

Research on the Issue of Cyberbullying in the Cross-cultural Communication of Adolescents in Social Media

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Abstract. This paper explores the issue of cyberbullying in cross-cultural communication among adolescents on social media, with a particular focus on how media literacy theory can be used to understand and address these problems. With the popularity of social media, information spreads rapidly and widely, but it may also lead to misreading and misunderstanding of information, thus causing ethical issues such as cyberbullying. Anonymity provides adolescents with a sense of protection, allowing them to express their opinions more freely, but it can also lead to an increase in cyberbullying. This paper focuses on the issue of cyberbullying in cross-cultural communication among adolescents on social media, exploring its causes, impacts, and resolution strategies. The study aims to investigate, through a questionnaire survey method, the impact of anonymity on social media platforms on adolescents' cyberbullying behaviors, as well as the motivations and purposes behind adolescents' cross-cultural communication. The research findings indicate that the anonymity provided by social media platforms significantly increases the incidence of cyberbullying among adolescents.

Keywords: Adolescents; Cyberbullying; Cultural Communication.

1. Introduction

In today's society, social media has become an indispensable part of adolescents' daily lives, and its anonymity characteristics have a significant impact on adolescents' ethical behavior.

The high interactivity of social media platforms such as Weibo and WeChat make information spread rapidly and widely [1], but this may also lead to misinterpretation and misinterpretation of information, which may lead to ethical problems such as cyberbullying. At the same time, anonymity protects adolescents and allows them to express their views more freely, but this may also lead to an increase in cyberbullying. Together, these factors may lead to adolescents encountering more ethical problems in cross-cultural communication [2]; adolescents' motives and purposes of cross-cultural communication influence their cyberbullying behaviors, including interest in cultural exchange, new knowledge pursuit, or personal identity exploration. Positive motives promote responsible behavior, such as respecting different cultural values; conversely, curiosity or challenging existing cultural norms may trigger cultural offense or misunderstanding. Media literacy education is key to improving critical thinking, and information evaluation skills, and reducing the negative impact of misinformation or anonymity. Educational institutions and parents should work together to help adolescents establish correct cross-cultural communication concepts and behavioral patterns through education and practice. The purpose of this paper is to explore the cyberbullying problems of adolescents' intercultural communication in social media, especially how to understand and solve these problems through media literacy theory [3].

This study uses a questionnaire to explore the impact of the anonymity of social media platforms on adolescents' cyberbullying behaviors, as well as to focus on the motivations and purposes of adolescents' cross-cultural communication and to explore the relationship between the cyberbullying problems they encounter on social media. In addition, the questionnaire will use a Likert scale to assess adolescents' level of media literacy, including their critical thinking skills and information evaluation skills.

This study is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the cyberbullying problems of cross-cultural communication among adolescents in social media and to propose effective media literacy education strategies to address these problems. This will help to build a healthier and more positive social media environment that promotes the healthy growth and socialization process of adolescents. Organization of the Text

2. Literature References

2.1. Frontiers in the Development of Social Media Communication Theory

This study explores the critical thinking abilities, information selection capabilities, and moral judgment of individuals in the media environment. As the primary user group of social media, the level of media literacy among adolescents directly impacts ethical behavior in cross-cultural communication [4]. The term "media literacy" generally refers to people's ability to choose, understand, evaluate, question, create, produce, critically respond to, and judge various types of media information [5]. Faced with a vast amount of information, the public should learn to discern the truth of information rationally and objectively, read information critically, and adhere to ethical standards, without blindly accepting others' viewpoints. Professor Peng Lan argues that the definition of media literacy should be redefined in the era of social media. Previous definitions of media literacy were more targeted at the audience in the traditional media era, who were seen as pure consumers [6]. However, in the era of social media, the audience is not only a consumer but also a producer of content and an active participant in media activities. Therefore, the connotation of media literacy should be reflected in six aspects: media usage literacy, information consumption literacy, information production literacy, social interaction literacy, social collaboration literacy, and social participation literacy [7].

2.2. Current Research on Cyberbullying among Youth Groups

According to existing research, cyberbullying has become the most common and fastest-growing form of violence among adolescents, and its degree of harm has exceeded that of traditional bullying. The occurrence of cyberbullying is characterized by anonymity and rapid dissemination, which makes the victim's body and mind seriously affected, from the initial sadness and frustration gradually evolving into negative emotional experiences such as depression, decreased self-esteem, helplessness, and social anxiety [8]. Not only that, cyberbullying may also trigger suicidal behavior, bringing great threats to the mental health of adolescents [9].

Domestic studies on cyberbullying among adolescents mainly focus on prevalence characteristics, influencing factors, and their causal analysis [10]. For example, a data analysis based on a questionnaire survey of adolescents in seven provinces and autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government in the East, central and west showed that the proportion of adolescents in China who were bullied on the Internet was much higher than that of other populations, and explored the individual and social causes leading to this phenomenon [11]. In addition, the World Health Organization has also pointed out that nearly one-sixth of adolescents around the world have experienced cyberbullying, and this phenomenon has become increasingly serious since 2018 [12].

Strategies to prevent and respond to cyberbullying involve multiple dimensions. At the educational level, cyberbullying prevention education, cyber safety education, and cyber responsibility education are needed [13]. On the governmental level, the prevention of cyberbullying should be included in the policy and legal framework related to the protection of minors [14]. In addition, international organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have called for coordinated actions to address and prevent cyberbullying against children and young people [15].

Overall, adolescent cyberbullying is a global problem that requires the concerted efforts of individuals, platforms, and governments to prevent and treat it. Future research should continue to focus on how adolescents in different cultures recognize and respond to cyberbullying and explore how social media platforms can be used for positive education and interventions.

3. Methodology

3.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire for this paper is divided into four sections. The first section collects basic information from the respondents, including age and gender.

The second section includes two multiple-choice questions about social media usage, covering the time spent on social media and the commonly used social media platforms.

The third section uses a Likert scale to ask respondents ten questions, which cover understanding different cultural perspectives, comfort with cross-cultural communication, the role of social media in enhancing cultural understanding and respect, the impact of anonymity on cross-cultural communication, issues related to cyberbullying and cultural bias, and measures taken by social media platforms to prevent cyberbullying.

The fourth section consists of open-ended questions, asking respondents if they have encountered misunderstandings or conflicts due to cultural differences, how they handle such misunderstandings or conflicts when they occur, how they typically respond to cyberbullying on social media, and how they typically deal with cyberbullying that results from cultural bias on social media.

3.2. Participants

To ensure the specificity and representativeness of the research, the questionnaire will be distributed to adolescents aged 13 to 30. A total of 134 valid questionnaires were collected in the end, with participants from different age groups of adolescents, specifically distributed as follows: 5.22% are under 15 years old, 23.88% are between 16-20 years old, 29.1% are between 21-25 years old, and 26-30 years old account for the largest proportion, reaching 41.79%. This data distribution not only reflects the age characteristics of adolescents in social media usage but also provides a rich sample basis for the paper to explore the differences in cyberbullying encountered in cross-cultural communication among different age groups. The questionnaire content fully covers the basic information of the respondents, social media usage habits, insights on cross-cultural communication, and their cognition and attitude towards the phenomenon of cyberbullying, ensuring the comprehensiveness of the data. In the process of designing the questionnaire, the cognitive ability and interests of adolescents were fully considered, and the questions were set to be clear and easy to understand to improve the completion rate and the validity of the data.

Through a rigorous data collection, organization, and analysis process, the accuracy and reliability of the research results were ensured, providing solid data support for the paper. The design and implementation of this methodology aim to deeply analyze the cyberbullying behavior of adolescents in the social media environment, reveal the essence of the phenomenon of cyberbullying and the impact of anonymity on adolescent cross-cultural communication, and provide a scientific basis for related policy-making and intervention measures.

4. Results

4.1. Usage Habit Statistics

From the perspective of social media usage habits, most respondents spend between 1 to 5 hours on social media every day. Specifically, 40.3% of respondents use social media for 1 to 3 hours a day, and 32.09% use it for 3 to 5 hours a day. The number of users who use it for less than 1 hour and more than 5 hours accounts for 6.72% and 20.9% respectively. WeChat and TikTok are the two most popular social media platforms, followed by QQ, and Little Red Book is also favored by many users as shown in figure 1 and figure 2.

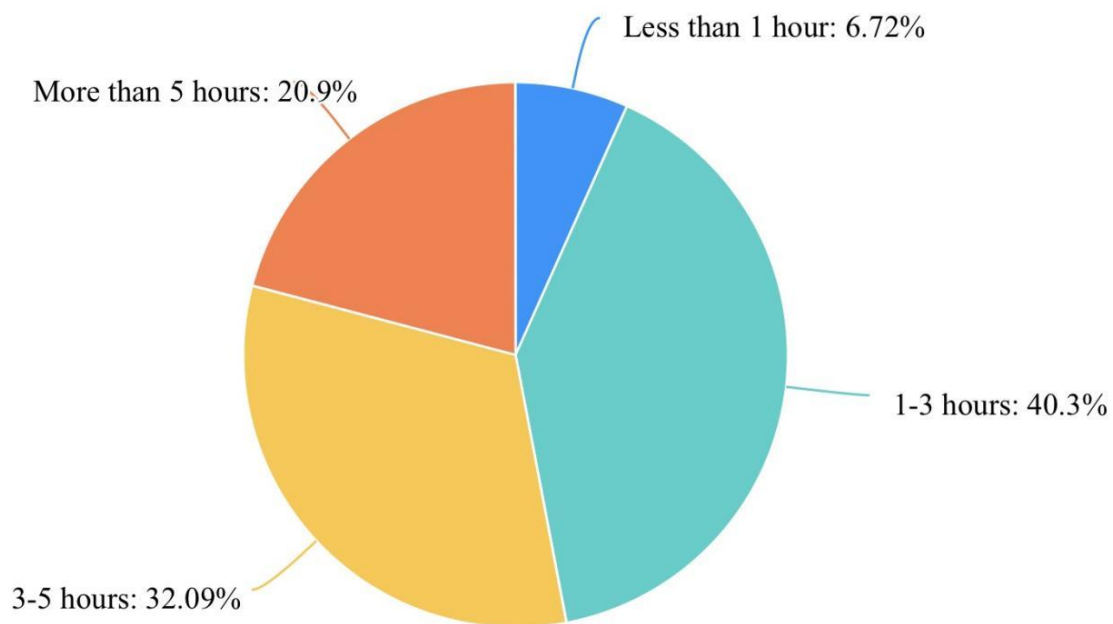


Fig 1. Daily Social Media Usage Time of Respondents.

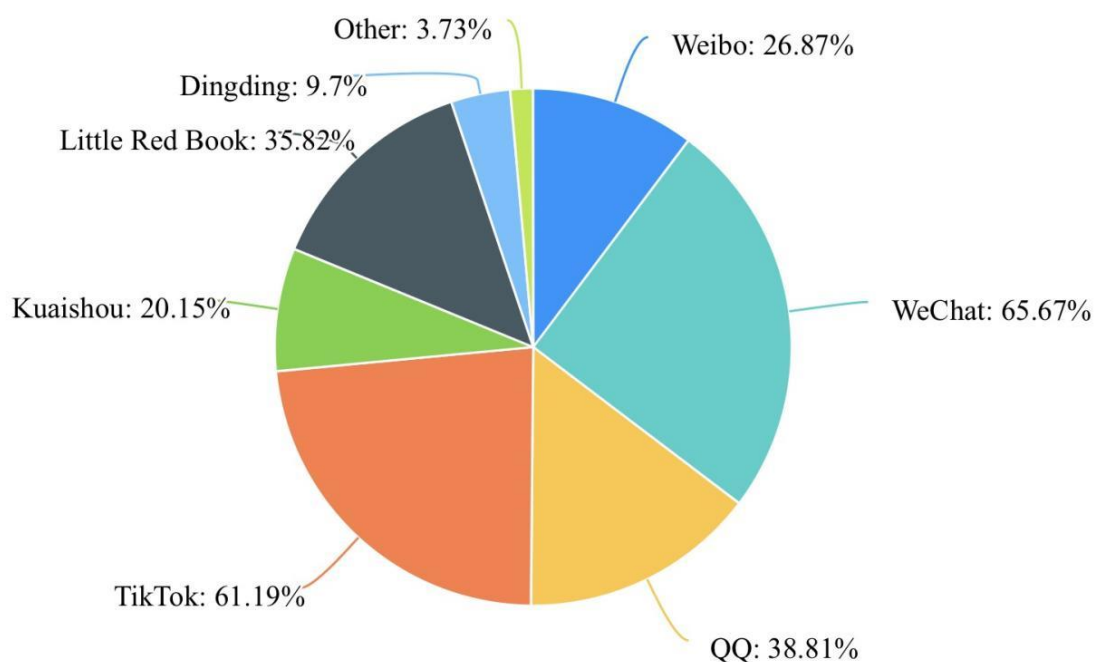


Fig 2. Main Social Media Platforms Used by Respondents.

4.2. Attitudes Towards Cyberbullying and Cross-cultural Communication

The cultural exchange and understanding section use the Likert scale to survey, and the results show that most respondents have a positive attitude towards understanding and respecting different cultural backgrounds. Among them, 50% are very consistent with this description; nearly two-thirds of the respondents reported that they often have the opportunity to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds on social media. This indicates that social media provides a good platform for promoting cross-cultural exchange; despite some differences, respondents generally feel more comfortable communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds. Neutral attitudes

are the most common, with only a few people saying they feel uncomfortable in such communication processes as shown in figure 3 and figure 4.

From the open-ended question section, respondents use methods such as calling the police, cold processing, explaining arguments or reporting complaints to resolve misunderstandings or conflicts caused by various situations on social media.

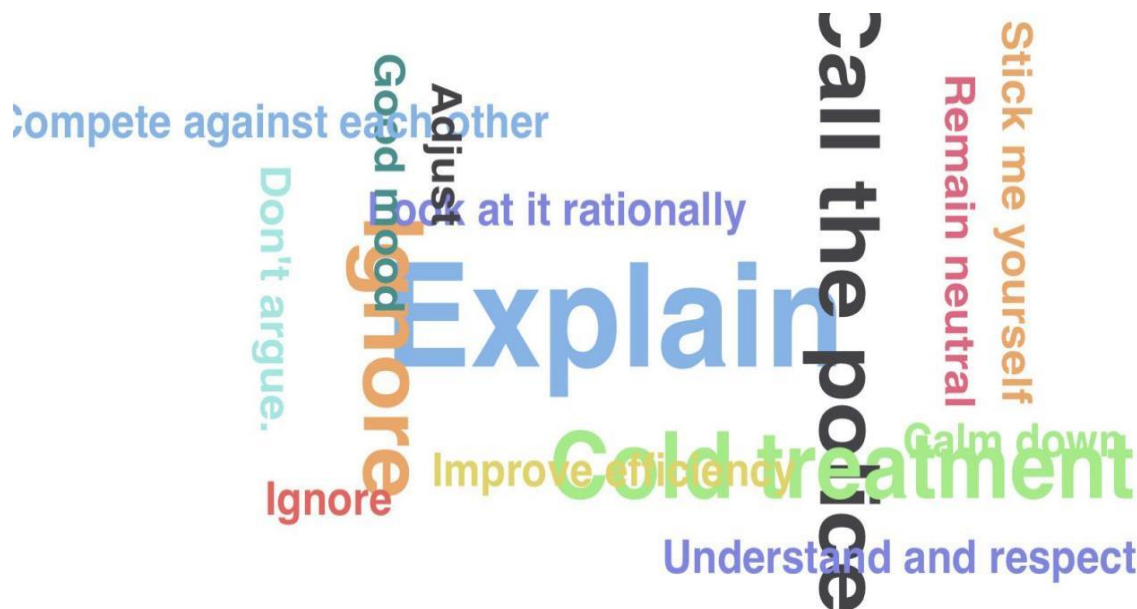


Fig 3. Methods of Handling Conflicts or Misunderstandings Due to Cultural Prejudices.



Fig 4. Methods of Dealing with Cyberbullying Due to Cultural Prejudices.

In summary, this survey reveals the age and gender characteristics of current social media users, as well as their preferences for social media platforms, and emphasizes the positive trend of cultural exchange and open and inclusive attitudes among users. These findings help to further understand how social media affects the way people interact and its role in the context of globalization. It also

proves that when adolescents have clear motives and purposes for cross-cultural communication, they may be more cautious in handling information to avoid causing disputes or conflicts, thereby reducing the occurrence of cyberbullying and cultural prejudice issues. Anonymity may reduce individual moral constraints, thereby increasing the possibility of cyberbullying behavior.

5. Discussion

In social media, the issue of cyberbullying in the cross-cultural communication of adolescents is increasingly prominent. This paper explores the causes, impacts, and strategies for resolution of this phenomenon through media literacy theory. The anonymity of social media platforms significantly increases the incidence of adolescent cyberbullying behavior, and anonymity reduces social monitoring, making individuals more likely to exhibit extreme behavior, and thereby increasing the occurrence of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying not only causes psychological harm to victims but may also trigger serious social issues. For example, cyberbullying may lead to depressive symptoms in adolescents and even engage in non-suicidal self-injury behavior. Therefore, addressing the issue of cyberbullying requires efforts from multiple aspects. First, improving the media literacy of adolescents is key. Media literacy education can help adolescents use the network correctly, improve information discrimination ability, and cultivate a positive social attitude. Parents and schools should become "middlemen" in the network, understand the state of existence of adolescents in the network, and reduce the occurrence of cyberbullying through positive guidance and preventive education.

Governments and businesses should also actively participate in the governance of cyberbullying. Governments can protect the network security of adolescents through legislation, formulate relevant laws to crack down on cyberbullying behavior, and social media platforms should strengthen the enforcement of community guidelines, handle and delete inappropriate content promptly, and provide users with a safe network environment.

In addition, multi-party co-governance is also an effective strategy to deal with cyberbullying. The United Nations Children's Fund points out that the participation and collaboration of children, parents, governments, businesses, and society are key to preventing cyberbullying. Through joint efforts, a healthier and safer network environment can be built to protect adolescents from cyberbullying.

The issue of cyberbullying in the cross-cultural communication of adolescents on social media is a complex social phenomenon that requires comprehensive governance from multiple perspectives. By improving media literacy, strengthening positive guidance, improving laws and regulations, and multi-party collaboration, cyberbullying behavior can be effectively reduced, and the physical and mental health of adolescents can be protected.

6. Conclusion

This paper mainly explores the phenomenon of cyberbullying among adolescent groups caused by cultural differences in the social media environment. The study found that in the context of globalization, although Internet technology has significantly promoted the exchange and understanding between adolescents from different countries and regions, it has also exposed some problems that need to be solved urgently, especially in cross-cultural interactions, misunderstandings, prejudices, and even aggressive behaviors are more frequent.

International cooperation should be strengthened to jointly formulate and improve relevant laws and regulations, clearly define cyberbullying behavior, and set corresponding punitive measures. At the same time, increases investment in digital literacy education for adolescents, helps them establish correct values and interpersonal communication standards, and encourages all sectors of society to actively participate in prevention and treatment work.

In summary, this paper not only reveals a severe challenge that exists globally but also provides a valuable reference framework for subsequent research.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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