

The Impact of Cyberbullying on Child Psychological Health and Moral Development along with School Community Responses

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of digital communication technologies has transformed social interactions among children, introducing new risks to their psychological development. This qualitative literature study examines how digital bullying disrupts the formation of self-confidence and moral integrity in children, and explores the capacity of school communities to address this issue. The analysis reveals that repeated exposure to negative feedback through digital platforms undermines children's self-esteem through internalization of derogatory messages. The public and permanent nature of online content amplifies feelings of shame and social exclusion, while the physical distance between perpetrators and victims attenuates empathic responses, eroding moral sensibilities on both sides. School communities occupy a strategic position in prevention efforts due to their sustained access to children and ability to detect early warning signs of psychological distress. Effective prevention requires comprehensive policies, curriculum integration, teacher training, parental partnerships, and accessible counseling services. The findings suggest that addressing digital bullying demands a collective commitment to extending ethical principles to online spaces, ensuring that children develop healthy identities and moral frameworks in an increasingly digital world. This study contributes conceptual clarity to the relationship between online victimization and developmental disruptions, while offering practical guidance for educational institutions seeking to protect child well-being.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has fundamentally changed the landscape of children's social interaction. Public space that was once limited to the physical environment of school and home now extends into a boundless virtual world. Children grow up in a dual reality, real life and digital life that influence one another (Tan, 2021). This shift carries major consequences for the process of their self-formation. Interaction that takes place on social media platforms, online games, and instant messaging applications has become an inseparable part of young people's daily lives. The presence of technology offers ease of access to information and wider social networks, yet at the same time it brings new risks unknown in earlier generations of childhood development. Digital space becomes an arena of symbolic contest where self-esteem, recognition, and identity are at stake at every moment.

The phenomenon of digital bullying emerges as one of the most serious risks faced by children in online interaction. Unlike conventional bullying limited to certain times and places, attacks in cyberspace can occur anytime and anywhere. Perpetrators can hide their identity, while victims feel they are never safe because the threat follows them wherever they go (Shafik, 2025). Hateful messages, the spread of gossip, exclusion from chat groups, to the creation of fake accounts to humiliate someone are common forms of violence encountered. The characteristic of digital media that allows information to spread massively and permanently worsens the psychological wounds experienced by victims. Something embarrassing or hurtful uploaded to the internet can last forever and be seen by many people, reinforcing the sense of shame and alienation felt by the child.

Children's vulnerability to digital bullying is closely related to the stage of psychosocial

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development they are going through. Late childhood and adolescence are periods of identity formation that are highly sensitive to judgment from the social environment. Children at this stage need recognition and acceptance from their peer group as a foundation of self-confidence. When the digital world becomes the main source of social interaction, rejection or attacks that occur within it carry a very heavy emotional weight (Betts, 2022). Children who become targets of digital bullying often experience confusion between the self-image they want to present and the negative image attached by the perpetrator. The process of internalizing these negative messages can disrupt the formation of a healthy and stable self-concept. This condition is worsened by children's tendency to hide their bad experiences from parents for fear of losing access to digital devices. Discrimination or rejection from the social environment has in fact been shown to affect a person's psychological wellbeing, so its effect on children exposed to digital bullying deserves serious attention (Udjari et al., 2021).

The moral dimension of digital bullying adds complexity to the problem that must be fully understood. Acts of hurting others through digital media are often carried out without full awareness of the human impact of such behavior. The physical distance between perpetrator and victim creates the illusion that the act committed is not particularly dangerous or is not even violence at all. Children who become perpetrators may not see the expression of sadness or suffering from their victims directly, so empathy becomes blunted (Nukusheva et al., 2024). The normalization of rude behavior in online interaction worsens the situation, because children grow up believing that demeaning others on the internet is a common thing. This moral crisis harms not only the victim but also damages the perpetrator's own ethical development. Without proper intervention, this behavior pattern can crystallize into a habit that is difficult to change in adulthood. This shows that ethical governance of digital space needs to be built early, so children learn responsible ways of interacting online rather than being left to find their own moral boundaries (Rifa'id et al., 2024).

The school community as children's closest environment after the family holds a strategic position in facing the threat of digital bullying. School is not merely a place for the transfer of knowledge, but a space for character formation and human values. The role of educators in monitoring and responding to the dynamics of relationships between students becomes increasingly crucial in the digital era. This role can only run well if teachers themselves are able to adapt

and are given adequate space to foster student discipline and participation in the classroom (Rozikin et al., 2023). However, many schools do not yet have adequate readiness to handle bullying that occurs outside class hours and outside the school's physical environment (Tozzo et al., 2022). Principals also often face heavy time pressure in managing various organizational demands, leaving little room to design a specific response to digital bullying (Saputra et al., 2023). Existing anti-bullying policies are often still oriented toward physical violence, while psychological attacks in cyberspace escape attention. Teachers' limited confidence in adapting to technological change also affects how ready they are to recognize and handle problems that emerge among students in digital space (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022). Teachers' limited understanding of digital technology and the dynamics of online interaction makes prevention efforts less than optimal. In fact, without the school's active involvement, children will face this threat alone, without the support of a system that should protect them.

The main problem that arises is the gap between the reality of children's digital lives and the response of the existing education system. Schools still treat digital bullying as an external problem outside their responsibility, even though its impact is strongly felt in the teaching and learning process. Children experiencing psychological pressure due to digital bullying show decreased concentration, loss of learning motivation, and even absence from school to avoid social interaction (Prayuni et al., 2024). This is not unlike other forms of inequality in education, where limited resources and unclear solution strategies leave certain groups of students without adequate protection (Rojak & Khayru, 2022). Teachers and school staff often do not have a clear protocol to identify signs of a child experiencing digital bullying. The absence of a systematic handling procedure causes cases of digital bullying to go undetected early. As a result, the child's suffering continues for a long time without adequate intervention, while the perpetrator continues their destructive behavior. This condition shows that an educational approach that ignores the digital dimension of children's social interaction is no longer relevant to the needs of the times.

The complexity of digital bullying also lies in its cross-boundary nature, spanning space and time, which complicates efforts at identification and intervention. A child can become a victim of bullying from a classmate through social media at night, then meet the perpetrator at school the next day as if nothing had happened (Husni et al., 2025). This duality of experience creates deep confusion and

helplessness for the victim. Parents often fail to notice the warning signs because their level of education and daily busyness limit their awareness of what their children experience online (Warin, 2025). Parents and teachers often do not realize that a child is in trouble because the wounds caused are psychological and not visible physically. The child may feel unable to explain what they are experiencing or fear being seen as weak if they admit to being a victim. The reporting system in schools is usually designed for incidents that occur in the physical environment, so it fails to capture the essence of digital bullying. This condition creates a space of impunity for the perpetrator and despair for the victim who feels no one can help them.

Children who become victims of digital bullying show symptoms of anxiety, depression, and social isolation that can persist into adulthood. Disruption to the formation of self-identity at this critical age can affect a person's ability to build healthy relationships later in life. Moral integrity that should be formed through positive social interaction is threatened by the bitter experiences they undergo. Schools carry a moral responsibility to create a safe environment for all their students, including psychological safety in digital space (Esquivel et al., 2023). Regulation intended to protect children's access to education and health should also extend to their psychological safety, both offline and online, since school responsibility is not limited to the physical environment (Suwito et al., 2021). A stable, closely-knit social environment around the school has also been shown to strengthen a sense of togetherness among its members, a foundation schools can build on to protect students from digital bullying (Wisnujati & Mardikaningsih, 2021). Without a systematic effort to integrate awareness of digital bullying into educational policy and practice, young people will continue to face threats that damage their future. Turning this awareness into practice requires a clear communication strategy so that anti-bullying policy changes can be understood and applied consistently by the entire school community (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022). Investment in the prevention and handling of digital bullying is an urgent need that every school community must realize.

The purpose of this writing is to conceptually describe the mechanism of digital bullying disturbances on the formation of children's self-confidence and moral integrity, as well as to formulate a framework for the role of the school community in prevention efforts. The explanation of the psychological dynamics of victims and perpetrators will serve as the foundation for a more complete understanding of this phenomenon.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study design as the main method of data collection and analysis. The choice of this approach is based on the nature of the topic which requires a rich and deep conceptual understanding of complex socio-psychological phenomena. As emphasized by Makateng and Mokala (2025), qualitative research methodology provides a framework for exploring the meanings individuals attach to their experiences, which is highly relevant for understanding the psychological impacts of digital bullying. Literature study as a variant of qualitative research allows researchers to synthesize various theoretical thoughts from written sources without having to collect primary data from the field. This approach is very appropriate when the research topic concerns a cross-disciplinary phenomenon and requires the integration of various theoretical perspectives. Data sources in this study take the form of scientific journal articles, textbooks, research reports, and policy documents relevant to digital bullying, children's mental health, and the role of the school community. The collection process is carried out through systematic searches in trusted academic databases with predefined keywords to ensure the completeness and relevance of the material reviewed.

The data analysis technique used in this study refers to the thematic analysis approach developed within the qualitative research tradition. Paul and Kaurav (2025) explain that qualitative research demands flexible yet systematic analysis procedures to produce credible findings. Data collected from various literature sources are read repeatedly to capture the essence of the thoughts contained within them, then grouped based on the main themes that emerge (Brühl, 2025). These themes include the psychological mechanisms of digital bullying, disruptions to self-identity formation, erosion of moral integrity, and the capacity of the school community in prevention. The analysis process is conducted inductively, where conceptual categories are built from existing reading materials rather than forced from a particular theoretical framework. The validity of findings in the literature study is maintained through source triangulation, which involves comparing views from various authors and schools of thought to obtain a balanced picture. Caution in interpreting conflicting arguments is also an important part of the analysis process to avoid selective bias toward certain sources. The final result of this process is a coherent conceptual synthesis of how digital bullying affects children and how schools can respond to it.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Digital bullying affects children's self-confidence through repeated attacks on a self-image that is still being formed. Children in the middle and late stages of development rely heavily on social feedback to build an understanding of who they are. When the feedback they receive takes the form of mockery, insults, or exclusion through digital media, the foundation of self-confidence becomes fragile. Negative messages received repeatedly become internalized into a belief that one is truly worthless or unacceptable (Shafik, 2025). This internalization is closely tied to how a child comes to see themselves as different or excluded, since victims of ongoing mockery often absorb the stigma attached to them by their peers and begin treating it as a defining trait rather than a passing judgment (Oluwatosin & Da Silva, 2021). This process is reinforced by the public nature of most digital interactions, where humiliation can be witnessed by many people at once. The shame that arises is no longer personal but becomes a spectacle for a wide circle of acquaintances. As a result, children lose the private space needed to process their emotional wounds because everyone can see and comment on what is happening. Such exposure also disrupts a child's psychological wellbeing and their ability to engage socially, since identity and coping strategies are formed through interaction with others, and repeated public judgment leaves little room to build a stable sense of self (Pakpahan et al., 2022).

This condition worsens when children lack adequate coping mechanisms to deal with continuous psychological attacks. Children who are not yet emotionally mature tend to equate other people's opinions of them with absolute truth about themselves. They are not yet able to distinguish between a perpetrator's subjective judgment and the objective reality of who they really are. This inability to make that cognitive distinction causes every negative comment to be accepted as an indisputable fact (Liu, 2025). Setbacks experienced during this developmental period rarely stay contained to the moment they occur; they tend to reshape a child's aspirations and motivation across various areas of learning, since a single blow to self-worth can color how a child approaches every subsequent challenge (Rahman & Hariyani, 2022). Self-confidence, which should be built through achievement and positive recognition, becomes eroded by a flood of negative messages that never stop. Children begin to doubt their competence in various areas, even in things they previously believed to be their strengths. An inner sense of stability, whatever its source, can act as a buffer that helps sustain psychological wellbeing

under this kind of pressure, though not every child has equal access to such a buffer (Darmawan & Zahid, 2025). This loss of self-confidence then affects their participation in school activities and social interactions outside the digital world.

Disruption to children's moral integrity in the context of digital bullying occurs through two interrelated pathways. First, the experience of being a victim can trigger responses that damage moral values such as fairness and compassion. Children who are continuously hurt may come to view the world as a cruel place where other people cannot be trusted. This view can give rise to a cynical attitude toward humanistic values and encourage retaliatory behavior that perpetuates the cycle of violence. Second, children who become perpetrators of digital bullying often experience a blunting of empathy because of the physical distance separating them from the victim's suffering. This blunting reflects a broader pattern: when a fast-moving technology is not balanced with genuine humanistic reflection, it becomes easier to treat another person as an object rather than someone capable of feeling pain (Darmawan, 2023). The ease of hurting others without seeing the direct consequences causes them to lose moral awareness of the boundaries of acceptable behavior. Whether digital tools end up strengthening or eroding fairness in an interaction depends largely on how they are used, since the same distance that enables convenience can just as easily enable cruelty (Darmawan, 2024). The normalization of harsh behavior in online interactions increasingly blurs the line between joking and hurting, between freedom of expression and verbal violence (Camacho et al., 2025). This process of moral desensitization is very dangerous because it can shape behavioral patterns that persist over the long term.

Moral integrity as an important component of children's self-identity erodes when they grow up in a digital environment permissive toward violence. Children learn about right and wrong through observing what happens around them, as well as through the teachings of parents and teachers. When they witness digital bullying occurring without meaningful consequences, the message received is that such actions are socially acceptable. A climate shaped by consistent, principled conduct from those in positions of authority tends to produce more accountable behavior among the people within it, so an environment that never models or enforces such conduct leaves children with little reason to behave differently (Mardikaningsih, Halizah, Darmawan, Masithoh, & Nuraini, 2022). Perpetrators who never receive firm sanctions will consider their behavior normal and unproblematic. Victims who do not receive protection will lose trust in the authorities and rules that

are supposed to protect them (Shaikova, 2024). This condition creates a crisis of trust in the value system that has so far guided how a child behaves. Integrity, understood as consistency between moral beliefs and actions, becomes difficult to maintain when the social environment sends conflicting signals.

The impact of digital bullying on children's self-identity is multidimensional and unfolds over a long period. Identity is not a static entity but a narrative construction that continues to develop through interaction with the social environment. Every experience of digital bullying becomes a kind of mark on the self-narrative a child is still writing. Too many negative marks can change the overall direction of the story about who they are. Children begin to define themselves through the eyes of the perpetrator, seeing themselves as a loser, a weirdo, or someone unworthy of being loved. This negative narrative then influences the choices they make in life, including in education, friendship, and future aspirations (Uysal & Haspolat, 2024). A stable, positive psychological state tends to reinforce a person's sense of engagement with their own life and surroundings, which suggests that without such a state, children may struggle to feel invested in the very areas that could otherwise help rebuild their identity (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Identity formed from experiences of digital violence is often narrow and full of self-imposed limits.

The process of forming children's moral identity depends heavily on the availability of ethical role models they can observe and imitate. In the school setting, teachers and education staff should serve as examples in treating others with respect and dignity. However, many schools have not fully realized that this example must extend to the digital realm. Teachers who do not show awareness of communication ethics in the online world provide an inconsistent example for students. Children see that the adults around them do not treat digital space as an area requiring the same moral vigilance as the physical world (Aydin et al., 2023). Leadership grounded in ethical conduct tends to shape a broader culture that carries over into every setting an institution touches, so when school leaders and staff fail to extend ethical conduct into digital spaces, the inconsistency is felt by students well beyond the classroom (Mardikaningsih et al., 2022). This inconsistency confuses children as they try to develop a moral compass integrated across online and offline life. Moral integrity requires coherence between the values taught in class and the behavior practiced in daily life, including in digital spaces. Learning approaches that combine different methods have shown promise in strengthening students' critical

thinking in the digital era, which matters here because a child able to think critically about what they encounter online is better equipped to question rather than simply imitate harmful behavior (Darmawan et al., 2024). The way educational material circulates through social media also shapes how students come to understand appropriate digital conduct, since the channels through which lessons are shared can either reinforce or undercut the values being taught (Darmawan & Fajar, 2024). Schools have a responsibility to show that ethics apply everywhere, no matter the medium used to interact.

The school setting holds a unique position in the prevention of digital bullying because of its access to a large number of children over an extended period. Schools are the institutions most likely to consistently observe changes in children's behavior over time. Teachers who pay attention to their students every day can detect early signs of children experiencing psychological pressure from digital bullying. Changes in attendance patterns, class participation, or interaction with peers can indicate an underlying problem. Adolescent social behavior is shaped substantially by the school environment, particularly through discipline and interpersonal relationships, which is precisely why teachers who understand these dynamics are better positioned to notice when something has shifted (Multihakiki et al., 2024). This comparative advantage makes schools the frontline in early identification and intervention efforts (Lizut, 2019). However, this advantage only matters if schools have the system and capacity to use it effectively. Without adequate training on the signs of digital bullying, teachers may miss important signals shown by their students. Building this kind of capacity is not unlike strengthening any routine skill: deliberate effort to build staff knowledge is what turns everyday observation into a genuine early-warning system rather than something left to chance (Darmawan, 2024).

Preventing digital bullying at school requires an approach that brings every part of the education setting together. Principals, teachers, administrative staff, students, and parents all have complementary roles in creating an environment safe from digital violence. An effective anti-bullying policy must not remain only a formal document kept on a shelf; it must be brought to life through everyday practice at school (Atieh, 2022). A policy that endures over time, rather than fading after its first rollout, usually depends on the same coordination across every part of a system that keeps any sustainable practice alive no single actor can carry it alone (Mardikaningsih & Nuraini, 2022). Socialization of rules on ethical digital behavior needs to be carried out continuously, not as a one-time program. Students

need to be involved in policy formulation so that they feel greater ownership of and compliance with the rules made. Parents need to be invited to cooperate through regular meetings and open communication channels with the school. Structures that remain flexible enough to adjust to changing circumstances tend to hold up better than rigid ones, which is worth keeping in mind as schools adapt their policies to new forms of digital behavior over time (Darmawan & Mardikaningsih, 2023). Shared knowledge that is deliberately organized and passed on within an institution tends to make its practices more effective and harder to erode, which is exactly what sustained anti-bullying efforts need in order to outlast any single staff member's initiative (Darmawan, 2023). When every element moves in the same direction, the message about the importance of respecting others in digital spaces will be more easily accepted by children.

School curricula can serve as an effective vehicle for instilling awareness of the dangers of cyberbullying and the skills needed to face it. Material on digital ethics, media literacy, and mental health can be integrated into various subjects without adding to the burden of the existing curriculum. Character education, which has long been part of school programs, needs to expand its scope to cover the digital dimension of children's lives. Since this kind of integration must reach students with varying needs, curriculum design that follows accessible and child-friendly principles helps ensure character material actually reaches every learner (Adriani et al., 2025). Discussion of cyberbullying case studies can serve as a means to train students' empathy and critical thinking about the consequences of their actions in the digital world. Embedding character values across several subjects rather than treating them as one isolated topic also strengthens children's broader social competence (Hariani et al., 2021). Simulations of what it feels like to be a victim of cyberbullying can help students develop sensitivity to the suffering of others (Vasiou & Veloni, 2024). Narrative-based material, such as stories used to shape identity and character, tends to leave a deeper impression on students than direct instruction alone (Kurniawan et al., 2021). Learning about strategies for dealing with cyberbullying, such as reporting to a trusted adult or using blocking features, needs to be delivered practically. Whatever values this curriculum cultivates, they should be measured with assessment tools capable of capturing affective and social dimensions accurately, not only cognitive ones (An Nafisah et al., 2025). Curricular integration ensures that awareness of cyberbullying is not treated as supplementary knowledge but becomes

part of the formation of complete character.

The teacher's role as a moral authority figure in school is very important in responding to cases of cyberbullying among students. Teachers can no longer treat cyberbullying as a problem outside their responsibility simply because it occurs outside school hours. Every incident involving students at school, regardless of its physical location, has implications for the learning climate and students' psychological well-being. Teachers who are still adjusting to the demands of their profession need structured support and mentoring so they are ready to take on this kind of responsibility with confidence (Liwak et al., 2023). Teachers need to be trained to respond to cyberbullying reports seriously and without blaming victims for what happened to them. A restorative approach that focuses on repairing relationships and correcting mistakes is more effective than a punitive approach that merely punishes the perpetrator (Pereira, 2022). How a teacher manages student discipline is shaped not only by classroom practice but also by school culture and the parenting patterns students bring from home, both of which are worth understanding together when handling a case (Djazilan & Darmawan, 2021). Teachers also need good communication skills to talk to parents about cyberbullying without provoking defensiveness or unnecessary conflict. Involvement in structured student activities has also been linked to discipline and learning outcomes, suggesting a teacher's guidance matters well beyond the classroom itself (Arifin & Kurniawan, 2022). When teachers show a strong commitment to handling cyberbullying, students will trust them more and be more willing to report incidents and seek help.

Schools need to develop reporting mechanisms that are easily accessible and felt to be safe by students who become victims of cyberbullying. Many children do not report their experiences because they fear not being believed, being judged, or facing retaliation from the perpetrator. Anonymous complaint boxes, trained counselors, and reporting channels through homeroom teachers can be alternatives for students to express their problems. Socializing these channels regularly matters as much as building them, since awareness efforts are what actually change how a program meant to help people gets used (Gautama & Mardikaningsih, 2022). The existence of this mechanism must be socialized periodically so students always remember there is a place to ask for help. The process of handling reports must be transparent and involve students at every stage so

they feel valued and heard. A student's willingness to come forward is also shaped by the social support available to them, since students who feel supported by those around them tend to be more confident expressing difficult experiences (Ernawati et al., 2022). Confidentiality of the victim's identity needs to be maintained to protect them from the potential for more severe further bullying (Azizah, 2023). Schools also need a clear protocol regarding the steps to be taken after a report is received, so that handling is not reactive and unplanned.

The role of parents in preventing cyberbullying cannot be separated from the efforts made by the school. Schools and parents need to build a close partnership to monitor children's digital activities and provide consistent guidance. Family conditions differ considerably from one environment to another, and these differences shape how much guidance and monitoring a child actually receives at home something schools need to account for when designing parent-engagement programs (Amri & Khayru, 2021). Parent-teacher meetings can be filled with educational sessions on supervising children's use of gadgets and social media. Parents need to understand that limiting digital access alone is not enough; active companionship in the use of technology is also needed (Bauerová & Kopřivová, 2023). Patterns of human relationships within families have also been shifting alongside broader social change in urban life, and this shift affects how closely parents stay involved in their children's daily digital activity (Irfan & Al Hakim, 2022). Schools can provide resources in the form of guides for parents on how to detect signs that a child has become a victim of cyberbullying. Two-way communication channels between schools and parents must be established so information about children's behavior can flow smoothly. Building this kind of cooperation is, in essence, a form of social cohesion between school and family, one that grows stronger the more consistently both sides work together (Mardikaningsih, 2021). Parents who are positively involved in their children's digital education will become strong partners for schools in prevention efforts.

The development of character education programs focused on humanistic values in digital spaces is an urgent need for every school. Values such as compassion, justice, responsibility, and respect for human dignity need to be translated into concrete digital behavior. Education aimed at expanding students' awareness beyond their immediate surroundings supports this kind of value formation, since students encouraged to consider people and circumstances outside their own

experience tend to develop stronger empathy (Hariani & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Students need to learn that their actions in the digital world have real consequences for others, even if they do not directly see the impact. This program can be designed in the form of classroom activities, collaborative projects, or campaigns within the school environment. Stories that portray the experiences of people who are often overlooked or treated unfairly can be a powerful tool for building this kind of awareness, since they invite students to see a situation from a perspective other than their own (Kurniawan & Seran, 2025). Student involvement in designing and running this program will increase its effectiveness because they feel ownership of the initiative. Schools can make certain moments, such as anti-bullying week, an occasion to highlight this issue more intensively (Mainita et al., 2025). Ongoing and integrated character education will leave a stronger impression on students than programs that are incidental in nature.

School policies on the use of digital devices and social media need to be formulated clearly and communicated to the entire school community. Rules about what students may and may not do on digital platforms must be specific, not merely a general statement about behaving well. Firm and proportional sanctions for violators need to be established and applied consistently to provide a deterrent effect. Much as any institution relies on clear operating standards to keep its practices accountable, a school benefits from applying its own rules with that same consistency (Barzani et al., 2022). However, this policy must also be accompanied by educational efforts so students understand the reasoning behind the rules. An authoritarian approach that relies solely on prohibition and punishment without explanation will trigger resistance from students (Marcus-Quinn, 2024). Rules on digital conduct should also keep pace with how creativity and productivity are expressed in a digital era, so policy does not end up restricting skills students are otherwise expected to develop (Darmawan, 2023). A good policy is one that involves students in the process of making it, so they understand and accept the rules as belonging to everyone. Where a school's access to technology is limited, policy design also needs to account for what is realistically achievable given those constraints (Kurniawan & Seran, 2024). Schools need to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of policies already implemented and make adjustments if necessary.

Strengthening the role of school counselors in addressing the psychological impact of cyberbullying is an important part of the child protection system in schools. Trained counselors can provide the emotional support victims need to restore their self-confidence

(Lim & Lee, 2021). This kind of support matters because psychological well-being and the quality of a person's social relationships are closely tied together, and repairing one often requires attention to the other (Darmawan, 2023). Counseling services that are easily accessible and free of stigma will encourage more children to seek help when they experience it. Counselors can also work with perpetrators to help them understand the impact of their behavior and develop greater empathy. Extending this kind of attentive support to every student, including those who might otherwise be overlooked, reflects the same principle behind efforts to bring vulnerable groups more fully into an organization's activities (Darmawan, 2023). A recovery- and growth-oriented approach, rather than judgment, will be more effective in changing a perpetrator's behavior. School counselors can serve as a bridge between victims, perpetrators, parents, and teachers in handling cases of cyberbullying. With adequate support, counselors can turn a bullying incident into a learning moment for the entire school.

CONCLUSION

Digital bullying is a serious threat to children's mental health and the process of forming a healthy self-identity. Disturbances to self-confidence occur through the mechanism of internalizing repeated negative messages from the digital environment, which is aggravated by the public and permanent nature of interactions in cyberspace. Children's moral integrity experiences erosion both through the experience of being a victim that triggers a cynical view of humanitarian values, and through the experience of being a perpetrator who experiences empathy blunting due to physical distance in digital interactions. The school community has a strategic capacity to prevent digital bullying through an approach involving all educational elements, clear policies, curricular integration, teacher training, partnerships with parents, and adequate counseling services. Effective prevention requires a collective commitment to make the digital space a safe area for children's development, where humanitarian values are applied consistently regardless of the interaction medium used.

Schools must view the development of children's character and mental health as an integral part of the educational mission that is inseparable from the reality of their digital lives. The suggestion that can be given is the need for every school to formulate a comprehensive anti-digital bullying policy and involve all stakeholders in the drafting and implementation process. Training for teachers and school staff on the identification and handling of digital bullying needs to be a priority in sustainable

professional development programs. Close collaboration with parents through joint education programs on supervision and assistance in children's use of technology is also urgently needed. Further research is recommended to test the effectiveness of various digital bullying prevention intervention models in the school environment by involving the active participation of students in program design.

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