

## THE IMPACT OF CYBERBULLYING ON ADOLESCENTS' EMOTIONAL STABILITY AND AGGRESSIVE REACTIONS

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**Abstract:** This thesis analyzes the impact of cyberbullying—harassment and intimidation carried out via online platforms—on adolescents' emotional stability, levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms, as well as their aggressive reactions. A review of the literature and recent research indicates that, unlike traditional school bullying, cyberbullying may intensify psychological harm due to its continuity, anonymity, and broad public exposure. This thesis summarizes existing studies, proposes methodological approaches for conducting empirical research, outlines preventive measures, and presents scientific and practical recommendations.

**Keywords:** cyberbullying, emotional stability, adolescence, aggression, prevention.

With the widespread use of digital communication tools and social media, cyberbullying has emerged as a frequent socio-cultural issue among young people. Slonje and Smith (2008) define cyberbullying as a new form of traditional bullying, emphasizing that its anonymity and publicity can lead to severe psychological consequences for victims.

Purpose of the thesis: To determine, based on scholarly literature, how emotional stability (emotional regulation) and aggressive reactions change among victims of cyberbullying; to systematize available evidence; and to propose an empirical research methodology suitable for conference presentation.

A meta-analysis by Kowalski et al. (2014) demonstrates strong correlations between cyberbullying and youth mental health: cyber-victims experience increased depressive symptoms and heightened anxiety. The authors highlight consistent effect sizes reported across studies, indicating measurable psychological impacts.

Slonje & Smith (2008) further note that technological features of cyberbullying—such as anonymity, a potentially large audience, and 24/7 accessibility—create persistent sensory stress and social isolation, which can disrupt emotional regulation.

Studies by Bauman (2013) and Barlinska et al. (2013 and subsequent works) reveal that some victims display reactive aggression (defensive or retaliatory behaviors). Additionally, bystanders' reactions may vary depending on their level of empathy, with lower empathy levels contributing to desensitization.

Recent research also shows that parental emotional support and school-based intervention programs (including parental awareness initiatives, digital literacy training, and cognitive-behavioral therapy components) can significantly reduce the negative consequences of cyberbullying.

Several effective measures are recommended to prevent cyberbullying. First, prevention at the school level is essential. It is advisable to conduct lessons aimed at improving students' digital literacy, including topics such as internet etiquette, safe communication, the real consequences of anonymity, and protecting personal data. Schools should also establish clear codes of conduct regarding

cyberbullying and define appropriate disciplinary measures. Teachers must be trained to recognize signs of cyberbullying and to intervene promptly.

Parents also play a crucial role. They should maintain open, trusting communication with their children and monitor their online activities. Instead of blaming, parents need to listen attentively to their children's feelings and analyze the situation together. Research indicates that parental emotional support significantly reduces the psychological harm associated with cyberbullying. Psychological preventive measures—such as emotional regulation training—help adolescents manage stress, control impulsive reactions, and reframe negative thoughts. Empathy-building and social-competence training also promote sensitivity to others' distress, thereby decreasing cyberbullying incidents.

At the societal level, awareness campaigns—including videos, posters, and seminars—can effectively inform young people about the consequences of cyberbullying. Furthermore, adolescents should be educated about the legal responsibilities associated with online behavior.

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