

The Impact of Cyberbullying on Adolescents' Real Lives

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Abstract. With the surge of the Internet era, the widespread use of the Internet by minors has become an unstoppable and irreversible trend. In today's era of high-speed information flow, the Internet is like a sharp double-edged sword. On the one hand, it brings unprecedented convenience to minors with amazing speed and extremely wide coverage. They can easily obtain rich knowledge resources through the Internet and broaden their horizons. On the other hand, while the Internet brings many conveniences, it also induces various types of network infringement. Among them, cyberbullying is an extremely serious public health problem, and the depth of its harm may lead to a sharp increase in the risk of mental health problems. This risk may lead to a series of serious consequences, including long-term psychological problems and adverse effects on the development of adolescents, and in extreme cases, it may even push them to a desperate situation of suicide. This article is intended to deeply explore the multi-faceted impact of cyberbullying on the real life of teenagers, to attract great attention from all walks of life, and to jointly create a safe and healthy network environment for teenagers.

Keywords: Cyberbullying; Youth group; Case analysis.

1. Introduction

With the progress of the times, the information age has arrived, and the rapid development of the Internet is widely used around the world. The Internet has advantages and disadvantages, which not only bring convenience to our lives but also affect the physical and mental health of teenagers, resulting in cyber violence becoming a major public problem [1]. Social media refers to any digital tool that allows for social interaction, allowing users to share information on social platforms [2]. Plus strengthens the interaction and communication between people on the Internet. Bullying is an act that causes harm or discomfort to others through long-term intentional physical contact, verbal attack, or psychological manipulation. It has the characteristics of bullying, direct or indirect, active or passive, alone or in pairs. All parties to the bullying relationship usually include the bully, the bullied, and the bystander. Cyberbullying subverts the "power principle" of bullying. As long as the bully has strong Internet operation technology, they can bully the weak in the online world. Compared with traditional bullying, the harm of cyberbullying may be greater [3]. Cyberbullying is one of the common types of bullying. As the name implies, cyberbullying is violent on the Internet and penetrates the real life of teenagers with an invisible sense of oppression. It is for individuals or teams to use network means online too repeatedly and long-term send threatening words to teenagers whose physical and mental health is not yet mature, etc., and to use virtual email addresses and network names to cover their ears and eyes. The term cyberbullying first appeared in an article about Internet addiction in the New York Times in 1995. The earliest concern in the academic field was the Canadian scholar (Bill Belesy) [3]. He began to pay attention to bullying in 1995 and then created a website dedicated to children's cyberbullying [3]. Cyberbullying is different from normal bullying. For example, campus bullying (in terms of physical contact), campus bullying spreads a wide range of information and a large number of victims. It usually spreads other people's false remarks, posts embarrassing photos of others, etc., and usually targeting vulnerable groups. Teenagers use the Internet more and more frequently, and in the relevant aspects, society pays less attention to the impact of cyberbullying among teenagers. Therefore, the topic of this paper focuses on the impact of

cyberbullying on the real life of teenagers. Through case analysis, society pays attention to the harm of cyberbullying to teenagers and helps every teenager grow up healthily.

2. Literature References

With the widespread adoption of the internet, it has become an integral part of daily life for many people. As internet usage grows, it has also extended the scope of traditional "bullying behavior" into the digital realm. Cyberbullying, while sharing some commonalities with traditional bullying, also has unique characteristics due to the nature of the online medium. Shi Guoliang and colleagues compared traditional bullying with cyberbullying, highlighting both the similarities and differences. They argue that, like traditional bullying, cyberbullying is driven by motives such as emotional release or personal gain, and both share similar components. However, the internet has altered our perception of power dynamics—allowing individuals to use technology to harass others, regardless of physical strength or status. Forms of cyberbullying include verbal abuse, humiliation, defamation, and more. [4]

Cyberbullying has evolved into a widespread societal issue, creating a harmful social environment. Renee Garrett and colleagues view cyberbullying as a serious public health and safety concern, noting that it can inflict deep psychological harm, increase the risk of mental health issues [5] and in extreme cases, lead to suicidal tendencies. Data from Zoujiaqi shows that 33.33% of minors who have encountered internet-related dangers were harassed by inappropriate content, 35.76% were victims of online fraud, and 71.11% experienced cyberbullying. These statistics underscore the severity of the cyberbullying problem. To prevent further harm to adolescents from cyberbullying and other online threats, stronger measures must be taken in the realm of Internet security management.[6]

Human intervention plays a crucial role in effectively combating cyberbullying. By studying the patterns and characteristics of how cyberbullying spreads—such as the speed and reach of information dissemination across networks—strategic interventions can be developed. Technical tools can be employed to detect and prevent the spread of cyberbullying content in real time while establishing an early warning system. By stopping instances of bullying early on and providing proper guidance, it is possible to reduce the involvement of bystanders in online harassment and prevent the situation from escalating, ultimately minimizing the harm caused.[7]

Adolescents are often quick to embrace new technologies and platforms, making the Internet a crucial aspect of their daily routines. A study by Lenhart et al. (2015) revealed that 92% of American teenagers go online daily, with 24% of them reporting near-constant use. Teens typically engage with multiple platforms, including Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube, where social media plays a pivotal role in their communication and socialization habits [8].

According to Livingstone et al. (2017), the main reasons teen's use the internet are for entertainment, searching for information, and connecting with others. However, their research also highlights a concerning gap in awareness—many teens are unaware of the risks associated with extensive internet use, such as exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying, and privacy violations [9].

2.1. Social Media's Part in Cyberbullying

Social media platforms, with their promise of constant connectivity and instant communication, have become prime breeding grounds for cyberbullying. Kowalski et al. (2014) conducted a study showing that social media creates a blurred line between real-life and online interactions, which increases the chances of harmful behavior, such as cyberbullying. Teens are especially vulnerable as they use social media more frequently for socialization. The study also pointed out that bullies tend to feel emboldened by the anonymity that the internet offers, which reduces the need for direct, face-to-face confrontation, allowing aggression to escalate [10].

Hinduja and Patchin (2018) explored a case in which social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram were used to spread false information and share embarrassing photos of teenagers without their consent. The researchers found that because this content can go viral quickly and remain

accessible for an extended period, victims of cyberbullying on these platforms often experience profound feelings of isolation and helplessness [11].

2.2. Cyberbullying and Online Gaming

Cyberbullying isn't limited to social media; it also permeates online gaming communities. Multiplayer games, in particular, encourage social interactions that can sometimes create hostile environments. Research by Marciano et al. (2020) shows that online gaming community's often foster cyberbullying, which can take the form of verbal abuse, harassment, and exclusion. Adolescents who participate in online gaming are frequently subjected to bullying through chat functions, where aggressors can hide behind anonymous usernames and face no real-world consequences for their actions [12].

This study also highlighted significant gender disparities in online gaming, with female players reporting higher rates of harassment—often sexual—than their male counterparts. This underscores the complex and multifaceted nature of cyberbullying among teenagers, reflecting broader concerns about gender-based harassment in digital environments.

2.3. Psychological and Social Consequences of Cyberbullying

Studies suggest that adolescents who spend considerable time online are more vulnerable to the psychological effects of cyberbullying. The constant exposure can take a toll on their mental health and social relationships. A longitudinal study by Ditch the Label (2019) found that adolescents who spend more than five hours a day online face a higher risk of experiencing cyberbullying. These teens also reported elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and stress compared to those who spent less time online [13].

Mishna et al. (2012) further found that the lack of clear boundaries in online spaces contributes to feelings of powerlessness among cyberbullying victims. Unlike traditional bullying, which usually takes place in specific locations like schools, cyberbullying can occur anytime and anywhere, leaving no safe space for the victim to escape the harassment. This constant presence of online aggression can have a profound impact on the emotional well-being of adolescents, who often feel trapped by the unrelenting nature of the abuse [14].

These studies highlight the pressing need for effective strategies to address cyberbullying in all its forms, whether it occurs on social media or in online gaming communities, and underscore the lasting psychological consequences it can have on young people.

3. Methodology

This study used case analysis and selected specific cyberbullying events as the research object. Relevant information was obtained through a literature review, online data collection, and qualitative analysis of the cases, aiming to reveal the impact of cyberbullying on adolescent mental health and the social and legal factors behind it. Using the case analysis method, we analyzed the influencing factors of current cyberbullying on teenagers and found relevant domestic and foreign cases respectively. The specific situation is shown in Table 1. The Internet is playing an important social function and has an unprecedented impact on people's lives. However, the subsequent phenomenon of Internet infringement also appears frequently, especially in teenagers.

Table 1. Cyber-bullying cases.

Type	Area	Event Description	Time	Process Mode
cyber bullying	internal	Xiao Zhang and Xiao Huang are classmates in the same school. Xiao Zhang spread derogatory notes and indecent videos in his circle of friends, which led to serious mental harm to Xiao Huang.	2024.04	Xiao Zhang's parents were sentenced to pay Xiao Huang 3,000 yuan in compensation for mental damage and legal expenses of 2,000 yuan. In addition, the first-instance court also ordered Zhang to publicly apologize to Huang on his WeChat moments, and the apology statement should be kept public for at least 24 hours.
cyber bullying	internal	A college entrance examination girl in Henan province was subjected to online violence after entering an examination room wearing a short skirt. In the face of overwhelming criticism and abuse, the girl was under great psychological pressure and finally chose to give up the college entrance examination.	2024.06	Due to the large number of Internet users, it is difficult to investigate the responsibility of individuals, and the incident has not been effectively dealt with at the legal level.
cyber bullying	Foreign country (Australia)	Amy Ivy, a 14-year-old child star, committed suicide after intense online abuse and intense psychological pressure.	2018.01	Similarly, due to the large number of netizens and the difficulty of being held accountable, the incident has not been properly handled at the legal level.
cyber bullying	Foreign (UK)	Hannah Smith, a 14-year-old middle school student, was abused and threatened by online thugs after registering her homepage on Ask. FM and uploading photos. She was overwhelmed, and he hanged himself at home	2013.08	Similar to the Amy incident, the incident has not been effectively handled at the legal level due to the imperfect law and the difficulty of network accountability.

Through the above case analysis, it is found that the negligent supervision and imperfection of the Internet is one of the problems that teenagers are harmed by cyberbullying. In the process of cyberbullying, the supervision of the platform is not in place, and there is no effect of cutting off and timely stopping loss. In addition to the uncertainty of the identity of the Internet, some unidentified "netizens" make inappropriate remarks on the above but cannot be held accountable, and the Internet has become a place outside the law.

The imperfection of the law is the reason for the fear of cyberbullies, and it is also the problem of cyberbullying itself. Many cyberbullying incidents will not have the corresponding legal punishment after the occurrence mostly in the form of failure. The netizen's apology cannot resolve the pain of the parties concerned, nor can it recover the regret. For example, Amy and Hannah. In addition to the improvement of the law, the strength of the law is also worth examining whether the bully can be truly punished. With the younger age of Internet users, minors in adolescence, on the one hand, are full of curiosity and desire to explore the Internet world, and on the other hand, they are easy to be induced by bad information on the Internet. They have a weak sense of self-protection and lack a clear ability to distinguish the network world. They cannot accurately distinguish the truth, good, and evil of network information, nor do they have enough self-protection awareness and coping ability to self-protection. Under such circumstances, it is easy to become the object of network illegal behavior, and the network security education of teenagers is also the most important problem. With the development of The Times, cyberbullying is a new way of bullying on the stage of history. It should be included as a part of the anti-violence education of teenagers. Due to the lack of education in this

aspect, minors are unable to identify in time when they suffer from such violations, leading to frequent tragedies. We teenagers should learn how to prevent the occurrence of problems, how to adjust the mentality, and who to ask for help. Never let the weapon of the law be rendered useless.

4. Discussion

Adolescent cyberbullying is becoming increasingly common, which has brought attention to the psychological and social effects of this behaviour as well as the need for more popular scientific education and stricter legal oversight. Legal frameworks must change to adequately safeguard minors in digital environments, and educational institutions must address the disparity in young people's digital literacy and responsible use of technology. The present discourse delves into the potential synergies between legal oversight and popular scientific education to alleviate the consequences of cyberbullying. It highlights the legal obstacles that exist today, the parental and school responsibilities, and the significance of teaching teenagers' online etiquette.

A relatively recent topic of concern is the legal framework governing cyberbullying, especially in light of how quickly the digital environment is changing. Many nations have passed legislation to combat cyberbullying, particularly in cases where it coexists with defamation, harassment, or stalking. However, because of the distinctive characteristics of online interactions and the global reach of social media sites, these laws frequently encounter severe enforcement issues.

The jurisdictional intricacy of cyberbullying claims is a major legal concern. Because the internet is a worldwide network, cyberbullying may happen between states or countries. Because several countries use different laws, it can be challenging to coordinate legal activities. For example, a teenager in one nation may cyberbully another adolescent across borders, complicating the legal procedure. As a result, requests have been made for more unified international legislation and conventions to deal with cyberbullying globally.

The age of legal responsibility is another matter. The fact that kids are sometimes not subject to the same legal requirements as adults makes it more difficult to penalize and discourage cyberbullying. Children must be shielded from the worst legal repercussions, but there also has to be a system in place to guarantee responsibility. Restorative justice approaches, which emphasize rehabilitation over punishment, are advocated by several legal professionals as perhaps more suitable for kids who engage in cyberbullying. Instead of focusing just on punishment, these models promote education, counseling, and reconciliation to mend the harm that has been done.

Furthermore, anonymity and privacy present difficult legal issues. The anonymity of the internet is frequently used by cyberbullies, making it challenging to identify the offenders. The privacy regulations in place may unintentionally shield cyberbullies, particularly if they create false accounts or hide their identities. Some nations, including the UK, have imposed more stringent laws on social media businesses, mandating that they remove offensive information immediately and assist in apprehending perpetrators. These steps are still in their early stages, though, and the laws that deal with cyberbullying are not as advanced as the technology that makes it possible.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, judicial oversight is still a crucial component in the fight against cyberbullying. Governments must enact precise legislation that defines cyberbullying, specifies its consequences, and offers victims' rights of recourse. Social media companies also need to answer for their part in making cyberbullying possible. Many platforms have come under fire for not enforcing stricter anti-bullying policies and for taking too long to respond to complaints of harassment. Stronger legal obligations on social media corporations to shield children from cyberbullying may entail more stringent content filtering guidelines and obligatory reporting.

Legal oversight is essential for combating cyberbullying, but it is not enough to stop the issue on its own. Children must get an education, especially in popular science, to enable them to use the internet responsibly and safely. Popular science education refers to accessible and engaging instructional content that discusses complicated subjects, such as cyberbullying, in a way that

connects with young audiences. It contributes significantly to the prevention of cyberbullying by raising awareness and digital literacy.

Teaching digital citizenship is one of the main components of popular science education for minors. Understanding how to use the internet responsibly, respecting others' rights online, and identifying and reporting harmful behavior is all part of being a digital citizen. Digital citizenship programs may be implemented by parents, schools, and community organizations to educate teenagers about the risks associated with using the internet, such as cyberbullying, online predators, and privacy violations. Through the use of these tools, teenagers may become more conscious of the implications of their activities in digital environments and enhance their critical thinking abilities while dealing with online information.

The growth of empathy in online interactions is another crucial component of schooling. A common cause of cyberbullying is a lack of awareness of the effects that words and actions taken online can have on other people. Cyberbullying may be decreased via educational programs that foster empathy and compassion in both offline and online contexts. For instance, role-playing activities, where students take the roles of both bullies and victims, can show the emotional damage caused by cyberbullying and build deeper knowledge of the pain it inflicts.

Programs for education should include teaching teenagers about online security and privacy in addition to developing empathy. A lot of kids don't realize how simple it is to share or alter personal information online. By teaching young people how to secure their data and the consequences of oversharing online, educators may help decrease the potential for cyber bullies to exploit sensitive information. Adolescents should also be taught the value of keeping a positive internet presence since their actions online can have a lasting impact on their reputations and future chances.

Another important component of popular scientific education is parental participation. Compared to schools, parents frequently have more control over their kids' internet usage and conduct. However, many parents lack the requisite digital literacy skills to adequately supervise their children in online settings. Parent education programs should educate parents on the platforms their kids use, the dangers of cyberbullying, and how to keep an eye on and encourage their kids' online activity. Parent education seminars and materials can help parents better comprehend the digital environment their children live in. Schools and community initiatives can offer these events.

Additionally, schools must play a bigger part in teaching popular science. Although many schools currently have anti-bullying policies in place, not many of them sufficiently address the unique problems that come with cyberbullying. Schools can work with tech firms and groups that specialize in internet safety to create programs that specifically address the peculiarities of cyberbullying. The emotional impacts of online harassment, reporting procedures for cyberbullying, and techniques for fostering and encouraging online communities should all be covered in these seminars. In addition, educators and other school personnel must be trained in recognizing the warning indicators of cyberbullying and how to take appropriate action.

Ultimately, as technology changes, so too must popular science teaching. The content of education has to be updated to reflect new hazards when new platforms and communication methods appear. For instance, the prevalence of livestreaming and vanishing texts has made it more difficult to stop cyberbullying. To ensure that teenagers are always prepared with the most up-to-date knowledge to protect themselves in digital environments, educational efforts must adapt to these developments.

To successfully prevent cyberbullying, legal oversight, and popular scientific education must collaborate. Although laws offer the essential framework to protect victims and make cyberbullies responsible, education is the most important factor in avoiding cyberbullying in the first place. Popular science education may assist teenagers in navigating the digital world more securely by fostering digital literacy, empathy, and responsible internet use. To guarantee that kids are shielded from online abuse, governments and social media companies must simultaneously keep creating and enforcing legislative restrictions. When combined, these tactics provide a thorough way to deal with the widespread issue of teenage cyberbullying.

5. Conclusion

Through the above case analysis and literature review, this paper analyzes the various injuries suffered by teenagers when they use the Internet. Because teenagers have a sense of dependence on the Internet for a long time, the Internet has become an indispensable part of their lives. Youth is in the rapid development stage of life, which is a critical period for the formation of an outlook on life and values. Being curious about unknown things can easily lead to excitement, so cyberbullies take advantage of this and post negative evaluations, intimidation, and violent messages toward teenagers. Cyberbullying has brought many adverse effects and deeply affects the physical and mental health of minors. May endanger the physical and mental health of adolescents and lead to suicidal thoughts; The negative emotional impact of cyberbullying on normal life can easily lead to decreased academic performance, tardiness, early departure, absenteeism, and truancy. On the one hand, due to the virtual nature of social networks, teenagers are prone to social anxiety after being cyberbullied. On the other hand, it can trigger a series of mental problems. Long-term cyberbullying can lead to damage to the physical and mental health of victims, affecting sleep quality, appetite, and dissatisfaction with their body image. Seriously affects the normal life of teenagers. There are certain limitations to this case analysis, and more comprehensive case studies are needed for further investigation. The situation of adolescent cyberbullying requires action from the government and various regions, through the enactment of laws, regulations, and mandatory measures. Cyberbullies should face severe punishment and receive online education. Schools should organize training for parents' awareness of network security education and teenagers' awareness of network security prevention. Through lectures, expert symposiums, etc., educators can provide correct guidance and encourage parents to participate in preventing bullying and coping work. It is necessary for the country to regulate the online behavior of young people and set up youth modes through software to prevent them from becoming addicted to the internet. Family and school should be connected, hand in hand, to build a healthy barrier for young people and enable them to grow up healthy and happy.

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