

Cyberbullying and Its Impact on Adolescent Emotional Well-Being

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of social media networks has been remarkable, offering easy access and the ability to connect with a vast network of friends, which has captivated people of all ages and social backgrounds. This enthusiasm for social media is particularly prominent among teenagers. While social networks provide a platform for emotional expression, unfortunately they are also used to vent anger and use insults and derogatory comments, a phenomenon commonly known as cyberbullying. This section aims to explore the impact of cyberbullying on adolescents within the realm of social media. A literature review method was used, taking articles and journals published between 2013 and 2023, collected from the Google Scholar electronic database. Findings from numerous studies consistently highlight that cyberbullying on social media significantly impacts adolescents, affecting them across psychological, physical, and social dimensions. Importantly, this impact goes beyond just the victim, also affecting the perpetrator and even bystanders.

INTRODUCTION

In the growing digital age, the internet and social media have become an integral part of teenagers' lives. The ability to interact online, share experiences, and engage in social networking has facilitated access and communication among adolescents. Unfortunately, the development of this technology also brings negative consequences, one of which is the phenomenon known as cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying refers to degrading, insulting, or intimidating someone online through various social media platforms, text messages, or emails. This phenomenon is an important issue because it can have a serious impact on the emotional well-being of adolescents. Teens who engage in cyberbullying experiences often face serious risks to their emotional well-being. They can experience psychological distress, stress, depression, and even experience a decrease in self-esteem.

Adolescents are a vulnerable group who are searching for their identity and are very sensitive to the judgment of others. Cyberbullying can significantly affect a teen's emotional well-being. In some cases, victims of cyberbullying experience anxiety disorders, depression, low self-esteem, and even suicidal thoughts.

According to a UNICEF release in 2020, the rate of violence among students reached 41 percent, while the rate of cyberbullying reached 45 percent. However, the numbers may be larger on the ground, given that not all victims or witnesses dare to report or speak openly about the case.

In Indonesia, bullying cases are also a troubling problem, according to the Federation of Indonesian Teachers Unions (FSGI). According to him, the number of bullying in Indonesia is quite high among students. Between January and September 2023, 23 cases of bullying were recorded. Of these, as many as 50% of cases occurred at the junior high school level, 23% at the elementary level, 13.5% at the high school level, and 13.5% at the vocational level. Furthermore, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) has stated that school students are vulnerable to cyberbullying. On September 3, 2018, at 18:00 WIB, KPAI reported that online-related incidents had affected 3,096 teenagers. In this data, there were 83 adolescents identified as victims of bullying on social media, with 32 boys and 51 girls (Subagja & Pradana, 2018).

The report's data shows that bullying cases are most common at the junior high level, both from peers and educators. Unfortunately, one of the bullying cases resulted in fatalities. A student at SDN Sukabumi Regency died after being the victim of physical violence from peers. Another case involved a student at MTs in Blitar, East Java.

Keep in mind that bullying in schools is a serious problem that must be taken seriously. All parties, including teachers, students, and parents, must work together to create a safe and bullying-free environment. Therefore, it is important to understand the impact of cyberbullying on the emotional well-being of adolescents and identify efforts that can be made to protect them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media is a platform that facilitates social interaction through web-based technologies, transforming communication into an interactive dialogue that is highly accessible and scalable. It allows users to share, participate, and create content, often enhanced by advanced multimedia technology. The rapid dissemination of information through social media has a significant impact on people's perspectives, lifestyles, and culture. Social media also encourages individuals to engage in discussion, honing their logical and psychological skills as they interact with the digital world. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that messages conveyed through electronic media can influence an audience, either towards pro-social or anti-social behavior. With the continuous advancement of information technology, teenagers, as users, tend to spend more of their time in the digital world (Pandie & Weismann, 2016).

Early adolescence marks the transition phase from childhood to adolescence, a period when individuals typically begin to explore and evaluate their own psychological attributes in an attempt to be recognized in their environment. While some teens successfully navigate this transition, others may experience juvenile delinquency, ranging from minor offenses to criminal activities, including forms of delinquency such as cyberbullying (Malihah & Alfiasari, 2018).

In Indonesia, there is a significant prevalence of cyberbullying, with reports showing that 80% of adolescents have experienced it, and such incidents occur almost daily among this age group (Safaria, 2016). Prabawa, A.F. (2018) suggests that the rapid progress of science and technology can be seen as a double-edged sword. This can present both opportunities and challenges, depending on how society responds. Opportunities are evident in today's teens who have become multi-taskers, tech enthusiasts, critical thinkers, are highly confident, and have extensive social networks. However, the challenge for today's youth is their growing familiarity with the fast-paced information environment, which can lead to a tendency towards egocentrism and instant gratification. If the negative aspects of these situations are not addressed effectively, they can result in adverse consequences (Prabawa, 2018).

The Internet can have a variety of negative impacts, including issues such as pornography, internet addiction, violence, gore, fraud, carding, and cyberbullying. Cyberbullying, in particular, can be likened to an iceberg, with only a few cases known to the public, while more incidents remain hidden. Usually, victims of cyberbullying have previous conflicts or problems with the perpetrator. This conflict may stem from feelings of envy, resentment, or hatred on the part of the perpetrator, or it could be that bullying is done for purely evil purposes (Siregar et al., 2023).

Cyberbullying is a significant problem, and its impact on teens can be far-reaching. Teens who are victims of cyberbullying often experience emotions such as anger, pain, shame, or fear. This emotional response can cause victims to retaliate against the perpetrator, withdraw from their usual circle and social activities, and may even cause them to adopt similar cyberbullying behaviors themselves (Ramadan et al., 2023).

According to the findings of Navarro et al, cyberbullying has several significant impacts on adolescents:

1. **Physical Impact:** Teens who experience cyberbullying may experience physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach pain, sleep disturbances, fatigue, backache, loss of appetite, and digestive problems.
2. **Psychological and Emotional Impact:** Victims of cyberbullying often suffer psychological and emotional distress, including feelings of fear, terror, anxiety, suffering, sadness, stress, and depressive symptoms.
3. **School-Related Impacts:** Cyberbullying can affect teens' motivation to attend school and their concentration levels, potentially leading to decreased academic performance.
4. **Psychosocial Impact:** Teens who experience cyberbullying may feel a sense of isolation, loneliness, exclusion, and even social rejection (Navarro et al., 2016).

These negative consequences can affect many different aspects of a teenager's life, including their psychological, physical, and social well-being, and can have long-term implications. Nurses play an important role in preventing and addressing bullying behavior, particularly in primary health care, by focusing on promotive and preventive efforts related to education and strategies to control bullying and reduce its impact on adolescent health.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this study involves a literature review. Data for the review was collected from Google Scholar's electronic database, covering the years from 2013 to 2023. The article selection process is done manually, with researchers filtering articles based on their titles and abstracts to distinguish them based on their relevance to the research objectives. From a collection of articles, 10 were selected for in-depth examination. These selected articles are carefully assessed, focusing on abstracts, research objectives, and data analysis conducted by researchers. The aim is to extract information relating to the impact of cyberbullying on adolescents in the context of social media.

In terms of inclusion criteria, articles with titles and content relevant to the research topic are considered. In addition, the article must be a research article published within the specified time period from 2013 to 2023. Exclusion criteria include articles that do not have a complete structural framework, review articles, and articles that do not specifically address the impact of cyberbullying on adolescents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Impact on Mental

In their 2014 study, Shultz, Heilman, and Hart characterized cyberbullying in the United States as a form of violent behavior perpetrated through media channels, typically involving a widely disseminated message that can reach a wide audience in a short period of time. They observed that in cases of cyberbullying, there are often reciprocal interactions between perpetrators and

victims, with the majority of interactions, about 90%, initiated by perpetrators (E et al., 2014). Increased accessibility to social media platforms has increased the risk of cyberbullying, especially for young individuals who are still in a psychologically vulnerable state.

Cyberbullying often arises from the breakdown of relationships, whether these relationships are with close friends, romantic partners, or other people. This damage to relationships often serves as a catalyst for attacking the other party through social media, either through direct verbal aggression or in the form of satirical content. The consequences of this electronic media attack can result in serious psychological problems for the victims. Victims often experience feelings of vulnerability, isolation, and bear long-term consequences when compared to more traditional forms of bullying (C.E et al., 2013).

The findings of research conducted by Parkington, Bilsbury, and Leblanc in 2012, as cited in a work by Sari and Suryanto in 2016, revealed the significant impact of cyberbullying on adolescents. The study reported that teens who are victims of cyberbullying experience a variety of emotional and psychological problems. Specifically, 32% of these adolescents suffered from mood disorders, 15% showed depressive symptoms, and 37% showed conspicuous abnormal behaviors associated with suicidal thoughts or tendencies. Additionally, the emotional impact of cyberbullying is evident, with 68.5% of teens reporting experiencing negative emotions such as anger, upset, worry, stress, fear, and feelings of depression as a result of their cyberbullying experience. These statistics highlight the severe emotional toll that cyberbullying can take on adolescents and underscore the importance of addressing this problem effectively (Bottino, 2015).

Research conducted by Fahy, Stansfeld, Smuk, Smith, Cummins, and Clark in 2016 highlighted a significant link between cyberbullying and mental health. The study suggests that the high prevalence of cyberbullying has the potential to cause victims to experience depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and overall lower well-being among adolescents. This concerning trend is exacerbated by the increasing use of mobile devices and the internet among adolescents (Fahy et al., 2016).

In addition, another study conducted by Desmet, Deforche, Hublet, Tanghe, Stremersch, and Bourdeaudhuij in 2014 underlined the link between being a victim of cyberbullying and mental health problems, including suicidal ideation. These findings emphasize the need to address and combat cyberbullying as an urgent public health issue, especially given its adverse effects on adolescent mental well-being (Desmet et al., 2014).

Research conducted by Elgar, Napoletano, Saul, Dirks, Craig, Poteat, Holt, and Koenig in 2014 revealed that victimization of cyberbullying is linked to mental health problems in adolescents. These problems include reduced life satisfaction, emotional well-being, and disturbances in social behavior. The study underscores the detrimental impact of cyberbullying on various aspects of adolescent mental health and overall quality of life (Elgar, J et al., 2014).

Impact on Psychosocial

Findings from Safaria, Tentama, and Suyono's 2016 study showed that cyberbullying exerts a negative psychosocial influence on its victims. The extent of this negative impact depends on the frequency, duration, and severity of cyberbullying incidents. Victims of cyberbullying generally suffer emotional and behavioral distress as a consequence of these experiences (Safaria, 2016).

Other studies have also shown that individuals who are victims of cyberbullying have bad experiences, including being verbally abused online. These experiences can lead to a loss of trust, and the victim may then become cyberbullies themselves or continue to bear victimization. In addition, when online harassment occurs, victims often react by crying, experiencing feelings of shame, losing friends at school, succumbing to depression, and suffering from insomnia after cyberbullying incidents (Zahral'Iffat, 2023).

Impact on Academics

Research conducted by Ningrum F.S. and Zaujatul Amna (2020) revealed that from the sample, 177 (84.7 percent) had experienced cyberbullying victimization and felt undisturbed in their learning process, also considered school as a safe place. On the other hand, 32 (15.3 percent) of the sample felt deeply hurt by the victimization of cyberbullying, which significantly disrupted their learning and made them feel unsafe at school (Ningrum & Amna., 2020). This finding is in line with the work of Smokowski, Evans, and Cotter (2014), who assert that victimization of cyberbullying has a detrimental impact on individuals in the school environment, affecting their academic performance (PR, 2014).

Cyberbullying also has a significant impact on victims, leaving them with discomfort and depression. As a result, victims often lose their enthusiasm for engaging in activities and may become reluctant to attend classes. Academic failure is a common consequence of cyberbullying, and some victims even decide to stop their education. This situation can contribute to higher unemployment rates among affected individuals, potentially leading to an increase in cases of delinquent behavior among adolescents (Omniyi, 2013).

Findings from Laeheem's 2013 study revealed additional symptoms experienced by victims of cyberbullying, including feelings of threat, difficulty concentrating, decreased academic achievement, and a sense of isolation. These results are consistent with Aisiyai's research conducted in 2015, which showed that victims often develop a fear of attending school and suffer from decreased academic performance. Repeated acts of bullying can significantly erode a person's self-confidence (Laeheem, 2013).

Physical Impact

Research conducted by Triyono and Rimadani in 2019 revealed various physical impacts of cyberbullying on victims. These effects include persistent headaches, sleep disturbances that cause difficulty sleeping and result in physical symptoms such as morning sleepiness, red eyes, the appearance of eye bags, and a feeling of eye discomfort. Victims of cyberbullying can also experience loss of appetite and feelings of nausea. These physical impacts are

interconnected and collectively contribute to the victim's overall sense of distress (Triyono & Rimadani, 2019).

The study's conclusions suggest that cyberbullying on social media can have detrimental physical effects on adolescents, especially since victims find it difficult to control their thoughts and reactions to the actions of their peers. In addition, the personality type of the victim, which is characterized as a thinker, can make them very vulnerable to excessive burdens of contemplation, which can negatively affect their physical health.

Research by Navarro, Yubero, and Larranaga in 2016 supports the idea that cyberbullying can cause a variety of physical health problems in adolescents. These physical impacts include headaches, abdominal pain, sleep disturbances, fatigue, back pain, loss of appetite, and digestive problems (Navarro et al., 2016).

In addition, Laeheem's research in 2013 reinforced the idea that cyberbullying negatively impacts physical health, potentially resulting in difficulty sleeping and decreased appetite. These findings collectively emphasize the adverse physical consequences of cyberbullying in adolescents (Laeheem, 2013).

DISCUSSION

Indeed, we are currently undergoing significant social and cultural transformations driven by the widespread use of information technology, particularly the internet. The Internet offers many advantages when used wisely, but it also presents challenges. As stated by Prabawa, A.F. in 2018, this digital era can be likened to a double-edged sword with opportunities and challenges, depending on how the community responds to it (Prabawa, 2018).

One important opportunity is the way today's teens are developing into individuals who are proficient at multitasking, tech-savvy, critical thinkers, confident, and well-connected with a wide network of friends. This underscores the potential for positive development and growth among young people in this digital era (Zidana & Handaka, 2023).

Of course, the internet is a powerful tool that can have both positive and negative impacts depending on how it is used. As highlighted in research by Utami in 2014, cyberbullying is one of the negative consequences of internet abuse, especially on social media platforms. The nature of online interaction allows individuals to engage with others without the need for face-to-face contact, and this can sometimes lead to harmful behaviors such as cyberbullying. It is essential to recognize the potential risks associated with internet use and to promote responsible and respectful online behavior, especially among adolescents (Utami, 2014).

The younger generation, especially teenagers, are indeed showing significant interest in social media. Other research shows that teens use social media to express themselves, shape their identity, and share personal problems. However, it is important to note that while social media provides a platform for self-expression, there must be a level of discretion. Not everything has to be shared online, and individuals, especially teens, need to filter their content to avoid potential problems in the future. This highlights the need for digital

literacy and responsible use of social media platforms among young users (Fitriana, 2023).

Cyberbullying is indeed a serious issue that demands attention in the digital age. This can have severe consequences, especially for adolescents, leading to depression, low self-esteem, difficulty concentrating on schoolwork, decreased academic achievement, anxiety, and in some tragic cases, even suicide. These adverse effects highlight the critical need to address and prevent cyberbullying in the digital world (Adha et al., 2023).

Given the significant dangers associated with cyberbullying, it is imperative to continue to raise awareness among the general public, particularly social media users, about the responsible and mindful use of these platforms and prevent actions that may harm or inflict emotional pain on others. The spread of hatred, threats, and anger on social media is a form of violence with far-reaching and severe consequences. Cyberbullies often perceive themselves as superior and sometimes rationalize their behavior toward their victims. Unfortunately, women are often the target of cyberbullying, both by men and other women. Efforts to combat cyberbullying must be gender-inclusive and promote digital civility for all (Djingga et al., 2023).

According to Mendez-Baldwin, Cirillo, Ferrigno, and Argento (2015), one out of every three teens has experienced cyberbullying and reported this incident to a parent, teacher, or other adult. This underscores the importance of parents, teachers, and individuals in the victim's environment to be alert and attuned to changes in behavior, such as frequent mood swings, decreased self-confidence, disinterest in activities, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and social withdrawal. It is very important for parents to be familiar with the social media platforms their children use, allowing them to monitor and address any issues that may arise from these platforms. In addition, fostering open and honest communication between parents and adolescents is essential to prevent and respond effectively to cyberbullying (Mendez-Baldwin et al., 2015).

The mental health of cyberbullying victims can be assessed by examining the negative psychological consequences they experience, such as increased social anxiety, emotional distress, drug use, depressive symptoms, and even suicidal thoughts and attempts. Victims of cyberbullying often grapple with feelings of frustration, anxiety, depression, fatigue, low self-esteem, difficulty concentrating, mood swings, self-blame, irritability, and even suicidal tendencies (Lestari et al., 2023).

Sartana and Afriyeni (2017) suggest that the Center for Disease Control is of the view that adolescents who face cyberbullying are at higher risk of academic problems. The impact of cyberbullying on academic achievement can be categorized into three types: negative, neutral, and positive. The specific impact depends on factors such as the victim's ability to manage their emotions, the nature of the cyberbullying they experience, and the support they receive from their social networks. First, individuals who experience negative effects on their academic performance are typically younger and have weaker emotional management skills. Second, some victims may not see a significant impact on

their academic performance, which can occur when they encounter certain forms of cyberbullying that are not directed directly at them or have no overtly negative consequences. Finally, there are instances where victims actually achieve better academic performance if they have strong anger management skills and supportive networks (Sartana & Afriyeni, 2017).

Cyberbullying doesn't just affect victims; This has consequences for both the victim and the perpetrator. Adolescence is a period characterized by significant biological, psychological, and social changes. When conflicts arise in adolescent lives and are not handled appropriately, they can have adverse effects, as highlighted by the Indonesian Pediatric Association (IDAI) in 2016 (Fadiyah et al., 2023).

The results of this study show that victims of cyberbullying experience distress and feelings of anger. Similarly, research conducted by Nixon in 2014 found that most cyberbullying targets experience at least one symptom of stress. In addition to these emotional effects, victims may also experience physical symptoms, such as headaches, likely stemming from distress and preoccupation with cyberbullying incidents they experienced (Nixon, 2014).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research that has been discussed, cyberbullying is a serious problem that can have a significant impact on the psychological, psychosocial, academic, and physical aspects of adolescents. The psychological impact includes depression, mood disorders, feelings of isolation, and even the potential risk of suicide. Its psychosocial effects include emotional distress, feelings of shame, and loss of confidence. In academic terms, cyberbullying can interfere with school performance, decrease learning motivation, and lead to decreased academic achievement. The physical impact includes symptoms such as headaches, sleep disturbances, and digestive problems. Therefore, it is important to raise public awareness about the dangers of cyberbullying and promote responsible online behavior. Parents, teachers, and individuals around teens need to understand the signs of cyberbullying and support victims. In addition, gender-inclusive approaches and digital literacy are also important in efforts to prevent cyberbullying and address its impact. In addition to identifying victims, we must also recognize that cyberbullies may also need support and guidance in order to avoid harmful actions. In an ever-evolving digital world, attention to these issues is an important step towards a safer and more positive online environment for young people.

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