

The Role of Social Work in Facing the Negative Effects of Cyberbullying on Adolescents in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: This research aims to explore the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia and assess the role of social work in addressing the issue. The first objective of this study is to identify the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia. The second objective of this study is to assess the role of social work in addressing the issue of cyberbullying in Saudi Arabia. The third objective of this study is to identify the challenges that social workers face in addressing the issue of cyberbullying. This research work is qualitative in nature and follows the systematic review approach to interpret the outcomes. The study employed a qualitative secondary approach, utilizing existing literature and data to identify the key issues related to cyberbullying and the challenges faced by social workers in addressing the issue. The research findings indicate that cyberbullying has serious negative effects on adolescents, including emotional distress, decreased self-esteem, and negative impacts on their academic performance. The role of social work in addressing cyberbullying is crucial, as social workers have the skills and training to provide support for victims. However, the study highlights the challenges faced by social workers, including a lack of training and resources, as well as legal and cultural barriers that make it difficult to effectively address the issue. Based on these findings, the study concludes that a comprehensive and collaborative response is required from a variety of stakeholders, including social workers, policymakers, educators, and technology companies, to effectively address the issue of cyberbullying and protect the well-being of young people in Saudi Arabia. The study reached a number of recommendations, the most important of which are: Social work education and training, Awareness and education, improved support systems, and Policy development.

Keywords: cyberbullying, social workers, Adolescents.

دور الخدمة الاجتماعية في مواجهة الآثار السلبية للتنمر الإلكتروني على المراهقين في المملكة العربية السعودية

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المستخلص: يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف الآثار السلبية للتنمر عبر الإنترنت على المراهقين في المملكة العربية السعودية وتقييم دور الخدمة الاجتماعية في معالجة هذه المشكلة بالإضافة إلى تحديد التحديات التي يواجهها الأخصائيون الاجتماعيون في معالجة قضية التنمر عبر الإنترنت. هذا العمل البحثي نوعي بطبيعته ويتبع نهج المراجعة المنهجية لتفسير النتائج. استخدمت الدراسة نهجًا ثانويًا نوعيًا، باستخدام الأدبيات والبيانات الموجودة لتحديد القضايا الرئيسية المتعلقة بالتنمر عبر الإنترنت والتحديات التي يواجهها الأخصائيون الاجتماعيون في معالجة هذه المشكلة. وتوصلت نتائج هذا البحث إلى أن التنمر عبر الإنترنت له آثار سلبية خطيرة على المراهقين، بما في ذلك الضيق العاطفي، وانخفاض احترام الذات، والآثار السلبية على أدائهم الأكاديمي. فيعد دور الخدمة الاجتماعية في معالجة التنمر عبر الإنترنت أمرًا بالغ الأهمية، حيث يتمتع الأخصائيون الاجتماعيون بالمهارات والتدريب لتقديم الدعم للضحايا. ألفت الدراسة الضوء على التحديات التي يواجهها الأخصائيون الاجتماعيون، بما في ذلك نقص التدريب والموارد، فضلاً عن الحواجز القانونية والثقافية التي تجعل من الصعب معالجة هذه المشكلة بشكل فعال. بناءً على هذه النتائج، خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الاستجابة الشاملة والتعاونية مطلوبة من مجموعة متنوعة من أصحاب المصلحة، بما في ذلك الأخصائيون الاجتماعيون وصناع السياسات والمعلمون وشركات التكنولوجيا، لمعالجة قضية التنمر الإلكتروني بشكل فعال وحماية رفاهية الشباب. في المملكة العربية السعودية. كما توصلت الدراسة إلى عدد من التوصيات أهمها: تعليم وتدريب الخدمة الاجتماعية، التوعية والتعليم، أنظمة الدعم المحسنة، تطوير السياسات. الكلمات المفتاحية: التنمر الإلكتروني، الأخصائيين الاجتماعيين، المراهقين.

Introduction

Various factors, such as technical advancements, demographic changes, economic shifts, cultural influences, and political and social movements, can all play a role in how societies develop and change over time. The growing interconnection and interdependence of individuals and communities around the world is one key way that societies are evolving. The need for social justice and equality is becoming increasingly recognized as modern civilizations and globalization progress. The need of addressing problems like racism, bigotry, cyberbullying, harassment, and other forms of oppression has gained more attention in recent years. This has also sparked social and political initiatives that aim to advance the equality of rights and opportunity for all societal members. (Masilo, 2018)

Social work is crucial in combating the harmful problem of cyberbullying. Teenagers who experience cyberbullying may experience feelings of loneliness, melancholy, anxiety, low self-esteem, and even suicidal thoughts. Teenagers' capacity to concentrate and learn is hampered by cyberbullying, which results in scholastic difficulties and poor grades. In addition, Relationships suffer, and social rejection and loneliness result. Additionally, it makes teenagers feel uncomfortable or dangerous in social settings. (Peled, 2019, p:2). The negative impacts of cyberbullying continue beyond adolescence and into adulthood, potentially impacting mental health, relationships, and overall well-being. Cyberbullying is a sort of intimidation that takes place online or via the use of digital tools like social media, texting, and other electronic communication methods. It might appear in a variety of ways, such as sending scary or harassing emails, spreading false information online, disseminating embarrassing or private images or videos, or excluding someone from online social groups (Hellfeldt et al., 2020, p:2)

Social workers work with individuals, families, and communities to address cyberbullying in several ways. They provide counselling and therapy to help individuals cope with the emotional and psychological effects of cyberbullying. They also work with schools and other organizations to develop policies and programs that address cyberbullying and promote a positive and safe online environment (Alzamil, 2021). Additionally, social workers advocate for policies and laws that support protecting individuals from cyberbullying and other forms of online harassment and abuse. They also work with community organizations and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the negative impacts of cyberbullying and to educate people about how to prevent and respond to it. Social workers play a critical role in addressing these negative effects by providing support and resources to adolescents who have been affected by cyberbullying. This may include individual therapy, class therapy, or family therapy, varying on the needs of the individual. Social workers also work with adolescents to develop coping strategies and resilience skills that can help them navigate difficult situations and build self-esteem and confidence. Social workers also work with schools and other organizations to develop policies and programs that address cyberbullying and promote a positive and safe online environment. This may include educating adolescents about cyberbullying and how to prevent it, as well as providing support and resources for those who have been affected by it (Alfandari, 2019, p:62)

Additionally, social workers advocate for policies and laws that help to protect adolescents from cyberbullying and other forms of online harassment and abuse. They also work with community organizations and other stakeholders to raise awareness about the negative impacts of cyberbullying and to educate people about how to prevent and respond to it. Social work plays a crucial role in addressing the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents by providing a range of services and support (Willoughby, 2018). Adolescents who have experienced cyberbullying might get individual, group, or family counseling from social professionals to help them deal with the emotional and psychological impacts of the experience. This might entail assisting teenagers in creating coping mechanisms, fostering resilience, and enhancing their general psychological health and well-being. Social workers offer advocacy and support to teenagers who have been victims of cyberbullying in addition to counseling and treatment. In order to help young people manage the complicated social structures and obstacles they may face, this may involve linking them with legal services, support networks, and other resources. (Williford & Depaolis, 2019, p:10-11)

Social workers also work with adolescents, families, schools, and community organizations to educate people about cyberbullying and how to prevent it. This may include developing and implementing prevention programs, as well as educating people about the negative impacts of cyberbullying and how to recognize and respond to it (Gasca, 2018, p:6)

The study Problem:

Despite the growing recognition of the destructive influences of cyberbullying on adolescents, there is an absence of knowledge and awareness of the role that social work can play in addressing these effects in Saudi Arabia. Cyberbullying refers to the utility of electronic communication technologies, such as social media, messaging apps, and virtual forums, to intentionally and repeatedly harm, intimidate, or harass others. It is a growing problem worldwide, and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to its negative effects, including psychological distress, social isolation, and academic difficulties. As a result, many adolescents who have been affected by cyberbullying do not receive the support and resources they need to cope with and overcome the challenges they face. This can lead to serious and lasting adverse impacts on their emotional and psychological well-being, as well as their academic and social success (Masilo, 2018, p:2). To address this issue, it is important to examine the role of social work in facing the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia and to identify ways in which social workers can aid and provide resources to those who have been affected by cyberbullying. This study aims to identify the role of social work in facing the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents.

In Saudi Arabia, the widespread adoption of digital technologies and the high rates of internet and social media use among young people have contributed to the incidence of cyberbullying. However, there is limited research on the extent and nature of cyberbullying in the country, and little is understood about the effectiveness of mediation in addressing its negative effects on adolescents. Social work is a profession that is well-positioned to address the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents, as it focuses on promoting social justice and well-being and has a history of addressing issues related to violence and aggression. However, the specific role of social work in addressing cyberbullying in Saudi Arabia has not been adequately explored. This study aims to fill this gap in knowledge by examining the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia and the role of social work in addressing these effects. The study also identifies any barriers or facilitators to the effectiveness of social work interventions in this context and makes recommendations for improving the ability of social workers to support adolescents who have been affected by cyberbullying. This information is valuable for policymakers, social personnel, and other professionals who are seeking to deal with the adverse effect of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia (Albantan, 2021, p:97)

Research Questions:

- 1- What are the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia?
- 2- How is social work be used to address the issue of cyberbullying in Saudi Arabia?
- 3- What are the challenges that social workers face in addressing the issue of cyberbullying?

Significance of the Study:

This research study is significant for multiple reasons; first, this research study is significant because it addresses a pressing issue that has important implications for the well-being of adolescents in Saudi Arabia. Cyberbullying is a serious problem that can have severe and long-lasting consequences for the psychological condition and well-being of teenagers (Adelphi, 2021). By examining the specific ways in which social work can effectively address the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia, this study has the capacity to inform the progress of operative interventions and policies aimed at preventing and mitigating the undesirable penalties of cyberbullying for adolescents in this context. This study has the potential to inform the improvement of useful and evidence-based approaches to addressing the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia. By examining the role of social work in facing these negative effects, this study provides valuable insights into how social workers can support and empower adolescents who have been affected by cyberbullying and identify best practices and strategies for doing so (Albantan, 2021, p:98)

Second, this research study is significant because it fills an essential gap in the existing literature on cyberbullying and social work. While there has been some research on the frequency of cyberbullying in Saudi Arabia, there is a lack of research on the specific ways in which social work can effectively address the destructive impacts of cyberbullying on adolescents in this context. By providing a detailed examination of the specific ways in which social work interpositions can be active in addressing the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia, this study has the capability to inform the development of effective intercessions and strategies for addressing cyberbullying in other contexts. This study significantly contributes to a better understanding of the prevalence

and nature of cyberbullying among adolescents in Saudi Arabia and informs the development of guidelines, plans, and strategies that can assist in averting and addressing cyberbullying in the country and create a safer and more inclusive environment for all people.

Third, this research study is significant because it has the capacity to contribute to the broader body of knowledge on the role of social work in addressing the negative effects of cyberbullying. While social work has a long history of addressing issues related to bullying and victimization, there is still much to learn about the specific ways in which social work can be used to mitigate the negative consequences of cyberbullying. By offering valuable insights into the ways in which social work can be used to alleviate the undesirable significances of cyberbullying for adolescents, this study has the prospective to inform the development of effective interventions and policies aimed at averting and vindicating the undesirable costs of cyberbullying for adolescents in Saudi Arabia and beyond. This study identifies best practices and strategies for social workers to support adolescents who have been affected by cyberbullying and provides recommendations for how social work can be more effectively used to address the adverse effects of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia (Cabrera et al., 2022). Finally, the implication of this research study remains in its capacity to add to a better perception of the negative outcomes of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia and the ways in which social work can effectively address these effects. By providing valuable insights into the ways in which social work can be used to lessen the harmful consequences of cyberbullying for adolescents, this study has the ability to inform the expansion of operative interventions and policies aimed at preventing and mitigating the negative penalties of cyberbullying for adolescents in Saudi Arabia and beyond.

METHODOLOGY

The systematic review process includes several steps, including the identification and selection of relevant studies, the critical appraisal of the quality and relevance of the studies, and the combination of the findings. The search strategy used in this study includes a combination of keywords and terms related to the research question, such as cyberbullying, social work, adolescents, and Saudi Arabia. The search is conducted in a variety of databases, including PubMed, JSTOR, Google Scholar and PsycINFO, and is limited to articles published in English and 3020 studies were extracted.

1. Systematic Review Approach

This research work is qualitative in nature and follows the systematic review approach to interpret the outcomes by employing the secondary method. Systematic reviews are an important tool for synthesizing research evidence on a particular subject. This approach is used to identify and appraise the existing body of published literature on a given topic to draw conclusions about the current state of knowledge. Systematic reviews are rigorous, comprehensive, and transparent in their approach, allowing for a more accurate assessment of the evidence. The systematic review approach began with the formulation of a research question and the development of a search strategy. This involved identifying relevant databases and devising a search strategy to retrieve relevant studies. After the search was complete, the next step was to assess the quality of the retrieved studies by using a standard quality assessment tool. This allowed the researcher to identify the studies that provided the highest level of evidence. Once the studies had been identified, the next step was to perform a systematic analysis of the studies. This involved synthesizing the findings of the studies, identifying similarities and differences among the studies, and drawing meaningful conclusions. The researcher also utilized meta-analysis to identify potential sources of bias and to assess the impact of the findings across multiple studies (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2021, p:3)

2. Data Sources and Search Strategy

This research work utilized the four main search engines for the retrieval of pertinent databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, PsycINFO, and JSTOR. Data bases and search tactics are critical components of a systematic review, and it is important to carefully consider these aspects when researching the topic of the role of social work in facing the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia. The data sources and search strategy used in a systematic review are designed to ensure that the review is comprehensive and rigorous and that the results are illustrative of the existing state of research on the topic (Giraud et al., 2022,p:34).

The primary data source for this systematic review is a comprehensive search of academic journal databases such as PubMed, JSTOR, Google Scholar and PsycINFO. Additionally, the systematic review also included grey literature sources such as research papers, reports, and other documents published by non-academic sources, including governmental organizations and non-

governmental organizations. The search strategy for this systematic review included a combination of broad terms related to the main topic of the review, as well as terms related to the population and geographical context. The primary search terms which were used to extract sources were social work, cyberbullying, adolescents, and Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the systematic review also employed a snowballing strategy, whereby the references of relevant papers were screened for additional sources of relevant literature (Tawfik 2019, p:3)

The search strategy was conducted in multiple stages. The first stage was a broad search of all databases using the primary terms outlined above. The second stage was a more targeted search, using additional terms related to the research question. The third stage involved the screening of the full text of all relevant papers for additional sources of literature. Finally, the fourth stage involved a manual search of the relevant literature to identify any additional sources of information. The search strategy was conducted in both English and Arabic, and this search was conducted by a trained researcher, who ensured that it was comprehensive and replicable (Giraud et al., 2022,p:32)

3. Study Selection

The selection of the studies for the role of Social Work in Facing the Negative Effects of Cyberbullying on Adolescents in Saudi Arabia was performed by searching a distinct range of databases, such as Google Scholar, PubMed, PsycINFO, and JSTOR. The search strategy for this systematic review included a combination of broad terms related to the main topic of the review, as well as terms related to the population and geographical context. The primary search terms which were used to extract sources were social work, cyberbullying, adolescents, and Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the systematic review also employed a snowballing strategy, whereby the references of relevant papers were screened for additional sources of relevant literature. This search was refined by restricting the range of published articles to the past 10 years (Munn, et al., 2018, p:37)

After utilizing the search strategies, a total of 3020 most pertinent sources were extracted from these search engines. Most of the relevant studies were identified and extracted from Google Scholar 805. Around 733 studies were extracted from PubMed, 698 from PsycINFO, and 784 from JSTOR.

4. Limitations of the study

As with any research study, the systematic review on the topic of the role of social work in facing the negative effects of cyberbullying on adolescents in Saudi Arabia has certain limitations that may impact or influence the application or interpretation of the findings. These limitations include constraints on the generalizability and functionality of findings, difficulties faced in conducting the literature review, and limitations commonly found in the literature.

Firstly, one limitation of this study is that it is a systematic review of existing literature, which means that the findings are only as strong as the studies that were included in the review. Therefore, the generalizability of the outcomes may be restricted by the attributes of the studies that were incorporated in the review, such as their study design and included studies. Additionally, the utility of the findings may be restricted by the fact that the studies included in the review may not have addressed all aspects of the research question or may not have used interventions that are feasible or practical for social workers to implement in the field.

Secondly, conducting a literature review on this topic may be challenging due to the absence of research on the role of social work in addressing cyberbullying among adolescents in Saudi Arabia. This may make it difficult to identify enough studies that meet the inclusion criteria for the review. Additionally, there may be a lack of research that was performed in Saudi Arabia, which may limit the generalizability of the outcomes to the Saudi context.

Thirdly, the limitation of this study is that it is restricted to studies printed in English, which may eliminate relevant studies that were published in other dialects. This may also limit the generalizability of the outcomes to other countries or cultures where the prevalence of cyberbullying and the attitudes towards it may be different. Additionally, some limitations commonly found in the literature on this topic include the lack of standardized measures for assessing cyberbullying and the lack of agreement on the description of cyberbullying. This makes it difficult to compare the findings of different studies and draw conclusions about the effectiveness of different interventions.

Furthermore, the limitations of this study could not be overcome by the methods used in the study. For instance, the absence of research on the topic of social work interventions in addressing cyberbullying among adolescents in Saudi Arabia cannot be

overcome by increasing the search criteria or the number of databases searched. Finally, the impact of these limitations on the overall conclusions and inferences of the study was considered. The limited generalizability and utility of the findings may mean that the conclusions of the review could be viewed with caution and that further research is required to confirm the usefulness of social work mediation in addressing cyberbullying among adolescents in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, the lack of research on the topic may mean that the conclusions of the review are based on a small number of studies and that further research is needed to expand upon the current understanding of the topic.

Study Structure

This study was divided into three sections, the first section deals with the Literature Review of the study and previous studies, while the second section deals with the Impact of Cyberbullying on Adolescents, and the third section deals with the Role of Social Work in Addressing Cyberbullying.

The first section: Theoretical Framework of the study and previous studies

1- Theoretical Framework

In the context of cyberbullying, Nixon (2016) stated that adolescents who experience cyberbullying may perceive it as a significant stressor and may struggle to cope with the negative emotions and experiences that result from it. Adolescents who are already coping with other stressors, such as academic pressures or family conflicts, may be particularly exposed to the negative impacts of cyberbullying. General strain theory (GST) is a sociological theory that explains how strain or stress can lead to negative outcomes, such as crime or deviant behaviour. According to GST, strain occurs when an individual experiences negative events or conditions that are perceived as a threat to their goals, values, or positive emotions. These strain factors can be caused by a variety of circumstances, including financial stress, social isolation, or exposure to violence or other forms of abuse.

In the context of cyberbullying, GST suggests that adolescents who experience cyberbullying may be more feasible to take part in harmful behaviours or attitudes because of the strain they are experiencing. Adolescents who are victimized by cyberbullying may feel threatened or distressed by the bullying, and they may struggle to cope with the negative emotions and experiences that result from it. Extremera et al. (2018) indicated that this strain could lead to a range of destructive consequences, such as:

- ❖ Reduced self-esteem and self-worth (Barlett et al., 2021).
- ❖ Raised feelings of sadness, depression, and anxiety
- ❖ Difficulty concentrating or paying attention in school
- ❖ Physical indicators such as headaches or abdominal aches
- ❖ Decreased academic achievement
- ❖ Increased risk of substance abuse (Extremera et al., 2018,p:2).

Li & Peng (2022) asserted that GST theory predicts that people who experience many strain factors may be more susceptible to negative outcomes because they may lack the resources or coping mechanisms necessary to handle the additional stress. The study also confirmed that the likelihood of engaging in cyberbullying is increased by the presence of negative emotions and poor self-control, whereas morality and restrictions had protective benefits on coping with stress and avoiding cyberbullying. Also, Results demonstrate that stress and cyberbullying behavior are affected differently depending on the role of both risk and protective factors.

Akgül & Artar (2020) stated that Expressive repression, as a negative emotion regulation strategy, is positively associated with peer relations. In other words, adolescents who repressed their emotions more had better relationships with their peers, and those with better peer relations did less cyberbullying. Peer relations were found to have a negative relationship with cyberbullying. This result is in line with the GST theory's prediction, which recognizes peer interactions as a source of strain. Peer relationships were considered to be a cause of cyberbullying on their own. This study also showed how crucial peer relationships and online victimization are to cyberbullying. Teenagers who have trouble forming close friendships with their peers are more likely to engage in cyberbullying, making them a prime target for preventative efforts in educational settings (Akgül & Artar ,2020,p:32-34)

Barlett et al. (2021) indicated that the general aggression model (GAM) is a theoretical framework that explains the relationship between aggressive behaviours and media violence. GAM is based on social learning theory and social cognitive theory

and implies that individuals learn aggressive behaviours through observation and imitation of others. According to GAM, exposure to media violence, including violence in video games and television shows, can increase aggressive thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. When applied to the context of cyberbullying, GAM suggests that adolescents who are exposed to cyberbullying may be more expected to involve in similar behaviours themselves. This may be because they have learned aggressive behaviours through observation and imitation of others or because they have become desensitized to aggression because of their exposure to cyberbullying (Barlett et al., 2021, p:2)

Research by Anderson & Bushman (2018) has found that Research by Anderson & Bushman (2018) has found that the impact of frequent exposure to violent media on the likelihood of an initial ambiguous provocation escalating to an aggressive response. Aggressive action is more likely to occur when aggressive thoughts are readily available in memory. (Anderson & Bushman, 2018, p398). that parents, and other caregivers, can aid in reducing cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a practice that is learned. Thus, by preventing the learning relevant to cyberbullying, parents, friends, school counselors, etc. can aid in lowering the likelihood of cyberbullying. For instance, it has been demonstrated that poor contact with parents can lead to cyberbullying, but having good communication with parents can reduce cyberbullying. (Barlett et al., 202, p:7)

2- Previous Studies

The study conducted by Wiguna et al. (2021) stated that 48% of teens reported experiencing cyberbullying or other forms of abuse, while 79.5% of people with increased screen use, particularly those who live in cities, reported experiencing negative effects. Another research by Kwan et al. (2020) suggested that the utility of cyberspace and social media, including WhatsApp, Messenger, and Facebook, are majorly employed by adolescents by the kids, and it negatively influences their cognitive skills; ultimately, it considered the major source of cyberbullying.

Wiguna et al. (2021) also highlighted that about 88% of American teenagers have access to the internet and digital applications and 45% of them spend the most of their time online, almost 99% of children in the UK between the ages of 12 and 15 use the internet. Additionally, cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying because it severely violates the victim's right to privacy and harasses them about their whereabouts. The study by John et al. (2018) highlighted that the occurrence of cyberbullying discrimination ranges from 4% to 72%, and it depends on the utility of internet-related applications.

Another research by Maurya et al. (2022) highlighted that the incidence of cyberbullying has upsurged from 3.8% to 6.4%, and adolescents confront cyberbullying 20.4% more than others, and these adolescents suffer more depression, frustration contrasting to those who do not confront the cyberbullying, while the adolescents which confront the cyberbullying have a probability of 2.50 times more to have suicidal thoughts than others. Adolescents from low- and moderate-income nations have more trouble with decline and upsurged risks of involving in unsafe behaviours, and it may enforce a liability of health on the whole society. The study also highlighted that the age group between 18 to 20 years and 21 to 23 years is more exposed to internet usage and is more likely to confront cyberbullying. As more adolescents have an approach to digital telecommunication, therefore, from 2005 to 2022, the case of cyberbullying has increased drastically.

Gül et al. (2018) conducted a medical study from Turkey that suggested that around 62.2% of teenagers were the victims of cyberbullying. The study's results also showed that Turkey had a 62.6% cyber victimization rate. The regression analysis indicated that lack of awareness and increased bullying are the major reason behind cyberbullying.

Venkataraghavan (2015) highlighted that the cases of cyberbullying were highest among 24 nations, and adolescent cyberbullying was highest at 32%, contrasted to the United States with 25% while 11% was recorded in Great Britain. Approximately 70% of Indian teens and adolescents spend about 5 hours daily on the internet and out of which around 27% of the adolescents have smartphones. The most popular social sites, including Snapchat, WhatsApp, and Facebook, are believed to be the cause of adolescent victims of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying has become a significant concern in recent years, as the proliferation of social media and other online platforms has made it easier for individuals to engage in this type of behaviour. According to a survey performed by the Pew Research Center in 2018, 59% of U.S. teens reported experiencing some form of cyberbullying, and 14% said they had been the target of severe forms of cyberbullying, such as being called names or threatened online. The negative impacts of cyberbullying on adolescents can be serious and long-enduring. Sufferers of cyberbullying may encounter a range of emotional and psychological consequences, including

feelings of shame, anger, and sadness, as well as reduced self-esteem and increased anxiety and depression. They may also struggle with sleep problems and difficulty concentrating and may have a harder time forming and maintaining friendships (Franco & Ghanayim, 2019)

Batool et al. (2017) stated the position of social media in facilitating cyberbullying has also been a matter of concern. A study issued in the journal *Pediatrics* in 2014 found that adolescents who consumed more period on social media were more prone to experience cyberbullying, and those who suffered cyberbullying were more likely to endure emotional health difficulties. Some experts have called for greater efforts to educate young people about responsible online behaviour and the importance of being an "upstander" rather than a bystander when it comes to cyberbullying.

Bouchrika (2021) Cyberbullying has become a significant problem in recent years, as more and more people, especially adolescents' people, have gained entry to the internet and other forms of technology. According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2020, 41% of adolescents in the United States reported experiencing some form of cyberbullying. This is a significant increase from a survey performed by the Cyberbullying Research Center in 2011, in which 19% of youngsters in the United States reported experiencing cyberbullying in the past 30 days. In a similar survey conducted in 2014, this number increased to 27%. There is some testimony to indicate that certain groups may be more at risk of cyberbullying than others. Additionally, adolescents who have preexisting mental health conditions or who are isolated or socially marginalized may be more at risk of cyberbullying.

The second section: The Impact of Cyberbullying on Adolescents

Cyberbullying can have a serious and lasting impact on adolescents. It can cause them to feel depressed, anxious, and isolated and can lead to problems with sleep and concentration. In severe cases, it can even contribute to thoughts of suicide. Adolescents who are cyberbullied may also experience physical symptoms, such as stomach aches and headaches. The effects of cyberbullying can be particularly harmful because it can be hard for adolescents to escape from the harassment (Alrasheed et al., 2022, p:8). Unlike traditional bullying, which typically occurs in specific places and at specific times, cyberbullying can follow a victim everywhere, as it can happen anytime, anywhere, and through multiple forms of technology. This can make it difficult for adolescents to find a sense of safety and can further contribute to feelings of helplessness and isolation (Hasse et al., 2019, p13)

Al-Zahrani (2015) highlighted that more than half of students in Saudi Arabian schools had experienced cyberbullying, with social media programs being the most frequent location for such incidents. The harmful effect of cyberbullying on students is well-documented, with consequences including emotional distress, social isolation, and even suicide. For educators and policymakers, addressing cyberbullying among education students in Saudi Arabia requires a multifaceted approach. This may involve educating students about responsible online behaviour, promoting positive online communities, and developing policies and laws to prevent and respond to cyberbullying. It may also involve providing support and resources for students who have experienced cyberbullying and working to build a culture of respect.

Al-Buhairan et al. (2016) stated that bullying is a significant issue in early adolescence, with negative consequences for both those who are bullied and those who bully others. In Saudi Arabia, a recent study explored the prevalence and impact of bullying in early adolescence. This study found that a significant proportion of students in early adolescence had experienced bullying, either as a victim or a perpetrator. The study also found that bullying was more common among males than females and that bullying was more likely to occur in school than outside of school. This study found that bullying in early adolescence is related to a selection of negative outcomes, including emotional distress, social quarantine, and poor academic performance. It also noticed that those who were bullied were more viable to inform low self-esteem and a lack of self-confidence, while those who bullied others were more likely to report aggressive behaviour and a lack of empathy (AlBuhairan et al., 2016, p:66)

Alrasheed et al. (2022) indicated that cyberbullying among adolescents in Saudi Arabia has a prevalence ranging from 9.5% to 27.6%. Risk factors for cyberbullying among adolescents in Saudi Arabia may include age, with younger adolescents potentially being more at risk; gender, with some studies finding that boys are more probable to involve in cyberbullying behaviours while girls are more expected to be the victims; internet use, as adolescents who spend more time online may be more at risk; social media use, as this platform can be used to harass, bully, and spread negativity; and negative or strained relationships with family or peers. There is a strong alliance between cyberbullying and psychological well-being among adolescents in Saudi Arabia, with those experiencing cyberbullying being more likely to report emotional health concerns such as unhappiness, nervousness, and low identity-esteem. It is

important to address cyberbullying and support the mental health of adolescents to prevent negative long-term consequences (Alrasheed et al., 2022, p:9)

In response to the growing problem of cyberbullying, many schools and other organizations have implemented programs and policies to address the issue. These efforts often focus on educating adolescents about the dangers of cyberbullying and how to recognize and report it, as well as on providing support and resources for victims of cyberbullying (Lee & Chun, 2020,p:6). However, addressing the issue of cyberbullying is not just the obligation of schools and other organizations. Parents, families, and communities also play a critical role in preventing and addressing cyberbullying. It is essential for adults to be concerned about the signs of cyberbullying and to take any reports of cyberbullying seriously. They should also talk to adolescents about the importance of treating others with respect online and about what to do if they or someone they know is being cyberbullied (Varela et al., 2018,p:2-3)

The third section: The Role of Social Work in Addressing Cyberbullying

In order to address the harmful consequences of cyberbullying on teenagers, social professionals are essential. Social workers are qualified to assist young people who are dealing with the emotional and psychological effects of cyberbullying since they are trained to assist people and communities in dealing with complicated social issues. Counseling and therapy are two of the main ways social workers can help teenagers who are victims of cyberbullying. (Staples, 2016, p:51). Many young people who have been the victims of cyberbullying can find it helpful to discuss their feelings and ways to deal with the stress and suffering of the experience with a mental health expert. social workers can also work with adolescents to manage their emotions and create resilience in the face of difficulty. (Simmons, 2019,p:50)

The study by Cohen-Almagor (2018) indicated the negative impact of cyberbullying on individuals, including emotional distress, social isolation, and even suicide. It also notes that cyberbullying can have wider societal consequences, such as eroding trust and respect within communities. The research emphasizes the need for a collective effort to address cyberbullying involving a range of stakeholders, including government, schools, community organizations, and individuals. It suggests that these stakeholders can take several steps to address cyberbullying, including educating individuals about responsible online behaviour, promoting positive online communities, and developing policies and laws to prevent and respond to cyberbullying. Cyberbullying includes a range of behaviours, such as sending bullying or mean emails, propagating rumours, or sharing humiliating photos, or videos without permission. It is a growing problem that affects people of all ages, but it is particularly prevalent among children and adolescents (Simmons, 2019).

Social professionals are indispensable in combating cyberbullying. They can seek to prevent cyberbullying from happening in the first place as well as offer help to people who have been impacted by it. Social workers can specifically address cyberbullying in the following ways:

By offering counseling and treatment: social workers can assist those who have been the victims of cyberbullying in processing their feelings and learning to cope. They can also offer support to help people become resilient and avoid becoming victims in the future (Williford & Depaolis, 2019, p. 11)

Individuals, families, and communities can be made aware of the risks of cyberbullying and the best ways to avoid it: by social workers. In addition, to developing materials and resources for individuals to use, this may entail delivering information in classrooms, community centers, and other venues (Wang, 2022).

Advocating for policy change: Social workers can push for policy changes that will protect those who have been harmed by cyberbullying and help to prevent it. This can involve advocating for stronger rules and legislation as well as collaborating with decision-makers and other stakeholders to create effective plans (Wang, 2022).

Working with schools and other organizations: Social workers can develop and implement policies and programs to prevent cyberbullying in schools and other organizations. This may entail educating faculty, staff, and students about cyberbullying and how to stop it, as well as developing systems for responding to incidents when they occur (Williford & Depaolis, 2019, p. 12)

Challenges and Limitations in Addressing Cyberbullying in Saudi Arabia

Bell (2021) conducted a study involving more than 1,200 parents in Saudi Arabia and noticed that half and more of them believed their kids were at risk of being cyberbullied by their associates. The study surveyed parents from the Kingdom about their perception and experience of cyberbullying and its relationship to schools. Most contestants believed that video games, Snapchat, and

Twitter were the most frequent boards on which cyberbullying arose. Most of the participants believed that there were significant matters when a youthful person was cyberbullied, and nearly 43% clearly consented that cyberbullying was more detrimental than usual bullying. However, only 53% of parents reported having discussed cyberbullying with their children.

Alfakeh et al. (2021) highlighted that in Saudi Arabia, about 67.7% of parents deeply thought that cyberbullying causes psychological harm, and 78% felt it was crucial to check their children's internet use. Many parents, 78%, assumed that schools must be preemptive in delivering cyberbullying, and 72.8% felt that parents should also be more proactive in addressing the issue. However, 27.9% of parents believed that parental commitment would diminish cyberbullying. In terms of legal action, 75.1% of participants felt that more principles should be put in place to avert or penalize cyberbullying

Alotaibi & Mukred (2022) stated that the increasing use of social media among young Saudi people might contribute to cyber violence, as it provides a platform for individuals to harass, bully, and spread negativity online. The influence of family and peers can play a substantial role in shaping an individual's behaviour. If young person is exposed to violent or aggressive behaviour at home or among their peers, they may join in cyber violence. Mental health issues such as despair, nervousness, and low self-appreciation may also contribute to cyber violence behaviour. Entities who are battling with intellectual health concerns may turn to aggression as a coping mechanism, which can manifest itself in the form of cyber violence. If young person does not have sufficient supervision or guidance from their parents, they may be more likely to engage in risky or aggressive behaviour online.

Strategies for Supporting Adolescents Affected by Cyberbullying

There are several strategies that can be used to support adolescents who have been affected by cyberbullying. These strategies can be grouped into four main categories: prevention, intervention, education, and post-intervention support. Prevention strategies are aimed at reducing the prospect of cyberbullying happening in the initial spot (Ngo et al., 2021, p:2). This might include implementing policies and procedures to prevent cyberbullying, such as establishing clear rules for online behaviour and providing training for students, teachers, and parents on how to recognize and report cyberbullying. Other prevention strategies might include providing students with access to safe and supportive online environments, such as monitored chat rooms or forums, and encouraging students to be "upstanders" rather than bystanders when it comes to cyberbullying (Dennehy et al., 2018, p:61)

Intervention strategies are focused on addressing and resolving incidents of cyberbullying when they occur. This might include working with students, teachers, and parents to identify the source of the cyberbullying and develop a plan to address the problem. Interventions might also involve providing counselling and support to students who have been affected by cyberbullying and working with school administrators to implement disciplinary measures for students who engage in cyberbullying (Redmond et al., 2019, p:5)

The study by Sampasa-Kanyinga et al. (2018) observed that cyberbullying discrimination was significantly linked with both suppressing and expressing problems among adolescents. However, the strength of the link between cyberbullying harassment and internalizing problems was found to be moderated by the quality of the parent-child relationship. Specifically, the study found that adolescents who experienced high levels of cyberbullying victimization and had a poor link with their parents were to experience internalizing problems than those with a better relationship with their parents. No considerable moderating influence was found for the link between cyberbullying harassment and expressing problems. The outcomes of this study recommend that the parent-child relationship may play a role in the impact of cyberbullying victimization on the emotional health of adolescents. Adolescents who experience cyberbullying victimization and have a poor affiliation with their parents may be more vulnerable to suppressing difficulties such as apprehension and depression. This highlights the importance of supporting and strengthening the parent-child relationship as a potentially defensive factor as opposed to the negative effects of cyberbullying.

Education strategies are intended to improve awareness and understanding of cyberbullying among adolescents and the wider community. This might include providing students with information about the influence of cyberbullying, teaching students how to recognize and report cyberbullying, and encouraging students to develop positive online behaviours. Education strategies might also involve working with parents and caregivers to help them understand the role they can play in preventing and addressing cyberbullying. Post-intervention support strategies are focused on providing ongoing support and assistance to adolescents who have been affected by cyberbullying. This might include providing counselling and therapy to help students cope with the emotional and

psychological consequences of the experience and working with students to develop strategies for building resilience and coping with future challenges (Tozzo et al., 2022, p:4-5)

According to Sigurdson et al. (2015), those who were bullied as adolescents are more likely to develop a variety of emotional health issues as adults, including sadness, worry, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Bullying in adolescents has also been linked to an increased risk of mental health issues, such as substance misuse and personality disorders, in later life. Bullying has been shown to have indirect consequences on intellectual health in adulthood in addition to its direct effects on emotional health.

There are several strategies that can be effective in supporting adolescents who have been affected by cyberbullying. Some of these strategies include:

1. Offering practical assistance

It is valuable to create a safe and supportive environment in which adolescents can open up about their experiences with cyberbullying. This can help the adolescent feel heard and understood and can also provide an opportunity for adults to offer guidance and support. This may include helping the adolescent block or report the person who is bullying them or adjust their privacy settings to limit who can see their online activity. Help the adolescent connect with supportive friends, family members, or professionals who can provide emotional support and guidance. This may include school counsellors, mental health professionals, or organizations that specialize in supporting individuals affected by cyberbullying (Neorr, 2020, p:9)

2. Encouraging the adolescent to seek help

If cyberbullying is severe or persistent, it may be necessary to involve school officials, law enforcement, or psychological health professionals. Encourage the adolescent to speak with a trusted adult or to seek help from a helpline or online resource (Olasanmi et al., 2020). Urge the adolescent to engage in activities that they enjoy and to surround themselves with supportive friends and family members. Help them to develop coping strategies, such as taking breaks from technology or pursuing assistance from trustworthy adults. There are several strategies that adolescents can use to cope with cyberbullying, such as ignoring or blocking the perpetrator, seeking support from trusted adults, or seeking help from a school counsellor or other professional. Encourage the adolescent to explore different coping strategies and find what works best for them (Hinduja et al., 2020, p:8)

3. Educating the adolescent about cyberbullying

Help the adolescent to understand what cyberbullying is and why it is wrong. Encourage them to think about the impact of their own online behaviour and to be an ally to others who may be experiencing cyberbullying. Help adolescent understand their rights and options when it comes to cyberbullying. This may include educating them about laws that protect them from cyberbullying or helping them explore options for seeking legal remedies if necessary (Olasanmi et al., 2020, p:361)

4. Addressing the problem with the person who is bullying

In some cases, it may be appropriate to try to resolve the issue directly with the person who is bullying the adolescent. This should only be done with the support and guidance of a trusted adult and only if the adolescent feels safe and comfortable doing so (Espelage & Hong, 2016, p:377)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings reveal that cyber bullying has a profound impact on the mental and emotional well-being of adolescents, leading to negative outcomes such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and even suicide in some cases. The outcomes of this, supported by the research conducted by Alrasheed et al. (2022), in addition, A recent study done locally shows that 20.7% of youth are involved in cyberbullying. Risk factors for cyberbullying among adolescents in Saudi Arabia may include age, with younger adolescents potentially being more at risk; gender, with some studies finding that boys are more probable to involve in cyberbullying behaviors while girls are more expected to be the victims; internet use, as adolescents who spend more time online may be more at risk; social media use, as this platform can be used to harass, bully, and spread negativity; and negative or strained relationships with family or peers.

Another study by Batool et al. (2017) stated the position of social media in facilitating cyberbullying has also been a matter of concern. A study issued in the journal *Pediatrics* in 2014 found that adolescents who consumed more period on social media were more prone to experience cyberbullying, and those who suffered cyberbullying were more likely to endure emotional health difficulties. Some experts have called for greater efforts to educate young people about responsible online behavior and the importance

of being an "upstander" rather than a bystander when it comes to cyberbullying. While this research project also found that individuals who were harassed or bullied in adolescence described higher levels of adult aggression, disruptive behavior, substance use, unease, and depression in adulthood. Furthermore, the study found that the effects of bullying were stronger for individuals who had experienced both bullying and victimization in adolescence (Sigurdson et al., 2015, p:36)

Furthermore, the study by Maurya et al. (2022) supported the outcomes of this research work and highlighted that the incidence of cyberbullying has upsurged from 3.8% to 6.4%, and adolescents confront cyberbullying 20.4% more than others, and these adolescents suffer more depression, frustration contrasting to those who do not confront the cyberbullying, while the adolescents which confront the cyberbullying have a probability of 2.50 times more to have suicidal thoughts than others. Adolescents from low- and moderate-income nations have more trouble with decline and upsurged risks of involving in unsafe behaviours, and it may enforce a liability of health on the whole society. The study also highlighted that the age group between 18 to 20 years and 21 to 23 years is more exposed to internet usage and is more likely to confront cyberbullying. As more adolescents have an approach to digital telecommunication, therefore, from 2005 to 2022, the case of cyberbullying has increased drastically.

The findings of this research work also found that adolescents who are victims of cyberbullying might experience a range of adverse outcomes, including increased nervousness, hopelessness, and reckless ideation. Cyberbullying is also concerned with an increased risk of substance abuse, physical health problems, and academic difficulties. Additionally, victims of cyberbullying may experience decreased self-esteem and a lack of confidence (Hasse et al., 2019). Cyberbullying leads to social isolation, as victims may become increasingly withdrawn from their peers, and the effects of cyberbullying can have a lasting impact on an adolescent's mental health and can even lead to long-term psychological problems. In the context of cyberbullying, GST suggests that adolescents who experience cyberbullying may be more feasible to take part in harmful behaviours or attitudes because of the strain they are experiencing. Adolescents who are victimized by cyberbullying may feel threatened or distressed by the bullying, and they may struggle to cope with the negative emotions and experiences that result from it (Nixon, 2016, p:150)

While the research by John et al. (2018) also supported the findings of this research and revealed that the widespread availability of technology and the internet has made it easier for young people to engage in cyber violence. With just a few clicks, individuals can access a vast array of tools and platforms that can be used to harass or bully others online. It is important to note that while these factors may contribute to cyber violence behavior among Saudi youth, they do not necessarily cause suicide. Suiciding is a complex issue with multiple contributing factors, and it is important to address any underlying mental health issues or other challenges an individual may be facing to prevent suicide.

On the other hand, this research work also social work plays a vital role in addressing the issue of cyberbullying in Saudi Arabia. Social workers can provide support and counselling to victims, educate and raise awareness among adults and youth, and work with other organizations to prevent cyberbullying and support victims (Extremera et al., 2018, p:8). In addition, the study by Cohen-Almagor (2018) emphasizes the need to make a coordinated effort to fight cyberbullying involving a range variety of stakeholders, including the government, schools, community organizations, and people. It suggests that these stakeholders can take several steps to address cyberbullying, such as educating people about appropriate online conduct, fostering healthy online communities, and creating regulations and legislation to address and prevent cyberbullying. Moreover, Fati (2021) highlighted that social workers have an important role to play in providing support to victims, educating and raising awareness, and working with other organizations to prevent cyberbullying. With the high rate of internet and social media usage in Saudi Arabia, it is essential that social workers are equipped to address this issue effectively.

Additionally, the findings of this research work found that social workers can help victims understand the impact of cyberbullying on their mental health and well-being and provide them with coping strategies and resources to help them heal and move forward. Social workers can also work with victims to develop safety plans to protect themselves from further harm, such as by blocking the bully's online accounts or reporting the abuse to authorities (Alotaibi & Mukred, 2022). Similarly, social workers can also help to create a safer and more supportive environment for adolescents. This might involve working with schools, community organizations, and other stakeholders to develop guidelines and programs intended to avoid cyberbullying and promote positive online behavior (Peña, 2022). For instance, a social worker might help to implement a peer education program that teaches young people how to recognize and report cyberbullying or work with school administrators to generate a safe and inclusive online area for students to connect and communicate. Social workers can also advocate for policy and legislative changes that address cyberbullying and promote

the well-being of adolescents. This might involve working with policymakers and community leaders to develop and promote laws and regulations that make it easier to identify and prosecute cyberbullies or advocating for increased funding for prevention and intervention programs (Anak, 2020).

In conclusion, educational strategies are intended to improve awareness and understanding of cyberbullying among adolescents and the wider community. This might include providing students with information about the influence of cyberbullying, teaching students how to recognize and report cyberbullying, and encouraging students to develop positive online behaviours (Tozzo et al., 2022, p:4) Education strategies might also involve working with parents and caregivers to help them understand the role they can play in preventing and addressing cyberbullying. Post-intervention support strategies are focused on providing ongoing support and assistance to adolescents who have been affected by cyberbullying. This might include providing counselling and therapy to help students cope with the emotional and psychological consequences of the experience and working with students to develop strategies for building resilience and coping with future challenges (Tozzo et al., 2022, p:5)

Amarah (2020) highlighted that school counsellors could provide a safe and supportive environment in which to discuss experiences with cyberbullying and offer guidance and support. Mental health professionals, such as therapists or psychologists, can provide counselling and support to help individuals develop coping strategies and improve their mental well-being (Peña, 2022). Cyberbullying hotlines and helplines can provide support and guidance and connect individuals with additional resources if needed. Support groups, either in-person or online, can provide a sense of community and support for individuals affected by cyberbullying. It is important to remember that seeking additional support is a sign of strength, not weakness, and can be an important step in healing and moving forward.

Recommendations

The of Recommendations this study for social work practice, policy, and research are significant. The results highlight the critical role that social workers can play in addressing the issue of cyberbullying among adolescents in Saudi Arabia. Based on the findings, the following course of action can be taken to promote changes in social work practice, policy, and research:

- ❖ Social work education and training: Social work programs in Saudi Arabia should include courses on cyberbullying and its effects on adolescents. Social workers should receive comprehensive training on how to address the issue of cyberbullying, including how to identify victims, provide support, and educate families, schools, and communities on preventative measures.
- ❖ Improved support systems: Social workers should work with schools, communities, and families to develop comprehensive support systems for victims of cyberbullying. This can include counselling services, support groups, and other resources to help victims cope with the effects of cyberbullying.
- ❖ Awareness and education: Social workers should work to raise awareness and educate families, schools, and communities on the issue of cyberbullying and the importance of preventative measures. This can include public speaking engagements, workshops, and other educational programs.
- ❖ Collaboration with other stakeholders: Social workers should collaborate with other stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, and technology companies, to develop comprehensive solutions to the issue of cyberbullying.
- ❖ Policy development: Social workers should work with policymakers to develop comprehensive policies to address the issue of cyberbullying in Saudi Arabia. This can include legislation that criminalizes cyberbullying, policies that require schools to implement anti-bullying programs, and regulations that govern the use of technology in schools.
- ❖ Community outreach: Social workers should engage with local communities to raise awareness and educate families and young people on the dangers of cyberbullying. This can include public speaking engagements, workshops, and other educational programs aimed at promoting safe and responsible online behaviour.
- ❖ Media engagement: Social workers should work with the media to raise awareness and educate the public on the issue of cyberbullying. This can include providing expert commentary on the issue, appearing on talk shows and news programs, and contributing to articles and op-eds in the media.

In conclusion, the issue of cyberbullying among adolescents in Saudi Arabia requires a comprehensive and collaborative response from a variety of stakeholders, including social workers, policymakers, educators, and technology companies. By taking the

recommended course of action, the negative effects of cyberbullying on young people in Saudi Arabia can be mitigated, and their well-being can be better protected.

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