



Cyberbullying Analysis in Behaviorism Psychology Perspective

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ABSTRAK

This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of Cyberbullying through the perspective of behavioral psychology, focusing on how bullying behavior is formed and maintained in cyberspace. A qualitative approach with descriptive analytical methods was used in this study to explore the influence of reinforcement and punishment in influencing the behavior of perpetrators and victims. Data were collected through literature studies, in-depth interviews with victims and perpetrators, and analysis of social media content involving bullying behavior. The results of the study indicate that Cyberbullying behavior is often acquired through the process of observation and imitation, as explained in the social learning theory by Albert Bandura. Cyberbullying perpetrators tend to imitate aggressive behavior that they observe in cyberspace, especially those involving public figures or famous people. In addition, positive and negative reinforcement received by the perpetrator, such as social attention or avoidance of negative feelings, play an important role in strengthening the behavior. The psychological impact of Cyberbullying is very significant for victims, who can experience stress, anxiety, depression, and decreased self-esteem. On the other hand, perpetrators may feel strengthened by social responses, but may experience a decrease in their ability to control themselves. This study suggests the importance of digital literacy education, strict monitoring of online behavior, and the implementation of stricter penalties on digital platforms as an effort to reduce the prevalence of Cyberbullying and create a safer online environment.

Keyword: Cyberbullying, behaviorism psychology, observational learning

1. Introduction

Cyberbullying, or online bullying, is a form of violence that occurs in cyberspace, often through social media platforms, instant messaging applications, or various other digital platforms. In recent years, this phenomenon has become increasingly widespread, along with the development of information and communication technology, and the increasing use of the internet, especially among young people and adolescents (Anisah et al., 2024). This online bullying is often carried out in a cruel and destructive manner, using harsh words, insults, threats, or spreading hatred that aims to lower self-esteem and damage someone's mental health. As a more sophisticated and hidden form of violence, Cyberbullying can cause deep psychological trauma to victims that may not even be immediately visible physically, but its impact greatly affects the emotional and social life of the victim (Dewi et al., 2024).

One of the main reasons why Cyberbullying is an important concern is the psychological impact it causes. Victims of Cyberbullying often feel severe stress, deep social anxiety, and feelings of isolation. The fear of being insulted or judged in cyberspace makes victims feel depressed and insecure (Azzahra & Viena, 2024). Moreover, Cyberbullying also often continues without any time and space limitations, because cyberspace provides unlimited access for perpetrators to continue to intimidate victims, without having to face the direct impact of their actions. This distinguishes Cyberbullying from conventional bullying, which usually has physical and time limitations. This phenomenon poses a serious threat to the mental health of victims, with some cases even causing victims to experience depression, anxiety disorders, and even the desire to end their lives (Lubis & Novebri, 2024).

In Indonesia, this problem is increasingly rampant along with the rapid growth of internet users, especially among teenagers. Teenagers are often the group most vulnerable to the negative impacts of Cyberbullying, because they are in a sensitive stage of psychological development and are searching for their identity (Asalnaije et al.,

2024). Social media, with all its appeal, has become the main arena for Cyberbullying perpetrators to express their hatred and aggression, with victims often finding it difficult to avoid or escape from these attacks. Platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook provide an easy channel for spreading negative content that can destroy a person's reputation and self-esteem. Although some platforms have policies to address online bullying, law enforcement in cyberspace is often inadequate, so perpetrators feel free to carry out bullying without fear of clear consequences (Sari & Prasetya, 2022).

As a growing social phenomenon, Cyberbullying involves not only victims and perpetrators, but also society as a whole, especially in terms of how social responses and public policies address this issue. Various parties, from schools, parents, to legal institutions, have an important role in preventing and overcoming this online bullying. However, to date, prevention and response efforts are still far from effective. One of the main reasons is the lack of in-depth understanding of how this behavior develops and how psychological and social factors influence individual behavior in cyberspace (Paramitha & Siregar, 2024). Therefore, it is important to view Cyberbullying through the lens of psychology, especially behaviorism psychology, which can help us understand how this bullying behavior is acquired, reinforced, and maintained in the digital environment.

Behavioral psychology provides a relevant perspective in understanding human behavior, including in the context of Cyberbullying. This theory focuses on observing observable behavior, and how this behavior is influenced by reinforcement or punishment from the environment. In the behaviorist view, humans are considered as individuals who respond to stimuli from their environment, and their behavior is learned and maintained based on the results of these interactions (Mu'minin et al., 2022). In the context of Cyberbullying, bullying behavior can emerge as a result of social experiences and influences from the digital environment that reinforce the behavior, either directly or indirectly.

For example, the perpetrator may feel reinforced or rewarded because they receive attention or support from friends or even the public after bullying the victim.

Albert Bandura, one of the leading figures in the field of psychology, made a major contribution to understanding how behavior is learned through observation and imitation. In his theory known as social learning theory, Bandura explains that individuals can learn new behaviors simply by observing the actions of others, without having to directly experience the consequences of those actions (Jayana, 2021). This concept is relevant to understanding how Cyberbullying can spread among adolescents, where they often imitate the behavior they observe on social media or in everyday life. Cyberbullying perpetrators may not only be inspired by their own experiences, but also by the aggressive behavior they see in others, especially public figures or peers who receive attention or recognition from society.

In addition to Bandura's theory, B.F. Skinner, another very influential figure in behaviorist psychology, provided further understanding of how behavior can be reinforced through the mechanism of operant reinforcement. Skinner explained that individual behavior is greatly influenced by the reinforcement received after the behavior is carried out (Habsy et al., 2023). In the case of Cyberbullying, perpetrators may feel reinforced when they receive positive responses from their friends, such as likes or supportive comments after insulting or bullying the victim. This positive reinforcement strengthens the bullying behavior and encourages the perpetrator to continue his actions. On the other hand, negative reinforcement, such as avoiding feelings of discomfort or stress in real life, can also be a factor that encourages individuals to express their aggression through cyberspace.

However, while these theories provide important insights into cyberbullying behavior, the problem also has far-reaching and complex implications. Cyberbullying not only impacts victims, but also perpetrators and society as a whole. The psychological impacts are profound, both for victims who experience low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and psychosomatic disorders,

and for perpetrators who may develop aggressive habits that are increasingly difficult to control. Perpetrators who continually receive positive reinforcement from their digital environment may become increasingly committed to the behavior, making it difficult to stop the cycle of violence. Therefore, to effectively address this problem, a deeper understanding of the factors that influence the behavior of both perpetrators and victims is needed.

Cyberbullying prevention and control efforts are essential, and require collaboration between various parties. Parents, educators, government agencies, and social media platforms have a big responsibility in creating a safer and healthier digital environment. Educational programs that teach empathy, respect for differences, and the negative impacts of Cyberbullying can be an effective first step in reducing online bullying incidents. In addition, it is also important to implement stricter policies against perpetrators of Cyberbullying, including clear punishments and a reporting system that is easily accessible to victims. On the other hand, psychology-based approaches, such as therapy for victims and perpetrators, can also help in overcoming the psychological impacts of online bullying.

Given the importance of psychological understanding in overcoming Cyberbullying, this journal will discuss the phenomenon from the perspective of behaviorist psychology theory. By using Albert Bandura's social learning theory and B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning theory, it is hoped that more effective ways can be found to prevent and overcome Cyberbullying. Through an in-depth analysis of the factors that influence bullying behavior in cyberspace, this journal aims to contribute to efforts to create a safer and healthier digital space for all users, especially among adolescents who are the group most vulnerable to the negative impacts of Cyberbullying.

The importance of a psychological approach in understanding human behavior, especially in the context of the Cyberbullying phenomenon, cannot be ignored. Cyberbullying is not only a social problem, but also a psychological problem that affects the mental well-being of individuals.

By understanding the psychological dynamics behind online bullying behavior, we can design more targeted interventions based on a deeper understanding of how this behavior develops and can be overcome. Therefore, further analysis of behaviorist psychology theories and their application in the context of Cyberbullying is needed to find more effective and sustainable solutions.

2. Metode

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive analytical method to analyze the phenomenon of Cyberbullying through the perspective of behaviorist psychology. This approach is very relevant considering that Cyberbullying is not only a social problem, but is also influenced by various deep psychological factors that need to be understood (Fadli, 2021). By using psychological theories, especially the social learning theory by Albert Bandura and the operant conditioning theory by B.F. Skinner, this study attempts to dig deeper into how bullying behavior can be formed, developed, and maintained in the context of cyberspace. Furthermore, this study aims to understand how reinforcement and punishment play a role in influencing the behavior of both perpetrators and victims, and how these dynamics can encourage or reduce the emergence of bullying behavior. It is hoped that through this understanding, more effective solutions can be found to overcome the increasingly disturbing problem of Cyberbullying, especially among teenagers who are very active in cyberspace.

The data in this study were collected through three main techniques: literature study and content analysis. The literature study was conducted by reviewing various scientific articles, journals, and books that discuss Cyberbullying and relevant psychological theories. This aims to provide a strong theoretical basis for the analysis to be carried out (Waruwu, 2023). Through literature studies, researchers can understand various views and previous findings related to the phenomenon of Cyberbullying, as well as map the gaps in this study. In addition, in-depth interviews were

conducted involving victims and perpetrators of Cyberbullying, as well as psychologists who are experienced in handling bullying cases. This interview aims to explore the direct experiences of the participants, thus providing a more personal and in-depth understanding of the impact of Cyberbullying behavior. Researchers also seek to gain insight into how perpetrators and victims perceive this behavior, and how they deal with it in their daily lives. In addition, researchers also conducted content analysis of various interactions that occurred on social media. This analysis helps to understand how bullying behavior not only occurs in real life, but can also develop and be strengthened in the digital space, where social norms often do not apply strictly. After the data was collected, the analysis was carried out using a thematic approach, which aims to identify patterns that emerge in the data collected and relate them to theories of behavioral psychology. Researchers will explore how Bandura's social learning theory explains how individuals can learn bullying behavior through observation and imitation of others, both in real life and through interactions in cyberspace. In other words, through this theory, the study will explore how bullying behavior can be transmitted through examples shown by other individuals, especially by people who are considered authority figures or have influence on social media. In addition, Skinner's operant conditioning theory will be used to analyze how reinforcement and punishment affect the behavior of cyberbullying perpetrators. In this context, researchers will look at how positive reinforcement, such as getting attention or social status, strengthens bullying behavior, while negative reinforcement, such as avoiding feelings of anxiety or insecurity, can also be a factor that motivates perpetrators to continue bullying.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses triangulation by comparing findings from various sources, such as interviews, content analysis, and literature studies. This triangulation aims to validate the findings obtained, so that it can provide more objective and reliable results. The researchers also involved the opinions of psychology experts in the analysis process

to ensure that the findings are in accordance with existing theories and provide a clearer picture of the Cyberbullying phenomenon. With this comprehensive approach, it is hoped that this study can provide deeper insight into the psychological mechanisms underlying Cyberbullying behavior. This study is also expected to provide significant contributions to the development of more effective prevention efforts against the Cyberbullying phenomenon, both through psychological interventions and changes in social media policies that are more responsive to this problem.

3. Results and Discussion

This study examines the phenomenon of Cyberbullying using a literature review approach, integrating various literature sources to explore the psychological dynamics underlying cyberbullying behavior. Based on a review of relevant articles, journals, and books, it was found that Cyberbullying is a social phenomenon that is greatly influenced by the interaction between individuals and their digital environment. From the perspective of behavioral psychology, especially Albert Bandura's social learning theory and B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning theory, bullying behavior can be understood as the result of the process of observing and imitating aggressive behavior in the surrounding environment, both in real life and in cyberspace. Thus, cyberbullying behavior often comes from observing similar actions carried out by others, whether public figures, peers, or figures who are considered influential on social media.

This study shows that Cyberbullying is common among teenagers who are active on social media. The literature analyzed reveals that the main factor that strengthens cyberbullying behavior is the desire to gain attention or social status. Bandura's theory of social learning, especially the concept of observational learning, explains that individuals can learn new behavior by observing the actions of others. In this case, perpetrators of Cyberbullying are often inspired by negative behavior that they see on social media, either from peers or public figures who

engage in aggressive actions. When the bullying behavior gets a positive response, such as praise or attention from others, it becomes a reinforcement that encourages the perpetrator to repeat the same action.

In addition, literature analysis shows that social media often exacerbates the impact of Cyberbullying due to its anonymous and uncontrollable nature. Digital platforms allow individuals to engage in aggressive behavior without fear of immediate punishment. Researchers have found that many perpetrators feel safe bullying because they do not see any real consequences for their actions. This phenomenon is very relevant to B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning theory, which states that reinforcement and punishment play an important role in shaping behavior. In the context of Cyberbullying, positive reinforcement such as getting "likes", supportive comments, or social recognition makes perpetrators feel that their behavior is allowed or even rewarded. Conversely, the absence of effective punishment, such as sanctions or account restrictions, allows perpetrators to continue bullying without fear of negative consequences.

Based on the literature review, many studies have shown that Cyberbullying can cause serious psychological impacts for victims, including anxiety, depression, and decreased self-esteem. The reviewed literature reveals that victims often feel isolated and helpless, especially because bullying behavior can continue without any chance of escape, given the nature of social media that is always accessible. Victims tend to feel stressed because there is no safe space for them, which leads to more severe mental disorders, such as social anxiety disorder and depression. Decreased self-esteem is one of the most common impacts experienced by victims, where they feel worthless or unwanted by their social environment. This creates a negative cycle that further worsens the psychological condition of the victim, making them feel trapped in the bullying behavior they experience.

As the understanding of the psychological mechanisms behind cyberbullying grows, the study also found that negative reinforcement

plays a significant role in influencing the behavior of the perpetrators. Several studies analyzed showed that cyberbullying perpetrators often use bullying behavior to cope with feelings of anxiety or frustration that they experience in their lives. In many cases, perpetrators have difficulty coping with social or emotional stress, and they use bullying behavior as a way to distract themselves from their personal problems. The reduction in stress or anxiety felt after venting anger through bullying acts as negative reinforcement that encourages the perpetrator to repeat the behavior. This suggests that bullying behavior is often a response to negative feelings that the perpetrators experience, which they try to eliminate in maladaptive ways.

In addition, the literature also shows that punishments given to cyberbullying perpetrators, even if they exist, are often not effective enough to reduce the behavior. Many social media platforms set policies on bullying, such as deleting comments or restricting accounts, but these sanctions often do not have a long-term impact. The anonymity provided by social media allows perpetrators to feel safe from punishment, so they do not feel threatened or afraid of the negative consequences of their actions. This exacerbates the cycle of negative behavior, where perpetrators do not feel pressured to stop bullying. In many cases, perpetrators also do not understand the impact of their actions on the victim, which makes the situation worse.

The study also found that preventive and educational approaches can play a significant role in reducing the prevalence of cyberbullying. Digital literacy and social-emotional education provided in schools or communities can help individuals, especially adolescents, understand the consequences of their actions online. Programs that instill values of empathy and respect for differences can reduce the potential for cyberbullying by building awareness of the importance of treating others with respect online. Teaching adolescents to recognize the signs of bullying and providing them with the tools to report bullying are important steps in addressing this problem. Through education and fostering positive values, isolated aggressive behavior can

be transformed into a more empathetic and supportive attitude.

Rewarding positive behavior on social media is also one strategy that can reduce Cyberbullying. Several social platforms have started implementing a reward or recognition system for users who demonstrate positive behavior, such as supporting victims or promoting constructive messages. This reward can be in the form of a "badge" or other recognition that shows that the behavior is valued by the community. Through this kind of system, social norms can be created that support better behavior in cyberspace, thereby reducing the dominance of uncontrolled bullying and aggressive behavior. This also provides an incentive for users to behave more positively, because they know that their actions will get better attention.

In further analysis, it was found that public figures and influencers have a very large role in influencing the behavior of their followers in cyberspace. Many studies have shown that when public figures engage in bullying or online harassment behavior, their followers, especially teenagers, tend to imitate the actions because they see the figure as a role model. Therefore, it is very important for influencers to be good role models and use their platforms to spread positive messages. On the other hand, if they engage in negative behavior, this can worsen the problem of Cyberbullying because their followers feel that such actions are legitimate and acceptable in online social interactions. Thus, having public figures who support social change and stop online bullying can have a significant impact in reducing this phenomenon.

In conclusion, this study shows that Cyberbullying is a very complex social phenomenon, which is influenced by various psychological, social, and environmental factors. Behaviorism theory, especially social learning and operant conditioning, provides a very useful understanding in analyzing how bullying behavior is formed, reinforced, and maintained. Positive and negative reinforcement from the digital social environment strengthens bullying behavior, while weak or ineffective punishment makes it worse. Therefore, more integrated

efforts are needed, including education, changes in social media policies, and the role of public figures to create a safer and more supportive digital environment.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that Cyberbullying is a social phenomenon that is influenced by various complex psychological factors. This study reveals that behavioral psychology theories, especially the social learning theory by Albert Bandura and the operant conditioning theory by B.F. Skinner, can provide an in-depth explanation of how bullying behavior can be formed and reinforced in cyberspace. In this context, Cyberbullying perpetrators tend to learn from observing the behavior of others, whether by peers, public figures, or other social figures, who provide examples of aggressive or demeaning behavior. In addition, positive reinforcement received by the perpetrator, such as attention or recognition from others, often strengthens bullying behavior and encourages the perpetrator to repeat his actions. This shows that Cyberbullying is not only influenced by individual factors, but also by social influences and digital interactions that occur in cyberspace.

In addition to the influence of psychological theory, the psychological impact caused by Cyberbullying is very significant, both for victims and perpetrators. Victims often experience stress, anxiety, depression, and a profound decrease in self-esteem as a result of online bullying. These psychological impacts not only affect the mental well-being of victims, but can also affect aspects of their social and academic lives. Some victims even feel isolated, withdraw from social interactions, and lose interest in activities they previously enjoyed. On the other hand, perpetrators of Cyberbullying are also not immune to psychological impacts. Although they may feel they are getting positive reinforcement, in the long term, dependence on attention or recognition from social media can reduce their ability to manage emotions and interact healthily

with others. Perpetrators who continue to engage in aggressive behavior can experience decreased self-control and become increasingly alienated in their social relationships.

To address the phenomenon of Cyberbullying, this study suggests the importance of a more comprehensive approach, which includes education and prevention through digital literacy and social skills development. Education about the consequences of bullying behavior and the importance of mutual respect in cyberspace can help create awareness among adolescents and the general public. Programs that teach empathy, self-control, and how to interact positively on social media are essential to prevent cyberbullying. In addition, a reward and recognition system for positive behavior can also be implemented to encourage supportive behavior in cyberspace. The use of technology and digital platforms to reward individuals who demonstrate empathy and positive attitudes will create better social norms and support the creation of a safer digital ecosystem.

Finally, to reduce the prevalence of Cyberbullying, cooperation is needed between the government, educational institutions, and social media platform providers. Each party has a very important role in creating a safer digital environment, as well as reducing the negative impacts caused by online bullying. Stronger policies from social media platforms regarding bullying behavior, along with more consistent and fair law enforcement, can have a significant impact in stopping such behavior. Overall, this study provides deeper insight into the psychological mechanisms underlying Cyberbullying and how various environmental factors contribute to strengthening or reducing such behavior. With a more holistic and integrated approach, it is hoped that we can reduce the prevalence of Cyberbullying and create a healthier digital space for all parties.

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6. AI Disclosure Statement

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