# Emotional Intelligence, Social Support, and Anxiety Among Victims of Cyberbullying: A Literature Study

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Abstract: Inevitably, the Internet has become widely used in modern life. The Internet has two sides: positive and negative. Among these negative effects, cyberbullying is one. The victim of cyberbullying can be anyone, but adolescents are the most vulnerable to it. Various studies have indicated that teenagers who are victims of cyberbullying may experience multiple psychological effects, among which excessive anxiety is one of them. This article explores the relationship between emotional intelligence and social support for anxiety in adolescents who are cyberbullying victims. The method used in this study was a literature review. The literature was searched throught online platforms, using the keywords: cyberbullying, social support, anxiety, and emotional intelligence. The results revealed that anxiety among adolescent victims of cyberbullying can be suppressed or avoided through the presence of emotional intelligence and social support. These findings imply that family and school environments play an important role in the development of emotional intelligence and that peer support is essential for victims of cyberbullying. The results of this study highlight the importance of emotional intelligence and social support from the environment. These can be the basis of any interventions, both at school and at home, concerning character building among adolescents.

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Advances in technology have given birth to the socalled Internet. With the existence of the Internet, developments in communication between individuals have been helped by the emergence of social media which can bring individuals closer to each other (Zhang et al., 2022). The existence of the internet has made the media evolve into a large and wide scope. Anyone with Internet access can create and share information or news instantly, easily, and simultaneously in a seemingly unregulated and limitless virtual world(Patchin & Hinduja, 2012).

Although the use of the internet and social media is associated with clear benefits, it is also associated with considerable negative implications. This includes unwanted exposure to sexual material, cybercrime, cyberstalking, and cyberbullying. In Indonesia alone, 80% of adolescents are victims of cyberbullying is 80%, and almost every day, teenagers experience cyberbullying treatment (Triantoro, 2016).

Several survey results conducted by the EU Kids Online Survey 2020, as well as SEJIWA, KPAI, UNICEF, APJII, and reports received by the Metro Jaya Regional Police, show an increase in cases of bullying on social media (cyberbullying) that many adolescent children experience (Zhuhri, 2021). According to the data from Hertz et al. (2015), the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System indicates that approximately 16% of high school students are bullied electronically.

In another research, one in five (20.9%) tweens (9 to 12 years old) reported being bullied, others reported cyberbullies, and/or witnessed cyberbullying. In the, 2016-2017 school year, 20.2% of 12-18 year-olds (including 8.5% of 6th graders and 15.6% of 7th graders) reported being bullied at school. Among those who had been bullied, 15.3% reported that it happened online or by text (including 6.7% of 6th graders and 13.1% of 7th graders). In

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2019, a nationally representative sample of 4.972 12 to 17-year-old middle and high school students found that 52% had been bullied at school and 17% had been cyberbullied in the previous 30 days (Patchin & Hinduja, 2020).

As of September 3, 2018, there were at least 3,096 teenagers involved in cyberspace cases. The challenges to child protection in cyberspace, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, where 79% of children do not have rules for using gadgets, 34.8% of children use gadgets 2-5 hours per day, and 25.4% of children play more than 5 hours per day outside of study hours.(Subagja & Pradana, 2018).

UReport's, 2019 poll of 2,777 young Indonesians aged 14-24 found 45% experienced cyberbullying; With the number of boys being slightly higher than girls at 49% and 41%, respectively. Then 3 in 10 children experienced online sexual exploitation and violence. It is difficult to determine the exact record of cyberbullying cases in Indonesia due to the ambiguous nature of the crime. However, at least 25 instances of cyberbullying are reported to the Greater Jakarta Metropolitan Police each day. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission also estimated that 22.4% of adolescents in Indonesia were victims of cyberbullying, and the number can rise along with the increasing use of the internet among adolescents (Zaki, 2022).

It has been observed that cyber victimization has serious negative effects on the physical, social, academic, and emotional lives of adolescents even though there is no direct and physical contact involved in cyberbullying actions (Yurdakul & Ayhan, 2021). One problem caused by cyberbullying is anxiety (Perwitasari & Wuryaningsih, 2022). Victims of cyberbullying experience moderate levels of social anxiety, whereas adolescents experience high levels of social anxiety (8.8%). They are worried about their social environment. They fear being the subjects of conversation by their friends (Martínez-Monteagudo, 2019).

A study conducted in Amsterdam revealed that both low and high emotional intelligence levels were associated with childhood social anxiety. Children with clinical social anxiety tend to have low emotional intelligence, whereas children with aboveaverage emotional intelligence tend to have subclinical social anxiety, which can be excessive due to the judgment of others. Only if they are selfaware (Nikolić et al., 2019). Similar to this study, people with high emotional intelligence are likely to experience fewer adverse effects from fear-triggered events. They have an excellent understanding of the physical, mental, and social impact of relationships and emotions (Fahlevi et al., 2020).

Social support can also play an important role in anxiety. According to the COR theory, when an important resource (e.g., social support) is decreased, individuals cannot protect their wellbeing because losing resources has harmful effects on their psychological state. Moreover, low levels of social support limit individuals' ability to manage stressors and other life crises, which may also damage health. People with sufficient social support view themselves as valued and deserving of love and appreciation, and social support helps them to withstand pressure and seek help (Bhat & Khan, 2017).

In Addition, people who perceive a high level of social integration, value assurance, trust alliance, and guidance experience lower levels of performance anxiety and social anxiety. The feeling of trust and awareness of one's own value, as well as belonging, ensures the maintenance of low levels of anxiety (Dughi et al., 2020). In another study, family support was found to be the most important predictor of mental distress compared to peer support, positive coping styles, and secure attachment; however, this form of support did not significantly attenuate the association between cyberbullying victimization and symptoms of depression and anxiety. One explanation for this is that during adolescence, young people tend to spend more time with their peers and less time with their parents. As a result, they may choose to turn to their peers for support when faced with online challenges. In line with this, perceived peer support moderated the impact of cyberbullying victimization on mental distress, as adolescents exposed to cyberbullying and who perceived greater peer support reported fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety (Worsley et al., 2019).

# 2 METHOD

The method used in this study was a literature review. Literature review was defined as a summary obtained from a reading source related to the discussion of research. In addition, a literature review is a combination of analysis results and information synthesis centered on findings, summarizing them and then drawing conclusions (Ridwan et al., 2021). In Summary, literature reviews played an important role as the foundation of all research. They can served as a foundation for knowledge development, provide policy and practice guidelines, provide evidence and hopefully generate new ideas and directions in a particular field (Snyder, 2019). The literature was searched throught online platforms, using the keywords: cyberbullying, social support, anxiety, and emotional intelligence.

# **3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

# **3.1** The Rise of Internet and the Correlation With the Adolescent

A new form of interpersonal communication is provided by digital technology (Thomas et al., 2015). Ningrum and Amna (2020) explained that communication technologies such as social networking services, the internet, mobile phones, chat rooms or text messages are increasing every year. Meanwhile, according to Zhu et al. (2021), about one-third of the world's Internet users are children and adolescents under the age of 18.

In Indonesia, according to data from the Association of Internet Network Operators, the number of internet users every year is increasing. From 2013 to 2017, there was an increase of 61.26 million people. In that time, internet user penetration is dominated by teenagers aged 13-18 years by 75.50 percent with most internet use per day for 1-3 hours. In terms of education, internet use is dominated by high school teenagers (SMA) which is 70.54 percent while junior high school (SMP) is 48.53% (Ningrum & Amna, 2020).

Meanwhile, According to the newest data from (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (APJII) in the late 2022, the total amount of internet users in Indonesia now are 210 million users with teenagers ages 13-18 years rank the first as the most users of the internet by 99.16% in Indonesia.

# 3.2 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves three key elements. Harmfulness, reproducibility, and power imbalance between bully and victim. Therefore, the definition of cyberbullying is expected to reflect these three elements using cyber media (Zhang et al., 2022). This definition ties in with research traditions on offline or traditional bullying, including physical and verbal bullying, organized social exclusion, and rumor spreading. Cyberbullying, also known as electronic or online bullying, is bully affects phones and the Internet. However, cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying in many ways. A certain level of technical know-how is required. Because it is mostly indirect and not face-to-face, there is a certain amount of "invisibility" for the bully. Therefore, perpetrators usually do not see the victim's reaction, at least not in the short term. The diversity of stakeholders' roles is more complex (Smith, 2019).

Repetitive behaviors that define traditional bullying (that is, more than once or twice) may need to be reconceptualized for cyberbullying. While cyberbullying is relatively easy to spot in direct, repetitive attacks (such as multiple abusive text messages), single episodes of traditional attacks previously confined to specific times and places are no longer confined to cyberspace. Targeted offensive content could now be posted by the perpetrator as a comment, photo, or video capture in a single action, but as a result, the content was repeatedly viewed by other users. maybe shared, saved, commented on, or Liked". Re-experience of the original attack and its associated lasting damage or trauma to the victim (Alipan et al., 2020). Cyberbullying has been associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety, it has been suggested that cyberbullying has a greater impact on victims than traditional bullying (Worsley et al., 2019).

Previous research into cyberbullying has revealed a variety of methods that bullies use to target victims in cyberspace, such as flaming (or roasting), harassment, character imitation, deception, exclusion, slander, and cyberstalking (Chen et al., 2017). Academic and practical research on cyberbullying has recently increased due to the increasing popularity of social media platforms, such as Facebook (Baccarella et al., 2018).

A study published in 2015, when social media was growing exponentially, found that the prevalence of cyberbullying was around 23%. A systematic review updated in 2021 reported an increasing prevalence of cyberbullying among children and adolescents, with a cyberbullying perpetration rate of 25.03%, ranging from 6.0 to 46.3%, and an average victimization rate being 33.08%, ranging from 13.99 to 57.5% (Zhu et al., 2021). A national survey in South Korea found that 34% of high school students were involved in cyberbullying as perpetrators, victims, or both (Lee & Shin, 2017). A similar study in Peru found cybercrime at 5.6% and cyberbullying victim rates at approximately 17% (Martínez et al., 2020).

The effects of cyberbullying have been studied primarily in the context of adolescent mental health. In general, researchers have examined the association between involvement in cyberbullying and the tendency of adolescents to internalize problems (e.g., negative mood disorders, loneliness, anxiety, depression, suicide ideation, and development of physical symptoms, etc.) (Nixon, 2014). Triantoro (2016) found in his study suggest that cyberbullying has become a problem, not only in the Western world but also in developing countries like Indonesia. Results indicate that 80% of participants in this study had frequently experienced cyberbullying and that cyberbullying is considered a stressful life event.

#### 3.3 Anxiety

Anxiety is a tense and anxious expectation of a threatening but intangible event, a feeling of uneasy suspense. Anxiety makes it difficult to identify the source of unpleasant tensions and anticipated events and disasters. Emotions can be mysterious to those who experience them. Fear is also a combination of stress and unpleasant anticipation, but distinctions can be made between the causes, duration, and maintenance of fear and anxiety. Strictly, the term fear is used to describe an emotional reaction to a perceived danger, to an identifiable threat, such as a poisonous snake (Rachman, 2013).

Most fear reactions are intense and have the quality of an emergency. The person's level of arousal is sharply elevated. However, feelings of anxiety persist for lengthy periods and can nag away at the back of one's mind' for days, weeks, or months. Fear has a specific focus. Typically, it is episodic and recedes or ceases when the danger is removed from the person, or the person from the danger. In this sense, fear is determined by perceivable events or stimuli. The perceived source of the danger may be accurately or inaccurately identified; or correctly identified, but wrongly evaluated. The fear may be rational or irrational. Intense but irrational fears are termed phobias, such as claustrophobia (intense fear of enclosed spaces), snake phobia, and so on (Dacey et al., 2016).

Anxiety can be learned through a process called conditioning, whereby anxiety is associated with an event or object the person has experienced, and the person feels anxiety when faced with that event or object. Certain factors increase the risk of developing anxiety disorders. These include genetics, but common life stresses can also increase the risk of developing anxiety disorders. This includes both adverse and traumatic childhood events. Temperament can also be a risk factor, so people who exhibit neurotic traits, including worry, fear, loneliness, and other moods and conditions, are at increased risk of anxiety (Dacey et al., 2016).

#### 3.4 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is a system of cognitive abilities that has four components, which are the ability to comprehend emotions accurately after evaluating and expressing them, the ability to generate emotions and to reach them, to facilitate thinking, the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, the ability to regulate emotions to facilitate cognitive and emotional development (Kurdi & Hamdy, 2020).

Other researchers defined emotional intelligence as a group of skills and competencies that enable individuals to identify their and others' feelings motivate themselves, and manage their emotions and their relationships with others effectively. These competencies and skills include five areas: selfawareness, management of emotions, selfmotivation, empathy, and dealing with others or social skills. He explained each of these five areas and considered self-awareness to be the key to emotional intelligence, as it is linked to understanding of feelings (Santos et al., 2021).

Emotional intelligence is the ability to distinguish and manage emotions and to use this knowledge to manage one's thoughts and actions. It is "the ability of a person to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions, to label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior". It is also the ability to recognize other people's feelings and one's own and to be able to motivate and handle properly the relations that we have with other people and with ourselves emotionally intelligent person should be able to differentiate between distinct emotions and to devise an accurate and effective plan of action to respond to different situations and scenarios (Coyle et al., 2021).

# 3.5 Social Support

Social support is defined as "an individual's perception of general support or specific supportive behavior (available or performed) by people within his or her social network to enhance one's functioning and/or may act as a buffer against adverse effects.". When considering peer relationships, social support from classmates and close friends is often a fundamental component of the relationship, as it promotes overall well-being

and reduces the risk of negative consequences. When people get social support from those around them, they become calmer and less afraid of life. Conversely, if the social support received is low or non-existent, this creates the appearance of high anxiety. Social support is behavior that provides comfort and makes one feel respected, valued, loved, and cared for by others (Liedya et al., 2020).

Social support can be divided into two categories. One category is objective support, including direct material assistance, social network presence, and community relationships and participation. Another category is subjective support. It relates to an individual's respect for and understanding of their emotional experience and satisfaction, and is closely related to an individual's subjective feelings. Moreover, some scholars believe that social support should also include support through individual advocacy. Research shows that social support is associated with people's mental health. Social support can help ease or alleviate anxiety symptoms in people who face stress. Studies have shown that levels of social support are closely associated with the incidence of depression and anxiety, with low levels of social support more likely to lead to symptoms of depression and anxiety when individuals are exposed to stress (Qi et al., 2020).

## 3.6 Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence and Anxiety

Emotional intelligence is identifying and controlling emotions and using that knowledge to control your thoughts and actions. It is "a person's ability to monitor their own and others' emotions, distinguish between different emotions, give them appropriate names, and use emotional information to guide thought and action. It is also the ability to recognize other people's feelings and one's own and to be able to motivate and handle properly the relations that we have with other people and with ourselves (Santos et al., 2021).

Emotional intelligence encourages us to deal with the challenges we face in life, and anxiety is a feeling of fear we experience when faced with these challenges. Emotional intelligence gives us the ability to effectively deal with the anxiety we experience. Emotional intelligence helps to control emotions such as fear, anxiety, and stress. Emotional intelligence means empathy, compassion, motivation, and the ability to respond appropriately to external pain. By developing emotional intelligence, a person can be more productive and successful in their work. The process and consequences of developing emotional intelligence can reduce an individual's stress and anxiety (Nayak & Bhatt, 2021).

Mokhlesi and Shinde (2020) conducted a study on children's emotional intelligence, anxiety, and gender. The study was conducted on 50 boys and 50 girls. The results show that boys and girls do not differ significantly in either status or trait anxiety. They experience similar states and trait anxiety levels. This study also shows that state anxiety is related to trait anxiety in children. The results of this study proved beneficial for teachers, parents, and students.

Another study of the relationship between emotional intelligence and anxiety in high school students showed a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and gender. The findings also show that there is no significant difference in anxiety levels between men and women. The study found that students with high emotional intelligence were more mature and less anxious in stressful situations than students with lower emotional intelligence (Bhat & Khan, 2017).

In another study conducted on futsal athletes in the city of Madrid, it was found that a high level of trait anxiety and state anxiety means that the person pays excessive attention to their own emotions (Sánchez et al., 2021). This could increase the athlete's anxiety due to not being able to control or manage their feelings. On the contrary, when the person can understand their emotional state and regulate their emotions correctly, anxiety will decrease (Sánchez et al., 2021).

## 3.7 Correlation Between Social Support and Anxiety

Research shows that social support is associated with people's mental health. Social support can help ease or alleviate anxiety symptoms in people who face stress. Low levels of social support are more likely to lead to symptoms of depression and anxiety when people are stressed. as in the research conducted by Madoni and Mardliyah (2021) on the subjects of students who entered the grade 12 level at one of the SMK schools in the city of Jombang. He found that with sufficient social support, students would be able to realize that others around them were ready to support and help them deal with pressure, In his research, it was also explained that the level of social support in 40 students achieved a very high score, 38 others achieved high scores, and six other students achieved low scores (Madoni & Mardliyah, 2021).

Another study examining the effects of social support on adolescent mental health in China during the pandemic, which was conducted on 7,202 students aged 14-18 (Qi et al., 2020). She found that the lower the level of social support, the higher the rate of depression and anxiety symptoms among rural residents, and this is significantly higher than urban residents. She also found that although most of the adolescents who stayed at home lived with their parents, just 24.6% of the subjects in the study reported a high level of social support. A possible reason for this low number is that a family system may not provide enough social support because of family dysfunction (e.g., a family may have poor problem-solving strategies or suffer from ineffective communication among family members). Furthermore, more than half of young people with low social support experienced both depression and anxiety symptoms, and young people with low social support were 3.2-fold higher risk of anxiety symptoms than those with high social support (Qi et al., 2020).

Other studies have also suggested that Social support from classmates had a mediating relationship between both traditional and cyberbullying victims and adolescent social anxiety. Experiencing this form of victimization was associated with students' perceptions of social support from common peer groups and subsequently with reports of social anxiety (Coyle et al., 2021). In line with these findings, Hurlock (in Rif'ati et al., 2018) stated that adolescents get more social support from peers. Teenagers think of friends as figures who can understand what teenagers feel, they have feelings of harmony, and understand each other, sympathy is gained more from peers than parents. In this case, adolescents are more comfortable listening to peer complaints as a forum to suppress negative and positive emotional feelings and reduce anxiety (Rif'ati et al., 2018).

However, in another study conducted in the city of Medan on 80 visually impaired adolescents, it was found that social support did not affect anxiety (Liedya et al., 2020). The absence of a relationship between social support and anxiety was influenced because participants ignored the social support they would obtain. Participants felt do not need to seek or ask for social support from those around them, because all needs had been met while in the dormitory. A sense of comfort and security makes them not consider the burden of life that they will experience to minimize the appearance of anxiety (Liedya et al., 2020). Although the hypothesis is not accepted, it proves that if one of the aspects of social support, namely instrumental support, is accepted, it can make the individual feel calm, safe, cared for, loved, self-confident, and competent (Rifati et al., 2018).

# 4 CONCLUSION

Based on the discussions that have been conducted, we can learn how technological developments can produce a space called cyberspace. However, instead of taking advantage of what can be used in cyberspace with the internet, many people still use cyberspace as a place to start, ignite, and spread hate. Instead of using cyberspace as a place to seek, create, and spread good knowledge, many people are interested in creating hostility and normalizing what is known as cyberbullying. Thus, many people end up suffering from this. Unfortunately, many of the victims are teenagers, who are the most numerous age groups and often use cyberspace. In addition, bullying behavior will also not disappear, and the perpetrator will remain as long as a technology called the Internet continues to exist. The problem is that victims of cyberbullying can feel anxious, which can affect how they live their lives, and this can persist for a long time.

Based on studies that have also been conducted worldwide, it takes what is called emotional intelligence and social support for victims to overcome the anxiety that can arise from being victims of cyberbullying. Emotional intelligence can help victims regulate the emotions that arise when receiving cyberbullying treatment, and appropriate social support received by victims can help reduce their burden. Therefore, it is important to teach these two variables to overcome the impact of cyberbullying on children. Government institutions such as KOMINFO (Indonesia Ministry of Communication and Information Technology) and KEMENDIKBUD RISTEK (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology) should collaborate with various parties, both from the field of education (schools and teachers) and to the closest environment to children such as parents and children's circle of friends.

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