



The impact of internet addiction on cyberbullying among adolescents: Causes, psychological effects, and intervention strategies

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Abstract

Internet Addiction Disorder is the term for problematic, compulsive internet use, especially on social media, that affects an individual's ability to function over an extended period of time. It is also referred to as pathological or problematic internet use. Internet addiction has become a growing concern among adolescents, significantly contributing to cyberbullying behaviors. Excessive online engagement fosters cyber aggression, victimization, and psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Understanding the causes, psychological effects, and intervention strategies is essential to mitigate the negative impact and promote safer digital interactions. This review examines peer-reviewed studies (2020–2025) from PubMed, Google Scholar, Web of Science, and PsycINFO, using systematic reviews, meta-analyses, surveys, and cross-sectional studies. Key themes cyber aggression, victimization, psychological effects, and coping mechanisms were analyzed to understand how internet addiction drives cyberbullying and its impact on adolescent mental health. The findings reveal a strong link between internet addiction and cyberbullying among adolescents, contributing to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and academic decline. Excessive internet use increases cyber-victimization, aggression, and emotional distress. Lack of parental supervision and digital literacy exacerbates these risks. Effective interventions include self-regulation, digital detox, CBT, and school-based awareness programs. Strengthening cyber safety policies and promoting ethical online behavior can help mitigate the harmful effects of internet addiction and cyberbullying. This review highlights the link between internet addiction, cyberbullying, and negative mental health outcomes among adolescents. Addressing these issues requires digital literacy programs, parental guidance, and mental health support. Promoting responsible internet use, stronger policies, and targeted interventions can help protect young people from the risks of excessive digital engagement.

Keywords: Internet addiction, cyberbullying, adolescent mental health, psychological effects, digital literacy, parental supervision, intervention strategies

Introduction

Internet addiction disorder (IAD) is conceived as an impulse control disorder that closely resembles pathological gambling and does not involve exclusive use of an intoxicating drug. Originally IAD was suggested as a disorder by Goldberg (1995) in a satirical hoax. The internet has evolved into a 'social technology' that is continually challenging researchers to examine its effects on numerous facets of social life (Kraut *et al.*, 1998). The massive growth of the internet over the past decades has changed the profile of the "computer addict" (Siste *et al.*, 2019; Young, 1996). Internet is a valuable and attractive source for people because of instant communication and access to facts, information, knowledge, and entertainment. It has become an environment that could be abused by virtually anyone, irrespective of their interest in ideas, science and technology (Griffiths, 1998). Internet addiction has employed a great progressive impact on individuals' psychological wellbeing and social lives besides some other negative aspects of human life like Facebook addiction and cyberbullying. Bullying was previously discussed as repeated overt

aggression to harm others but in recent years a new form of bullying known as cyberbullying has attained the attention of psychologists, social scientists, educationists, and researchers. It has now become a wide concern of parents and educationists because of its negative impact on academic performance and interpersonal relations. Particularly adolescents and young adults in university settings have been experiencing or exposed to cyberbullying. Usually, they are hesitant and are not a good reporter of the situations embarrassing to them as a result they experience distress that drastically affects their academic and social life. Both internet addiction and cyberbullying are electronic sicknesses that are surmised to be closely linked, it is therefore recent researcher are paying serious attention to this phenomenon ^[1].

Social media addiction is linked to cyberbullying through various theories. Social Learning Theory suggests that exposure to online aggression influences behavior. Problem Behavior Theory explains that adolescents engage in cyberbullying to gain peer acceptance. The Online Disinhibition Effect highlights how frequent exposure to

online aggression desensitizes individuals, increasing their likelihood of participating in or tolerating cyberbullying. These theories emphasize how excessive social media use fosters aggressive behaviors, reinforcing cyberbullying as a normalized aspect of digital interactions [2].

Causes of cyberbullying

The causes of cyberbullying include a lack of empathy, a desire for power and control, revenge, peer pressure, deficient digital communication skills, escapism, seeking entertainment, and inadequate regulation. These factors can lead individuals to engage in hurtful online behaviors without understanding the emotional harm they cause [2].

Psychological effects of internet addiction and cyberbullying

Internet addiction is a serious psychological phenomenon that manifests itself in adolescents worldwide. Young people exhibit compulsive behaviors in the digital world that affect their emotional functionality. In this way, adolescents spend many hours online, find it difficult to break free from them, withdraw socially and experience unpleasant feelings. This means that internet addiction is turning into a modern form of psychopathology that burdens mental health [3].

Internet addiction has also been considered as a psychological escape mechanism to avoid real-world problems and has been proven to be associated with both mental and physical symptoms. Examples are the higher risk of Internet addiction, inferior mental health outcomes, suicidal ideation, depression, and anxiety. In addition, intense back pain, headaches, and increased body mass index have been observed among Internet-addicted youths. Furthermore, Internet addiction has been identified to negatively impact the ophthalmologic system in the form of eye strain, and an increase of sleep disorders has been reported among Internet-addicted youths compared with non-addicted individuals. Cyberbullying could occur via a special path that could lead to increased severe harm among individuals who have been bullied in their real life [4].

Cyberbullying trends among adolescents

According to a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of America, teenagers were the main victim of cyberbullying. With the increasing popularity of computers and mobile phones, the proportion of students being bullied in school dropped from 28% to 21% from 2005 to 2015, but the proportion of cyberbullying was increasing year by year. In 2007, 4% of middle and high school students suffered from cyberbullying. In 2013, about 7% of middle and high school students reported being cyberbullied in the school. In 2015, 11.5% of students in public middle and high schools were cyberbullied. Middle school students were at the highest risk of cyberbullying, but by high school the risk began to decline. Middle and high school students are going through adolescence, a critical period in human development. Harmful experiences during this period can cause serious and lasting consequences. At the same time, it also causes trouble to human relationship and interaction in the school. Therefore, Cyberbullying in middle and high schools is a pressing social, health, and educational issue, drawing attention from

researchers, social workers, and scholars [5].

Coping mechanisms and psychological interventions

Coping strategies are generally defined as an individual's behavioral, emotional, and cognitive responses to stress. Cyberbullies also had high conduct problems, hyperactivity, frequent smoking and drunkenness, and low prosocial behavior. The use of instant messaging applications, blogging, and chat rooms has been associated with harassment from the internet. Traditionally, coping strategies fall into two categories. These are the transactional model and the approach-avoidance model. According to the transactional model, it is described as problem-focused and emotion-focused. In this model, there are primary and secondary evaluation processes. The primary process involves assessing whether an event is a threat, and the secondary process involves choosing a specific coping strategy that is appropriate to the resources available to the individual. For example, a student who approaches the event with a problem-oriented approach may directly resist cyberbullying or seek help from those around him/her. A student who approaches the event with an emotional focus may cry and want to comfort herself/himself by thinking that there are more important life events to worry about. According to the approach-avoidance model, the individual evaluates whether he/she has sufficient resources to cope with the situation and then chooses either the approach mode (focused on solving the problem directly) or the avoidance mode. For example, a student who uses the approach strategy may face the cyberbully instead of ignoring the event. Students who use the avoidance strategy can delete threatening messages and ignore cyberbullies.

Coping strategies used to manage cyberbullying include trusting friends and teachers, staying offline, not using the websites/software used by the bully, and preventing the bully. Although some students have reported cyberbullying incidents to their friends or parents, it has been argued that cyberbullying victims are less likely to seek help than traditional bullying victims. It was stated that they also use coping methods within the scope of online security, such as changing their username/account ID, changing their e-mail address/phone number, unfriending/blocking messages, or using social media [6].

Coping strategies when having cyberbullying experience may vary and can be classified into four groups: (1) directly reacting against cyberbullying acts (such as retaliation or constructive feedback); (2) ignoring the cyberbullying behaviors (such as avoidance or doing nothing), (3) seeking support from other sources (such as parents, friends, or teachers), and (4) utilizing technological solutions (such as blocking senders; Perren *et al.*, 2012) [7].

Prevention and Intervention strategies

For better protection of vulnerable adolescents online, it is critical to review prevention and intervention strategies with specific reference to cyberbullying and online harassment. These strategies should preferably target and address specific adolescent issues and variables. Cyberbullying, involving repeated digital harassment intended to harm others, is more pervasive than traditional bullying due to anonymity and a lack of time or location constraints. This

study explores youth cyberbullying prevention and intervention strategies by gathering insights from experts in education, psychology, technology, law enforcement,

research, and social support to develop effective measures for reducing cyberbullying [8].

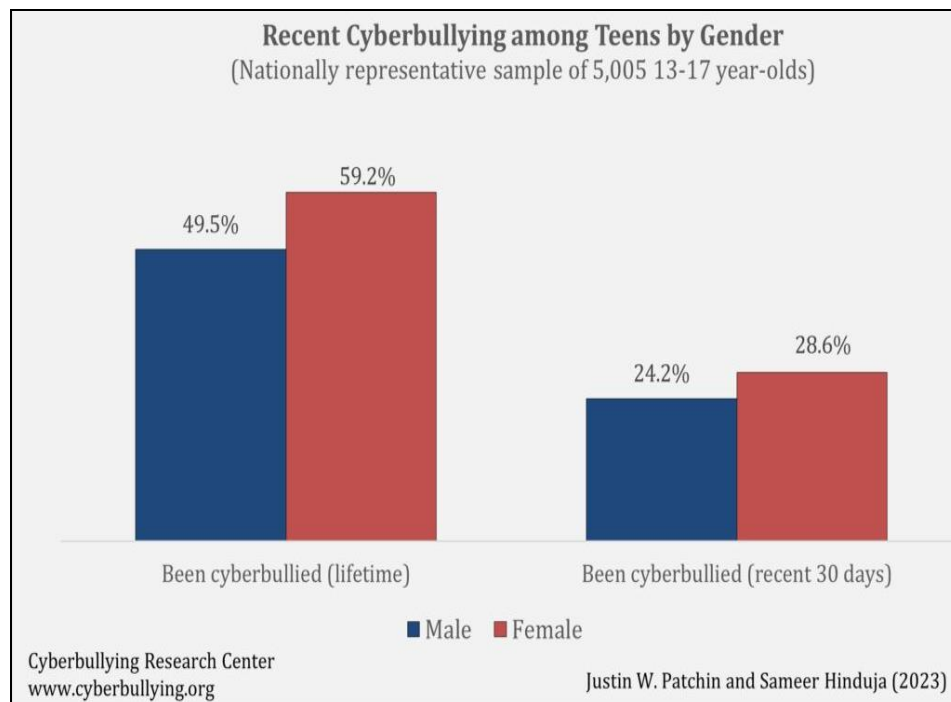


Fig 1: Cyberbullying Research Center. 2023 Cyberbullying Data [Internet]. Cyberbullying Research Center. 2024 [cited 2025 Mar 1]. Available from: <https://cyberbullying.org/2023-cyberbullying-data>

Scope of the review

This review analyzes studies from 2020 to 2025 on the link between internet addiction and cyberbullying among adolescents. It incorporates diverse methodologies, including systematic reviews, meta-analyses, surveys, descriptive, and cross-sectional studies, to explore how internet addiction influences cyberbullying behaviors, victimization, and psychological effects.

Types of Studies Included

The review incorporates empirical studies, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, survey-based research, and scoping reviews that investigate the link between internet addiction and cyberbullying. It explores the role of excessive internet use in influencing adolescent behavior, mental health, and coping mechanisms related to cyber aggression and victimization.

Research questions

This study aims to address the following key questions:

- How does internet addiction contribute to cyberbullying and cyber victimization among adolescents?
- What are the psychological effects of cyberbullying on adolescents with internet addiction?
- What intervention strategies can be implemented to mitigate the impact of internet addiction on cyberbullying?

Review of literature

The intersection of internet addiction and cyberbullying has become a pressing issue in adolescent mental health research. This section provides a structured analysis of

relevant studies categorized under key themes

1. Internet addiction and cyberbullying trends

A systematic review by Muhammed Sevilgen (2025) examined the relationship between internet addiction, cyberbullying, and cyber victimization among adolescents. Using PRISMA guidelines, the study reviewed literature from Web of Science, PubMed, Science Direct, Google Scholar, and Yöktez, identifying 2,515 studies (2010–2022). After applying inclusion criteria, 29 empirical studies with a final sample of 51,311 adolescents were analyzed. Findings revealed a significant link between internet addiction and cyberbullying, with higher addiction levels increasing both cyberbullying perpetration and victimization risk. The study underscores the interconnected nature of excessive internet use and online aggression, advocating for integrating internet addiction awareness into education and prevention programs. Addressing internet addiction in interventions may help reduce cyberbullying and improve adolescents' psychological and social well-being [10].

Kismet Akkurt Nurtan (2022) explored the relationship between Internet addiction, cyberbullying, cyber victimization, and parental attitudes among ninth-grade students. This descriptive study surveyed 550 students, using Young's Internet Addiction Test-Short Form, Cyberbullying and Cyber Victimization Scales, and the Parental Attitudes Scale. Results showed 47.1% owned a computer or tablet, while 99.5% had a smartphone. Most students (57.4%) used smartphones for social media and video streaming, while 44.9% used computers weekly. Findings revealed a positive correlation between Internet addiction and cyberbullying, but a negative correlation with

cyber victimization. The study highlights the importance of educational programs for adolescents and parents to promote responsible Internet use, awareness of addiction risks, and cyberbullying prevention through parental guidance strategies ^[11].

2. Psychological Impact of Internet Addiction and Cyberbullying

Gassem Gohal (2023) investigated the prevalence, risk factors, and psychological effects of cyberbullying among adolescents in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. This cross-sectional study surveyed 355 students (ages 12–18) using a validated online questionnaire, including the Cyberbullying Questionnaire and Mental Health Inventory-5 (MHI-5). Cyberbullying prevalence was 42.8%, with males slightly more affected. Excessive internet use (12+ hours/day) increased vulnerability. Academic performance declined in 26.3% of cases, with some students considering dropping out (20%), quitting internet use (19.7%), or experiencing self-harm thoughts (21.1%). The study highlights a strong link between cyber victimization, academic struggles, and psychological distress, stressing the need for awareness campaigns, mental health support, and digital safety programs ^[12].

Helen Dermani (2022) conducted a scoping review examining the psychological impact of internet addiction on adolescents. The study analyzed 25 empirical studies retrieved from three databases, categorizing findings into four key areas: depression and anxiety, suicide, emotional and behavioral effects, and school bullying/cyberbullying. Results indicated that internet addiction significantly contributes to various forms of psychopathology, negatively affecting adolescents' emotional well-being and behavior. Excessive internet use was linked to increased depression, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, and behavioral issues, as well as an increased risk of involvement in school bullying and cyberbullying. The review highlights the critical need for professionals working with adolescents to recognize and address the psychological consequences of internet addiction. The study underscores the importance of early intervention, digital literacy education, and mental health support programs to mitigate the risks associated with internet addiction. Addressing these concerns can help prevent long-term emotional and behavioral consequences for adolescents ^[3].

3. Academic and Social consequences

Kaizyn P. Vaghchipawala *et al.* (2023) conducted a study examines the impact of cyberbullying on high school students' academic performance in Surat. Utilizing regression analysis, it explores the extent to which cyberbullying affects students' CGPA. A total of 92 students, aged 14–19, participated, with data collected using the Cyber Victimization Scale (CYBVICS) and students' academic records. The SPSS program was used to analyze the relationship between cyberbullying and academic performance. Findings indicate that cyberbullying is a significant predictor of academic decline. The study highlights the growing prevalence of cyber victimization, with rates varying due to different assessment methodologies. Given the increasing impact of online harassment, the study underscores the need for targeted

interventions in schools, such as awareness programs, digital literacy initiatives, and improved monitoring of online interactions. These findings provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers to develop strategies that mitigate cyberbullying's negative effects on student achievement ^[13].

Apolinario K. *et al.* (2023) conducted a study explored the social and academic effects of cyberbullying victimization among undergraduate students in Capiz, using a mixed-method research approach. Data collection involved a demographic profile, the Cyberbullying Victimization Scale, the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire, and a researcher-developed focus group discussion guide. Findings revealed that the overall extent of cyberbullying victimization was moderate, while its social effects were also moderate. However, the academic effects of cyberbullying victimization were found to be high. Additionally, significant differences were observed in the social and academic impacts depending on the extent of cyberbullying victimization. These results highlight the need for targeted intervention programs, counseling services, and awareness campaigns in educational institutions to mitigate cyberbullying's adverse effects on students' academic performance and social well-being ^[14].

4. Intervention strategies and coping mechanisms

Jorge J. Varela (2022) examined the impact of different coping mechanisms on depressive symptoms among adolescents experiencing cyberbullying. The study analyzed two independent samples, one with 463 adolescents (73.4% female) and the other with 694 adolescents (85.45% female), all aged 15–19. Using moderation models through ordinary least squares regressions, the study confirmed that cyberbullying victims experience higher levels of depression. The findings revealed that disconnecting from social media was linked to increased depressive symptoms when cyberbullying frequency was low. Conversely, ignoring the situation was associated with lower depressive symptoms when cyberbullying occurred less frequently. These results emphasize the role of coping strategies in mitigating the mental health effects of cyberbullying, particularly in the context of increased virtual interactions. The study highlights the importance of educating adolescents on effective coping mechanisms to reduce the psychological impact of cyberbullying and suggests that interventions should be tailored based on the severity and frequency of online harassment ^[15].

Eyüp Sabır Erbiçer (2022) investigated the relationship between coping strategies and cyberbullying perpetration among adolescents in Turkey. The study aimed to determine whether active, avoidant, and negative coping strategies, along with sociodemographic factors such as parental education, gender, and family income, influence cyberbullying behaviors. A total of 1,032 adolescents (mean age = 16.01 years) participated, with 58.9% female and 41.1% male. Data were collected using the Personal Information Form, Cyberbullying Scale, and Coping Scale for Adolescents (KIDCOPE). Multiple regression analysis revealed that active coping strategies ($\beta = -.26, p < .001$) served as a protective factor against cyberbullying perpetration, while avoidant ($\beta = .31, p < .001$) and negative coping ($\beta = .32, p < .001$) strategies increased the likelihood

of engaging in cyberbullying. Additionally, a mother's education level ($\beta = .10, p < .001$) was a risk factor. However, gender, family income, and father's education level were not significant predictors. These findings highlight the importance of fostering adaptive coping strategies in adolescents to reduce cyberbullying perpetration. The study suggests that intervention programs should focus on promoting active coping mechanisms while discouraging avoidant and negative coping behaviors. Implementing targeted educational initiatives in schools and communities can help mitigate cyberbullying risks and support healthier online interactions among adolescents ^[16].

5. Gaps in literature and future directions

Despite extensive research on internet addiction and cyberbullying, significant gaps remain in understanding long-term effects, causality, and individual differences.

Most studies rely on cross-sectional data, limiting insights into behavioral changes over time. Longitudinal research is needed to assess sustained impacts on mental health, academics, and social relationships. While the link between cyber-victimization and cyber-aggression is recognized, little is known about why some victims become perpetrators. Cultural, socioeconomic, and demographic factors remain underexplored. Parental attitudes, digital literacy, and coping mechanisms need further study. Research must also consider platform-specific risks. Future studies should evaluate interventions, protective factors, and targeted prevention strategies to mitigate psychological and social consequences.

Result

Studies on Internet Addiction and Cyberbullying

Table 1: Summary of studies (2014–2025) examining the relationship between internet addiction and cyberbullying, highlighting outcomes, study designs, and adolescent mental health impacts.

S. No.	Authors	Year	Study Design	Sample Size and Age Range	Outcome Measures
1.	Muhammed Sevilgen	2025	Systematic Review	51,311 adolescents	Internet addiction positively associated with cyberbullying and cyber victimization
2.	Kismet Akkurt Nurtan	2022	Descriptive Study	550 ninth-grade students	Positive relationship between Internet addiction and cyberbullying; negative relationship with cyber victimization
3.	Teresa Portilho Carvalho	2023	Survey-based Study	553 adolescents and young adults (17-30 years)	Internet addiction is positively associated with cyber-victimization and cyber-aggression
4.	Chengyan Zhu	2021	Comprehensive Review	Multiple empirical studies	Prevalence of cyberbullying increased significantly; identified risk and protective factors
5.	Charisse L Nixon	2024	Review Study	Multiple empirical studies	Impact of cyberbullying on adolescent health, including mental and emotional well-being
6.	Charisse L Nixon	2014	Review Study	Multiple empirical studies	Cyberbullying linked to depression, anxiety, loneliness, suicidal behavior, and substance use
7.	Helen Dermani	2022	Scoping Review	25 empirical studies	Internet addiction contributes to depression, anxiety, suicide, emotional and behavioral issues
8.	Jiameng Li	2023	Survey-based Study	3378 adolescents (11-16 years)	Excessive internet use linked to anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, and psychosomatic issues
9.	Jayanti Mishra	2024	Narrative Review	Multiple studies	Internet Addiction Disorder impacts social interactions, physical health, and academic performance
10.	Yinghe Yang	2024	Review Study	Multiple studies	Internet addiction associated with depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, and poor academic performance
11.	Gassem Gohal	2023	Cross-sectional Study	355 adolescents (12-18 years)	Cyberbullying prevalence at 42.8%, linked to poor academic performance and mental health issues
12.	Vidhya Lakshmi Kumar	2021	Review Study	Multiple empirical studies	Cyberbullying victims experience anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and physical symptoms
13..	Isabella Kamanthi P.	2023	Review study	Multiple empirical studies	Cyberbullying linked to low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, school violence, and suicide.
14.	Faye Mishna	2016	Longitudinal and Multi-Perspective Mixed-Methods Study	670 students (grades 4, 7, and 10), 246 parents, 103 teachers	Examined cyberbullying prevalence, motivations, and impact on mental health, social behavior, and psychosomatic symptoms. Findings will inform intervention strategies and policies to mitigate cyberbullying's harmful effects. Emphasizes need for education, parental involvement, and school-based prevention programs.
15.	Norah Alotaibi	2019	Questionnaire-based Study	395 high school students (grades 9- 12)	Cyberbullying intentions negatively impacted academic performance; influenced by attitudes, social norms, and lack of parental supervision
16.	Jorge J. Varela	2022	Moderation Analysis	463 adolescents (73.4% female) and 694 adolescents (85.45% female), ages 15-19	Cyberbullying victims had higher depression levels; ignoring reduced depressive symptoms at low cyberbullying frequency
17.	Eyüp Sabır Erbiçer	2022	Multiple Regression Analysis	1,032 adolescents (mean age = 16.01 years)	Active coping reduced cyberbullying; avoidant and negative coping increased it; mother education was a risk factor

Discussion

A study conducted by Muhammed Sevilgen (2025) a systematic review examining the relationship between internet addiction, cyberbullying, and cyber victimization in adolescents. Using PRISMA guidelines, 29 empirical studies involving 51,311 participants were analyzed from a pool of 2,515 studies published between 2010 and 2022. The findings revealed a strong positive association between internet addiction and both cyberbullying and victimization, indicating that excessive internet use increases the likelihood of engaging in or experiencing cyberbullying. The study highlights the need for integrating internet addiction awareness into education and intervention programs to effectively reduce cyberbullying and its negative consequences among adolescents. Similar study conducted by Ling Lin (2020) investigated the role of internet addiction as a mediator between cyber victimization and psychological and physical symptoms among adolescents. The study sampled 1,854 middle and high school students from Shenzhen, China, assessing psychological and physical symptoms using the WHO Quality of Life-BREF and internet addiction via Young's Internet Addiction Test. Statistical analyses using the PROCESS macro for SPSS confirmed that both cyber victimization ($\beta = -0.102, p < 0.05$) and internet addiction ($\beta = -0.278, p < 0.05$) significantly predicted adverse health outcomes. Mediation analysis indicated that internet addiction partially mediated this relationship, exacerbating psychological and physical distress in cyberbullying victims. Additionally, moderation analysis revealed that physical exercise played a protective role, reducing the negative impact of internet addiction on health ($p = 0.047$). These findings emphasize the need for intervention programs addressing internet addiction while promoting physical activity as a coping strategy for cyberbullying victims [4].

A study by Gassem Gohal (2023) examined cyberbullying prevalence, risk factors, and psychological effects among adolescents in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. Surveying 355 students (ages 12–18), findings showed a 42.8% cyberbullying rate, with males slightly more affected. Excessive online use increased vulnerability, impacting academic performance (26.3%), with some students considering school dropout (20%) and experiencing self-harm thoughts (21.1%). The study confirmed a strong link between cyber victimization, academic struggles, and psychological distress, highlighting the need for awareness campaigns, mental health support, and digital safety programs to protect adolescents. Other study conducted by Jiameng Li (2023) examined the impact of internet use and cyberbullying on the psychosocial and psychosomatic well-being of Chinese adolescents. The study surveyed 3,378 middle school students (ages 11–16) across three provinces in China. Findings revealed that excessive internet use (over three hours per day) significantly increased the likelihood of anxiety (OR = 1.6, $p = 0.006$), depression (OR = 2.1, $p < 0.001$), and psychosomatic issues like abdominal pain (OR = 2.4, $p < 0.001$). The study also found gender differences, with boys being more likely to engage in online gaming. While moderate gaming had some positive effects, excessive use was linked to negative health outcomes. Additionally, cyberbullying was prevalent, with 37.5% of students

admitting involvement. Bully-victims exhibited the highest rates of psychological and psychosomatic distress, whereas those who only engaged in bullying reported fewer negative effects. These findings suggest that while moderate internet use for entertainment is not harmful, excessive use can negatively impact mental health. Schools should implement responsible internet use education and incorporate anti-cyberbullying programs into their curriculum to mitigate these risks and promote adolescent well-being [17].

A study by Apolinario K. *et al.* (2023) examined the social and academic effects of cyberbullying victimization among undergraduate students in Capiz using a mixed-method approach. Findings showed moderate social effects but high academic impact. Significant differences were observed based on cyberbullying severity, emphasizing the need for intervention programs, counseling, and awareness campaigns in educational institutions. Other study conducted by Christopher E. Torres *et al.* (2020) examined how different types of bullying victimization social, verbal, physical, and cyberbullying affect academic performance among adolescents. Using data from the 2015 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey, the study analyzed responses from 4,610 middle and high school students (ages 12–18, 51% male, average age 14.7). Applying General Strain Theory, the study found that bullying negatively impacts academic performance, with social (relational) bullying having the most significant effect. Ordinal regression analysis revealed that while a composite measure of bullying affects academic outcomes, social bullying remains a strong predictor of academic decline, even after adjusting for multiple variables. These findings highlight the critical need for targeted interventions to address relational bullying in schools, emphasizing its long-term impact on students' academic success and mental well-being [18].

A study by Jorge J. Varela (2022) examined how coping mechanisms impact depression in cyberbullied adolescents. Analyzing two samples (N=1,157, ages 15–19), findings confirmed that cyberbullying increases depression. Disconnecting from social media worsened symptoms when bullying was infrequent, while ignoring the situation reduced depression in less severe cases. The study underscores the need for educating adolescents on effective coping strategies and tailoring interventions based on cyberbullying frequency and severity to minimize its psychological impact. Similar study conducted by Yesim Yurdakul (2022) examined the effectiveness of the Cyberbullying Awareness Program in improving adolescents' awareness of cyberbullying and their coping skills. The study involved 38 adolescents, with 17 in the intervention group and 21 in the control group, with a mean age of 13.8 years (SD = 0.44). The intervention group participated in 10 program sessions, while the control group received no intervention. Using the Cyberbullying Awareness Scale for Adolescents and the Coping with Cyberbullying Scale, results showed that the program significantly increased awareness and enhanced coping skills among participants in the intervention group. These findings highlight the importance of structured educational programs in equipping adolescents with the knowledge and strategies to handle cyberbullying effectively. The study recommends that policymakers incorporate cyberbullying

prevention programs into national curricula and that educators implement these initiatives nationwide. Enhancing awareness and coping mechanisms through targeted programs can help mitigate the negative impacts of cyberbullying on adolescents ^[19].

Limitations and Future research directions

Despite providing valuable insights, the reviewed studies have several limitations. Many rely on self-reported data, which may introduce response bias, affecting the accuracy of adolescents' perceptions of their internet use, cyberbullying experiences, and psychological well-being. Additionally, cross-sectional and short-term longitudinal designs dominate much of the research, making it difficult to establish causal relationships between internet addiction, cyberbullying, and mental health outcomes. There is also limited exploration of cultural differences, gender-based effects, and the role of individual personality traits in moderating these relationships.

Future recommendations

1. Conduct Longitudinal Studies: Future research should employ long-term studies to better track how internet addiction and cyberbullying impact adolescent mental health and academic performance over time.
2. Investigate Moderating Factors: Explore how parental guidance, offline social support, personality traits, and digital literacy levels influence the relationship between cyberbullying and psychological distress.
3. Develop and Test Intervention Strategies: Assess the effectiveness of school-based programs, therapy-based coping strategies, parental monitoring, and digital literacy initiatives in reducing cyberbullying and its negative effects.
4. Examine Platform-Specific Effects: Different social media and internet platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat) may uniquely influence adolescent behavior and mental health. Future research should analyze how engagement styles and content exposure on each platform contribute to cyberbullying, addiction, and emotional distress.
5. Address Cultural and Regional Differences: Conduct comparative studies across different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to better understand how cyberbullying and internet addiction manifest in diverse populations.

Conclusion

This review examined the prevalence, motivations, and consequences of internet addiction and cyberbullying among adolescents and young adults. Findings highlight a strong link between excessive internet use, cyberbullying victimization and perpetration, and negative mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and academic decline. While digital platforms enable learning and social interaction, they also increase risks like cyber harassment, social isolation, and addiction. To address these challenges, mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers must implement digital literacy programs, parental guidance, and mental health support. Promoting responsible internet use, stricter cyberbullying policies, and psychological interventions can help create a safer digital space for adolescents.

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