones, has emerged. It involves harassment by the cyberbully to terrorize the victim and subject him to psychological pressure. The cyberbully may choose to reveal or conceal his identity. Cyberbullying is characterized by the following features:

- The absence of physical contact with the possibility of maintaining anonymity makes cyberbullies more aggressive in their language, as they do not see the consequences of their actions and feel that using anonymous names in communication tools makes them less likely to be pursued by the victims.
- With the evolution of modern communication technology, cyberbullying follows the individual and persists with them, not limited to a specific location.
- Videos, messages, and images used by cyberbullies can remain visible for an indefinite period and are accessible to everyone.⁴
- Cyberbullying relies on a certain level of technological expertise, requiring skills and proficiency to send emails and text messages, disguise identity to avoid attacks, pretend to be someone else, tarnish the victim's reputation, and disseminate information online.
- The cyberbully can remain unknown and engage in bullying with a large number of peers with minimal effort, anytime and anywhere during the day. Through cyberbullying, the perpetrator can reach a wider audience online than in the physical community⁵.

The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) in the United States emphasized in a report that cyberbullying is significantly more vicious than traditional bullying. It increases against females by 63%, surpassing the rate for males at 34%. The report highlighted aspects in which cyberbullying differs, underscoring its severity⁶.

¹ Thanaa Hachem Mohamed, "The Reality of Cyberbullying among Secondary School Students in Fayoum Governorate and Ways to Confront it: A Field Study," *Journal of Fayoum University for Educational and Psychological Sciences*, Issue 12, Part 02, Faculty of Education, Fayoum University, Egypt, 2019, pp. 199-200.

² Mahmoud Omar Ahmed Eid, previous reference, p. 577.

³ Houria Charki, Ahmed Daoudi, previous reference, p. 614.

⁴ Yamina Medouri, "Cyberbullying: A Conceptual Approach," *Journal of Integration in Social and Sports Sciences Research*, Volume 05, Issue 02, Institute of Physical and Sports Activities Sciences and Technologies, Amar Telidji University, Lghouat, Algeria, December 2021, p. 137.

⁵ Thanaa Hashem Mohamed, previous reference, pp. 198-199.

⁶ Ahmed Abdullah Al-Tayyar, previous reference, pp. 1537-1538.



In this context, cyberbullying involves the use of modern technology to engage in one or more of the following:

- Spreading rumors about someone.
- Sharing private information about someone.
- Socially isolating someone.
- Humiliating or ridiculing someone.
- This type of bullying is characterized by its elusive nature and rapid spread compared to traditional forms of violence.¹

Second Sub Section: Elements of Cyberbullying Process

The internet is a powerful tool that can be used to connect like-minded individuals and communities intellectually. However, it is often used as a platform for defamation, harassment, and mistreatment within people's homes. Some studies indicate that up to 7 out of 10 young people experience mistreatment online². It is essential to note that the cyberbullying process consists of **three elements**:

Firstly, Perpetrators (Cyberbullies):

Smith defines *cyberbullies* as students who engage in repeated actions against victims unable to defend themselves. This behavior can have severe negative consequences, especially for the victims over time.³

Cyberbullies often struggle with social and family relationships, particularly with their parents. They exhibit problems in peer relationships, such as a desire for control, impulsive aggressiveness, difficulty managing anger, lack of empathy and emotional understanding, moral conscience absence, rebellion against authority figures, a sense of psychological loneliness at home and school, and a perceived self-competence in using communication technologies and the internet.⁴

Electronic bullies tend to conceal their identities, using the digital space to hide behind various social media accounts. This anonymity allows them to engage in cyberbullying without facing legal consequences or liability⁵.

Bullies exhibit external behaviors such as disruptive conduct, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder, antisocial behavior, inability to manage anger, difficulty controlling motives and emotions, decreased social skills, difficulty understanding others, lack of social and emotional harmony, depression, anxiety, and anger⁶.

Olweus highlighted in his research that bullies are characterized by a strong desire for dominance over others, a tendency toward violence, quick expression of internal feelings, disruptions in the system, and empathy. Some may engage in harmful and socially unacceptable

¹ Boussada Meriem, Dahmani Fatima Zahra, "The Reality of Cyberbullying among Middle School Students: A Field Study on Third-Year Middle School Students at Sari Mustafa Middle School - Tlemcen Province," *Journal of Rawaafid for Scientific Studies and Research in Social and Human Sciences*, Volume 07 (Special Issue), University Center Belhadj Bouchaib, Ain Temouchent, Algeria, April 2023, p. 538.

² Adnan Jalab Manijal Al-Jayashi, previous reference, p. 698.

³ Yamina Medouri, "Cyberbullying: A Conceptual Approach," previous reference, p. 133.

⁴ Mahmoud Kamil Mohamed Kamil, previous reference, p. 33.

⁵ Khaled Benn Haif Khalaf Al-Raqas, previous reference, p. 451.

⁶ Kareman Mohammed Ibrahim Zuhair, previous reference, p. 35.



behavioral experiments, such as theft, looting, alcohol consumption, smoking, school dropout, and carrying weapons.¹

Dr. Jamal Frewiz suggests that a bully is someone who feels internal pain, lacks a sense of comfort, suffers from emotional neglect from family or surroundings, and experiences a void in time. He resorts to bullying as a form of illusory self-affirmation to feel confident, assert control, and express his opinions.²

In this regard, a UNESCO report for the year 2019 mentions the characteristics of those involved in bullying as follows:

- Children who differ in any way are more susceptible to peer victimization. Additionally, children who are more vulnerable face a higher risk of being bullied.
- Victims of bullying are often from marginalized neighborhoods, impoverished families, those with different identities, individuals with disabilities, immigrants, or refugees.
- External appearance is the most common cause of this phenomenon, and physical harassment is more prevalent among boys, while girls are more susceptible to psychological harassment.³

Secondly, Victims:

The victim is the party subjected to bullying, defined by Rigby as a student who is repeatedly harassed or insulted verbally by another more powerful student.⁴

In this regard, Olweus indicates that the lack of security in the victims' situation is a critical factor in the continuation of their exposure to bullying due to fear and intimidation. Victims of bullying also suffer from attention deficit and lack of focus.⁵

Maynard suggests that victims, stereotypically, are children who can be physically, mentally, and emotionally overcome by the bully. They are usually more anxious and less confident than other students. These children often take a negative stance towards the use of violence in dealing with others, suffer from low self-esteem, view themselves negatively, and consider themselves failures, unintelligent, and unattractive, making them vulnerable to bullying.⁶

In reality, bullying has negative effects on the victim, especially if he is a child. He may experience various problems such as fear, social isolation, anxiety, low self-esteem, school absenteeism, and academic decline.⁷

Modern studies have confirmed that cyberbullying experienced by teenagers through social media is more serious than traditional bullying. The threat and fear felt by individuals due to cyberbullying do not end by leaving a particular place or isolating themselves from others; instead, the individual remains vigilant at any time and place.⁸

Thirdly, Bystanders:

¹ Musaad Abu Al-Diyar, previous reference, p. 46.

² Yamina Madouri, Sara Zeghdoudi, 'Cyberbullying - The Modern Form of Violence -', Daa Journal of Psychological and Educational Research, Experimental Issue, 20th August 1955 University, Skikda, Algeria, January 2020, p. 23.

³ Turki Al-Shlaqi, previous reference, p. 21.

⁴ Yamina Madouri, Cyberbullying - A Conceptual Approach - previous reference, p. 133

⁵ Musaad Abu Al-Diyar, previous reference, p. 48

⁶ Musaad Abu Al-Diyar, previous reference, pp. 49-50.

⁷ Amal Youssef Abdullah Al-Ammar, previous reference, p. 334

⁸ Julia Saleh Khattaybeh, Ola Abdul Kareem Al-Huwayan, previous reference, p. 785.



These individuals observe but do not participate and feel guilty for their failure to intervene. They are characterized by intense fear, often confused and unable to distinguish right from wrong. They have low self-esteem and self-respect, feeling safer by doing nothing¹. Bystanders can be categorized as follows:

1. **Defenders (Guardians):** Those who sympathize with the victim and offer assistance.
2. **Reinforcers:** Those who support the bully due to a friendship relationship actively participate in the attack.
3. **Outsiders:** Neutral individuals who do not take sides.²

Third Section: Cyberbullying Methods

Cyberbullying refers to all practices conducted by one or more individuals using social media platforms, email, or social media applications on smartphones and similar devices. The intent is to insult, defame, or damage the image or reputation of one or more individuals, with the targeted person often unable to confront or respond to the aggression. This is done repeatedly, either verbally – spoken or written – or visually, through drawings, photographs, and videos³. Based on this, we will discuss the methods of cyberbullying on one hand and the types of cyberbullying on the other.

First Sub Section: Cyberbullying Techniques

Cyberbullying is characterized by its use of digital tools such as computers and mobile phones, possessing the same ability as traditional bullying to create emotional and psychological fear, social anxiety, and harm to others.

Despite the diversity of **cyberbullying techniques**, several different forms exist, including:

- **Electronic harassment is a specific form of electronic thuggery**, such as email messages.
- **Revenge** in case of repeated severe harassment and continuous humiliation, including threats, behaviors, and significant fear, can be considered electronic stalking.
- **Defamation** involves publishing false and demeaning information about a person, including spreading rumors and gossip to tarnish someone's reputation and friendships. False information may be published on web pages or disseminated through private channels.
- **Digital alteration of photos**, most commonly depicting a person in a sexual or harmful manner.
- **Identity theft** is when the perpetrator pretends to be the victim and sends or publishes negative, harsh, or inappropriate information to harm that person's reputation. This occurs in public places and private exchanges, and identity theft is committed by a criminal who pretends to be someone else entirely to extract embarrassing information and then shares it online.

¹ Ali Moussa Al-Sabheen, Mohammed Farhan Al-Qudah, previous reference, p. 39.

² Fatima Zahra Chtibi, Boutaf Ali, 'The Reality of Bullying in Algerian Schools - Middle Education Stage, A Field Study -', Al-Bahith Journal, Volume 07, Issue 02, Higher Teacher Training School, Bouzaréah, Algeria, 2015, p. 10.

³ Fatima Zahra Chtibi, Boutaf Ali, 'The Reality of Bullying in Algerian Schools - Middle Education Stage, A Field Study -', Al-Bahith Journal, Volume 07, Issue 02, Higher Teacher Training School, Bouzaréah, Algeria, 2015, p. 10.



- **Cyber exclusion or cyber ostracism** is the intentional and harsh act of excluding someone from an online group. The cyberbully makes every possible effort to expel the victim from an online community¹, delete them from social media platforms, and encourage others to do so to belittle the victim and exercise power over him.²
- **Bullying involves the use of the victim's identity on a social media platform** and then starts to tarnish the person's image. This is among the most common types of bullying faced today on the Internet.
- **Sending fabricated pornographic images and videos** to the target the bully wishes to harass.
- **Modern theft of the bully's accounts** and then using the information available about the person to bully or pry into their his life³.
- **Public exposure and privacy violation** through sending or printing publications that include information, messages, or private images of the person.
- **Impersonation** involves the cyberbully pretending to be someone else and sending messages or publications that make the other person look bad.⁴

Second Sub Section: Cyberbullying Types

In cyberbullying, there are two main types:

First - Direct Cyberbullying: In this type of cyberbullying, the perpetrator directly sends harmful content to the victim. This includes digital verbal bullying using the internet or mobile phones for threats and insults. It also includes non-verbal digital bullying by sending explicit or threatening photos or illustrations.

Second - Indirect Cyberbullying: In this form, the perpetrator sends harmful content to places where others share it, such as social media platforms, without the immediate awareness of the victim.⁵

It is worth noting that the concept of cyberbullying is closely related to the terms electronic harassment and cyberstalking. This type is considered a branch of cyberbullying and is interchangeably used with the term media bullying. Both involve false accusations, defamation, reputation tarnishing, and slander. Additionally, online harassment is referred to as electronic bullying, describing the use of the internet for malicious harassment, threats, or embarrassment. The terms electronic bullying and online harassment are often used interchangeably to describe direct bullying, which has become common among young people.⁶

Second Chapter: Cyberbullying Provisions

Instant messages refer to real-time online communication between individuals through friend lists, emails, text messages via mobile phones, short messages through phones,

¹ Wafaa Mohamed, previous reference, pp. 363-364.

² Yamina Madouri, Sara Zeghdoudi, "Cyberbullying - The Modern Form of Violence" previous reference, p. 19.

³ Abir Najm Abdullah Al-Khaldi, previous reference, pp. 142-143.

⁴ Yamina Madouri, Sara Zeghdoudi, "Cyberbullying - The Modern Form of Violence", previous reference, p. 18.

⁵ Samah El-Sayed Mohammed El-Sayed, "Approaches to Confronting the Phenomenon of Cyberbullying among University Students from the Perspective of Some Educational Experts", Faculty of Education Journal, Volume 31, Issue 121, Part 01, Faculty of Education, Benha University, Egypt, January 2020, p. 206.

⁶ Marwa Salah El-Din Abdullah, previous reference, p. 286.



multimedia messaging, various social media platforms, chat rooms, blogs, personal websites, and online video games, all included in the scope. These messages resemble daily diaries, except they are sent for public viewing and commenting.¹

In reality, cyberbullying is a form of aggression in an electronic format that has consequences for the perpetrator. It can impact his personality, physical health, and psychological well-being, making him vulnerable to mental disorders and behavioral problems. Cyberbullying is associated with social difficulties, a lack of security, low self-esteem, and academic achievement levels for the perpetrator.

As a result, cyberbullying, whether in traditional or electronic form, is considered one of the most significant challenges facing society, with negative effects on the victim. To illustrate this, we categorize this chapter into three sections. Firstly, we discuss the reasons for cyberbullying. Secondly, we delve into the effects of cyberbullying. Finally, we explore the dimensions of cyberbullying in the third section.

First Section: Cyberbullying Causes

Some may think that social media platforms are the most common places where individuals are exposed to cyberbullying. However, this is not accurate, as there are other gateways for cyberbullying, including text messaging services on mobile phones, instant messaging found in online games.²

Moreover, cyberbullying tends to grow and persist in secrecy, given the negligence of parents and the lack of attention from social and psychological specialists. Their complete absence in addressing this issue has various justifications, including the limited experience of some specialists and their lack of awareness of the intricacies of this phenomenon. Cyberbullying is often practiced discreetly, away from the eyes of specialists. Additionally, some aspects of cyberbullying behavior resemble certain signs of aggressive behavior. Many parents are unaware of the real reasons behind the phenomenon of cyberbullying.³

Therefore, the causes of cyberbullying can be classified into internal and environmental factors:

First Sub Section: Cyberbullying Internal Causes

Divided into two types:

1. **Causes related to the act of cyberbullying itself:** Engaging in cyberbullying is sometimes driven by specific reasons, such as the need for freedom, self-affirmation, a desire for revenge, or seeking approval from others.
2. **Causes related to the person being cyberbullied:** The individual may have recently transferred to a new school, making them temporarily rejected. Alternatively, their rejection in school groups may persist due to personality differences, the presence of a disability, or their academic excellence compared to others.⁴

Second Sub Section: Environmental Causes

¹ Houria Charki, Ahmed Daoudi, previous reference, p. 614.

² Abir Najm Abdullah Al-Khaldi, "Social and Cyberbullying among Preparatory Stage Female Students: Remedial and Preventive Measures", *Ishraqat Tanmawiyah Journal*, Issue 27, Al-Iraqah Foundation for Culture and Development, Iraq, June 2021, p. 142.

³ Amal Youssef Abdullah Al-Ammar, previous reference, p. 334.

⁴ Kariman Mohamed Ibrahim Zuhair, previous reference, p. 38.



From another perspective, both "Assi" and "Aslan" emphasized that there are a set of environmental factors that contribute to the development of bullying behavior, including:

- **Insufficient supervision of the child and adolescent:** They need to understand that bullying behavior is unacceptable.
- **Punishment:** Punishment by parents and adults on aggressive children makes them learn to use bullying behavior to get what they want from others whom they perceive as weak.
- **Aggressive behaviors at home:** A child tends to imitate these behaviors.
- **Counter aggression:** The bully finds attacking the most effective way to defend themselves, so they initiate the attack before others who do not expect their response, hostility, and aggression.
- **Constant negative outlook:** Bullies feel that the world around them is negative, which explains their engagement in negative behaviors to feel essential and confident.¹
- **Weak religious conscience and misunderstanding of some religious matters:** Some teenagers resort to committing cyber bullying due to their weak religious conscience, which leads them to engage in it for material gain, regardless of its legitimacy and conformity to religion and its principles.
- **Inadequacy of security awareness programs:** Information security awareness programs are among the most effective ways to combat cyberbullying.
- **Weak deterrent laws:** It should be noted that some Arab legislations that lack specialized laws on cyberbullying, such as Algerian legislation, and few of them attempt to legislate for this type of crime. However, they are still early and need further improvements and amendments.²

Besides, schools play a role in the spread of cyberbullying. Students who are more active and restless tend to engage in it more than others. Studies have shown that an educational environment lacking activities that make use of student's free time and meet their psychological and social needs results in students resorting to violence as a means to release negative emotions and psychological pressure.³

Furthermore, the absence of physical contact, which is a crucial characteristic of online communication, plays a significant role in understanding the phenomenon of cyberbullying. Bullies feel a sense of freedom and recklessness in committing actions that they cannot engage in in real life. They also fail to grasp the consequences of their actions due to their perception of actions as unserious, believing that they will not get involved in any problems.⁴

Similarly, it can be said that unhealthy social upbringing resulting from family disintegration has a significant role in the emergence of various psychological and behavioral

¹ Tarab Issa Jraissi, "Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Self-Concept and Academic Achievement among Students", Master's thesis in Educational Psychology, specialization in Development and Learning, Faculty of Educational and Psychological Sciences, Arab Open University, Jordan, 2012, p. 16.

² Samaah El-Sayed Mohammed El-Sayed, previous reference, p. 199.

³ Ben Dada Souhila, Freiha Mohamed Karim, "The Reality of Cyberbullying among Algerian Adolescents", *Al-Mawaqif Journal for Research and Studies in Society and History*, Volume 17, Issue 01, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mustapha Stambouli University, Mascara, Algeria, July 2021, pp. 355-356.

⁴ Yamina Madouri, Sara Zeghdoudi, "Cyberbullying - The Modern Form of Violence", previous reference, p. 19.



disorders, which provide a fertile environment for different forms of bullying, especially cyberbullying. The social and health isolation has led to an increase in the occurrence of psychological and behavioral disorders, particularly noticeable after the shift to online education in all educational institutions.¹

It is worth mentioning that **Atlas** and **Pepler** interpreted bullying as an interaction between the bully and the victim within a social environment which is influenced by several factors, including the individual characteristics of the bully and the victim, the interactive processes between the bully and their victim, the presence of peers and teachers, and the context in which bullying behavior manifests².

Second Section: Cyberbullying Effects

Cyberbullying is an attempt to exploit communication and information technology to achieve criminal objectives by harming others through aggressive messages and disclosing sensitive information. It relies on humiliation, mockery, harassment, and embarrassment making cyberbullying more prevalent among users of electronic communication channels due to the opportunities for anonymity, hiding the identity of the bully, lacking of confrontation, and the ability to assume fake identities and evade punishment.³

In this regard, **Huebner** explains bullying behavior as an attempt to feel powerful. Based on this, the bully believes that bullying strategies effectively achieve this purpose. Therefore, they adopt a repetitive pattern of physical and psychological threats against the victim. It is a way to exert control over the other person. Continuous physical or verbal harassment between individuals of different power levels aims to humiliate, subdue, and embarrass the victim⁴. The impact of bullying is not limited to the victim and the bully alone but affects the entire community as a whole.

To illustrate the effects of cyberbullying, we divided this section into three sub sections. We discuss the effects of cyberbullying on the individual victims (the first sub section) and then its effects on the bullies (the second sub section). We will also address its impact on society (the third sub section).

First Sub Section: Effects of Cyberbullying on the Individual Victims

Victims may lower their self-esteem to an extremely low level, to the point where they see suicide as the only way out of their situation. In the long term, continuous cyberbullying throughout school years can have long-lasting negative effects on the victims, extending into the post-school years.⁵

There are cases of young people and teenagers who have experienced digital bullying that end in tragic outcomes. Some individuals' hearts and self-confidence have been broken, and they continue to suffer, along with their families, from the pain caused by cyberbullying and its consequences. Cyberbullying has numerous negative effects that accompany both the bully and the victim in the short and long term:

1. **Short-term effects:** These include feelings of depression, lower academic achievement, recurring suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, and self-harm.
2. **Long-term effects:** These involve diminished job opportunities, a crisis of trust in others, an increase in future bullying incidents, and the transformation of the victim into an

¹ Abir Najm Abdullah Al-Khaldi, previous reference, pp. 141-142.

² Tarab Issa Jraissi, previous reference, p. 10.

³ Falah Ahmed, Ben Said Abdelkader, previous reference, p. 522.

⁴ Tarab Issa Jraissi, previous reference, p. 10.

⁵ Thanaa Hachem Mohammed, previous reference, p. 203.



aggressor¹. Victims may also experience feelings of insecurity, distrust of others, heightened sensitivity and vigilance, and a desire for revenge².

The damage caused by this phenomenon is not limited to social relationships but extends to psychological problems that can even lead to suicide. Cyberbullying has several complications for the victim, such as low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, weight gain, a tendency towards isolation, and fear of the future. It also pushes the victim towards aggression and a constant desire for revenge, leading to self-harm and personality disorders.³

Moreover, the effects of bullying can extend to the families of the victims. These families often lack harmony and supervision over their children, failing to teach them appropriate social behavior skills. On the one hand, there may be a lack of appropriate supervision, and on the other hand, the victims may come from families that use physical punishment or violence⁴. The parents may be overprotective, or the families may lack proper supervision patterns, warmth, support, and harmony among their members. Typically, these families often suffer from disturbances.⁵

Second Sub Section: Effects of Cyberbullying on the Bullies

Bullying is not an isolated behavior on the part of its perpetrators; instead, it is considered a part of an anti-social behavioral pattern that breaks the organized rules of society. The main symptoms of bullying on the bullies include:

- Addiction to drugs and alcohol, involvement in legal violations, and criminal activities.
- Engaging in constant fights and property destruction.
- Expulsion from school⁶, facing difficulties in benefiting from educational programs.
- Early engagement in sexual activities or sexual deviation⁷.

The bullying behavior only intensifies in the absence of the victim reporting the attack. This strengthens the bully's power and perpetuates their bullying. The behavior continues to reinforce. Therefore, it is necessary to modify this behavior by acquiring correct behaviors and eliminating the reinforcements of negative behavior.⁸

It is worth noting that the bully does not harass the victim child through face-to-face interaction but attacks him using technology through a computer screen or mobile phone. He instills fear by practicing threats or offensive phrases or inciting violence, hatred, and mockery. Victims of cyberbullying are subjected to harm on a broader scale than just within the school or regular life. Furthermore, the harm may persist for extended periods and is difficult to escape since its electronic nature allows it to occur without drawing the attention of teachers, parents, and families in general, especially considering that most of our children today have their own devices and live in a virtual, isolated world. The danger of bullying becomes evident when

¹ Julia Saleh Khataybeh, Ola Abdul Kareem Al-Huwayan, previous reference, p. 787.

² Chtibi Fatima Zahra, Boutaf Ali, previous reference, p. 17.

³ Hassi Malika, Sharara Hayat, "Cyberbullying: A Theoretical Study on Dimensions and Practices", Al-I'lam wa al-Mujtama' Journal, Volume 04, Issue 01, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, University of El-Hamd Lakhder, El-Oued, Algeria, June 2020, pp. 71-72.

⁴ Yamina Madouri, Sara Zeghdoudi, "Cyberbullying - The Modern Form of Violence", previous reference, pp. 23-24.

⁵ Bousaada Meriem, Dahmani Fatima Zahra, previous reference, p. 540.

⁶ Abdulrazzaq Abdullah Saeed, "Cyberbullying: Causes and Effects", Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities, Volume 29, Issue 10, Part 01, College of Education for Humanities Sciences, Iraq, 2022, p. 287.

⁷ Thanaa Hashem Mohammed, previous reference, p. 205.

⁸ Houria CharKi, Ahmed Dawoodi, previous reference, p. 620.



information is sent on social media platforms, whether through a post, tweet, or video on YouTube¹.

3- Third Sub Section: the Effects of Cyberbullying on Society.

These effects can be summarized as follows:

- Cyberbullying is considered one of the challenges that have emerged and impacted society, especially with the advancement of technology. It requires constant vigilance, and society needs to develop awareness of its impact on the victims.
- The revolution in electronic communication methods has led to increased concern in society, mainly due to teenagers being exposed to cyberbullying, which increases societal anxiety and may result in the mistreatment of teenage children by their families.
- Students' exposure to cyberbullying in the school environment leads to a decline in their academic, emotional, and social development.²

Cyberbullying can also occur anonymously, leaving additional effects on verifying the abuse outside the internet. The anonymous bully significantly undermines the sense of trust and security for those who receive it, as it becomes difficult to prove without the intervention of authorities who can address the incident of mistreatment. It can create a state of paranoia and persecution³.

Numerous studies have observed psychological, social, and academic consequences between the victim and the bully. They indicate increased levels of anxiety and fear of going to school, long-term difficulties in concentration, a negative reputation, lack of trust, and low self-esteem. These effects persist even after the electronic attacks on the victim cease⁴.

From another perspective, the negative effects of bullying in its various forms are not limited to bullies and victims but also extend to individuals who witness or hear about bullying incidents from their peers. The role of bystanders can be either negative or positive. They can be divided into active and negative bystanders.

As for the active bystanders, they are the ones who express approval or share comments, photos, or videos that the cyberbully has posted. The role of the active bystander can be beneficial in preventing and reducing the spread of cyberbullying behavior in the online space by removing comments or reporting the post to the site administration as inappropriate, thus aiding in its removal. On the other hand, the passive bystander is an individual who observes instances of cyberbullying but takes no action or intervention to prevent such behavior. The reason behind his inaction is often fear of retaliation from the cyberbully or the possibility of becoming a target of bullying himself⁵.

Third Section: Dimensions of the Phenomenon of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying occurs through online harassment, electronic stalking, tarnishing reputation by spreading rumors and false accusations and revealing personal information of the victim on social media or forums. Some individuals may impersonate the victim, creating fake accounts to spread information that incites hatred, encourage others to commit violence and collaborate against the targeted individual, causing additional harm.⁶

¹ Amr Abdelhamid, previous reference, p. 25.

² Lamia Tala, previous reference, p. 581.

³ Diaa Muslim Abdul Amir Ghaibi, previous reference, p. 102.

⁴ Ben Dada Souhila, Freiha Mohamed Karim, previous reference, p. 356.

⁵ Mahmoud Kamil Mohamed Kamil, previous reference, p. 34.

⁶ Amr Abdelhamid, previous reference, pp. 25-26.



Based on this, we will address mechanisms for dealing with and confronting cyberbullying on one hand while also discussing the legal protection for this type of bullying on the other."

First Sub Section: Mechanisms for Dealing with and Confronting Cyberbullying

These mechanisms can be summarized in the following points:

- **Broadcasting programs addressing cyberbullying through official television channels** play an influential role in boosting the confidence of those affected by cyberbullying and raising their social awareness to deal with such situations when encountered.
- **Educating parents and other family members on model techniques** to modify proper behavioral practices and how to implement them to achieve positive results in reducing the prevalence of this phenomenon, especially among school students.¹
- **Parental training and awareness:** Training parents is a component of programs that reduce cyberbullying behavior. This involves training them on optimal technology use and educating their children on using technology positively. Parents should also be informed about this behavior, which has become widespread with the advent of the Internet.
- **Digital literacy:** Children and teenagers should be educated on how to use the Internet safely and be made aware of the dangers of falling victim to digital bullying as both perpetrators and victims².
- **Reporting all harassments and annoyances to social media site administrators** to close the account of the cyberbully.
- **Keep all evidence**, including email messages, text messages, and web addresses, and record the date and time of each message. The more information obtained about the cyberbully, the more it helps identify their identity and file a complaint with cybercrime police for their arrest.
- **Adjusting privacy settings on personal accounts** prevents the cyberbully from finding new ways to contact the person they intend to harm³.
- **Enacting legislation and awareness campaigns aimed at combating this phenomenon** in schools and online platforms to protect children from harassment, annoyance, and verbal violence on the Internet.
- **Conducting more academic psychological, social, and media studies** to examine the dimensions of the phenomenon in the Arab region, considering different social and economic levels and strata.
- **Raising awareness within families about the danger of the phenomenon, methods of detecting it**, and how to deal with child victims and the perpetrators of cyberbullying.⁴

Second Sub Section: Legal Protection against Cyberbullying Crime

Cyberbullying includes all forms of harm and abuse directed from one individual to another or a group of individuals. Cyberbullies exploit electronic platforms such as social media sites, discussion forums, and blogs to disseminate intentionally hostile messages to tarnish the image of the recipient and cause harm to their well-being. The impact of cyberbullying can

¹ Abir Najm Abdullah Al-Khaldi, previous reference, p. 146.

² Lamia Tala, previous reference, p. 582.

³ Hassi Malika, Sharara Hayat, previous reference, pp. 74-75.

⁴ Amr Abdelhamid, previous reference, p. 28.



escalate to the point of depression and suicide as a means to escape the harassment endured. In response, many countries seek to limit and combat this phenomenon by enacting laws, developing detection devices for bullying, and raising awareness within society about this crime and its consequences.¹ The most significant forms of cyberbullying include:

- **Electronic rage:** It occurs through online communication channels or directly to the victim via email, text messages, comments, and various other messages within new media.
- **Cyberstalking:** Refers to sending repetitive insulting messages via email to another person, often containing sexual harassment.²

Based on these forms of cyberbullying, many countries have criminalized it on both international and national levels.

On **the international stage**, the International Labour Conference adopted **Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work** on 21/06/2019. The convention strongly emphasizes in its preamble³ that violence and harassment in work can violate human rights, exposing individuals to equal and unacceptable risks that conflict with the principles of decent work. The convention reminds countries of their liability to sanction a general environment that is not tolerant of such behaviors.

As recommended by the convention, member states emphasized the need to adopt, by national law and consultation with organizations representing employers and workers, a comprehensive approach aimed at preventing and eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work. This approach should include ensuring the handling of relevant policies on violence and harassment, access to remedies and support for victims, and the necessity of practical inspection and investigation mechanisms⁴.

Regarding the criminalization of cyberbullying, it may involve the bully accessing websites without permission, targeting social media pages to obtain information, exerting control over the victim, and even obtaining personal information and extorting the victim. In this regard, warnings may be issued by responsible authorities for cybersecurity, cautioning against engaging in such acts or providing guidelines to protect login credentials⁵.

In **comparative legislation**, we note the **Egyptian legislator**, who did not specifically address the crime of bullying with a dedicated provision that defines its effects, meaning, forms, elements, and the prescribed punishment with its specific characteristics until recently, under Law No. 189 of 2020⁶. It is observed in the text of Article 309 bis that the Egyptian legislator specifies the types of physical behavior through which the crime of bullying is committed,

¹ Falah Ahmed, Ben Said Abdelkader, "The Reality of Cyberbullying in Educational Institutions from the Perspective of Secondary School Students", *Rawafid Journal for Scientific Studies and Research in Social and Human Sciences*, Volume 07 (Special Issue), University Center Belhadj Bouchaib, Ain Temouchent, Algeria, April 2023, pp. 522-523.

² Falah Ahmed, Ben Said Abdelkader, previous reference, pp. 521-522.

³ The convention defines violence and harassment as "a range of unacceptable behaviors and practices, or threats thereof, whether occurring in a single instance or repeatedly, that aim to cause physical, psychological, sexual, or economic harm, or to potentially cause such harm. It includes violence and harassment based on sex." For more details, refer to: Diaa Muslim Abdul Amir Ghaibi, previous reference, p. 103.

⁴ Diaa Muslim Abdul Amir Ghaibi, previous reference, p. 104.

⁵ Sakhr Ahmed Al-Khasawneh, previous reference, p. 55.

⁶ Ahmed Abdullah Al-Tayyar, previous reference, p. 1567.



including statements regardless of their method, whether through ordinary or electronic means. It also includes the display of power or control by the perpetrator, exploiting the victim's vulnerability, or any situation believed to harm the victim, such as based on gender, religion, physical characteristics, health and mental condition, or social status.

The **French legislator** clarified the meaning, manifestations, behaviors, and outcomes of bullying and the prescribed punishment for it in Article 2-33-222 of the Penal Code. According to this article, anyone who harasses another person and intentionally inflicts harm, whether an individual or a group, through repeated words or behaviors that have the goal or impact of deteriorating working conditions or are likely to undermine their rights or dignity, resulting in a drastic change in their physical or mental health, or endangering their professional future, shall be punished with imprisonment for two years and a fine of up to 30,000 euros¹.

It is worth noting that the French legislator issued Law 2022-299², seeking to combat school bullying.

Concerning **national legislation**, as mentioned earlier, the Algerian legislator did not explicitly address the crime of cyberbullying but considered the actions of the bully as punishable crimes falling within the scope of threats, extortion, defamation, and cybercrimes³. Law 20-05, however, considers the crime of discrimination and hate speech as a form of cyberbullying, outlining penalties under Articles 30, 31/01, 32, 33, and 34 of Law 20-05⁴.

Conclusion:

Cyberbullying refers to aggressive and undesirable behavior that uses the Internet to harm and mistreat others by posting or distributing damaging content about someone. It involves sharing and exchanging personal information and images of a person, which exposes them to harm, humiliation, and embarrassment. It often involves attacking and threatening individuals.

Cyberbullying has become more prevalent in recent years as teenagers increasingly use modern technology and its applications. This form of bullying has spread widely and has had a

¹ Same reference, p. 1571.

² Law 2022-299, dated March 2, 2022, aiming to combat school harassment, JORF (Official Journal of the French Republic) No. 0052 on March 3, 2022.

³ The Algerian legislator addressed electronic crimes and the prescribed penalties in Law No. 18-05 on Electronic Commerce, dated May 10, 2018, published in the Official Gazette (Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne) No. 28 on May 16, 2018. The provisions related to crimes and penalties are included in the second chapter of the third section, titled "Crimes and Penalties," encompassing Articles 37 to 48. Additionally, Law No. 09-04, dated August 5, 2009, contains specific provisions for the prevention and combating of crimes related to information and communication technologies. It was published in the Official Gazette No. 47 on August 16, 2009. It is worth mentioning that Algerian legislation, under this law, provides descriptions for cybercrimes and crimes related to information and communication technologies. However, in the Algerian Penal Code, internet crimes are not specifically defined. Instead, punishment is imposed on certain acts categorized as "crimes related to automated data processing," as outlined in Articles 394 bis to 394 bis 07.

⁴ In this regard, Article 34 of Law No. 20-05, dated April 28, 2020, concerning the prevention and combating of discrimination and hate speech, published in the Official Gazette (Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne) No. 25 on April 29, 2020, states that: "Without prejudice to more severe penalties, anyone who establishes, manages, or supervises a website or an electronic account dedicated to disseminating information for the promotion of any program, ideas, news, drawings, or images that incite discrimination and hatred in society shall be punished by imprisonment for a period ranging from five (5) to ten (10) years and a fine ranging from 5,000,000 DZD to 10,000,000 DZD."



significant impact on individuals, especially teenagers. Several factors contribute to this, including the ability of bullies to conceal their identity, the ease of sharing cyberbullying content, the lack of emotional empathy on the part of the bully, and the insufficient regulation of social media platforms.

In this study, we have reached a set of results and recommendations, which are as follows:

First/Results:

- Cyberbullying is a serious behavioral phenomenon with educational, social, and contemporary implications. It threatens the safety of the community and its members of all ages, leading to severe social, psychological, security, economic, and political damages.
- Cyberbullying is characterized by privacy, as perpetrators resort to websites and fake pages to commit their crimes, requiring intensified efforts to identify the culprits.
- Cyberbullying varies in terms of methods, as it can be perpetrated through various modern technological means.
- Cyberbullying has detrimental effects on victims, including psychological distress, social isolation, academic deterioration, and long-term potential consequences for mental health. These effects emphasize the urgent need for preventive measures and support for victims.
- There is a lack of deterrent laws explicitly targeting this type of crime.
- Legal measures and policies are crucial in combating cyberbullying within a legal framework.

Second/Recommendations:

- Increase cyberbullying awareness among individuals, including parents, teachers, and policymakers. Emphasize the need for educational programs and campaigns that promote digital citizenship, empathy, and responsible behavior online.
- Implement comprehensive educational programs aimed at digital literacy to raise awareness about the effects of cyberbullying and equip individuals with the necessary skills to prevent and address it.
- Educate girls and boys about not sharing personal photos or videos of themselves or their families on social media platforms.
- Strengthen parental supervision of children's behavior, monitor their activities online, and provide guidance and counseling.
- Activate the role of educational institutions in highlighting the dangers of cyberbullying in schools and the community as a whole and promote methods of protection against it.
- Create job opportunities for young people to keep them engaged and prevent them from becoming vulnerable to the negative aspects of social media.
- Encourage medical and healthcare institutions to establish psychological clinics to rehabilitate individuals harmed through the Internet, with trained psychologists, doctors, and social workers to handle complaints.
- Guide the media to reduce the use of violence and aggression towards children and advocate for positive parenting methods to prevent all forms of bullying.
- Adopt clear legislative policies, including enacting a law that criminalizes cyberbullying and specifies its provisions.

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