

**CYBERBULLYING AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND ITS IMPACT ON  
CONFLICT SITUATIONS**

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**Annotation.**

This article provides a socio-psychological analysis of the phenomenon of cyberbullying, which is becoming increasingly widespread among high school students, and its impact on conflict situations. The study examines the essence of cyberbullying, the causes of its emergence, and its influence on adolescents' behavior and interpersonal relationships. In addition, the role of this phenomenon as a factor that intensifies conflicts is revealed, and its psychological consequences are substantiated. The article also proposes practical approaches aimed at preventing conflicts related to cyberbullying and managing them constructively. The obtained results are of significant importance in fostering a healthy culture of communication among students and ensuring psychological stability.

Cyberbullying is a form of aggressive, offensive, or harmful behavior repeatedly carried out against another individual through the internet and digital technologies (such as social networks, messaging platforms, forums, and online gaming platforms). It is particularly widespread among adolescents and is characterized by anonymity, rapid dissemination, and the ability to reach a wide audience. The primary aim of cyberbullying is to psychologically harm the victim, damage their reputation, or lead them to social isolation. Cyberbullying has several distinguishing features that set it apart from other forms of violence. It can occur 24 hours a day, meaning that the victim may not feel safe even in their own home. Information spreads quickly, turning a minor incident into a major problem. Since it is often carried out anonymously, identifying the perpetrator becomes more difficult. In addition, digital traces (such as screenshots and recorded messages) can remain for a long time, making the harm persistent and long-lasting.

Open insult and rude correspondence is one of the most common types of cyberbullying. In it, one individual or a group writes rude, insulting, degrading, and aggressive words toward another person through the internet. Such situations usually occur in comments on social networks, group chats, private messages, or various public pages. The main feature of this type of violence is that the victim is directly humiliated through words. For example, rudely mocking a student's appearance, clothing, family conditions, academic performance, or character belongs to this type. Such situations often begin with a small dispute and later turn into a serious conflict. Systematic harassment means that negative messages are sent to the victim not once, but repeatedly. That is, a certain person constantly writes to them, insults them, accuses them, irritates them, or exerts psychological pressure in various ways. The most important aspect here is repetition. A single inappropriate message is also a bad situation, but its continuous repetition makes cyberbullying even more dangerous. The victim begins to look at their phone with fear, becomes anxious about receiving a new message, and feels defenseless. Over time, this situation leads to psychological exhaustion, anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal. In damaging reputation, false, exaggerated, or deliberately negative information about the victim is spread. The purpose is to lower their respect among others, create a negative opinion about them, and weaken their social status. In such cases, various rumors are written, false information is spread, real events are distorted, or photos and messages are presented to the public in a misleading way. For example, the widespread circulation of statements about a student such as "they did such a thing", "they are such a person", "they cannot be trusted" negatively affects their relationships



with classmates, friends, and even teachers. This type of cyberbullying can leave a particularly strong psychological impact among girls and adolescents, as reputation and social acceptance are very important at this age. In cases of using a fake identity, the aggressor creates a page in the victim's name or illegally accesses their personal account and sends various inappropriate messages to others. As a result, people think that these messages were written by the real owner. Therefore, the victim finds themselves in an awkward situation in front of others, their relationships deteriorate, trust decreases, and conflicts arise. This type is very dangerous because the victim is not only subjected to insults but is also forced to justify themselves. Their reputation is damaged, and misunderstandings arise with their close ones. Such situations severely disrupt the sense of personal privacy and security. In the type of cyberbullying involving the disclosure of personal information and secrets, the victim's personal information, secrets, photos, videos, or correspondence that they did not want to share with others are distributed without their consent. This action is often associated with the abuse of trust. For example, private messages between two friends may later be made public, or someone's personal photo may be shared in groups. This not only embarrasses the victim but also creates a sense of insecurity, distrust toward others, and social anxiety. During adolescence, such situations are perceived very severely, because at this age the issues of personal life and confidentiality are extremely sensitive. Obtaining information through deception and then using it is characterized by first establishing a trusting relationship and then using the obtained information against the victim. The aggressor initially appears as a friend, engages in sincere conversation, learns personal details, and then spreads that information or uses it as a means of threat. This method is doubly painful for the victim: first, their secret is disclosed; second, they are betrayed by someone they trusted. As a result, distrust toward others increases, psychological defensiveness intensifies, and it becomes difficult to engage in communication. In social exclusion, a person is deliberately removed from groups, not included in conversations, ignored in general discussions, or not given attention. For example, removing someone from a class group, creating a separate group and intentionally leaving them out, or not informing them about general events belongs to the social exclusion type of cyberbullying. From the outside, this situation may not appear very harsh, but its internal impact is very severe. A person begins to feel unnecessary, unvalued, and lonely. Especially during adolescence, rejection by peers leads to decreased self-esteem, depression, and social withdrawal. Stalking and intimidation is one of the most dangerous types of cyberbullying. In it, the aggressor constantly monitors the victim, sends threatening messages, intimidates them, and tries to appear as if they are aware of their every action. For example, messages such as "I am watching you", "I know where you go", "if you tell, it will be bad" create strong fear in the victim. This situation harms not only psychological but also physical safety. If such pressure continues for a long time, it may lead to sleep disturbances, constant anxiety, panic, and even fear of going out among people. In provoking and deliberately irritating, the aggressor's goal is to intentionally anger the victim, force them to lose emotional control, and then mock them. The aggressor asks provocative questions, writes mocking remarks, and deliberately raises topics that are hurtful. Such actions are often presented as "jokes," but in reality they are a form of psychological violence. If the victim responds, they are mocked even more; if they do not respond, the behavior continues. Thus, regardless of what the victim does, they remain in a state of psychological discomfort. Sometimes cyberbullying is also carried out by secretly taking a photo or video of a person in an embarrassing situation and then distributing it. For example, images of someone falling, crying, misspeaking, or appearing in an awkward way are shared with others. In some cases, photos and videos are deliberately edited to make them appear even more ridiculous or shameful. The harmful aspect of this type of cyberbullying is that visual materials remain more strongly in people's memory and spread very quickly. As a



result, the victim experiences shame, fear, and social pressure for a long time. Sometimes a person is unjustly accused online, and posts are spread that suspect or condemn them of wrongdoing. This is often done publicly, meaning that others can also see it. People may express negative opinions without verifying the truth. As a result, the victim is forced to defend themselves, but often a negative perception has already been formed. This type especially causes serious misunderstandings and conflicts within school or college communities. Sometimes not just one aggressor, but a group of people acts against one person. This situation is called collective cyberbullying. In it, a class, a circle, or several users collectively mock, insult, or exclude one individual. In such a situation, the victim feels even more defenseless, as they are opposed not by one person, but by many. Due to group pressure, some students may join others even if they do not want to. The danger of collective cyberbullying is that it completely weakens the victim's social support. In practice, types of cyberbullying do not occur separately, but often appear in a mixed form. For example, first personal information is disclosed, then rumors are spread about it, followed by public insults, and finally the victim is excluded from the group. Thus, one type can lead to another. Therefore, it is important to evaluate cyberbullying not as a single message or a single situation, but as a continuous system of psychological pressure.

Among high school students, cyberbullying often manifests as a continuation of existing conflicts. That is, ordinary disagreements within the classroom move into the online environment and become more intensified. Insults, rumors, or humiliation that arise in the online environment also negatively affect real-life relationships. As a result, distrust, hostility, group division, and social separation among students increase. This process leads to more frequent and prolonged conflicts. Cyberbullying intensifies conflict situations through several factors. First, the sense of anonymity encourages the aggressor to act more freely and aggressively. Second, due to the rapid spread of information, small conflicts reach a wider audience and take on a mass character. Third, in written communication, emotions can be misinterpreted, which increases misunderstandings. Fourth, the continuous nature of cyberbullying turns the conflict into a constant state. Therefore, ordinary disagreements turn into complex socio-psychological problems. Cyberbullying causes depression, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, and social fear among high school students. This, in turn, changes their reactions to conflicts: some students become excessively aggressive, while others withdraw inward. As a result, instead of constructive communication, destructive conflicts arise. This process worsens the psychological climate in the classroom and negatively affects collective activity.

In order to prevent cyberbullying in schools, psychological trainings, lectures, and discussions should be organized regularly. Students should be taught internet culture, respectful communication, and skills for resolving conflicts peacefully. Through this, they understand the consequences of aggressive behavior and try to avoid such situations. It is important to develop rules of behavior in the digital environment among high school students. That is, they must realize that every word written on the internet has an impact in real life. Skills such as not spreading information without verification, treating others with respect, and protecting personal data should be developed. The role of parents and teachers is very important in reducing cyberbullying. Parents should monitor their child's use of the internet and pay attention to whom they are communicating with. Teachers, in turn, should observe the social environment in the classroom, identify conflicts early, and intervene in a timely manner. Students should be taught methods of resolving conflicts peacefully such as reaching compromise, engaging in dialogue, and trying to understand others. Through this, they choose healthy communication instead of cyberbullying. Students who have developed conflict management skills are less prone to aggression. Victims of cyberbullying should receive individual support from the school psychologist. Through conversations, consultations, and support, their psychological condition



can be restored. At the same time, it is important to work with aggressive students as well, since their behavior may also be the result of certain psychological problems. Clear rules against cyberbullying should be developed in schools and explained to all students. If such situations are identified, fair and educational measures should be taken. This also has a preventive effect on other students. It is very important to create an environment where students can freely talk about their problems. If a child feels safe, they will turn to a teacher or parent about cyberbullying. Otherwise, the problem remains hidden and becomes more severe.

**Conclusion.** Cyberbullying among high school students is considered one of the important modern problems. It transforms ordinary disagreements among students into intense conflicts. Cyberbullying negatively affects the psychological state of the victim. As a result, distrust and social isolation among students increase. This situation also worsens the overall psychological environment in the classroom. In order to reduce cyberbullying, it is necessary to develop digital culture among students. In addition, the supervision of parents and teachers is also of great importance.

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