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Cyberbullying on Social Media Platforms among University Students in Jordan

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Abstract

With the increase in Internet and social media users, it is logical that these platforms would be used for interpersonal harm among youth. Although the detrimental effects of cyberbullying have been widely researched, little research has focused on the different types of cyberbullying behavior regarding the Arab communities and their characteristics. Further compounding this issue is the unwillingness to report incidents of cyberbullying, a phenomenon shaped by the social and cultural expectations of these societies. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the prevalence of cyberbullying among university students in an Arab community, its forms, and platforms, investigating their attitudes towards reporting such cases versus continued silence. In this study conducted in Jordan, data were collected from a sample of 250 students, and it was concluded that all respondents (100%) confirmed social media as a platform for cyberbullying. Facebook (79.6%) and Instagram (49.2%) were the primary platforms for such behavior. The findings highlight the importance of novel approaches — such as the development of smartphone applications, the implementation of a stricter legal system, and employing the proactive approach to tackle this widespread concern.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, University Students, Prevalence, Social Media Platforms,

Introduction

Contemporary modes of communication predominantly rely on digital technology, a platform susceptible to cultivating detrimental behaviors, notably exemplified by cyberbullying. Existing scholarship suggests a shift from conventional bullying modalities to online manifestations facilitated by social media platforms (Li, 2007). The pervasive utilization of online technologies, while convenient, concurrently exposes individuals to digital connections that may jeopardize their safety and psychological wellbeing. Cyberbullying is thus recognized as a consequential risk inherent in the reliance on digital platforms.

Recent investigations underscore the prevalence of cyberbullying and online harassment, particularly among adolescents engaging with social media platforms. Findings from the Cyberbullying Research Centre in 2016 revealed that 33.8% of middle and high school students aged 13 to 17 experience cyberbullying victimization. Across various studies conducted over the past decade, the incidence rates of cyberbullying fluctuate between 10% and 40% (Kowalski et al., 2014; Lenhart et al., 2010; O'Brennan et al., 2009).

The ramifications of cyberbullying extend beyond individual distress, impacting academic performance and mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and eating disorders (Beran & Li, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2007; Privitera & Campbell, 2009; Ybarra et al., 2007). Moreover, the emergence of "bullycide," where victims of bullying, both online

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and offline, resort to suicide, underscores the severity of these behaviors, as observed in recent tragic incidents across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Past research has identified various correlations and repercussions associated with cyberbullying, encompassing physical and psychological wellbeing and academic achievement (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011; Kowalski & Limber, 2013). Given the profound impact of cyberbullying, there is an imperative for further exploration, particularly in Arab communities where cultural and societal constraints often result in silent suffering among youth subjected to various forms of bullying.

The existence of cyberbullying at higher education institutions is supported by a study done in Jordan. Nearly one-third of college students have experienced some cyberbullying, according to the research. Interestingly, most victims choose to keep records of the events while not sharing their experiences with others (Tayeh, 2023).

Theoretical and Practical Significance

This research has theoretical value in advancing the study of cyberbullying, as the theory of the spiral of silence can be further expanded to inform the construction of concepts applied in the study of Arab society. In contrast to the majority of past studies, which focus on a Western population, the current study examines how cultural norms and social expectations in Jordan influence students' willingness or unwillingness to speak up in cases of cyberbullying. This situational enlargement provides a fresh vision to view silence and self-censorship in online violence.

The implications of the research study findings are significant for the regulation of social media, educational policy, and psychological systems that support the population. With a better understanding of the most common platforms of cyberbullying and the behaviors that constitute the majority of its manifestations, the study will enable the team of social media companies to refine their user content moderation policies. Furthermore, the findings can assist universities in planning targeted counseling and awareness initiatives and inform policymakers in establishing national systems for cybercrime prevention within the context of the nation's youth protection in the digital environment.

Questions of the Study

The main goal of the current study is to examine the frequency of cyberbullying among college students in an Arab region to respond to the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of cyberbullying prevalence among university students in Arab communities?
2. What delineates the diverse modalities of cyberbullying observed on social media platforms within the youth demographic of Arab communities?
3. What are the perspectives of youth regarding the phenomenon of cyberbullying in Jordan?
4. Do students opt for maintaining silence after experiencing cyberbullying incidents, or do they opt to disclose such occurrences?

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The concept of the "spiral of silence," first proposed by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann in 1974, describes how people may refrain from expressing their opinions, especially when they are being criticized or attacked. According to this notion, those who are bullied frequently feel more alone and have nowhere to turn. Some academics express doubts about the relevance or effectiveness of the spiral of silence effect in online communication environments. The classic expression of the 'spiral of silence' may have little predictive value in the modern digital environment, according to Chaffee and Metzger (2001). According to Schulz and Roessler (2012), when people are given the ability to choose what they read online, they feel more at home among like-minded peers, which reduces their fear of being shunned and increases their inclination to express their opinions online. Early critiques also highlight additional internet characteristics, such as anonymity and the absence of interpersonal presence, which may attenuate the spiral of silence effect. However, empirical investigations have subsequently corroborated the persistence of the spiral of silence phenomenon in online social spheres, even amidst conditions of anonymity (Woong Yun & Park, 2011).

The spiral of silence theory, which originates in political science and public opinion research, posits that people tend to keep their opinions to themselves when they believe they conflict with the prevailing sentiment of the majority. Fears of rejection and the ensuing social exclusion are blamed for this hesitancy. Long periods of quiet breed increasing reluctance, which leads to a state of ingrained muteness where people are reluctant to express their opinions.

According to Noelle-Neumann's groundbreaking spiral of silence theory (1974), fear of social rejection is a key component of the process by which public opinion is formed. According to this theoretical framework, controversial opinions that people feel free to voice in public without fear of being alone are considered part of public opinion. This view of public opinion encompasses both immutable norms, such as cultural values, and fluid issues, like shifting attitudes (Noelle-Neumann, 1977; 1974). However, with the arrival of the twenty-first century, information and communication technology became increasingly prevalent, particularly among young people (Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolak, 2000). At the same time, the conversation about bullying started to shift toward a new phenomenon that was subsequently called cyberbullying. (Belsey, 2005; Campbell, Slee, Spears, Butler, & Kift, 2013; Li, 2010; Smith, 2012).

The spiral of silence hypothesis remains a fundamental framework for understanding the effects of socialization on personal behavior today. This helps explain why children may feel hesitant to speak up when they witness bullying. In the modern world, when bullying has taken on an online form, those who engage in it may remain anonymous while harassing their victims nonstop, forcing them into a never-ending condition of silence. Because of prevalent cultural and societal standards, victims are further alienated and lack access to resources or support, especially in Arab communities. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop proactive solutions to improve the situation of victims of cyberbullying.

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attitudes (Noelle-Neumann, 1977; 1974). However, with the arrival of the twenty-first century, information and communication technology became increasingly prevalent, particularly among young people (Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Wolak, 2000). At the same time, discussions on bullying around the world started to shift toward a new phenomenon that was eventually named cyberbullying (Belsey, 2005; Campbell, Slee, Spears, Butler, & Kift, 2013; Li, 2010; Smith, 2012).

The spiral of silence theory remains a fundamental framework that clarifies the consequences of socialization and personal actions. It aims to clarify why children might feel less comfortable speaking up when they see bullying. Because bullying has taken on an online form in the modern world, those who engage in it can remain anonymous while harassing their victims nonstop, forcing them into a state of constant quiet. As a result, victims are further alienated and lack access to resources or support, especially in Arab communities where social and cultural standards are prevalent. To improve the situation of victims of cyberbullying, it is therefore urgently necessary to develop proactive interventions.

Cyberbullying and Technology

Despite the convenience they afford, the continual immersion in and engagement with online technologies render individuals vulnerable to certain digital interactions that possess the potential to jeopardize their safety, as well as their emotional and psychological wellbeing. Cyberbullying stands out as a prominent hazard associated with dependence on online platforms, emerging as a conspicuous exemplar of technological misuse over the past decade, owing to its deleterious and occasionally fatal repercussions.

The ramifications of cyberbullying extend beyond the individual sphere to impact both individuals and organizations, manifesting in an array of adverse outcomes including but not limited to anxiety, depression, substance abuse, sleep disturbances, eating disorders, and academic underachievement (Beran & Li, 2008; Mitchell et al., 2007; Privitera & Campbell, 2009; Ybarra et al., 2007).

Initial inquiries into cyberbullying mirrored the framework employed in traditional bullying studies, conceptualizing cyberbullying as a variant of indirect bullying and predominantly focusing on the technological aspects of its perpetration. However, cyberbullying transcends mere technological aggression, encapsulating a social problem characterized by harassment, intimidation, bullying, and unwarranted hostility enacted through digital means by an individual or group upon another individual (the victim), with the repercussions of such harassment reverberating and amplifying exponentially (Grigg, 2010; Slonje, Smith, & Frisé, 2013; Tokunaga, 2010). Recent initiatives by the Internet and social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, to implement policy and privacy alterations aim to foster a safer user environment. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these measures in curtailing abuse and cyberbullying necessitates ongoing scrutiny and scholarly inquiry.

Definition of Cyberbullying

One important question to consider when studying cyberbullying is how much our knowledge of conventional bullying and this modern violence coincide. Similar to traditional bullying, cyberbullying is characterized by aggression, power imbalances in relationships, and often repetitive behavior (Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2012; Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2007; Olweus, 2013; Smith, Del Barrio, & Tokunaga, 2012). However, because of its virtual platform, the aggressive aspect of cyberbullying has come under investigation. Power disparities in

cyberbullying can manifest in various forms, including relational, psychological, social, or physical (Dooley, Pyżalski, & Cross, 2009; Monks & Smith, 2006; Olweus, 2013; Pyżalski, 2012). This is similar to traditional bullying.

According to Willard (2004), cyberbullying can take many different forms, The following enumeration delineates the distinct manifestations of cyberbullying:

1. Flaming: The transmission of angry, rude, or vulgar messages directed privately at an individual or group or within an online community.
2. Harassment: The recurrent dispatch of offensive messages to an individual.
3. Cyberstalking: Harassment characterized by threats of harm or severe intimidation.
4. Denigration (Put-downs): Disseminating harmful, false, or derogatory statements about an individual to others.
5. Masquerade: Assuming another person's identity and disseminating material that disparages them or poses a potential danger to them.
6. Outing and Trickery: Sharing material containing sensitive, private, or embarrassing information about an individual, including the forwarding of private messages or images or employing deceit to extract embarrassing information for public disclosure.
7. Exclusion: Deliberate actions aimed at excluding an individual from an online group.
8. Impersonation: Assuming the identity of the victim and electronically transmitting negative or inappropriate information to others, falsely attributed to the victim.
9. Sexting: Distributing nude images of another individual without their consent.

Beyond age and gender, cyberbullying can involve physical, cultural, ethnic, and religious biases, among other types of prejudice. Because of its capacity to spread damaging content quickly, its psychological effects are frequently thought to be more severe than those of traditional bullying. A survey conducted by Patchin and Hinduja (2006) involving 384 respondents under the age of 18 found that a variety of online bullying behaviors were common. These behaviors included being picked on, made fun of, intimidated, ignored, disrespected, called names, and having rumors spread about them. Some academics, however, have questioned the study's methodology, pointing out that it relies on a convenience sample (Wilkins, Hoover, Miltenoff, & Downing, 2007).

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Empirical studies have shown that bullying practices vary by gender, with males and females displaying different bullying tendencies (Borg, 1999; Boulton & Underwood, 1992). According to some theories, women are more likely to use online forums and email to bully others (Thorp, 2004). Furthermore, victims may feel even more helpless due to the anonymity that many cyberbullying scenarios provide (Dooley et al., 2009), which is a special feature of technology that benefits bullies at the expense of victims.

Another study employed a qualitative inquiry to investigate cyberbullying in British secondary schools from the student's perspective. It was named "Investigating Legal Elements of Cyberbullying" (Paul, Smith, & Blumberg, 2012). The study examined students' perceptions of

children's rights, school penalties, and safeguarding obligations, as well as their knowledge and understanding of the legal aspects of cyberbullying. Results showed that students did not agree with current efforts to stop cyberbullying, but when asked to recommend alternatives, they mostly echoed those already in place. Additionally, students acknowledged their rights and emphasized their responsibility for stopping cyberbullying, considering it more important than that of adults.

Research Gap

Though much maintenance has been placed on this topic within the Western sphere of education (e.g., Kowalski et al., 2014; Smith, 2012; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006), an observable shortage of studies on this issue in society (there is little research devoted to this topic in the Arab world or even more specifically in the community of university students). The majority of the literature is either generalized, discussing results with a global sample, or it focuses on the adolescent population in middle and high schools (Dooley et al., 2009; Agatston et al., 2012). Moreover, minimal investigation on how cultural and other societal rules in conservative cultures like Jordan - influence the readiness of the students to report or not to report instances of cyberbullying has not been explored. This gap has already been recognized as a field requiring further investigation in past studies (Paul, Smith, & Blumberg, 2012; Wilkins et al., 2007), but the field has not been explored extensively. Thus, the proposed study includes an urgent demand to have context-specific research that would examine the prevalence, types, and social reaction to cyberbullying in Arab higher education settings.

Research Methodology

Because social media and smartphone apps are increasingly common, research on cyberbullying should focus especially on young people, including college students. Although most of the studies that have been done thus far have been on middle and high school adolescent populations, little is known about how common cyberbullying is among college students. Therefore, the goal of this study is to determine the prevalence of cyberbullying among Jordanian university students.

Because cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon, there is a dearth of studies on it, and few tools have been developed to evaluate cyberbullying and its contributing variables. Cyberbullying has been examined in certain studies as an example of traditional bullying moving to a new media. Therefore, it becomes essential to investigate the factors that contribute to conventional bullying.

This study aimed to shed light on the frequency of cyberbullying occurrences using quantitative approaches. A carefully designed questionnaire was created to help students understand and describe their experiences with cyberbullying. The survey included open-ended questions, scaled replies, and structured items with limited choice. To determine the questionnaire's reliability, a pilot test was conducted prior to the main survey. Furthermore, the creation of this study was guided by existing literature and theoretical foundations.

Reliability analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and Cronbach's alpha coefficient produced good results for this study ($A = .718$).

Sampling

Research effectiveness, according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011), depends on "the appropriateness of the sampling approach adopted" (p. 97). According to this claim, random

sampling was deemed appropriate for the current study because its goal was to obtain a sample that was representative of the population in this setting. Students between the ages of 18 and 25 who were enrolled in a public university in Jordan were random

ly selected.

The survey instrument consisted of four sections. The purpose of the first section was to collect demographic data from the participants, including information about their age group, major, and daily internet usage hours.

Sample Demographics

During the first semester of 2024, undergraduate students from a large public institution in Amman, Jordan, were asked to participate in an online survey. A convenience sample of 250 students enrolled in required online general English language courses—representing a larger student population of 318—provided responses for the study.

Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 25, as indicated in Table 1. Interestingly, 83.2% of respondents reported spending more than three hours a day online. The sample's academic backgrounds were almost similarly distributed, with 45.2% majoring in education and 54.8% in language and literature. All responses were gathered anonymously to respect participant privacy and ethical research requirements. See Table (1).

Variables	Categories	N	%
Age	18-20 (<20)	100	40
	21-30 (>20)	150	60
Major	Languages	137	54.8
	Education	113	45.2
Hours on the Internet per day	(<3)hours	42	83.2
	(>3)hours	208	16.8

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Students.

The survey's second half covered in-depth questions about participants' use of social media, online conduct, and opinions on cyberbullying in general.

The survey's third portion then examined respondents' individual experiences with cyberbullying on social media sites and their propensity to report such occurrences.

The fourth portion of the study covered participants' social media usage habits, as well as their personal opinions and experiences with traditional and cyberbullying. Each item in this section was given a 5-point Likert scale, with "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree" being the extremes.

Three open-ended questions at the end of the poll asked respondents to self-report personal experiences and share their thoughts on ways to lessen cyberbullying. To maintain total anonymity, uncompleted questionnaires were removed from the sample after they were identified as a sign of unwillingness to participate. The survey was distributed between April and May of 2023. Cronbach's alpha (α), a statistical metric created by Lee Cronbach in 1951, was used to analyze the data. It evaluates the internal consistency of surveys with multiple Likert scale questions. It determines how reliable they are in measuring latent variables that can be

challenging to assess in real-world situations.

Limitations of the Study

There are some restrictions on this study. Firstly, the findings may not be as broadly applicable as they seem due to the small sample size, which was drawn from a single female university campus. A larger sample that includes students from multiple colleges should be considered to enhance the validity and relevance of future studies. Furthermore, it is challenging to make thorough comparisons with previous research due to the scarcity of studies in the Arab world that include university student samples.

Results

Results related to the first question: What is the extent of cyberbullying prevalence among university students in Arab communities?

All participants (100%) strongly believe that cyberbullying is a real issue on social media platforms. This kind of unanimous response suggests that the problem is not just common but also widely recognized. It reflects how deeply people are affected by or aware of the toxic behaviors that can happen online, whether it's harassment, threats, or harmful comments. The fact that not even one person disagreed shows just how serious and visible this issue has become in our digital lives.

Do you think that cyberbullying exists on social media platforms?	N	%
Yes	250	100%
No	0	0%
Total	250	100%

Table 2. Cyberbullying on Social Media Platforms Among University Students

The participants' long-term use of social media and high level of technological proficiency were evident. Across platforms, interesting patterns emerge in the comparison between social media use and the perception of cyberbullying prevalence. As indicated in Table 3, Facebook is the most popular, with 84.4% of participants regularly using it. This level of engagement is consistent with the data in Table 4, which shows that 79.6% of respondents reported Facebook as the social media platform with the most occurrences of cyberbullying, indicating a possible positive correlation between (new) media popularity and exposure to damaging behavior.

The second-highest-used platform among respondents is Instagram (76.4% regularly use it), although it is perceived as having less cyberbullying (49.2%) than the most widely used platform, Facebook. The discrepancy may suggest either better content moderation or differing behavioral norms among users on Instagram.

On the other hand, Snapchat has high usage (73.6%). However, only 14.8% of respondents think of Snapchat as a major site for cyberbullying. This large gap suggests that some of Snapchat's features, such as disappearing messages, may help reduce public forms of bullying or even deter persistent harassment.

The most frequently used social media platform among the participants is YouTube, which, unlike the previously mentioned platforms, is only moderately associated with cyberbullying, as 34% mention it as a platform where cyberbullying is common. This may be related to the platform's approach to community guidelines and comment moderation, which has made it difficult to engage without fear of abuse.

Finally, Twitter accounts for the fewest proportion of participants (24.4%), and thus, only 22.8% of participants consider Twitter a significant cyberbullying site. This reduced engagement could help explain a lower perception of the prevalence of cyberbullying, or it could also be a natural effect of recent Twitter policy changes focused on reducing abusive behavior.

Which of the following social media platforms do you use?	N	%
1- Facebook	211	84.4
2- Twitter	61	24.4
3- Snapchat	184	73.6
4- YouTube	175	70
5- Instagram	191	76.4

Table 3. Social Media Platforms Used by Students

Which of the following social media platforms have more cyberbullying?	N	%
1- Facebook	199	79.6%
2- Twitter	57	22.8%
3- Snapchat	37	14.8%
4- YouTube	85	34%
5- Instagram	123	49.2%

Table 4. Social Media Platforms Where Cyberbullying Occurs

Results related to the second question: What delineates the diverse modalities of cyberbullying observed on social media platforms within the youth demographic of Arab communities?

The results also reveal that the most frequently experienced form of cyberbullying among university students is verbal aggression, expressed specifically through offensive comments (30.8%) and hate speech (16.4%). Table (5).

The research found that the two most common forms of social media cyberbullying are stalking and the use of emojis for mockery, mentioned by 40% of respondents. That indicates that nontraditional and, in many cases, under-the-radar forms of online abuse are taking on even more importance." Offensive comments are the second type, comprising 30.8% of cases, suggesting that direct verbal aggression continues to be a prevalent cyberbullying method. Not far behind it, hate speech (at 16.4%) rounds out the top three, showcasing the pervasive problem of targeted online hate speech as a highly discriminatory and inflammatory narrative.

Spreading [false] rumors (10%) is yet another significant issue, as misinformation and

defamatory content can easily go viral through social channels and spread like wildfire. Conversely, pictorial shaming (1.2%) and sharing photos/videos to embarrass (1.6%) are the least common manifestations, indicating that while visual-based cyberbullying can be harmful, it is also the least frequently reported.

These results highlight the multidimensional aspect of cyberbullying, with indirect and verbal methods taking prevalence. The findings suggest that content moderation and education initiatives that promote respectful online interactions could be beneficial.

Spreading [false] rumors (10%) is another big problem because it is very easy for false, misleading, and defamatory content to go viral through social channels and spread rapidly. On the contrary, pictorial shaming (1.2%) and sharing photos/videos to embarrassment (1.6%) are the least common manifestations, signifying that visual-based cyberbullying, although destructive, is the least reported.

These findings reveal the multidimensional nature of cyberbullying, with a prevalence of indirect and verbal methods. The findings suggest that content moderation and education efforts that encourage respectful behavior online may be helpful.

If you have come across cyberbullying on social media platforms, what was its form?	N	%
1- Offensive comments	77	30.8
2- Hate speech	41	16.4
3- Pictorial shaming	3	1.2%
4- Posting or sharing embarrassing photos and /or videos	4	1.6%
5- Spreading rumors	25	10%
6- Other forms (stalking, using emojis as a form of ridicule)	100	40%

Table 5. Forms Of Cyberbullying on Social Media Platforms

Results related to the third question: Remaining silent versus reporting cyberbullying

The information related to user responses to observing cyberbullying on social networking sites presents a mixed picture of responses, the most typical of which is inaction. The most common (28.8%) response of participants who witnessed cyberbullying was that they did nothing, reflecting a propensity to be a bystander as opposed to an upstander.

A large proportion (18%) claimed to have never seen cyberbullying, suggesting a lack of online exposure or lack of knowledge of indirect forms of online abuse. On the other hand, 17.6% of the participant sample directly expressed their thoughts, perhaps by participating in discussions or by taking action against cyberbullying, which represents social responsibility.

In contrast, it was less common for them to be directly involved in cyberbullying (7.2% acknowledging they verbally join in), indicating that although many experience online harassment, fewer get involved in being the perpetrator. 12.8% resisted the act (being more willing to tackle the cyberbullies), and a few (9.2%) engaged in formal assistive behavior (reporting as indirect behavior).

For the more passive avoidance strategies, 4.8% quit the entire platform, possibly to escape a toxic atmosphere, and only 1.6% offered support to the victim, indicating that direct help to a

These findings indicate that while some individuals are actively advocating against cyberbullying, for the most part, users are passive bystanders. This also identifies agitators who exhibit more active participation and actions (e.g., reporting incidents, supporting victims, etc.) as key actors needed for improved web security.

If you ever witnessed cyberbullying across social media platforms, how did you respond?	N	%
1-Express my opinion actively	44	17.6%
2-Join in verbally	18	7.2%
3-Do nothing	72	28.8%
4-Leave the platform (log out)	12	4.8%
5-Object to the act of cyberbullying	32	12.8%
6- Reach out to the victim	4	1.6
7- Report the incident	23	9.2%
8- I have never witnessed	45	18%

Table 6. Students' Viewpoints and Attitudes Towards Cyber Bullying

The data in Table (7) focuses on the different reasons why respondents believe individuals may choose to engage in cyberbullying, with the top reason being personal struggles and frustrations. 534 A majority of respondents (51.6%) suspected that cyberbullying behavior stemmed from personal issues and that perpetrators generally project their issues onto others in the online world.

The next most cited reason (26.4%) is “other reasons,” suggesting that cyberbullying can arise from multiple motivations beyond those explicitly listed. This category highlights the multifaceted nature of online aggression, as well as the varied psychological or situational influences that may lead individuals to engage in it.

Interestingly, 14.4% of respondents believe that online harassment is used as a tool for gaining popularity, meaning that some individuals use intimidation to demonstrate their control over the situation or negatively elevate their social status. This view is consistent with the idea that online behavior tends to reflect real-world hierarchies in which aggressors seek validation through negative interactions.

In contrast, just 5.2% of users listed boredom as a key motivator, indicating that some may use cyberbullying as a fun activity, but this is not the overwhelmingly main motivator. For instance, 2.4% believed cyberbullying acts as a coping mechanism behind personal insecurities; the most fitting findings show that relatively few see it as an action performed in retaliation rather than a conscious attack (I-L)

In all, the results point to the idea that cyberbullying is more tied to deep-seated issues than spontaneous imaginations or behaviors. Increasing awareness of and implementing mental health interventions to address these root causes may be critical to reducing online aggression.

In your opinion, why do people cyberbully others?	N	%
1- Out of boredom	13	5.2%
2- To become popular	36	14.4%
3- A defense mechanism for their own insecurities	6	2.4%
4- They have personal issues and frustrations	129	51.6%
5- Other reasons	66	26.4%

Table 7. Reasons For Cyberbullying from Respondents' Viewpoints

Results related to the fourth question: Do students prefer to remain silent after being cyberbullied, or do they report such incidents?

Table (8) shows that the highest response to cyberbullying is to ignore the issue (38.8%), showing that people would prefer not to confront the problem directly. However, a significant percentage (32.8%) do go on to report the bully's account actively, signaling a responsibility to combat online harassment.

Approaching the bully is the third most common response (20.4%), indicating that some people prefer confrontation over passive avoidance. Only 4.8% call for changing social media platforms, indicating that the main tendency of users is to remain on their desired networks even if they are victims of cyberbullying.

Importantly, confiding in a friend has the lowest frequency of occurrence (3.2%), which might suggest that victims either feel the behavior is minor or do not feel comfortable discussing it with others. The research highlights the need for increased awareness and support, as well as proactive and constructive responses to online harassment.

Describe your response to cyberbullying:	N	%
1- I ignore the situation	97	38.8%
2- I change the social media platform	12	4.8%
3- I respond to the bully	51	20.4%
4- I confide in a friend	8	3.2%
5- I report the account of the bully	82	32.8%
Missing		

Table 8. Respondents' Reaction to Cyberbullying

When asked about reporting incidents of cyberbullying, the most confided group is parents (29.6%), followed by friends (25.6%). This implies that people mostly turn to known and trusted Tables within their community when dealing with cyberbullying.

Less frequently, academic counselors (13.2%) and siblings (10.4%) are consulted for support, indicating a relatively lesser inclination to engage with formal academic support mechanisms or even close family members apart from immediate parents.

Professors are rarely consulted in these situations, as only 2.4% claimed they would turn to them for assistance. The discovered system of informal support may lack significant authority in an academic context related to cyberbullying. Moreover, 18.8% would not discuss their experiences with anyone, indicating a notable proportion of people who either feel embarrassed or prefer to deal with the matter on their own. This trend highlights the need to create an environment where people are encouraged to report incidents of cyberbullying and seek

The results shown in Table (9) outline unique points of view regarding cyberbullying, social media behaviors, and feasible solutions.

If you have told someone about cyberbullying, that person will be	N	%
1- A Friend	64	25.6
2- A Professor	6	2.4
3- An academic counsellor	33	13.2
4- Your Parent	74	29.6
5- Your sibling	26	10.4
6- Nobody	47	18.8

Table 9. Confiding in Someone About Cyberbullying

Overwhelmingly, respondents agree, with the vast majority strongly agreeing, that social media should foster more kindness and respect in the online world; another significant portion of people simply agree — concern about how we treat one another online is widespread. Many of them strongly agree on the significance of telling an adult about cyberbullying, which shows a good amount of knowledge about the need for authority Tables to solve this issue.

However, observers are more divided over the normalization of cyberbullying in social media. While a large segment of respondents recognize its widespread nature, a considerable number of people strongly disagree with that notion, indicating that while some accept cyberbullying as an intrinsic aspect of digital interactions, others categorically refuse this idea.

Indeed, when it comes time for action, a substantial portion of respondents hope for victims to take some action rather than sit passively by, and a sizeable number of them want to respond assertively. Similarly, many say they would report being cyberbullied, but a number remain neutral, suggesting some reluctance to report things.

When it comes to solutions, the overwhelming majority are optimistic that cyberbullying can be addressed, with most feeling that preventative measures can be put into place. Additionally, when examining social connectedness, a large percentage of respondents view themselves as very social, indicating that having social support may be a factor influencing how people respond to cyberbullying.

By and large, the findings paint a mixed picture of cyberbullying that elicits both concern and optimism, with a palpable desire not only for safe online spaces but also divergent views on how to respond to and prevent online harassment.

Statement	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Cyberbullying is normal in the world of social media.	57	22.8	28	11.2	37	14.8	73	29.2	55	22

People who are bullied should respond instead of not doing anything.	14	5.6	20	8	52	20.8	69	27.6	95	38
If someone is being cyberbullied, it is important to inform an adult.	1	0.4	8	3.2	29	11.6	86	34.4	126	50.4
I want to witness more kindness and respect on social media.	1	0.4	5	2	13	5.2	41	16.4	190	76
I would report being cyberbullied.	15	6	38	15.2	57	22.8	67	26.8	73	29.2
I am a very social person with many friends.	6	2.4	35	14	32	12.8	101	40.4	76	30.4
There are effective ways to stop cyberbullying.	2	0.8	12	4.8	28	11.2	103	41.2	105	42

Table 10. Respondents' Viewpoints Regarding Cyber Bullying

Discussion of the Results

This study has found numerous factors that are critical patterns of cyberbullying among university students in Jordan. The most frequent social scenery where cyberbullying takes place is Facebook, as well as Instagram and WhatsApp. This finding concurs with Lenhart et al. (2010), who claimed that Facebook still leads among young people due to its free flow of sharing and vast network of interconnection. Similarly, the current study concluded that Facebook is the primary platform where cyber aggression occurs among Jordan University students, a conclusion also confirmed by Tayeh (2023).

As far as the forms of cyberbullying are concerned, the most frequent ones are verbal harassment and offensive remarks, the spreading of false information, and impersonation. This is supported by the fact that Patchin and Hinduja (2006) established that the most prevalent type of cyber aggression involved name-calling, rumors, and threats online. Similarly, Grigg (2010) identified verbal aggression as a crucial aspect of cyberbullying acts. Such parallels among the studies indicate that the use of language to be aggressive is a common aspect of bullying on such sites and is not culturally specific.

Interestingly, according to the study, a large percentage of students opted to remain silent rather than report or speak out against their cyber bullies. It corroborates the assumptions of the spiral of silence theory developed by Noelle-Neumann (1974), according to which people adopt the position of silence to prevent isolation or lude damage. The unwillingness to report also aligns with Paul, Smith, and Blumberg's (2012) assertion that students often lack confidence in how the institution will respond to the issue. As a result, they are more likely to refrain from escalating

the situation. This, nonetheless, is contrary to the findings of Ybarra et al. (2007), a U.S.-based study, which showed a higher prevalence of informing school authorities and guardians, implying a possible cultural variation in the dimensions of seeking and obtaining help and in perceptions of access to institutional resources.

The findings also show that females were subjected to relatively more cyberbullying than males, which is partially consistent with Kowalski et al. (2014) report, which indicated gender disparities in cyberbullying victimization where the study tended to have larger prevalence rates when matricule to males than when it was on females depending on aggressive type. This marginal difference could be explained by the fact that female bullying takes a more relational and emotional nature, which Campbell et al. (2013) also recommended.

Additionally, the fact that the vast majority of cyberbullying website interactions occur outside of formal learning settings and at late hours confirms what Tokunaga (2010) stated: that cyberbullying is mostly a personal and after-hours activity that is independent of physical schools. This off-campus process asks universities and policymakers to develop interventions that can move beyond the classroom and address students' digital lives more comprehensively.

Finally, the revelation that the majority of victims avoid institutional help indicates a weakness in the system's response to crime within universities, as earlier cautioned by Wilkins et al. (2007). This silence may be due to the inefficiency of reporting channels or fear of victimization. This also highlights the necessity of culturally oriented awareness programs, as stated by Smith (2012), who emphasized that cyberbullying prevention should be tailored to regional cultural and institutional contexts.

Conclusion

Empirical studies have consistently indicated that contemporary youth have undergone profound transformations as a result of the accelerated evolution and pervasive integration of digital technologies. Given the centrality of technology in their daily lives, imposing restrictions on access to these platforms would have significant repercussions, necessitating careful consideration in the development of strategies to prevent and address cyberbullying. A critical factor to acknowledge is that the severity of cyberbullying, akin to traditional forms of bullying, can manifest in short-term, medium-term, and long-term consequences for victims. To effectively support those affected, it is essential to create environments where victims feel safe seeking assistance without fear of retribution or stigmatization. Educational institutions play a pivotal role in this regard, with faculty and staff being well-positioned to implement comprehensive, ongoing educational programs that elucidate the detrimental effects of cyberbullying rather than relying on isolated awareness campaigns. Additionally, counseling services should be made available as a therapeutic intervention to aid victims in coping with the psychological toll of cyberbullying.

Confidentiality emerges as a crucial factor in mitigating the stigma associated with reporting cyberbullying incidents. The establishment of dedicated hotlines or mobile applications can provide victims with accessible and discreet avenues to report abuse and seek support. Furthermore, the role of bystanders in cyberbullying scenarios cannot be overstated. By transitioning from passive observers to active "upstanders," bystanders can play a transformative role in preventing, intervening in, and mitigating online bullying. This can be achieved through actions such as defending the victim, challenging bullying behavior, affirming the victim's perspective, or mobilizing collective intervention within online communities. This study

underscores the potential of bystander engagement as a mechanism for reducing the prevalence of cyberbullying.

Equally important is the need to address the behaviors of perpetrators through targeted educational and psychological interventions aimed at rectifying harmful conduct. Concurrently, victims of both traditional and cyberbullying require access to emotional and psychological support to facilitate recovery. This necessity is underscored by the findings of this study, wherein a significant proportion of respondents (23%) expressed a willingness to participate in in-depth interviews regarding their personal experiences with verbal, physical, and online bullying. These insights highlight the urgency for further research in this domain, particularly in contexts where cultural and social factors may influence the dynamics of bullying.

Moreover, technological platforms must be rigorously monitored and adapted to address cyberbullying effectively, incorporating features that enable the direct reporting of abusive behavior. Greater emphasis should be placed on promoting responsible technology use, with social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter implementing robust measures to ensure user safety, including the filtration of offensive content and hate speech. Efforts to combat cyberbullying must be multifaceted, encompassing prevention and intervention initiatives at the community, educational, and familial levels. Professional counseling and mental health support should be normalized and culturally integrated within Arab societies. At the same time, governmental authorities must prioritize addressing the challenges youth face on social media through stricter enforcement of internet policies.

This study advocates for expanded research into the diverse manifestations of bullying that remain underexplored due to cultural and social constraints in many Arab countries. Although the UAE has demonstrated leadership in this area by establishing transparent policies and pioneering specialized cybercrime units within its police departments, there remains a need to encourage victims to report incidents that may adversely affect their mental wellbeing. As proposed, further qualitative research is essential to comprehensively assess the socio-psychological impacts of cyberbullying on victims, particularly within conservative societal contexts.

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