

Cyberbullying among school students in Abu Dhabi

Hussein Salem Al-Srehan¹, Rakan Radi Alhrahshah²

¹Assistant Professor, Al Ain University, UAE

hussein.alsrehan@aau.ac.ae

²Al Ain University, UAE

Rakan.alhrahshah@aau.ac.ae

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9255-4240>

Abstract

This study aimed to identify the psychological and social factors that lead to cyberbullying among adolescent students. The descriptive approach was used through a questionnaire developed for the purposes of this study. The data was analyzed using the SPSS23 statistical analysis package. The study sample consisted of 2000 male and female students (1000 males and 1000 females). The results showed through the ANOVA test that there were statistically significant differences in the respondents' responses, with regard to psychological factors at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$, due to the psychological factors of neglecting the family, because they are always busy and there is no time to sit and talk with them, and these are the factors. The study recommended the importance of educating the family about the dangers of cyberbullying to help their children stay away from it.

Keywords: *Cyberbullying, Internet, school Students. Abu Dhabi.*

Introduction

Bullying in school students is a form of unbalanced aggressive interaction (Cuadrado, 2012), and it frequently occurs as a daily routine in peer relationships in the school field (Swearer, 2015), and it is based on control, domination, and compliance between two parties; One of them is a bully who is controlling. The other is the victim, who is out of control, and he is the victim (Moon and Alarid, 2015). It is preceded by a deliberate intention and intent reflected in the peer culture as a fixed behavior of that culture, which dealt with the concept of bullying as a special term for school violence (Olweus, 1997).

At the beginning of the nineties of the last century, with the information and technological revolution and the entry of many countries into the GAT organization, trade liberalized and customs duties on goods and products, particularly electronic ones, decreased (Michalska, 1995); computers, phones, various communication devices, and the Internet. Countries have become very close to

each other as the news moves between them very quickly (Wise, 2009). At the turn of the second millennium, all of these tools became accessible to individuals at lower prices, increasing their users' number, and turning traditional communication into electronic communication (Tosheva, 2020). This stage was considered a turning point in the practice of conventional direct bullying to bullying through the Internet (Bjärehed, 2020) being easier, and the identity of the bully often can be hidden. Cyberbullying increased in intensity and became more dangerous and prevalent in societies, especially the teenage school community. Although cyberbullying behaviors occur outside of school, these tools and practices have had their effects widely inside the school, as cyberbullying that children are exposed to affect the home, school, neighborhood, and society as a whole (Al-Hayari et al., 2017).

Al-Raqqad et al. (2020) indicate the importance of paying attention to the negative effects that occur to students due to cyberbullying, which may

harm the student and the school together, causing a decline in health, behavioral problems, lack of confidence and self-esteem, the inability to form friendships and the loss of social and psychological stability and insecurity. These feelings may last for an extended period of the student's life (Schofield, 1989). Among the effects that may appear on the victim are poor social and communication skills, inability to adapt with others, establish friendships, and lack the skills to cooperate and defend themselves (Vlachou et al., 2011).

Because of these problems, the school becomes an unhealthy environment in which negative habits and behaviors are practiced within it that harm other students and distract the administration and teachers from academic programs. Students' actions may lead to quarrels and harm between them, tension in relationships, and a decrease in the level of positive interaction between them on the one hand and hostility on the other hand (Beryand, 2009).

Numerous Mazzone and Menesini (2018) studies specializing in this field have confirmed the harm caused by bullying, in both electronic and physical forms. Most health professionals assert that stress is a significant factor that affects modern society's mortality rate, as sitting in front of the device for long hours leads to serious health diseases such as; heart disease and depression. The youth's identity becomes a digital identity that he cannot dispense with and finds himself in it through the Internet and games (Moon et al., 2011). Studies have indicated that 7-10 individuals have been subjected to abuse through the Internet at some point. Young people can be exposed to cyberbullying anywhere, not only in school as previously, but at home, in the car, or on the street (Abdulghany, 2019; Herkanaidu, 2020). Students may be subjected to abuse while sitting at home without knowing what is happening; this weakness of supervision makes the matter worse, as the situation with the individual may be repeated more than once and not inform his family about it for fear of isolation from the group or being removed from the game (Duffy, 2014). Naturally, these accumulations reflect negatively on the individual and appear in the form of tension and nervousness, sometimes excessive.

Adolescents today use technology extensively, which leads to their exposure to many problems, such as online abuse, which may cause them psychological problems that may lead to suicide. Cyberbullying is intentional aggression in a cyber-context. Estimates of the prevalence of online victimization range from 10% to 40% 11 and are the highest among adolescents (Soyen et al., 2018). "When cyberbullying is compared to traditional bullying, negative outcomes appear to be worse for the victims of cyberbullying. Using data from a total population survey of Swedish adolescents aged 15 to 18 years and controlling for exposure to traditional bullying, Laftman et al.9 found that being the victim of cyberbullying was associated with poorer subjective physical health" (Tracy, et al., 2016, 370). Many assert that bullying is an important educational and public health problem. Although traditional bullying of teenage students remains a major challenge in society, recent technology has provided new platforms in which bullying may occur. Which includes a variety of applications (such as Facebook, Twitter, TicTok) and online electronic games (Megan & Tracy, 2017).

The family environment and parental support constitute the main factor in protecting adolescents from cyberbullying, so social psychologists suggest strengthening the role of enhancing the role of family socialization in order to develop the personal aspects of children (Ghisleri & Samada, 2022).

Research Questions

The following research questions were sought to be answered in this study:

RQ1. What are the psychological factors that lead to electronic bullying among school students?

RQ2. What are the social factors that lead to electronic bullying among students?

Hypothesis

There are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha = .05$) when it comes to

cyberbullying amongst schools students related to the state of gender (male-female).

Literature review

Young people see the Internet and its tools as a suitable environment for them, that gives them a space of freedom to express themselves in a better way than the realistic social environment; however, Some researchers indicated that the results of this environment might lead to the existence of influential social relationships, and contribute to the exposure of adolescents to negative feelings such as anger (Molehill, 2018). Hiding an individual's identity on the Internet or entering these electronic platforms with fake names allows them to impersonate characters who are more aggressive than in real life. The electronic environment is a more attractive environment for intimidation, and bullying is safer for them. Individuals may use it to take revenge on others. Therefore, bullying among students has occurred outside the school's boundaries; these results have increased parents and social workers' level of concern towards their children about this phenomenon. A study indicated that 47% of individual respondents had experienced cyberbullying (Ozagu, 2010). Among the most prominent studies investigating this area: Chun (2020) analyzed 64 international studies on cyberbullying using general characteristics, bullying definition, study sample characteristics, sample size, device type, timeframe, survey type, data collection method, sub-metrics, reliability, and validity. The results indicated that 15 studies followed the recommended guidelines for developing the cyberbullying scale, bullying tools revealed medium to high reliability, and 32 studies assessed the validity of measuring cyberbullying. The study recommended the need for a standard definition of cyberbullying in order to be able to measure cyberbullying behavior.

While Kaiser (2020) examined cyberbullying's relationship to adolescents' mental health, the study sample was 2117 adolescents (50% males and 50% females). The gender of the potential mediator was examined on the relationship between cyberbullying and mental health. A single analysis of variance was used to predict

mental health problems by using a five-point questionnaire for degrees of difficulty, and the study showed that 1% of the sample were bully, while 9% of the sample were exposed to cyberbullying. The results also showed that the mental health of the girl is at risk more than the boys. And the mental health of Internet victims is worse compared to peers without cyberbullying. In contrast, Calvo (2020) investigated ways to find games to prevent cyberbullying through the systematic confrontation of control games. The study aimed to change user attitudes and increase awareness in various areas and awareness of mental health. The study seeks to learn about the benefits of video games as tools against bullying and find mechanisms to address bullying and identify its type. The study demonstrated a wide range of video games, the importance of using clear and different strategies to deal with bullying, and that serious games can effectively raise awareness and learn strategies to tackle cyberbullying.

Liu et al. (2020). They investigated the effects of online abuse on mental health. The study aimed to test the longitudinal association between cyberbullying and victimization through a sample of 661 high school students in China using a questionnaire. The study found that online victimization is positively related to Internet use of intermediate variables: mindfulness and depression. And in Ozgur's (2010) study on testing electronic and traditional bullying and its relationship to the gender on a sample of 123 females and 151 males between 14 and 18 years of age, the results confirmed that 32% of students bully others. So, male students were more likely to be bullying and that bullying of both electronic and traditional quality is arranged for males and not females, and the frequent use of the Internet increases the risk of bullying. In a survey on the prevalence of cyberbullying among youth (Francine et al. 2008), two questionnaires were sent to a sample of 1211 children and parents. Students answered the questionnaire in the classroom and parents at home; the results of the study showed that 16% of students participated in cyberbullying through text messages containing insulting and gossiping phrases, while about 23% of students fell victim to cyberbullying; the study recommended that parents should pay attention to

this harassment and set rules for their children about how to use the Internet. Al-Qahtani (2008) also tested bullying among middle school students in Riyadh, and the results concluded that approximately (31.5)% of middle school students are exposed to bullying once or twice. The study showed that bullying is affected by gender and the characteristics of the bullying student and the victim, and the study recommended the adoption of the Olweus Program to prevent bullying in schools. Finally, Patricia (2007) conducted a study on students' perspectives on cyberbullying. The study aimed to introduce students to methods of cyberbullying. The study was conducted on 148 middle and high school students. Questions were asked directly to them. It became clear that students, especially females, view cyberbullying as a problem and that the school does not provide them with support for how to deal with it, and the study recommended the necessity of creating a plan that is shared with students and parents to prevent cyberbullying.

Method

Research Design

This study was conducted with the objective to determine Causes of cyberbullying, specifically between students'. Through research in social and psychological determinants in family and social environment. This study relied on the descriptive approach through a questionnaire prepared for this study by the researchers themselves after reviewing similar literature. The research design is linked to multiple variables. The dependent variable is cyberbullying, and the independent variables are psychological reasons and social reasons. To find the correlation and its effect between the variables, this study relied on the analysis of the multiple correlation coefficient between the independent variables (psychological reasons and social reasons).

4.1 Procedure and sample

This study used an intentional random sample consisting of 2000 school students enrolled in the private schools in Abu Dhabi in the academic year 2020–2021. Half of the participants were female (N = 1000, 50%), while other were male (N = 1000, 50%). All participants were in an age group 15-18. Table 1 notes these frequencies and distribution.

Table 1:

Distribution of the sample members according to the gender variable

Type	Repetition	Percentage
Male	1000	50.0
Female	1000	50.0
Total	2000	100.0

Data Collection Tool

The only dependent variable in the study was cyberbullying. The independent variables are (psychological and social factors) as causative factors for the occurrence of cyberbullying among school students. It came from a questionnaire developed from the Reference Scale Boillot-Fansher's (2017) to hurt online stalking. Psychological factors were measured with fifth indicators. Participants were asked to indicate

whether (1) "I feel nobody care about me", (2) "I feel Always Stress", (3) "Relationship between my parents is strained ",(4)" I always get insulted ", (5) " and (5) " I was beaten many times ". To measure the social factors that cause cyberbullying, participants were asked to indicate whether they had (1) "I don't sit much with the family", (2) "My Parents are always busy", (3)" I don't have much friends", (4)" My parents always aske about me", (5) " My parents always aske

about me" and (6) " My parents always talk with me".

Data Collection Process

Data were collected through an online survey described above, conducted by the authors for a period of three weeks in January 2022. This study has been approved by the private education department. Initially, the questionnaire was sent through email to 2040 randomly selected students. Among these, 2009 completed the questionnaire and sent it back, nine samples were deleted because they were incomplete, and 31 questionnaires were not returned. The total

sample of the questionnaires used for the purpose of this study was 2000, to ensure a sufficient representative number of the students participated to better capture community attitudes toward the topic assessed. To ensure questionnaire validity, the authors had the questionnaire reviewed by a group of arbitrators at Jordanian, Al Ain University and the University of Sharjah, their observations were taken into due consideration. The stability of the questionnaire was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha test, as its value was .86. The high value of this parameter ($> .60$) indicated the high reliability of the study tool (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Table 2 summarizes these results.

Table 2:

Cronbach's alpha of the reliability of the questionnaire

Domain	No. of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Psychological causes	8	.854.
Social causes	6	.851.
Total	14	.863.

Data Analysis

In this study, SPSS-23 software was used to perform statistical analysis. This resulted in descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution and percentage of data used to display the Social Psychological factors for cyberbullying. As the study has multiple correlations, standard multiple regressions were used to test the hypothesis of the study, and from there, the homogeneity between the variables was measured, and the normality was determined. In addition, a linear test between the variables was used. Furthermore, the mean and standard deviation were used to determine the descriptive statistics of the variables included in the regression study and matrix correlation between the two independent variables. The correlations between dependent variables and the degree of influence by the independent variables were

examined. More specifically, R-Square test was employed to find out the correlation coefficient between the dependent variable and the independent variables and analysis of variance (ANOVA) test to show the p-value and the level of significance between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The last step also helped determine the validity of the hypothesis, the effect of the variables, and the beta value.

Results

RQ1. What are the psychological factors that lead to electronic bullying among school students?

Frequencies, percentages, arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and ranks of the responses of the study sample individuals on the psychological

causes that lead to electronic bullying among school students were calculated to identify the psychological factors that lead to cyberbullying

among school students, and the results were as shown in the following tables:

Table 3:

The responses of the study sample individuals to the items of the psychological factors that lead to electronic bullying among school students arranged in descending order

Item	Arithmetic average	standard deviation
My parents are always busy	4.76	3.22
I feel nobody care about me	4.35	2.33
Relationship between my parents is strained	3.11	2.27
I always get insulted	1.61	2.25
I was beaten many times	3.57	2.18
Arithmetic average	3.64	2.23

The results in the table 3 shown that the study sample's tendency towards the psychological factors that lead to cyberbullying among school students was agreed with an average of (3.64). Which mean that falls into the fourth category of the five-point scale (from 3.50 to 5), the category that indicates which study population is supportive of psychological factors that lead to cyberbullying among school students. Ranked #1 (I feel nobody care about me) with an average (4.76 out of 5.00). And in second place (I feel Always Stress) with an average (4.35 out of 5.00), and in the third phrase (Relationship between my parents is strained) with an average (3.11 out of 5.00). And in the fourth

phrase (I always get insulted) an average (1.61 out of 5.00). Finally, the phrase (I was beaten many times) averaged (1.2 out of 5.00).

RQ2. What are the social factors that lead to electronic bullying among students?

The frequencies, percentages, arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and ranks of the responses of the study sample individuals on the social factors that lead to electronic bullying among students were calculated to identify the social factors that lead to electronic bullying among students, and the results were as shown in the following tables:

Table 4:

The responses of the study sample individuals to the statements of the social factors that lead to electronic bullying among students, arranged in descending order according to the averages

Item	Arithmetic average	standard deviation
I don't sit much with the family	4.37	3.22

My Parents are always busy	4.12	3.17
I don't have much friends	3.96	2.14
My parents always ask about me	1.41	2.31
My parents always talk with me	1.21	1.14
Arithmetic average	3.05	1.09

Through the results shown from table 4, it is clear that the study sample individuals are neutral about the social factors that lead to cyberbullying among students with an average of (3.05 out of 5). It is an average that falls in the third category of the five-scale scale categories (from 2.60 to 3.39), which is the category that indicates the choice of members of the study sample being neutral on the social factors that lead to electronic bullying among students. The item (I don't sit much with the family) came first in terms of the study sample's approval, with an average (4.37). The phrase (My Parents are always busy) came second in terms of approval by the study sample, with an average of (4.12). The item (I don't have much friends) came third in terms of approval by the study sample, with an average (3.96). (My parents

always ask about me) ranked fourth with an average (1.41). Finally (My parents always talk with me) with an average (1.21).

Hypothesis

QR3. There are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha = .05$) when it comes to cyberbullying amongst schools students related to the social and psychological factors.

Independent T-test was used to compare the study sample's mean scores according to the gender variable. The researcher will address the following table to present and analyze the results of the third question.

Table 5:

Independent T-test results depending on the type variable

Variable	Gender	Number	Arithmetic average	Standard deviation	T value	Degree of freedom	Significance
Social factors	Male	1000	2.55	0.74	-2.22	247	0.027*
	Female	1000	2.74	0.65			
The psychological reasons that lead to electronic bullying	Male	1000	2.94	0.49	-2.12	247	0.035*
	female	1000	3.07	0.51			

* *Significant at the level of 0.05 or less*

It is evident from Table (5) that the significance values of the axes "the social causes that lead to electronic bullying, the psychological reasons that lead to electronic bullying" were (0.027, 0.035), respectively, which are less than the significance level 0.05. Thus, there are statistically significant differences in the respondents' responses to the

social causes that lead to electronic bullying and the psychological reasons due to the gender variable in favor of females.

QR3. There are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha = .05$) when it comes to cyberbullying amongst schools students related to the social and psychological factors.

ANOVA test was used to compare the mean scores of the study sample according to the age group's variable. The researcher will address the

following table to present and analyze the results of the fourth question.

Table 6:

ANOVA test results, depending on the social and psychological factors

Dimension	The source of the contrast	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average of squares	(P) Value	Significance
Social factors	Between groups	23.787	2	11.894	31.023	0.000**
	Within groups	94.313	246	0.383		
	Total	118.100	248			
Psychological factors	Between groups	1.749	2	0.874	3.496	0.032*
	Within groups	61.538	246	0.250		
	Total	63.287	248			

* *Significant at the level of 0.05 or less*

** *Significant at the level of 0.01 or less.*

It is evident from Table (6) that the significance values for the axes "the social causes that lead to electronic bullying, the psychological reasons that lead to electronic bullying" were (0.00 and 0.032), respectively, which are less than the significance level 0.05. Thus, there are statistically significant

differences in the respondents' responses to the social causes that lead to electronic bullying and the psychological causes that lead to electronic bullying due to the age group variable.

Table 7:

Matrix of correlations between the three independent variables and the dependent variable

	Cyberbullying	Social factors	Psychological factors
Person correlation			
Digital access to health	1.00	.925	.234
Social factors	.925	1.000	.145
Psychological factors	.246	.149	1.000

Sig. (1-tailed)

Cyberbullying	.	.000	.095
Social factors	.874	1.978	.215
Psychological factors	.014	.0323	.

N

Cyberbullying	2000	2000	2000
Social factors	2000	2000	2000
Psychological factors	2000	2000	2000

The findings encapsulated in Table 7 indicate that there was a strong direct correlation between digital access and both work and income, but

interestingly, in contrast, there was no relationship between education and digital access to health.

Table 8:

Shows the correlation coefficient between the dependent variable and the independent variables

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.932a	.868	.853	.75505

- a. Predicators: (constant), Psychological factors, Social factors
- b. Dependent variable: Cyberbullying

The results shown in Table 8 indicate that the independent variables explain the variance in the

process of digital access to health, which is a significant percentage. To verify this further, the ANOVA test was performed.

Table 9:

The analysis of variance between the dependent variable and the independent variables

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	f	Sig
-					

1	Regression	97.843	3	34.614	57.231	.000 ^a
	Residual	14.823	3	.587		
	Total	112.667	3			

a. Dependent variable: Cyberbullying

b. Predictor: (constant), Psychological factors, Social factors

Table 9 shows the value of f (57.231) and the value of significance (.000) less than (.05), which indicates the null hypothesis should be rejected, and the alternative should be accepted, as the regression is large and not equal to zero. Thus, there was a significant relationship between the independent variable, cyberbullying, and the

dependent variables: Social factors, and Psychological factors. However, to determine which of these variables had the greatest effect, we checked the value of beta in the method described as follows.

Table 10:

Coefficients of the variables and correlation

Model	Partial	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig	Correlation	
		Coefficient					Zero order	
		B	Std. Error					
1	Constant	.086	.503	.	.171	.866		
	Social factors	.874	.021	.946	10.567	.724	.925	.901
	Psychological factors	.435	.230	.104	1.428	.165	.276	.271

Results presented in Table 10 suggest that the variables Social and Psychological factors were significant, which means that there existed

significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) when it comes to cyberbullying among schools students regarding their Psychological

status. The variable Social factors has a significance level of more than 0.05 and thus had no effect on the dependent variable cyberbullying, and there was no direct correlation between them, also it's clear from the table there is a indicating significant at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) between Psychological factors and cyberbullying.

Discussion

The study revealed that the study individuals were divide in terms of gender: 50% females and 50% males; it is a close-ratio indicating an equitable observance of the gender distribution. The result shows some social reasons push may be cause bullying for them most thing they feel that their parents always busy and the relationship between them is strained, they feel nobody care about them,. But after we mad comparing between verbals to know which the most causes in bullying, The result also shows that psychological factors effect in students' more than social factor, because they don't sit much with the family and Their Parents are always busy, this factors make them feel always lonely. The family not care about them, so they escaping to internet, to the bully. This finding with Liu et al. (2020) study on the relationship of bullying to individuals' mental health.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study provided an important answer to the questions of the study, which focused on identifying the factors of cyberbullying. Technology is often seen as useful and indispensable in our social life. This perspective does not come without its drawbacks. Despite the different benefits technology and the Internet provide to students, they cause some challenges for both the family and the institutions of society. Consequently, it was crucial to study them objectively to identify those problems in order to provide protection for individuals. Cyberbullying is one of the most prominent of these problems, as it targets an important group in society, which is the youth group. In this article, the researchers examined the causes that contribute to this problem. Hence, the questions posed by this

research and their answers come at the most appropriate time and context to make intriguing predictions for the future. The participants in this study represent school students in the Emirates of Abu Dhabi and exemplify the widespread and extensive use of technology and its applications across the United Arab Emirates.

As long as an Internet connection remains, the individual remains exposed to cyberbullying, and local and international efforts must be combined to stand up to the causes of this phenomenon and ways to reduce it; and based on the previous results of the research, the study recommends the following:

- To conduct studies on victims of cyberbullying on the one hand and students who are bullying, on the other hand, to identify this phenomenon.
- To help students learn about bullying methods and how to face it.
- To conduct similar studies on cyberbullying, specifically on females, on age groups 15 and over.
- To continue awareness of school students about using the Internet and directing students to serious gaming programs and useful Internet sites.
- To raise the level of awareness among individuals, specifically teenagers.
- Parents should teach their children the principles of safe technologies and children's participation in selecting their friends over the Internet.
- To educate children not to publish personal information on the Internet.
- To encourage students to report incidents of bullying.
- To form a committee to combat cyberbullying in each school from the students themselves.

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