CYBERVICTIM BEHAVIOR IN ADOLESCENTS: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

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KeyWords

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of digital technology has brought significant changes in the social lives of adolescents, but it has also increased the risk of cybervictim behavior—that is, victim behavior due to aggression in cyberspace. This article presents an integrative review of the behavior of cyber victims in adolescents, highlighting the definitions, causative factors, psychological impacts, and relevant protection mechanisms. The studies reviewed show that cybervictimization not only impacts adolescents' mental health, such as anxiety, depression, and social isolation, but also often overlaps with other forms of violence such as traditional bullying and dating violence. Major risk factors include emotional dysregulation, adverse childhood experiences, low family support, and uncontrolled use of digital media. Conversely, strong family support and emotional intelligence play a significant protective factor. The methodology of this study involved a systematic review of 136 articles from the Scopus and PubMed databases, with strict inclusion and exclusion criteria using the PICOSS framework. The results of the review confirm that cybervictim behavior in adolescents is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by complex interactions between individuals, families, peers, and cultural contexts. This article recommends the need for a holistic and culturally sensitive intervention for the prevention and management of cybervictimization in adolescents, and highlights the importance of collaboration between families, schools, and communities in building adolescent digital resilience.

Introduction

The exponential growth of digital technology has radically changed the social landscape of teenagers. While offering new avenues for communication, expression, and connection, these technological advancements have also facilitated harmful online behavior—most notably, cyber victimization. Broadly defined as the experience of being targeted through digital means such as social media, messaging platforms, or other online interactions, cyber victimization behavior among adolescents has emerged as a significant mental and developmental health issue [1].

Unlike traditional forms of bullying, cybervictimization can occur continuously, anonymously, and beyond the confines of school or physical interaction, intensifying its psychological impact. The literature reviewed suggests that cyber victim behavior is embedded in broader social and psychological contexts, including interpersonal violence [2], family dysfunction[3], adverse childhood experiences [1], and psychiatric vulnerabilities such as behavioral disorders [4]. These complex interactions contribute not only to adolescents' vulnerability online but also to how they interpret, respond to, and internalize their experiences of victimization.

But sometimes there is still a misunderstanding between cybervictim and cybervictim behavior, these are two different meanings. Where cybervictim refers to individuals who experience or are subjected to acts of violence or harassment in cyberspace, such as cyber-harassment and cyber-impersonation. This term emphasizes more on a person's status as a victim in the context of crime or cyberviolence. Meanwhile, cybervictim behavior refers to patterns of behavior or online activities that can increase a person's risk of becoming a victim of online violence. For example, engaging in risky activities on social media, poor cyber security management, or a vulnerable online lifestyle. In other words, this behavior is an action or pattern that can make individuals more likely to experience victimization in cyberspace [5].

Several studies have shown cybervictim behavior as a consequence and predictor of psychosocial incompatibility. Teens who are victims

often report higher levels of anxiety, depression, social withdrawal, and even suicidal ideation especially in cases where family communication is poor or not supportive [6]. In contrast, adolescents with strong family support and emotional intelligence exhibit more adaptive coping mechanisms, highlighting the protective role of social connectedness and emotional regulation [7].

In addition, evidence suggests that cybervictims rarely exist in isolation. It often overlaps with other forms of aggression, including bullying, sexual harassment, and dating violence, creating a multidimensional network of victimization that can persist over time and share platforms [8]. These patterns underscore the importance of addressing cybervictims not only as isolated incidents but as a reflection of broader relational, cognitive, and emotional difficulties.

This integrative review seeks to synthesize existing findings on adolescent cyber-victim behavior, focusing on definitions, causative factors, psychological outcomes, and protection mechanisms. By critically examining peer-reviewed studies in a variety of cultural and clinical contexts, the review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon to guide future research, policy, and intervention strategies.

In recent years, cybervictims have become a growing concern in adolescent development due to the increased reliance on digital communication platforms. Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying is characterized by its persistent, anonymous, and often unavoidable nature. This can happen anytime and anywhere, attacking the safety of a teenager's home and contributing to long-term psychological harm. As a result, adolescents who experience cyber victimization often experience intense emotional distress, including anxiety, depression, isolation, and in severe cases, suicidal ideation [9], [10].

Cyber victim behavior refers to the emotional, behavioral, and psychological responses that adolescents exhibit after experiencing online aggression. This response is influenced not only by the nature of the cyberattack but also by predisposing factors such as the psychological nature of the individual, adverse childhood experiences, and offline victimization that occur simultaneously [1], [4]. For example, adolescents with behavioral disorders or a history of trauma are more likely to engage in a cycle of online aggression and victimization[4].

In addition, family and environmental contexts significantly shape how adolescents view and respond to cyber victimization. Research highlights that strong family communication and parental guidance can buffer the psychological impact of online victimization, while dysfunctional or non-existent family involvement can exacerbate emotional distress [9], [10]. During the COVID-19 pandemic, limited social interaction intensified online engagement, increasing adolescents' exposure to cyber risks [9].

In addition, cyber victimization is rarely an isolated phenomenon. It often overlaps with other forms of interpersonal violence, including traditional bullying, dating violence, and sexual abuse, which exacerbates its effects on adolescents' psychological well-being [11]. Further cross-cultural studies reveal variations in how adolescents in different countries experience and cope with cyber victimization, suggesting the need for a broader understanding of contextual and cultural influences [12].

Given the diverse and global nature of the problem, a comprehensive synthesis of current research is essential. By identifying common behavioral patterns, psychosocial predictors, and protective factors, this review aims to deepen our understanding of cyber-victim behaviors in adolescents and inform culturally responsive prevention and intervention strategies.

Method

In collecting articles or journals from two main sources, namely from Scopus and Pub Med, then the researcher then collected articles with the keywords used were "cybervictim behavior" AND "adolescent" OR "teenager" OR "youth". Based on keywords, around 1016 and 238 related articles were found published in 2020-2025. Based on the articles collected, the researchers used 83 articles from Scopus and 53 articles from Pub Med articles that were closely related to this study.

Furthermore, a review was carried out using the PICOSS (Population, Intervention, Comparators, Outcome Variables, Study Design and Setting) table which was used to determine the inclusion criteria, exclusions that were detailed, clear and relevant in relation to the key components of the systematic review questions. To determine the research sample, inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria were used. For inclusion and exclusion criteria, you can see the following table 1:

Table 1. Inclusion Criteria

Criterion	Information
Populasi	Adolescent
Intervention	-
Comparators	-
Outcome variabel	Cybervictim Behavior
Study Design and Setting	Quantitative and qualitative research.

From the results of the criteria according to PICOSS above, obtained from the 78 articles that have been searched, the researcher found 23 articles that are closely related to this research in accordance with the inclusion criteria that have been prepared. The following is a PRISMA graph as the flow of journal article selection used for this research as follows

Identification of studies via databases and registers

Identification

Records identified from Database (1254):
    Databases Scopus (n = 1016)
    Databases PubMed (n = 238)

Records removed *before screening*:
    Duplicate records removed (n = 0)
    Records marked as ineligible by automation tools (n = 933)

Screening

Records screened (n=136)

Records excluded (n =25)

Reports sought for retrieval (n=78)

Reports not retrieved (n =0)

Reports assessed for eligibility (n=78)

Reports excluded:
    Not general cybervictim behavior (n = 13)
    Before 2020 (n=2)
    Not specifically explain cybervictim behavior (n =39)
    Not using English (n =1)
    .

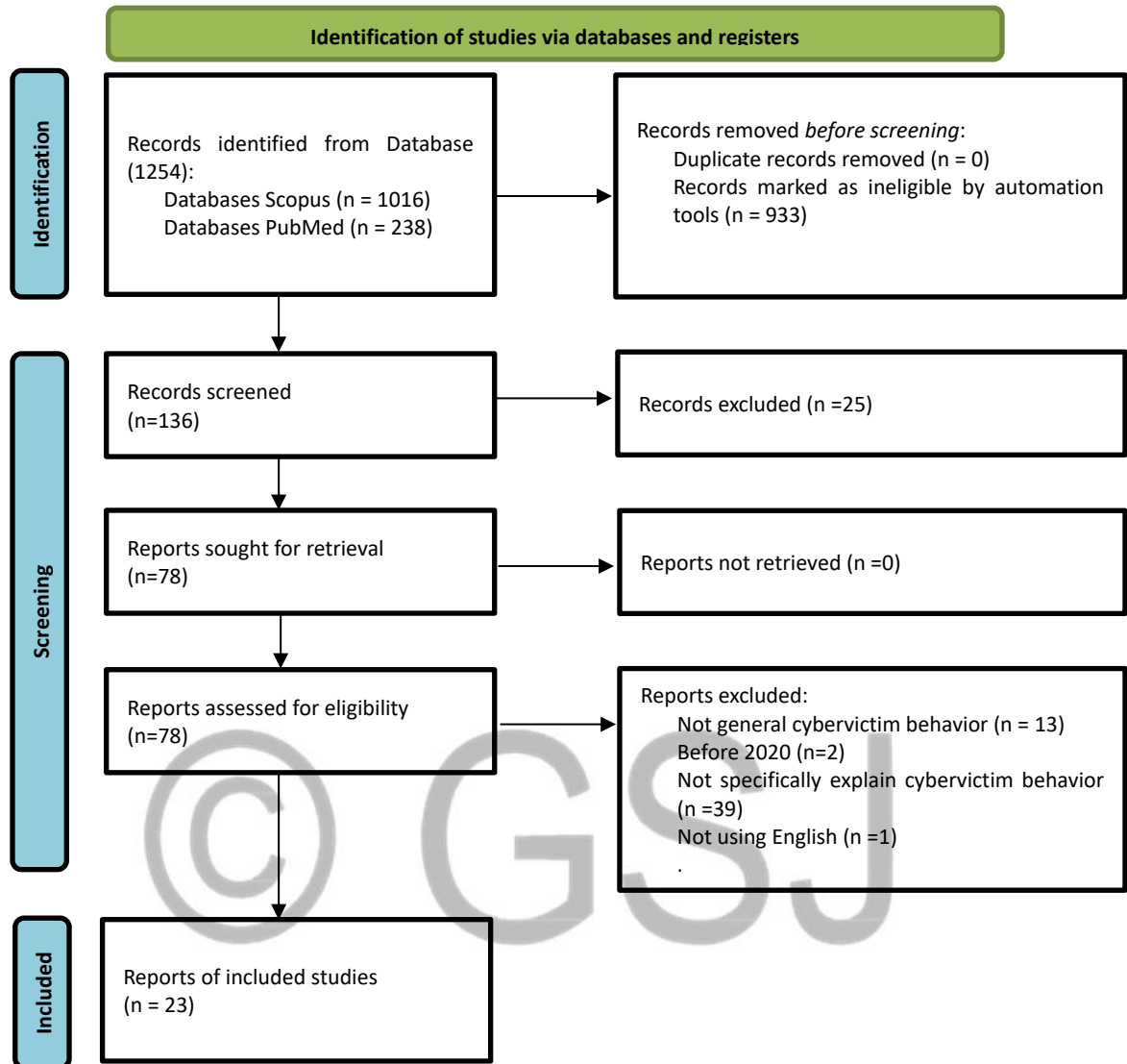**Included**

Reports of included studies (n = 23)

Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart. From: Page MJ, McKenzie JE, Bossuyt PM, Boutron I, Hoffmann TC, Mulrow CD, et al. PRISMA 2020 statement: the latest guidelines for systematic review reporting. BMJ 2021; 372: n71. doi:https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71 [13]

Based on the prism table, it presents a synthesis of critical findings from 23 selected articles that meet the inclusion criteria. Each entry is designed to provide a multidimensional comparative analysis including: (1) methodological context (population/design), (2) operational definition of cybervictim behavior, (3) core findings related to behavioral patterns and psychosocial impacts, and (4) study limitations. This synthesis reveals conceptual and thematic heterogeneity that is essential for further research mapping. The following are the results of the review of the findings of the articles used as follows:

Author/ Year/ Country/ Research Method	Population or Research Subject	Definition of Cyber Victim Behavior	Research Results	Limitations of Research
Adhia, et.al/ 2024/ American/ Qualitative [2]	The research population targeted high school students, specifically students in grades 6 through 8. The sample consisted of 15 high school-age teenagers from several major cities in the United States. The research method is Qualitative.	Experiences of interpersonal violence on digital platforms, such as bullying and harassment on social media, are common among adolescents, while their understanding of the behavior of cybercriminals is evident in their ability to identify concrete examples, such as receiving unwanted sexual images via AirDrop or direct messages.	The research subjects showed a clear understanding of the different forms of cyber abuse. They were able to identify common methods of receiving unwanted sexual content (such as AirDrops and social media direct messages) and provide specific examples of cyber victim behavior, such as pressure to send sexual photos/videos online and the risks.	This limited sample size may not fully represent the diverse experiences and perspectives of all high school students, potentially influencing the generalization of the findings. As well as the use of cognitive interviews, while beneficial for understanding understanding, can introduce biases based on participants' willingness to share their experiences openly.
Baumann, et.al/ 2022/ Germany/ Kuantitatif [4]	The population of children and adolescents aged 9–19 years, consisted of a clinical group with *a diagnosis of Conduct Disorder* (CD) and a typical developmental control group (*Typically Developing Children (TDCs)*). A total sample of 206 participants (76 CDs and 130 TDCs) with a gender composition of 57% female and 43% male, were recruited through multi-loci sources in Germany—including mental health clinics, welfare institutions, and juvenile offender services in Frankfurt and Aachen.	"Aggressive behavior that is intentional and repeated through electronic means (such as email, text messages, or social media) with the intent of harming others who are unable to defend themselves easily."	This study revealed that adolescents with Conduct Disorder (CD) experienced significantly higher cyberbullying victimization (average score of 4.2) than typical developmental adolescents/TDCs (score 1.2). The three main factors that predict susceptibility to victimization are the diagnosis of CD itself, female gender, and high callous-unemotional traits (lack of empathy). The most commonly reported forms of cyberbullying include involvement in online arguments, being the target of rumor spreading, and digital insults/threats—which indicate a dominant pattern of relational aggression. Another key finding was a significant positive correlation (r = 0.44) between cyberbullying victimization and traditional bullying experiences in schools, reinforcing the concept that victims are more likely to experience cross-victimization (online-offline).	This study has several critical limitations: (1) the use of *self-report* risks causing *social desirability bias* (the tendency of participants to give answers that are considered normative); (2) *the cross-sectional design* does not allow the identification of causal relationships between variables; (3) the limited time span of *cyberbullying measurement* (the last 3 months) has the potential to ignore long-term patterns of victimization; and (4) the generalization of findings is limited because the samples come from specific clinical populations in Germany, so they do not necessarily represent the dynamics of different demographic/cultural groups.

O'Connor, et.al/ / United States/ Quantitative [1]	The study involved 265 adolescents aged 12 to 17 years, with a mean age of 14.3 years (SD = 1.7). The sample consisted of slightly more female participants (56%) compared to male participants.	Cybervictim behavior refers to the experience of individuals being targeted by aggressive actions through digital platforms. Cyber victim behavior involves being subjected to aggressive actions through electronic communication, such as social media, SMS, or other online platforms. These actions can be overt, such as threats or insults, or relational, such as social exclusion or the spread of rumors. Cyber-victimization can occur in conjunction with face-to-face aggression. This combination can lead to more severe psychosocial and behavioral difficulties for victims and often experience negative mental health outcomes.	This study identified three subgroups of urban adolescents through latent classroom analysis of 265 participants:(1) *Combined Aggressive Victims* (17% of participants) who experienced aggression as well as victimization both cyber and face-to-face;(2) *Aggressors and Direct Victims* (51% of participants) as the largest group primarily involved in direct physical aggression/victimization; 3) *Limited Involvement* (32% of participants) with minimal participation in both forms of aggression. The Combined Subgroup *of Aggressive Victims* showed the most vulnerable profile—they had the highest exposure to community violence, trauma symptoms, and *Adverse Childhood Experiences* (ACEs), while reporting the highest rates of verbal and physical abuse compared to other subgroups.	The findings are based on a specific sample of urban adolescents which may limit the generalization of the results. The study mainly relied on self-report data from adolescents, which can lead to biases such as social cravings or inaccurate reporting. This dependence can affect the validity of findings, as self-reported experiences can be influenced by a variety of factors
Çimen, et.al/ 2022/ Turkey/ Quantitative [9]	This study is aimed at adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 who are enrolled in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry of Kocaeli University. This population was specifically chosen because of their potential experience with cyber victimization during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total sample of 142 patients was included in this study.	Cybervictim behavior refers to the experiences of teenagers who are subjected to bullying through digital platforms such as online games, text messages, and social networks, where they often encounter such behavior. Many victims have underlying psychiatric conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), suggesting the influence of mental health status on vulnerability to victimhood. Although victims often use coping strategies by relying on online safety measures, research shows they tend to seek help infrequently, which may be due to a lack of awareness or support systems available to them.	The study involved adolescents who enrolled in child psychiatry clinics, most of whom had psychiatric diagnoses. This selection may create bias, as the findings may not be representative of the general adolescent population that does not have such a diagnosis The study was unable to compare the situation of adolescents before and after the pandemic due to the absence of pre-pandemic data. This limits the understanding of how the pandemic specifically affected cyber victimization	The study sample consisted only of adolescents who came to a child psychiatric clinic and the majority had a psychiatric diagnosis, thus potentially causing sample bias. In addition, there is no comparative data on conditions before and after the pandemic due to the relatively small number of participants.
Buelga, et.al/ 2024/ Spain and Belgium/ Quantitative [10]	Participants are drawn from public and state-funded private education centres, specifically focusing on those studying Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) and Baccalaureate (pre-university classes). The participants were between the ages of 12 and 18, The study involved a total of 1,007 adolescents, comprising 51.9% of boys.	Cyberviktim was identified as a significant risk factor for suicidal behavior in adolescents. The article highlighted that cyber victims reported higher rates of suicidal ideation compared to those who experienced traditional victimization alone. Specifically, 50% of cyber victims report suicidal thoughts, and nearly 20% have attempted suicide	Victims of traditional bullying were found to have a significant direct effect on suicidal ideation and also predicted cybervictimhood. Cybervictims themselves are significant predictors of suicidal ideation. The study found a significant indirect effect of traditional victimization on suicidal ideation through cyber-victimization.	This study has limitations in the form of a lack of variables related to suicidal behavior (such as suicide attempts) that can be integrated for more comprehensive analysis in the future. In addition, no studies have been conducted on the role of moderation of school variables—such as teacher support and affiliation with classmates—that have the potential to influence the relationship between *victimization* and suicidal ideation.

Espino, et.al/ 2022/ Spain/ Kuantitatif [14]	The study involved a total of 2,526 students, consisting of girls (49.8%) and boys (49.7%). Participants were between the ages of 11 and 19, and were recruited from nine secondary schools in southern Spain.	Cybervictim behavior is defined as the state or behavior of being a victim of cyberbullying, which includes repeated aggression in cyberspace such as spreading rumors, threats, or identity theft. The criteria for being categorized as a cybervictim is to experience the aggression "at least once or twice a month" in the past two months. Cyberbullying itself has distinctive characteristics such as the potential anonymity of the perpetrator and constant exposure to aggression due to the absence of space and time restrictions on the internet.	The study shows a wide range of involvement in cybervictimization among adolescents. Specifically, it highlights that cyber victims can account for 3% to 72% of adolescents. The results showed a stark difference in the behavior of cyber victims based on dating experience. Among teens with no dating experience, about 39.7% were not victims of any form of violence, while this figure dropped significantly to just 7.1% among those with dating experience.	The sample was taken from nine secondary schools in southern Spain, which can limit the generalization of findings to other cultural or geographical contexts. The unique social and cultural dynamics of the region can influence the prevalence and nature of violence among adolescents, so it is important to replicate the research in diverse settings
Chudal, et.al/ 2022/ Europe/ Quantitative [15]	The overall study included a total of 28,427 adolescents from 13 countries, with a special focus on a subsample of 21,688 adolescents aged 13-15 years.	Cybervictim behavior in this article is defined as the experience of being a victim of cyberbullying, which includes: Repeated taunts on the internet, Bullying via email or text message, Dissemination of derogatory material about someone on the internet. This behavior occurs deliberately, repeatedly, and involves an imbalance of power. Those who reported experiencing combined victimization (both traditional and cyber) showed the highest levels of internalized symptoms, suggesting a strong link between cyber-victim's behavior and adverse mental health outcomes	The study revealed that the average prevalence of cyber-victimization in 21,688 adolescents was relatively low (5.1%), indicating that despite being a serious concern, its impact is still more limited than traditional bullying. However, significant overlap was found between the two forms of victimization—the combined prevalence (cyber and traditional) was 6.1%—suggesting that adolescent victims of cyberbullying were also more likely to experience traditional bullying, complicating their victimization experience. Another critical finding is the role of gender factors: girls are consistently more likely to be victims of any form of victimization (including cyber) in most countries.	The study was conducted in a specific region of 13 countries, which may not be representative of the entire country as a whole. In addition, these differences in the year of data collection may affect the comparability of the findings, especially given the rapid evolution of technology and social media during that period
Kyrrestad, et.al/ 2020/Norway/Quantitative [16]	A total of 2,117 students participated in the study, which was drawn from 72 junior high schools that agreed to participate from 220 invited schools.	Cyber victim behavior specifically refers to individuals who experience this form of bullying. This article categorizes teens into different groups based on their involvement in cyberbullying, including those who are solely victims of cyberbullying. This group is defined as teenagers who have been bullied online but do not engage in bullying on others.	This study confirms that being a victim of *cyberbullying* is a unique contributor to adolescent mental health problems. Cyber victims showed a significantly higher total SDQ difficulty score (15.21) than uninvolved adolescents (9.91) and cyberbullying perpetrators (11.73), indicating a more detrimental impact of the victimization experience than the perpetrator's actions. The findings also reveal gender vulnerability: girls who are cyber victims report mental health problems—particularly emotional symptoms—that are more severe than boys in similar positions. Overall, these results confirm the causal link between cyber victimization and decreased mental health, with victims suffering the heaviest psychological burden.	This non-random sampling can affect the representativeness of the findings, making it difficult to generalize the results to the broader adolescent population. The study used a single global item to measure both traditional bullying and cyberbullying, which, while common in bullying research, may not capture the full complexity of these behaviors. This can limit the depth of understanding of the nuances of the bullying experience
Colella, et.al/ 2025/ Italy and Spain/ Quantitative [17]	The population and sample of this study consisted of preadolescence in Italy and Spain. The sample used was a total of 895 preadolescen, with 54.6% of participants from Italy (n = 489) and 45.4% of participants from	Cybervictim is defined as the experience of being a victim of negative treatment, such as aggression, harassment, or intimidation carried out through electronic communication technologies such as the internet and social media platforms. These experiences can lead to emotional stress, psychological distress,	Cybervictimization was positively and significantly associated with an increase in problematic social media use (PSMU) and moral disengagement (MD), which then serially mediated the relationship between cybervictimization and cyberbullying perpetration. In other words, the higher the level of cybervictimization	The cross-sectional research design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between variables (such as *cybervictimization*, PSMU, *moral disengagement*, and *cyberbullying perpetration*), so that the findings only show correlations without cause-and-effect direction. The study also did not accommodate critical contextual factors—such as cultural

	Spain (n = 406. Participants ranged in age from 9 to 14 years old with an average age of 11.23 years	and long-term negative consequences for the victim's personality development. Victims of cyberbullying often experience mental distress, adopt maladaptive coping strategies, and in many cases, cyberbullying victims have the potential to become perpetrators as a form of revenge or an attempt to regain control and power (cycle of violence)	experienced, the more likely it is to experience problematic social media use and moral disengagement mechanisms, both of which contribute to increased cyberbullying perpetration behavior.	variation, educational policies, digital parenting patterns, or rules for the use of technology in families—that could potentially moderate the relationship between variables. This limitation opens up opportunities for further research to explore the complexity of these relationships more holistically.
Wang, et.al/ 2025/ China/ Quantitative [18]	The population and sample of this study consisted of adolescent and youth students who are studying at various levels of schools in Sichuan Province, China, including junior high school, high school, and college and university students.	Cybervictimization" or the behavior of being a victim of cyberbullying is defined as the experience of students who receive various forms of bullying or harassment through online media, which is a type of bullying carried out through digital platforms or the internet. Impact on mental health issues such as insomnia, anxiety, depression, and PTSD	A total of 17.7% of students reported having experienced cybervictimization, with the result that Cybervictimization was significantly associated with an increased risk of symptoms of insomnia, anxiety, depression, and PTSD after controlling for demographics and COVID-19-related variables: All values with p <.001 showed a statistically significant associationStudents who experience a combination of traditional bullying and cybervictimization show a higher risk of mental disorders, especially PTSD	The researchers suggest that further research be conducted with a more diverse longitudinal design and data collection methods to examine the causal mechanisms and mediating/moderation factors between bullying and mental health
Kenny, et.al/2020/Kanada/ Kuantitatif [19]	Canadian residents aged 15 years and older living in Canada's 10 provinces, including immigrants and non-immigrants who are not in institutions. The total number of respondents was 27,425 people (after weighting), with 6,273 immigrants and 21,152 non-immigrants being part of the sample	Cyber-victimization is defined as the experience of being subjected to threats, harassment, or intimidation through technological devices such as computers, mobile phones, or other digital devices.	Overall, no significant differences in *cyber-victimization rates* were found between immigrant and non-immigrant adolescents, but a more in-depth analysis revealed specific vulnerabilities in immigrant subgroups. Immigrant men show *a significantly higher risk of cyber-victimization* than immigrant women and non-immigrant men. Critical risk factors were identified in a history of *child maltreatment* that increased the likelihood of victimization by up to threefold, while age affected differently by gender—young immigrant women were more at risk, a pattern not seen in men. In addition, mental health issues and hostile living environments also contribute to increased vulnerability in immigrant populations.	The authors suggest that future research needs to use longitudinal data, expand the size of variables related to cyber-victimization and gender, and increase the representation of marginalized immigrant groups through surveys that do not limit language skills
Manocci, et.a/2023/Italia/ Kuantitatif [20]	The population and study sample consisted of adolescent students attending junior and senior secondary school in Italy. A total of 22 schools were involved in this study. A total of 2623 students were asked to participate, and 2112 questionnaires were successfully collected with a response rate of 80.5%.	Cybervictim behavior is defined as the status of being a victim of cyberbullying, which is harassment, humiliation, or threats carried out through digital communication tools or electronic devices by individuals or groups, which is usually done repeatedly and with victims who find it difficult to defend themselves.	The study reported the prevalence of *pure cybervictims* (victims without being perpetrators) at 9% of the total respondents. Three significant risk factors that increase the likelihood of becoming *a cybervictim* are: (1) female gender (OR=1.7; 95%CI: 1.18-2.35), (2) middle *school* education (ages 11-13) (OR=1.56; 95%CI: 1.01-2.44), and (3) use of IT devices for more than 2 hours per day (OR=1.63; 95%CI: 1.08-2.47). The findings on women's gender risk are in line with some previous studies, although their consistency varies. In addition, the high intensity of online communication has also been shown to correlate with increased involvement in *cyberbullying* both as a victim and perpetrator, confirming the relationship between the duration of internet use and vulnerability to *cybervictimization*.	The research sample was limited to junior and senior high school students with the convenience sampling method in 2021-2022, so these limitations should be considered when generalizing the results to a wider population. There is about 18% of the data blank in the questionnaire section related to the measurement of physical activity levels, which has the potential to affect the generalization of the research results.
Perez-Rodrigueza,	Population: Non-university adolescents in Spain are between	Cybervictimization" refers to violent behavior received by adolescents from peers	Cybervictimization was experienced by 22.5% of par-	It is necessary to triangulate the roles between vic-

et.al/2024/ Spain/ Quantitative [21]	11 and 22 years old. Sample: Consisting of 7,295 participants. Where the final sample size after the elimination of cases with a lot of lost values was 7,114 participants.	through digital media or information and communication technologies, without always having a clear imbalance of power as in the traditional definition of cyberbullying. In other words, cybervictimization is defined as violent behavior experienced online by individuals, which includes receiving acts of aggression such as threatening messages, insults, spreading gossip, or exclusion from groups in social networks.	ticipants (1,574 adolescents), with a typical developmental pattern: the frequency increases gradually from early adolescence, peaks in late adolescence (around the age of 15-18 years), and then decreases as young adulthood progresses. Although the lowest average scores were in early adolescence, key findings revealed that the severity of the victim experience (*pure cybervictim*) did not differ significantly between stages—meaning that the psychological impact could be equivalent even if the number of cases varied. In terms of gender, men are consistently more likely to be victims than women at almost all stages, except in early adolescence where women are more vulnerable. The most dominant form of victimization is verbal violence (e.g. threats/insults via messages), which also shows the most striking differences between age groups.	tims, perpetrators, and witnesses (cyberbystanders). Suggestions for the future by conducting longitudinal studies to observe the evolution of cyberbullying behavior during adolescence. Conduct frequency studies for ages before early adolescence. Identify personal, school, and family variables that can help design prevention strategies and interventions appropriate to the adolescent's developmental stage
Rodríguez-Hidalgo, et.al/ 2020/ Spain and Colombia/ Quantitative [22]	The population and sample of the study in this article include adolescents from two countries, namely Spain and Ecuador.	Cybervictim (Cybervictim Behavior) refers to the experience of a person who receives cyberaggression (cyberaggression) which is an aggressive and repetitive interpersonal behavior that aims to hurt the victim through information and communication technology, as happens in cyberspace and other telematic media. In other words, a cybervictim is an individual who is targeted by aggressive actions carried out online, which causes negative psychological, social, educational, and health impacts on the victim.	The results showed that cybervictim behavior was significantly related to several psychosocial variables, including self-deprecation (low self-esteem), communicative or relational skills, assertiveness, and conflict resolution skills. These variables are significantly associated with the rate of cybervictimization in adolescents. Nevertheless, some social skills as mentioned are not necessarily strong predictors of cybervictimization in all ethnic-cultural groups controlled by country of birth (Spain, Morocco, Romania, Colombia, and Ecuador). In addition, other studies show that social anxiety, difficulty communicating with peers, and lack of social skills are important predictors of cybervictimization	This study has two main limitations: (1) it does not include contextual variables such as parenting styles, educational policies, and access/availability of internet-technology that can explain differences across countries; and (2) the absence of an analysis of differences based on gender and age range. For this reason, future research is recommended to integrate these variables and conduct demographic stratification analysis to identify the most critical factors that affect cyberbullying, so that we can design more targeted and contextual prevention programs.
Meng, et.al/ 2023/ China/ Quantitative [23]	The population or subjects of this study were 497 junior high school (SMP) students between the ages of 12 and 15 who came from a secondary school in a rural area in northern China. Of the total participants, 46.1% were men. The participants came from families with low income levels (annual per capita income of less than 10,000 yuan) and low parental educational backgrounds.	Victimization behavior is defined as a significant form of interpersonal stress that involves the experience of accepting aggressive behavior or bullying through digital or online media. Cyber-victimization includes various forms of technology-based aggression such as harassment, humiliation, or intimidation experienced directly by adolescents through digital platforms (e.g. social media, text messages, or online communication applications). This results in negative psychological impacts such as loneliness, social withdrawal, and low self-esteem, which are core components of interpersonal theories about suicide.	Cybervictimization in adolescents shows a significant relationship with deficits in psychosocial skills, especially *self-deprecation*, weak *assertiveness*, and poorly developed communication-relational and conflict resolution skills. However, these patterns of relationships are inconsistent across cultures—when controlled by country of birth (Spain, Morocco, Romania, Colombia, Ecuador), these social skills are not always strong predictors of cyber victimization across all ethnic groups. Complementary findings from other studies reinforce this complexity by identifying additional critical predictors: social anxiety, communication difficulties with peers, and general social skills deficits.	The sample is relatively homogeneous, so the findings may not be generalized to adolescent populations in other regions or countries. The time interval between data collection was only two weeks, so it was not possible to capture the long-term effects of the relationship between cyber-victimization, interpersonal needs, and suicidality. Long-term research with longer intervals is needed to understand long-term dynamics

Domoff, et.al/ 2024/ America / Quantitative [24]	The study population was adolescents aged 13–18 years who received intensive care in a psychiatric partial inpatient program, The study sample consisted of 97 adolescents who filled out an online survey between March 2022 and February 2024.	Cybervictim behavior refers to a person's experience of being a victim of harmful actions in cyberspace, such as cyberbullying and online harassment. Cybervictimization encompasses negative experiences experienced by adolescents online that can adversely affect their mental health, including increased loneliness, depression, anxiety, and decreased physical activity. The article also highlights that cybervictimization is often difficult for teens to disclose due to various barriers such as fear of negative consequences, shame, and concerns that reporting the incident will exacerbate the problem	The study revealed that 25.8% of adolescents experienced *cybervictimization* in the past month—a figure higher than the annual prevalence of the non-clinical national sample (15%). Victims with a high frequency of victimization tend to exhibit addictive cell phone use/media, greater levels of loneliness, and *cyberbullying behavior* towards others. Although they generally seek support from friends (offline/online) or family, victims rarely report to a mental health professional for fear of worsening the situation, loss of digital access, embarrassment, or the threat of punishment. Further, *cybervictimization* correlates with increased loneliness and decreased physical activity, which has the potential to worsen mental health such as anxiety and social isolation.	The sample size was small and limited to adolescents undergoing treatment (n = 97), which hindered the ability to conduct more in-depth thematic analyses as well as limited the generalization of findings.
López-Martíne, et.al/ 2021/ Spain/ Kuesioner [8]	Population: Adolescents between the ages of 11 and 18, who are enrolled in Compulsory Secondary Education in some autonomous communities in Spain, namely Valencia, Aragon, and Andalusia. Initially 1318 teenagers, but 14 participants were excluded because the answers were incomplete. So, the final sample consisted of 1304 adolescents.	Cybervictimization is defined as a situation in which the victim is harassed or intimidated through electronic devices and in virtual environments by using messages or actions that are hostile or aggressive in nature with the aim of hurting or making the victim feel uncomfortable. Additionally, cybervictimization transcends physical and school boundaries as it can happen anytime and anywhere as long as the victim has access to internet-connected devices.	Research revealed that adolescents with high rates of child-to-parent violence (CPV) also experienced higher rates of cybervictimization (CV), both relationally and overtly, thus supporting the first hypothesis that high CPV correlates with increased victimization (PV and CV). Furthermore, the findings suggest the possibility that adolescent boys who commit CPV are not only cyber-victims, but can also play a role as cybervictimizers, illustrating the complex dynamics of the "violence-victimization cycle" in which individuals can act as aggressors as well as victims in cyberspace.	The study used data collected only from adolescents, without other sources such as family or teachers.
Segura, et.al/ 2020/ Spain/ Quantitative [25]	The total sample was 1318 adolescents, with a composition of 47% males, aged between 11 and 17 years (average age 13.8 years, SD = 1.32). The distribution of students was even at each grade level: 24.7% of the first grade, 27.3% of the second grade, 23.7% of the third grade, and 24.3% of the fourth grade of their secondary education	Cybervictim behavior or cybervictimization is defined as harassment or bullying experienced through devices such as mobile phones and the internet over the past year. The scale used to measure cybervictimization includes various forms of digital harassment, such as insults or ridicule on social media and WhatsApp groups aimed at harming, threats that force victims to do unwanted things, unauthorized dissemination of secrets or personal matters, unauthorized taking and dissemination of embarrassing photos or recordings, and social exclusions	The results of the study showed that adolescents who were victims of cybervictimization had deficits in all dimensions of emotional intelligence (EI). They showed lower levels of emotional clarity as well as lower ability to understand and manage their own emotions. These findings are in line with previous research showing that victims of cyberbullying tend to have difficulty recognizing, expressing appropriately, and managing their own emotions as well as those of others, especially when those emotions are intense and their emotion regulatory capacity is diminished. On the other hand, the development of adequate emotional intelligence—including attention to emotions, understanding, and the ability to manage them—can be a protective factor that reduces the risk of psychological problems appearing in cyberbullying victims during adolescence	The study sample only included adolescents aged 11 to 17 years, so the results could not be generalized to other education levels or age groups (such as early education, primary education, higher education) or different cultural contexts

González-Calatayud, et.al/ 2021/ Spain/ Kuantitatif [26]	The population of this study is all students who are undergoing compulsory secondary education in the Region of Murcia, Spain, which amounts to 66,413 students. The sample used was a representative sample of 950 students between the ages of 11 and 18, which was selected using stratified random sampling techniques	Cybervictim behavior is defined as the experience of an individual or adolescent who is subjected to repetitive aggressive behavior through information and communication technology (ICT), especially the internet and mobile phones, with the aim of causing harm or harm. More specifically, this behavior includes various actions such as receiving offensive or insulting messages via mobile phones/the internet, receiving intimidating anonymous calls, being subjected to slander or spreading malicious rumors online to damage a good name, and receiving threats or extortion through frightening or coercive messages/calls. These behaviors were evaluated based on the frequency with which they appeared, ranging from "occasionally" to "frequently" and "during," over a period of one year.	A total of 72.1% of students were involved in cyberbullying over the past year, with breakdowns: 49.3% as victims, 23.3% as perpetrators, and 62.3% as witnesses. The most common forms of behavior in all three roles include offensive or threatening messages/calls, intimidating anonymous calls, the spread of false statements, and digital blackmail. This uniformity of behavior patterns confirms the dynamics of role-switching in cyberbullying—where the perpetrator is often a victim on other occasions, and vice versa. These findings are reinforced by a significant positive correlation between the experience of being a victim and a perpetrator, showing an interrelated cycle between victimization and aggression in cyberspace.	The results of the study cannot be directly extrapolated to other regions of Spain or other countries, so their scope of applicability is limited. And this study could not distinguish between cyberbullying behavior that is carried out occasionally (casually) and that is carried out repeatedly or intensely (frequency). To be able to distinguish this requires a more in-depth qualitative cohort study
Matthews, et.al/ 2020/ English/ Quantitative [27]	The population and sample of this study came from the Environmental Risk (E-Risk) Longitudinal Twin Study, which is a developmental cohort that tracked the development of 2,232 British twins born in 1994–1995 in England and Wales	Cybervictimization (the behavior of being a victim of cyberbullying) is defined as a form of victimization that occurs through digital media or the internet and has different characteristics from offline forms of victimization. Cybervictimization:- Occurs outside of a specific physical location.- The identity of the perpetrator is often unknown.- It can continue even if the victim tries to avoid the situation, for example by staying away from the source of the bullying. These characteristics make it a new phenomenon that is conceptually and methodologically different from traditional victimization	Although cybervictimization often occurs in conjunction with offline victimization (which is generally more impactful on mental health issues such as depression and anxiety), this study reveals an independent and specific relationship between cybervictimization and increased loneliness in young adults. This relationship remained significant even after controlling for family factors and problematic technology use, suggesting that: (1) Cybervictimization has special characteristics that distinguish it from traditional victimization, (2) Its contribution to loneliness cannot be explained solely by excessive internet use,(3) The mechanisms of its impact are unique and require different intervention approaches.	Although using longitudinal design and monozygous twin samples (to control for genetic influences and family environment), the study has two crucial limitations: (1) The longitudinal design is not fully able to confirm the causal direction between victimization and loneliness—both have the potential to influence each other (*bidirectional relationship*) where loneliness can be the cause or consequence of victimization; (2) Control of genetic/family factors through twin design has not completely ruled out the possibility of *non-shared genetic factors* or other epigenetic mechanisms that may explain the association between victimization and loneliness.
Camacho, et.al/ 2022/ Spain/ Quantitative [28]	The population is adolescents between the ages of 11 and 16 who are studying in grades 7 to 9 in junior high schools in the Southern region of Spain That is a sample of 3,017 adolescents from 115 classes in 13 junior high schools.	Cybervictim behavior refers to a person's experience as a victim of aggressive behavior carried out through information and communication technology, especially in adolescents. Cybervictimization is defined as intentional and repeated aggressive behavior, where individuals experience harassment, intimidation, or attacks online, for example through messages, social media, or other digital platforms. More specifically, these behaviors include receiving verbal attacks, insults, threats, or perceived harassment in a digital environment, which can lead to negative emotional responses such as anger and rumination	The study uncovered a critical *unidirectional* relationship: the experience of being a victim *of cyberbullying* (*cybervictimization*) predicted an increase in cyberaggression behavior in the future, but not the other way around. A key mechanism that explains this relationship is *anger rumination*—victims tend to get caught up in a repetitive mindset about anger as a result of their victimization. Further analysis proves that *cybervictimization* acts as a full mediator between *anger rumination* and *cyberaggression*: it is the experience of cyber victimization that becomes the bridge that transforms anger reflection into online aggressive action.	The study has two main drawbacks: (1) the use of large but *non-random samples* limits the representativeness and generalization of findings to a broad population, so follow-up studies are recommended to apply *stratified random sampling* to improve external validity; and (2) exclusive reliance on *self-reported* data risks subjectivity *bias* and *social desirability bias*, which needs to be addressed in future research by involving *multi-informant approaches* (e.g., peer reports, family, or behavioral data) to obtain a more comprehensive and objective picture.

Lloret-Irles,et.al/2022/ Spain/ Quantitative [29]	The study used a sample of 560 students from Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE) in Spain after removing 45 cases that were considered inconclusive or random responses from a total of 605 questionnaires distributed.	Cyber-victim behavior refers to the experience of a person who is a victim of intentional and repeated bullying or harassment through electronic devices (e.g. internet, social media, instant messaging), both in the school environment and outside of school. In other words, cyber-victim behavior means experiencing repeated and continuous online attacks or bullying, which can lead to negative psychosocial impacts such as depression, low self-esteem, social isolation, and academic problems. So that the role of the victim can overlap with other roles such as bystanders, and factors such as attitudes towards violence, emotional regulation, and parental supervision.	The level *of cyber-victimisation* in the study sample was consistent with previous studies in Spain, showing variations in prevalence based on frequency and mode of behaviour: incidental *cyberbullying* occurred in 4.1%-25.6% of participants, while frequent cyberbullying *occurred* in 1.1%-6.1%. The critical findings reveal a close relationship between the victim's experience and the *role of the bystander*—almost all victims (98.4%) also witnessed *cyberbullying* (overlapping roles), indicating dual exposure in the digital violence ecosystem. The psychosocial profiles of the two victim groups differed significantly: victims who were active as *bystanders* tended to view violence as an entertainment/problem-solving tool, exhibit intense emotions, and lack parental supervision; while non-bystander victims had stronger anti-violence attitudes, limited media contact, and stricter family supervision—highlighting the protective role of the social environment and nurturing.	Further research is suggested to use longitudinal approaches and more diverse data collection methods to strengthen the findings and develop a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon of cyberbullying
Mascia,et.al/ 2021/ Italia/ Kuantitatif [30]	Population: Junior and senior high school students in rural areas of Sardinia, Italy. A total of 189 students (42% male) were between the ages of 11 and 17. Of the 189 students, 174 gave complete responses and were analyzed in this study.	cybervictim behavior," but from the context and use of the term in this study, cybervictim behavior can be understood as the experience or role of a teenager who is subjected to acts of aggression or bullying carried out through digital technology media such as the internet and mobile phones that negatively impact them emotionally or socially	There is a relationship between moral disengagement (MD), empathy, and victim experience representation (VER) with adolescent involvement in cyberbullying (CB), that in the context of cyberbullying, the inability to feel the victim's suffering directly (due to distance and online anonymity) inhibits the activation of empathy which can be a moral defense mechanism that weakens feelings of guilt or guilt related to adverse actions	The study has not included other important variables that may play a role in cyberbullying such as self-esteem, emotional intelligence, smartphone addiction, and online disinhibition, which could provide a broader picture of the dimensions that influence cyberbullying. The study emphasizes the moral and empathetic aspects but requires further analysis of the spread of responsibility among individuals who are not directly involved in cyberbullying but are aware of the risks

Findings

Definition of Cybervictim Behavior

Cybervictim behavior in adolescents has been the focus of significant research due to the increasing prevalence and severity of online abuse. Broadly defined, cyber victim behavior refers to the psychological, emotional, and behavioral responses shown by adolescents after being targeted through digital platforms such as social media, instant messaging, online games, and video-sharing apps. Unlike traditional bullying, cybervictimization occurs widely and continuously—often anonymously, publicly, and inevitably—magnifying its psychological impact [1], [4].

Of the 23 journal articles reviewed, several recurring characteristics help define cybervictim behavior. Some of its characteristics include emotional distress (e.g., anxiety, depression, fear, and anger), internalized symptoms (e.g., withdrawal, loneliness, low self-esteem), and external reactions (e.g., aggression, retaliation, or cyberbullying of others). Victims may also display passive coping strategies (e.g., avoidance or denial) or maladaptive coping strategies such as substance use or self-harm [9], [31].

The reviewed studies support that the experience of cyber victimization is shaped by different layers of influence. At the individual level, adolescents with emotional instability, poor anger regulation, or pre-existing psychiatric conditions are more susceptible to intense and prolonged victimization reactions [4], [32]. Adolescents with behavioral disorders were found to be subjected to treatment and victimization simultaneously, demonstrating the two-way nature of digital aggression [4];.

At the family level, adolescents who report low parental monitoring or communication tend to experience higher stress when being victims online. Instead, supportive family dynamics act as buffers, reducing the severity of psychological outcomes [3], [6], [10]). Family attitudes towards internet use also affect coping methods and vulnerability to online threats [9].

At the peer and community level, adolescent behavior is shaped by peer norms, school climate, and cultural expectations. Cybervictim behavior is often associated with peer rejection, isolation, and strained friendships. Teens in unsupportive peer environments are more likely to experience concurrent forms of aggression such as bullying, sexual harassment, and dating violence [8], [11].

Theoretically, cybervictim behavior is aligned with several psychological models. The occurrence of General Tension that usually exposure to repeated negative experiences online leads to emotional tension and maladaptive responses such as retaliation or depressive withdrawal [31]. The occurrence of Interpersonal Suicide further explains that adolescents who become cybervictims can develop feelings that are felt burdensome and thwart a sense of belonging, increasing the risk of suicidal ideation [21]. In addition, the Social-Ecological Model offers a broader view, emphasizing the interactions of individual, family, peer, school, and community systems that contribute to the development and consequences of cybervictim behavior [7], [33].

Developmental stages are also important, with early and middle adolescents likely to exhibit increased emotional reactivity to cyberbullying, while older adolescents may engage in more complex behavioral responses such as identity concealment or backlash [12]. Longitudinal studies show that victimization and its emotional consequences, such as loneliness and anger rumination, persist into young adulthood if left unaddressed (Zych et al., 2022; Marciano et al., 2023).

In a multicultural setting, cybervictim behavior manifests differently depending on the cultural context, immigration status, and societal norms. For example, immigrant youth in Canada show higher rates of cyber victimization due to marginalization and reduced access to protective social networks [33]. Similarly, cross-cultural comparisons between adolescents in Spain and Ecuador show variations in emotional responses and behaviors seeking social support [11].

Overall, cybervictim behavior in adolescents is a multidimensional construct that includes internal psychological responses, relational challenges, and broader socio-ecological factors. Effective interventions must address these complex influences by integrating emotional education, family support, school-based prevention, and culturally sensitive approaches.

Risk Dynamics and Protection Factors

The development of cybervictim behavior in adolescents is not the result of a single cause but rather a dynamic interplay of risk and protective factors that operate across the individual, relational, and systemic levels. These factors increase adolescents' vulnerability to negative outcomes after cybervictimization or serve as buffers that reduce their psychological impact. The following are general risk factors for adolescent behavior that are vulnerable to experiencing cybervictim behavior:

Table 2. Risk Factors That Cause Cybervictim Behavior

Risk Factors	The Form of Behavior
Individual factor	• Emotional dysregulation, • History of Psychiatric Disorders • Traumatic childhood experiences,

	• Risky internet use
Social Relations Factors	• Poor family communication
	• Minimal parental supervision,
	• Peer rejection,
	• Involvement in violent relationships
Cultural Factors	• School norms that are tolerant of bullying,
	• Socio-economic marginalization,
	• Cultural pressure on minority or immigrant groups

Risk factor

Some individual-level vulnerabilities have been consistently identified as risk factors for cybervictims. Adolescents with emotional dysregulation, low self-esteem, high impulsivity, or psychiatric disorders (e.g., behavioral disorders, depression) are more likely to be victims of online aggression and exhibit maladaptive responses such as anger, musings and social withdrawal [4], [32]. In addition, those who had prior adverse experiences including neglect, physical abuse, or bullying often exhibited compound psychological symptoms when victimized online, a pattern supported by trauma-informed frameworks [1], [27].

The online environment itself is also a risk factor. Teens who engage in excessive social media use, lack digital literacy, or use the internet unsupervised are more vulnerable to cyberbullying. These individuals often fail to recognize red flags, overshare personal information, or misinterpret the intentions of peers, increasing their exposure to online threats [9], [24]. Additionally, risky digital behaviors such as posting provocative content, engaging in online arguments, or retaliatory cyber aggression can increase the likelihood of continued victimization [22], [28].

At the family and peer level, poor parental supervision, ineffective communication, and highly conflicted home environments have been strongly associated with increased vulnerability to cyber victimization [3], [6]. Similarly, peer rejection, ostracization, and association with deviant peer groups can reinforce adolescents' exposure to harmful online interactions, especially when bullying behaviors are normalized in social circles (Espino et al., 2022).

Cultural and demographic variables such as immigrant status, low socioeconomic status, or minority group identity can also serve as risk factors, especially when adolescents do not have institutional or societal support. Cross-cultural research confirms that ostracized youth are often overrepresented among cybervictims due to reduced access to social capital and digital resources [11], [33].

Pelindency factor

Despite the breadth of risk factors, some protective variables have been shown to reduce the likelihood of cybervictims or mitigate their negative effects. One of the most powerful protective factors is positive family functioning, especially when characterized by open communication, emotional warmth, and proactive parental mediation of the internet [3], [10]. Teens who report strong family ties are more likely to seek help when victimized and less likely to internalize negative online experiences.

Another important protective factor is emotional intelligence. Adolescents with high levels of emotional intelligence tend to interpret peer aggression more accurately, manage their own emotional responses effectively, and use constructive coping strategies such as problem-solving and seeking social support [32], [34]. Programs that focus on improving self-regulation, empathy, and social awareness have been successful in reducing the incidence and impact of cybervictimization.

The school climate also plays a preventive role. An educational environment that promotes inclusion, respect, and anti-bullying norms contributes to lower rates of cyberbullying and better peer support networks. The presence of adult allies in schools such as teachers, counselors, or peer mentors encourages teens to disclose cyberbullying incidents and receive timely interventions [8], [15].
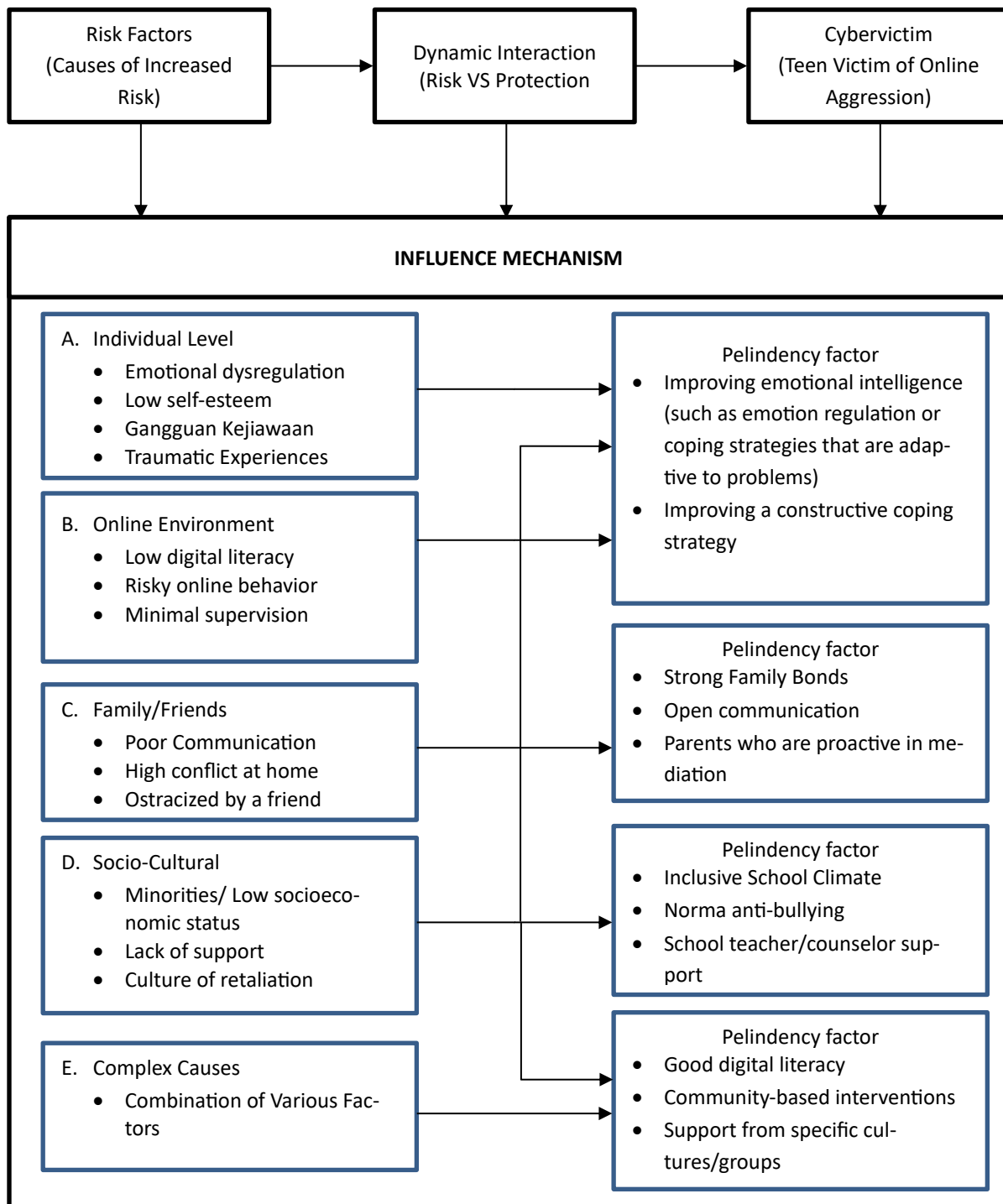
On a broader level, community engagement and access to digital literacy education can empower adolescents to navigate online risks more safely. Culturally tailored interventions that meet the specific needs of immigrant, low-income, or minority youth have been shown to be effective in prevention and recovery [17], [33].

Interaction of Risk Factors and Protection against Cybervictims

In particular, risk factors and protection against cybervictims often interact in ways that are non-linear and specific in their context. For example, adolescents with high emotional vulnerability may still show resilience if they are in a context where families and schools are supportive. Conversely, even those with stable emotional functioning can be overwhelmed in a toxic digital environment or when subjected to cumulative or continuous victimization [1], [24].

This complexity requires a comprehensive prevention framework that integrates various personal support systems such as family, education, and social. Interventions must not only address immediate risks but also strengthen long-term protection capacity that drives

digital wellbeing, emotional regulation, and interpersonal resilience. The following is an overview of how the mechanism of interaction of risk factors with protection factors against cybervictim behavior is:

Risk Factors (Causes of Increased Risk)	→	Dynamic Interaction (Risk VS Protection	→	Cybervictim (Teen Victim of Online Aggression)

INFLUENCE MECHANISM

A. Individual Level
- Emotional dysregulation
- Low self-esteem
- Gangguan Kejiawaan
- Traumatic Experiences

B. Online Environment
- Low digital literacy
- Risky online behavior
- Minimal supervision

Pelindency factor
- Improving emotional intelligence (such as emotion regulation or coping strategies that are adaptive to problems)
- Improving a constructive coping strategy

C. Family/Friends
- Poor Communication
- High conflict at home
- Ostracized by a friend

Pelindency factor
- Strong Family Bonds
- Open communication
- Parents who are proactive in mediation

D. Socio-Cultural
- Minorities/ Low socioeconomic status
- Lack of support
- Culture of retaliation

Pelindency factor
- Inclusive School Climate
- Norma anti-bullying
- School teacher/counselor support

E. Complex Causes
- Combination of Various Factors

Pelindency factor
- Good digital literacy
- Community-based interventions
- Support from specific cultures/groups

PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT AND DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENTS WHO EXPERIENCE CYBERVICTIMS

The psychosocial impact of cybervictims in adolescence is profound and diverse, affecting the individual's emotional health, interpersonal functioning, academic engagement, and overall developmental trajectory. Adolescence is a critical period characterized by identity formation, emotional maturation, and increased social complexity; thus, cyberbullying intrusion during this sensitive stage can

thwart normal developmental processes and leave lasting psychological scars.

Emotional and Psychological Impact

Cybervictims are consistently associated with increased levels of anxiety, depression, anger, and suicidal ideation among teens [21], [31]. Repeated exposure to digital abuse, especially if it occurs anonymously or publicly, contributes to feelings of powerlessness, humiliation, and social rejection. Victims often report symptoms of chronic stress and emotional dysregulation, which, if left untreated, can progress to clinical psychopathology, such as major depressive disorder or post-traumatic stress symptoms [10], [24].

One area of concern is the relationship between cybervictims and self-harm, including digital self-harm, which is a behavior in which teens post hurtful comments about themselves anonymously to get attention or cope with emotional pain. These behaviors often serve as maladaptive outlets for internalized stress and reflect unmet emotional needs [1], [28]

Social and Interpersonal Consequences

Victims of cyberbullying often experience disruption in their peer relationships, often leading to isolation, distrust, and withdrawal from social activities. Fear of further victimization can lead to teens disconnecting from digital and real-life peer interactions, which can reduce perceived sense of belonging and social support[32], [34]. This social isolation is a known predictor of depression and suicidal thoughts during adolescence [21].

In addition, adolescents who oscillate between roles such as victim-turned-aggressors or engage as observers may experience moral confusion, empathy exhaustion, or relational conflict. This complexity further interferes with the formation of healthy peer identities and conflict resolution skills, which are critical for adult functioning later in life [7], [22].

Academic and Behavioral Effects

The emotional toll of cyber victimization often extends to the academic realm. Affected adolescents may show signs of dropping out of school, poor concentration, absenteeism, and decreased academic achievement. In some cases, school rejection may arise, especially if the perpetrator is a classmate or if the school fails to provide a supportive response [6], [8].

Simultaneously, adolescents can exhibit externalizing behaviors as a means of expressing unresolved emotional distress. This includes aggression, drug use, or defiance which all contribute to a negative school experience and can increase the risk of dropping out of school or disciplinary action [4], [26].

Cybervictim Development Patterns

From a developmental perspective, the long-term impact of cybervictimization is shaped by how adolescents internalize and integrate these experiences into their self-concept. Longitudinal studies show that early and chronic victimization is associated with feelings of worthlessness and persistent fragmentation of identity into young adulthood [34], [35]. In addition, unaddressed trauma from digital aggression can affect romantic relationships later in life, career readiness, and social functioning, reinforcing the cycle of vulnerability and developmental mismatches of adolescents.

In contrast, adolescents who receive good early intervention and support either through family, school, or therapy are more likely to recover and show resilient developmental outcomes. They can develop increased empathy, emotional insight, and advocacy skills that empower them to prevent further harm to themselves and others [15], [32].

Cultural and Gender Considerations

The psychosocial consequences of cybervictims are increasingly influenced by gender and cultural factors. Adolescent girls are often more likely to report emotional distress and relational aggression as a result of cyberbullying, while boys may externalize their responses through risk-taking or aggression [9], [17]. Cultural norms also influence how adolescents interpret and respond to victimization. In a collectivist society, where honor and group identity are emphasized, publicly shaming online may have deeper psychological consequences compared to individualistic cultures [11], [33].

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this study tries to synthesize how cybervictims occur in adolescents, there are still many limitations from the results of this study. Such as the criteria in searching for research that are only limited for the past five years, then only looking for research or articles that use qualitative and quantitative methods. In addition, there is a need for additional longitudinal research so that it can fully photograph the development of cybervictim behavior from children to adults. In addition, it is also necessary to add other articles because only English is used and what is used in this study is only articles that can be accessed for free.

In addition, in the future, it is also necessary to add more research on cybervictims that use experimental research methods or with the use of AI. Research related to culture can also be used as input for research on cybervictims in adolescents in the future.

Conclusion

Based on an integrative review of 23 empirical studies, this study concludes that cybervictim behavior in adolescents, i.e. experiences of being subjected to repeated digital aggression (such as threats, harassment, or the spread of rumors through social media/instant messaging) that are persistent, anonymous, and beyond the boundaries of physical space, is a complex phenomenon. This phenomenon is influenced by the multidimensional interaction of risk factors (individual, social relations, and culture) as well as protective factors. The psychosocial impacts are significant and long-term, including an increased risk of anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, PTSD (especially in dual victimization), social isolation, identity formation disorders, decreased concentration, school absenteeism, and decreased academic achievement. Therefore, protection and support from family, friends, and nearby environments such as schools are indispensable to mitigate such severe impacts.

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