

# Cyberbullying Among Adolescent Students in Light of Some Demographic Variables

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the level of cyberbullying among a sample consisting of teenager students in the city of Mafraq in Jordan. It also aims to identify the differences at the level of cyberbullying in terms of gender, educational level, and academic achievement. The sample of the study was composed of 160 male and female students randomly selected from four schools of the education directorate in the northeast desert in 2020. Cyberbullying scale was employed in this research. The results revealed that the level of cyberbullying among adolescent students was moderate. Findings also suggested that there are differences at the level of cyberbullying between students in terms of gender, educational level, and academic achievement. In addition, the results suggested differences between the participants attributed to the interaction between gender and academic achievement and the interaction between educational level and academic achievement.

## KEYWORDS

Adolescent Students, Bullying, Cyberbullying, Demographic Variables

## INTRODUCTION

In today's world, bullying has become a prevalent, dangerous issue in schools. In this respect, Bidwell (1997) insists that bullying occurs both inside and outside schools, however, the former case is more prevalent. Also, bullying in most cases takes place in the school yard, corridors, bathrooms as well as classrooms. Meanwhile, bullies choose their victims from students who are as old they are or younger than themselves.

Bullying can happen in a variety of forms, including physical, verbal, psychological, social, and electronic forms. This phenomenon is one of the problems which are accompanied by negative effects on the bully himself and his victim. Bullying has also drawbacks for the school environment in general, since it affects the safety, and mental and social aspects of the school community. For this reason, physical aggression among these students in schools will negatively affect students at any educational level, but it also arises a feeling of being rejected and ignored among the victims. Furthermore, the latter group will be scared, anxious and discomforted and will avoid participating in school activities, or they skip the school since they are afraid of bullies. Bullies, on the other hand, are prone to being deprived or expelled from school, and they encounter difficulties in benefiting

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from the provided programs. Additionally, these individuals will be engaged in dangerous criminal conducts (Stephens, 2006).

With the advancements seen in employing information technology and network sites in recent years, researches have placed more emphasis on cyberbullying, which some deemed it one form of conventional bullying that is manifested in a new form (Berne et al., 2013; Stewart et al, 2014).

Menesini, Nocentini and Calussi (2011) categorized cyberbullying according to the nature of abuse: 1-Written-verbal, which includes behaviors that involve verbal or written bullying, such as phone calls, text messages and email messages; 2-Visual, which incorporates kinds of abuse that involve visual forms of bullying such as distributing offensive and embarrassing pictures; 3-Impersonation, which refers to the most developed kinds of abuses represented in benefiting from one's identity, such as accessing one's personal information or using someone else's account; 4-Exclusion, which refers to determining who is allowed to join a given group and who is not. For example, excluding a member from groups or chatrooms.

According to Hinduja and Patchin (2008), cyberbullying is a repetitive, deliberate harm to others using electronic systems like computer and cellphone. Juvonen and Gross (2008), however, deem this concept to be employing the internet or any e-communication systems to insult and threaten someone else. A number of definitions have been given for the cyberbullying concept. Furthermore, Akbulut and Eristi (2011), for instance, consider cyberbullying to be deliberately employing e-communication means to cause a repetitive damage to an individual or a group of people.

El-Shennawy (2014) stated that the differences between traditional bullying and cyberbullying are due to the characteristics of the electronic device and the modern technologies used, which facilitates the bully's ability to hide; This makes electronic bullying more attractive and widespread among users of electronic means of communication, in addition to the ease with which content is transmitted, and the weakness of emotional sympathy that emerges from the fact that the bully does not see the effects of his/her actions on the victim.

Although numerous studies of school bullying have found that boys are more likely to be victims, the extent of gender differences in cyberbullying is unclear (Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve & Coulter, 2012). The personality of the cyberbully is characterized by many traits, as follows (Calvete et al, 2010; Çam & Isbulan, 2012):

Being more aggressive in problem solving, suffering from mental disorders (depression - fear - anxiety), having difficulty positively assessing social interaction, freedom to use technology, low social skills, low stress tolerance, medium and high economic level, and addictive (excessive using) the Internet, and viewing his/her victims in an inferior way, and using other forms of bullying (physical - verbal - emotional - social).

There are many theories explaining cyberbullying, including the following.

The theory of social ranks and the exercise of power: This theory assumes that peer practice is a hierarchical structure, through which peers use aggression against a number of their peers with the aim of controlling them and exercising power, reaching social rank and status among the peer group, possessing the largest balance of power, and accessing available resources, and when peers are subject to this control through intense fear, escape or crying, force is imposed on them and control over them, and this may continue for long periods, as the victim does not have the balance of power or social standing that enables her to resist or defend herself (Beran & Li, 2007).

General Strain Theory: The General Strain Theory explains the processes of deviation and break of the law through the forces and motives inherent in the social construction, or through the response to accidents and constructive circumstances, which acts as pressures or anxieties, especially when there is no opportunity to achieve their socially acceptable goals. The sources of stress do not depend on the frustration experienced by the individual when they block the paths in front of him to achieve a goal, but also include the negative feelings that occur in various social situations (Hay, Meldrum & Mann, 2010).

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