



# Cyberbullying and Its Long-Term Impact on the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents

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ABSTRACT	
<p><b>ARTICLE INFO:</b> Received April 21, 2026</p> <p>Revised April 30, 2026</p> <p>Accepted May 18, 2026</p> <p><b>KEYWORDS:</b> Cyberbullying, Mental Health, Children, Adolescents</p>	<p>The rapid expansion of digital technology has reshaped social interactions among children and adolescents, while simultaneously increasing the prevalence of cyberbullying. This study was conducted as a literature review to integrate findings from recent research on the impact of cyberbullying on youth mental health. The topic was selected due to the growing global concern about cyberbullying, which differs from traditional bullying in its anonymity, speed of dissemination, and broad reach, making victims more vulnerable to severe psychological distress. The hypothesis underlying this review is that cyberbullying significantly contributes to mental health problems among adolescents, including depression, anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, and social withdrawal. The research method employed was library research, with analysis and synthesis of studies published within the last five years. Results consistently show that cyberbullying negatively affects emotional well-being, academic performance, and psychosocial development, and in severe cases, increases the risk of suicidal ideation. Protective factors such as resilience, digital literacy, and psychoeducational programs have been found to mitigate these effects. In conclusion, cyberbullying represents a complex global issue requiring comprehensive prevention and intervention strategies involving schools, parents, and policymakers. These findings highlight the urgent need to strengthen mental health support systems for adolescents in the digital era.</p>

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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has brought significant changes in the patterns of social interaction among children and adolescents. The use of social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp has increased and become part of daily life. On the one hand, digital media provides convenience in communication and information access. Still, on the other hand, it also gives rise to various new problems, one of which is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a form of bullying carried out through digital media repeatedly to hurt, humiliate, or intimidate other individuals.

The phenomenon of cyberbullying has become a serious concern because it has characteristics that differ from conventional bullying, such as the anonymity of perpetrators, rapid dissemination, and wide reach. These conditions make it difficult for victims to avoid bullying behavior and have the potential to experience more severe psychological pressure. Recent research shows that cyberbullying has become a global issue that continues to increase along with the high use of the internet among adolescents (Bansal et al., 2024).

The impact of cyberbullying on the mental health of children and adolescents has also been increasingly proven through various studies. Victims of cyberbullying tend to experience psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, stress, and decreased psychological well-being. In addition, cyberbullying is also associated with low self-esteem and difficulties in establishing

social relationships. In some cases, experiences of cyberbullying can even increase the risk of emerging thoughts of self-harm (Zhang et al., 2025; Arif et al., 2024).

Various research findings indicate that cyberbullying not only affects emotional aspects but also influences the academic and social lives of adolescents. Individuals who become victims tend to experience reduced concentration during learning, withdraw from social environments, and experience disruptions in psychosocial development (Badrakh et al., 2023). This shows that cyberbullying is a complex problem that requires serious attention from various parties, including educators, parents, and counselors.

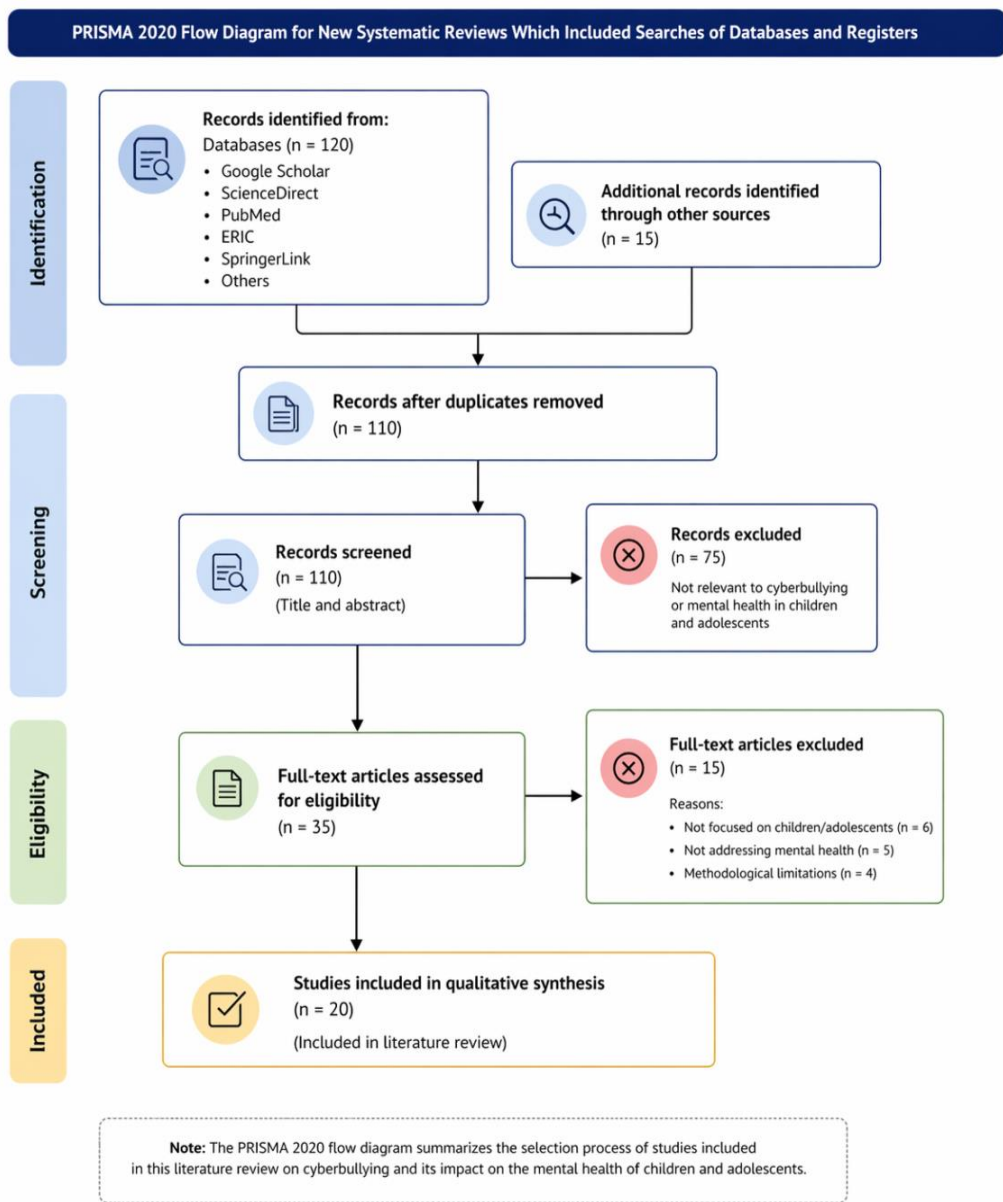
Although many studies have examined cyberbullying and its impact on mental health, the findings are still scattered with various approaches and diverse results. Therefore, a comprehensive literature review is needed to integrate various recent research findings in order to provide a more holistic understanding of the impact of cyberbullying on the mental health of children and adolescents.

Based on this, this article aims to review various recent literature on cyberbullying and its impact on the mental health of children and adolescents, so that it is expected to serve as a basis for developing more effective interventions, guidance, and counseling services.

## **METHODS**

In this article, the researcher uses a literature study method by collecting various relevant literature regarding cyberbullying and its impact on the mental health of children and adolescents. This method is used to obtain an overview of the forms of cyberbullying and their influence on the psychological conditions of children and adolescents based on previous research findings. According to Adlini et al. (2022), a literature review is a data collection method that involves understanding theories from various literature related to the research. The data collection technique involves searching, analyzing, and synthesizing information from various relevant sources.

This study followed a systematic literature review approach guided by the PRISMA 2020 framework to identify, screen, and select relevant studies on cyberbullying and its impact on the mental health of children and adolescents.



**Figure 1.** PRISMA 2020 flow diagram of the study selection process

## Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach based on a systematic literature review framework. The analysis process followed several structured stages aligned with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency, rigor, and reproducibility.

This study organized the data by compiling all selected articles that met the inclusion criteria. The studies were grouped by key characteristics, including author, year of publication, research design, sample characteristics (children and adolescents), and key findings related to cyberbullying and mental health.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Based on studies reviewed from various literature over the past 5 years, they are presented in the following table:

**Table 1.** Characteristics of Included Studies

Authors	Year	Country	Method	Focus Study
Nurul Fitriani & Jamilah	2026	Indonesia	Normative law	The research focuses on high school adolescents in Indonesia as a group vulnerable to the impact of cyberbullying
Restu Yogi Fahlevi, Ah Yusuf, & Ilya Krisnana	2020	Indonesia	Survey	Relationship between cyberbullying and social anxiety
Zafer Korkmaz, İlhan Çiçek, Metin Buluş, Mehmet Emin Şanlı, & Murat Yildirim	2025	Turkiye	Quantitative	Mediating role of resilience in the relationship between cyberbullying and depression, anxiety, and stress in adolescents
Mohammad Fawwaz Eneizat, Wael Ziad Alsharu, Majid Raza, dan Amer Khaled Ahmad	2025	Jordan	Quantitative research	Cyberbullying towards depression, with social anxiety as a mediator and gender as a moderator
Jungup Lee, Hyekyung Choo, Yijing Zhang, Hoi Shan Cheung, Qiyang Zhang, and Rebecca P. Ang	2025	Singapore	meta-analysis	Cyberbullying victimization on mental health
Emily Young, Jessica L. McCain, Melissa C. Mercado, Michael F. Ballesteros, Shamia Moore, Laima Licitis, Joi Stinson, Sherry Everett Jones, dan Natalie J. Wilkins	2024	Georgia	Descriptive analysis	Frequency of social media use and bullying victimization, persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, as well as the risk of suicide in high school adolescents.
Jorge Casaña Mohedo, María Teresa Murillo-Llorente, Marcelino Perez-Bermejo, María Ester Legidos-García, dan Miriam Martínez-Peris	2026	Spain	Systematic review	Analyze the relationship between cyberbullying and adolescent mental health, specifically the prevalence, clinical impact, as well as risk and protective factors
Novita Maulidya Jalal, Miftah Idris, dan Muliana	2021	Indonesia	Literature review	The purpose of the research is to explore, summarize, and synthesize the existing literature in order to understand the factors that cause the occurrence behavior cyberbullying in teenagers
Sema Yazıcı Kabadayı, Oğuz Mercan and Kemal Öztemel	2025	Turkiye	Informed consent	This study also aims to provide a basis for preventive interventions and strategies to improve adolescents' psychological well-being in schools
Alvin Nadhiroh & Atika Dian Ariana	2021	Indonesia	Quantitative approach with survey techniques	Cyberbullying and psychological well-being
Setyorini & M. Ramli	2023	Indonesia	literature	Explore the effectiveness of CBT as a

Authors	Year	Country	Method	Focus Study
			study	counseling approach in addressing bullying problems, both for victims, perpetrators, and bystanders (witnesses)
Rifan Fauzi Setiawan, Wayan Wirayana, & Muhammad Dhino Ridho Adiaksa	2025	Indonesia	Positivist framework	Analyze the relationship between cyberbullying and the level of anxiety among adolescents in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, as well as to examine the extent to which cyberbullying can affect adolescents' mental health
Jesicca Wulandari, Nadjwa Khairunnisa, Siti Yolandari, Tanjung Maulio Ar,ro`uufu, & Robby Subagja	2024	Indonesia	Qualitative method with a literature study	Analyzing the impact of social media use and cyberbullying on adolescents' mental health.
Ibarahim Arifin, Nurmagfira, Nirwana, & Akasayanti	2025	Indonesia	Qualitative approach with a systematic literature	Exploring the factors that influence cyberbullying behavior and its impact on adolescents' mental health
Oktariani, Mirawati, Arbana Syahmanta, & Rodia Afriza	2022	Indonesia	Quantitative	activities on cyberbullying for students
Munawaroh & M Sholihin	2026	Indonesia	Quantitative	Cyberbullying and its impact on mental health
Anugrah Rahmad Hidayat & Riko Sandra Putra	2025	Indonesia	Quantitative	relationship between cyberbullying and adolescents' mental health.
Umy Yonaevy, Syarifah Syarifah, Ratih, & Prananingrum	2024	Indonesia	Descriptive qualitative	Describing the implementation of digital literacy programs in preventing cyberbullying and their impact on adolescents' mental health
Kista Elizabeth Kirbianti, Etik Lusiani, & Iriene Kusuma Wardhani	2025	Indonesia	Quantitative	Analyzing the relationship between cyberbullying victimization and the mental health
Lorentius Goa	2025	Indonesia	Qualitative	Impacts of cyberbullying on the mental

## Discussion

Based on a review of various studies over the past five years, cyberbullying has been consistently shown to have a significant relationship with mental health problems among children and adolescents. In general, findings indicate that individuals involved in cyberbullying, particularly as victims, tend to experience increased levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. This is supported by the study of Fitriani and Jamilah (2026), which found that cyberbullying contributes to chronic anxiety and depressive symptoms among adolescents, including sleep disturbances, feelings of hopelessness, and decreased learning motivation. Furthermore, a meta-analysis by Lee et al. (2025)

strengthens this evidence by demonstrating a significant positive correlation between cyberbullying and symptoms of depression and anxiety among children and adolescents.

Moreover, cyberbullying not only affects emotional aspects but also influences adolescents' social functioning. Fahlevi et al. (2020) found a significant relationship between cyberbullying and social anxiety as well as social withdrawal behavior. Adolescents who experience cyberbullying tend to avoid social interactions and feel uncomfortable in social environments. This indicates that the impact of cyberbullying is multidimensional, affecting both psychological and social domains. Similar findings were reported by Wulandari et al. (2024), who stated that victims often experience prolonged negative emotions such as fear, distress, and sadness.

In addition, cyberbullying has implications for adolescents' academic performance. Fitriani and Jamilah (2026) explained that anxiety and depression resulting from cyberbullying can disrupt cognitive functioning, leading to decreased concentration, lower learning motivation, and declining academic achievement. This is supported by Badrakh et al. (2023), who emphasized that victims of cyberbullying tend to experience disruptions in psychosocial development as well as decreased academic performance. Therefore, cyberbullying should not only be viewed as a mental health issue but also as a factor affecting educational outcomes.

On the other hand, several studies highlight the presence of protective factors that can mitigate the negative effects of cyberbullying. Korkmaz et al. (2025) found that resilience plays a mediating role in the relationship between cyberbullying and stress, where individuals with higher resilience are better able to manage psychological pressure. Additionally, Yazıcı-Kabadayı et al. (2025) identified self-regulation and resilience as important protective factors, while loneliness was found to be a significant risk factor that exacerbates the negative impact of cyberbullying. These findings suggest that interventions focusing on strengthening psychological resilience are essential in prevention efforts.

Another factor that intensifies the impact of cyberbullying is the high intensity of social media use. Young et al. (2024) reported that frequent social media use is associated with increased risks of cyberbullying, persistent feelings of sadness, and suicidal risk among adolescents. In addition, Jalal et al. (2021) revealed that both internal factors, such as lack of empathy, and external factors, such as easy access to technology and high levels of online interaction, influence cyberbullying behavior. This highlights that cyberbullying is a complex phenomenon shaped by both individual and environmental factors.

Furthermore, the long-term impact of cyberbullying is an important concern. A systematic review by Casaña Mohedo et al. (2026) found that victims of cyberbullying experience significantly higher levels of depression and anxiety compared to perpetrators and are at greater risk of suicide attempts. This indicates that cyberbullying is not merely a temporary issue but can have serious and lasting consequences on adolescents' mental health.

In terms of intervention, several studies suggest that approaches such as psychoeducation, digital literacy programs, and counseling are effective in reducing the negative impacts of cyberbullying. Munawaroh and Sholihin (2026) found that psychoeducational programs significantly increase adolescents' awareness of the dangers of cyberbullying. Additionally, counseling approaches such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) have been proven effective in helping victims cope with trauma and improve psychological well-being (Setyorini & Ramli, 2023). Therefore, a comprehensive approach involving schools, families, and communities is necessary to address cyberbullying effectively.

## **Implication**

The present review underscores the urgent need for comprehensive, multi-level interventions addressing cyberbullying among children and adolescents. Given its robust

association with psychological distress, schools should institutionalize preventive strategies, including psychoeducation and digital literacy programs, to foster responsible online behavior.

The identification of resilience and self-regulation as protective factors suggests that counseling interventions should adopt a strength-based approach, integrating resilience enhancement and evidence-based modalities such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Furthermore, the demonstrated impact on academic functioning indicates that mental health support should be embedded within educational systems to optimize learning outcomes.

At a broader level, the findings highlight the necessity of coordinated efforts among schools, families, and policymakers. Parental involvement in digital supervision and the development of regulatory frameworks for safer online environments are essential. Future research should prioritize longitudinal and culturally sensitive designs better to capture developmental trajectories and contextual variations in cyberbullying experiences.

### **Limitation**

This review is subject to several limitations. First, as a literature-based study, the findings are contingent upon the methodological quality and heterogeneity of the included studies, which may introduce bias.

Second, the predominance of cross-sectional designs in the reviewed literature limits causal inference between cyberbullying and mental health outcomes. Third, including studies from diverse sociocultural contexts may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Additionally, the review predominantly focuses on victims, with limited attention to perpetrators and bystanders, thereby restricting a comprehensive understanding of cyberbullying dynamics. Finally, the rapid evolution of digital technologies may affect the temporal relevance of the findings, as emerging online behaviors are not fully represented in existing studies.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the objective of this study to examine the impact of cyberbullying on the mental health of children and adolescents, it can be concluded that cyberbullying has a significant and consistent influence on adolescents' psychological conditions. Various findings indicate that involvement in cyberbullying, both as victims and perpetrators, is associated with increased levels of anxiety, depression, stress, and decreased psychological well-being. In addition to affecting emotional aspects, cyberbullying also influences academic and social functioning, such as decreased learning concentration, academic performance, and a tendency to withdraw from social environments. The characteristics of cyberbullying, which include anonymity, rapid dissemination, and difficulty in control, make its impact more complex compared to traditional bullying. Furthermore, resilience, self-regulation, and empathy have been identified as protective factors. At the same time, loneliness and the intensity of social media use serve as risk factors that exacerbate its negative effects.

These findings contribute significantly to the development of psychological science, particularly by advancing understanding of the dynamics of adolescent mental health in the digital era. Cyberbullying should not be viewed solely as an individual issue but rather as a multidimensional phenomenon involving psychological, social, and digital environmental aspects. Therefore, more comprehensive and sustainable intervention approaches are needed. Recommended strategies include strengthening digital literacy programs, improving school counseling services, and encouraging active involvement of parents and educators in monitoring and guiding adolescents' use of social media. In addition, future research is expected to further explore the role of protective factors such as resilience and social support as a basis for designing more effective interventions to prevent and reduce the impact of cyberbullying on adolescent mental health.

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