Analysis of Anti-Cyberbullying Attitudes Among Generation Z as a Manifestation of Global Citizens Responsibility

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Article Info

Abstract

This study aims to explore anti-cyberbullying attitudes among Generation Z as an expression of their responsibility as global citizens. A descriptive quantitative approach was employed, involving 86 Generation Z respondents from Surakarta and surrounding areas. The respondents' characteristics are as follows: the majority were born between 2005 and 2008 (74.4%), reside in urban areas (55.8%), are female (81.4%), and nearly all have social media accounts (98.8%). Approximately 20.9% reported having experienced cyberbullying victimization. The results indicate that, overall, respondents hold positive attitudes toward anti-cyberbullying. Based on three attitude indicators: cognitive, affective, and conative, the distribution of responses on a Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) is as follows: for the cognitive dimension, 45% strongly agree, 22% agree, 17% are neutral, 8% disagree, and 8% strongly disagree; for the affective dimension, 65% strongly agree, 14% agree, 9% are neutral, 4% disagree, and 8% strongly disagree; and for the conative dimension, 2% strongly agree, 1% agree, 7% are neutral, 23% disagree, and 67% strongly disagree. These findings suggest that young people demonstrate a relatively strong awareness of the importance of anti-cyberbullying attitudes, although there is still room for further enhancement of understanding and commitment. Within the context of globalization, such attitudes represent a crucial aspect of moral and social responsibility as global citizens.

Introduction

As is widely recognized, we are currently living in a global era characterized by rapid advancements in technology particularly the internet and social media which have enabled swift and seamless interactions among individuals across the world. In this context, societies are no longer confined to local or national spaces, but are increasingly becoming part of a broader global community (Shanmugasundaram & Tamilarasu, 2023). Virtual spaces allow individuals to overcome physical boundaries, fostering connections across different times and locations (Franco & Birenboim, 2024). Consequently, technology plays a crucial role in facilitating and enriching social interactions in the digital realm.

Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is highly active in the digital world as they have grown up amidst rapid technological advancements. For this generation, social media is not merely a platform for self-expression, but also a space for connection, learning, and exchanging perspectives (Onjewu, Godwin, Azizsafaei, & Appiah, 2025). Many of them enjoy creating original content, participating in viral challenges, and engaging in meaningful discussions on social issues. Being online is not just a source of entertainment for Generation Z it is an integral part of their lifestyle and identity. Moreover, they hold the capacity to shape trends and influence public opinion (Lan, Tung, Oanh, & Cuc, 2024). This explains why Generation Z does not merely interact in digital spaces; they actively contribute to shaping and creating digital culture.

In general, Generation Z is not only actively engaged within their immediate surroundings, but also connected to people across the globe through social media and digital platforms. They participate in discussions on international issues, support global movements, and demonstrate heightened sensitivity toward global concerns. Their involvement in digital spaces goes beyond the pursuit of attention; it reflects a genuine form of participation in a global community (Ernawati, 2025). This indicates that they are not merely citizens of Indonesia, but also citizens of the world.

Given this context, it is increasingly important for individuals to recognize that they belong not only to a specific nation-state, but also to a broader global community. The awareness of one's identity as a global citizen has become particularly relevant amid today's complex global challenges (Akçay, et al., 2024). A global citizen is someone who cares not only about local issues, but also demonstrates empathy and responsibility toward global matters such as human rights, gender equality, child protection, and world peace (Syaifullah, Affandi, & Somantri, 2019).

According to TeachUNICEF (2013), one of the key characteristics of a responsible global citizen is a sense of duty toward fellow human beings (TeachUNICEF, 2013). This sense of responsibility includes the ability to appreciate diversity, uphold others' dignity, and actively contribute to the creation of a safe, inclusive, and just environment (UNICEF & SEAMEO, 2017). Amid ongoing globalization and digital transformation, these values must not only be practiced in physical life, but also upheld in digital spaces, which have become an increasingly integral part of daily existence (Blanco, Martín, & Nuere, 2023).

In its simplest form, the concept of global citizenship suggests that individuals who exhibit characteristics of a global citizen typically possess an awareness of global issues and are capable of considering their potential impact on others and humanity at large. Furthermore, they are able to contribute to raising awareness about such issues, whether or not they are directly involved in global communities (Saleem, Deeba, & Raza, 2022).

One of the ways to implement global citizenship values in the digital realm is by actively contributing to a safe, healthy, and respectful online environment (Kaki, Chaouche, & Fendil, 2025). This context emphasizes the importance of refraining from engaging in cyberbullying. Cyberbullying refers to a form of harassment carried out through electronic means, such as social media platforms, messaging applications, or other online sites (Buçaj & Haziri, 2024). In addition to its harmful psychological effects on victims, cyberbullying also contradicts the core principles of global citizenship, particularly the values of mutual respect and upholding the dignity and worth of every individual. Therefore, rejecting cyberbullying can be seen as a reflection of young people's growing awareness and responsibility as global citizens committed to maintaining a sustainable and respectful digital environment (Fonseca & Borges-Tiago, 2024).

Unfortunately, cyberbullying remains a pressing issue in today's digital age. According to data from www.unicef.org, a global survey conducted across 30 countries, including Indonesia, involved young people aged 13–24 years. The findings revealed that many of them have experienced various forms of online harassment, with 34% reporting incidents in Sub-Saharan Africa. When asked who should take responsibility for addressing this problem, 32% pointed to governments, 31% to young people themselves, and 29% to internet companies (UNICEF, 2019).

Indonesia faces significant challenges in fostering a respectful and responsible digital culture. The Microsoft Digital Civility Index (DCI) 2020 ranked Indonesia fourth from the bottom globally with a score of 76, placing it in the high-risk category alongside countries such as Mexico and Russia. This assessment is based on 11 indicators of digital risk behaviors, including the spread of misinformation, hate speech, discrimination, cyberbullying, and online extremism. Four key factors, misinformation, hate speech, discrimination, and fraud are the primary contributors to this low score, highlighting that these issues remain widespread within Indonesia's digital space (Burhani, 2021).

Low levels of media literacy are among the main causes of that situation (Anwar, Khadijah, & Rizal, 2023). Many internet users in Indonesia still lack awareness of the importance of using technology wisely and responsibly. The growing phenomena of fake news, online harassment, and social polarization further exacerbate the problem (Isdendi, Nanda, & Suganda, 2023). Therefore, serious efforts from multiple stakeholders including the government, educational institutions, and civil society are needed to enhance public understanding of safe, inclusive, and dignified internet use. Through strategic interventions, Indonesia has the potential to improve its global image while building a healthier and more ethical digital ecosystem for all its citizens (Ika, Winasis, Pratiwi, Nuryanto, & Basrowi, 2024).

The increasing prevalence of cyberbullying can be attributed to easier access to social media platforms and

insufficient oversight from relevant authorities, underscoring the need for stronger monitoring mechanisms through multi-stakeholder collaboration (Chalk, Brennan, & Reed, 2018). The nature of cyberspace, which allows perpetrators to hide behind anonymity, further emboldens their actions, making them feel secure while engaging in harmful behavior (Macaulay, Betts, Stiller, & Kellezi, 2022). Additional contributing factors include peer pressure and limited awareness of digital ethics (Kaluarachchi, Warren, & Jiang, 2020). he psychological impact on victims is profound, often manifesting as fear, anxiety, and even depression. In many cases, these experiences also negatively affect academic performance and overall mental well-being (Bacia, 2024). Therefore, a collective and empathetic approach involving all sectors of society is essential to prevent and address this growing concern.

In reality, a gap still exists between *das sollen* (what ought to be) and *das sein* (what actually is), particularly in the context of cyberbullying. Ironically, such behavior has seemingly become a normalized practice among Generation Z, despite their identity as global citizens. Given this phenomenon, research on anti-cyberbullying attitudes as a manifestation of global citizenship responsibility remains a pressing necessity. Therefore, this study aims to address the question: "How can anti-cyberbullying attitudes among Generation Z be analyzed as an effort to realize their responsibility as global citizens?" The objective of this research is to examine the anti-cyberbullying attitudes of Generation Z and how these attitudes reflect their emerging sense of responsibility as responsible global citizens.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of Generation Z's attitudes toward cyberbullying and highlights their role in upholding ethical and social norms. The findings are expected to serve as a reflective resource for both academics and the broader community in fostering collective awareness regarding the importance of cultivating anti-cyberbullying attitudes as an expression of moral and social responsibility in digital spaces.

Method

This study employed a descriptive quantitative method. Descriptive quantitative research aims to systematically portray a particular phenomenon, population, or situation by focusing on the aspects of "what, where, and when" rather than seeking explanations for "why". This approach enables the analysis of various types of data, including numerical data such as test scores, as well as categorical information. Common forms of descriptive research include surveys, case studies, and observation (Ghanad, 2023).

Accordingly, this study utilized a descriptive quantitative approach to provide a structured overview of data collected from respondents. The research was conducted between April and May 2025, with a primary focus on Generation Z in Surakarta, Central Java, along with a smaller number of participants from other regions. The target population consisted of Generation Z individuals youth born between 1997 and 2012 with a total sample of 86 respondents from Surakarta and its surrounding areas. The anti-cyberbullying attitude variable was assessed using the indicators and measurement criteria (see Table 1).

Data were collected using a questionnaire administered through Google Forms, consisting of 14 statements designed to assess attitudes toward anti-cyberbullying behavior. The response scale ranged from strongly disagree

(1) to strongly agree (5). Participants were asked to express their opinions on each of the 14 statements. The collected data were then analyzed using SPSS version 27 and Microsoft Excel to perform descriptive analysis based on percentage distributions.

Table 1. Indicator of Anti-Cyberbullying Attitude

Variable	Indicators	Measurement	Question Item Number
Anti Cyberbullying Atititude	**Cognitive**	Developing knowledge and understanding in the use of social media platforms.	1,2,9,10
	Affective	Recognizing emotionally that negative comments, particularly those constituting cyberbullying, are harmful and unacceptable.	3,4,12.14
	Conative	Demonstrating a tendency to interact in ways that align with established social norms and ethical behavior online	5,6,7,8,11

Source: (Azwar, 1995)

Results

Considering the diversity in respondents' characteristics, this data is expected to provide a representative overview and support a more in-depth analysis during the discussion phase. Figure 1 summarizes the demographic profiles of the participants involved in this study.
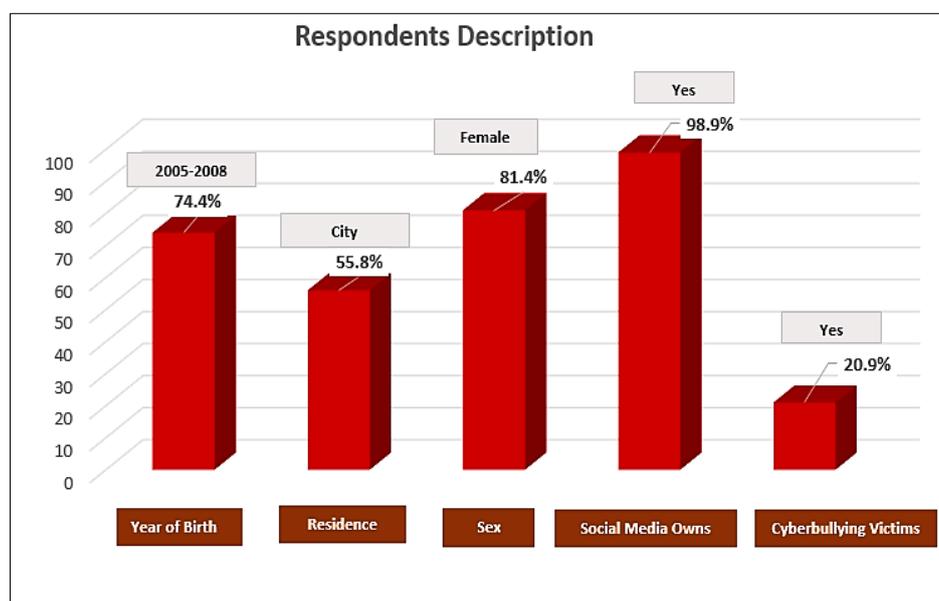

Figure 1. Respondent Description (Source: Researcher's Internal Data)

The results indicate that the respondents possess distinct characteristics, including a specific age range, a predominance of female participants, and a high level of technological proficiency. A significant majority, amounting to 74.4% of the respondents, were born between the years 2005 and 2008. This suggests that the majority of the respondents belong to Generation Z, a cohort that has grown up during the digital era. The data confirm that Generation Z can indeed be classified as digital natives individuals who are inherently familiar with technology, particularly social media. As noted by Marc Prensky (2001), individuals born into the digital age are referred to as digital natives, having been raised alongside rapid technological advancements. This generation is more accustomed to fast, interactive access to information than to traditional methods, making them more adaptable and actively engaged in the use of social media platforms (Prensky, 2001). The findings presented above support the notion that Generation Z represents a group of digital natives who are not only comfortable with technology but also regularly interact with it, especially through various forms of social media.

A majority of the participants (55.8%) reside in urban areas, which likely provides them with easier access to technology and social media platforms. Generally, individuals living in cities have greater advantages in accessing digital tools compared to those residing in rural regions. This disparity arises from several factors, including more developed infrastructure. Although recent efforts by governments and other stakeholders have aimed to expand technological access to remote areas—resulting in some degree of equity—urban populations still tend to demonstrate higher mobility and frequency in technology use. City dwellers also tend to adapt more quickly to emerging technologies due to increased exposure and greater perceived necessity (Warschauer & Matuchniak, 2010).

In addition, approximately 81.4% of the respondents identified as female, indicating a predominance of women in the sample population. This is particularly relevant as women are often primary targets in cyberbullying incidents. As reported by (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022), females may be more vulnerable to online victimization due to various factors, such as gender stereotypes and a general lack of safety in digital spaces. They frequently encounter negative comments, harassment, or threats directed at their appearance, opinions, or personal lives.

The data indicates that nearly all respondents (98.9%) have social media accounts, suggesting a high level of engagement in online interactions. As noted in several references, Generation Z is among the generations for whom technology has become an integral part of daily life. Members of this generation not only enjoy using social media platforms but are also adept at shaping their own digital identities by creating original content and expressing themselves creatively (Bennet, Maton, & Kervin, 2008).

However, approximately 20.9% of respondents reported having experienced cyberbullying at some point. This figure highlights the importance of understanding the negative impacts associated with social media use, particularly among young individuals who are more vulnerable to online threats. Surveys indicate that Gen Z and younger individuals are more likely to experience cyberbullying and online harassment compared to other age groups. Data shows that around 64% of people aged 18–29 have been victims of such incidents, often involving more severe forms of abuse, including physical threats and sexual harassment. Moreover, there remains a limited

number of studies addressing online risks faced by adolescents who are about to or have recently reached adulthood individuals who greatly need guidance and protection as they navigate the digital world (Rideout & Fox, 2018). The majority of respondents belong to a digitally native generation, characterized by high levels of social media usage. This suggests that they are susceptible to both positive and negative experiences in the online space, including exposure to cyberbullying.

In Figure 2, the measurement results are based on the following indicator: (1) Cognitive, which includes negatively worded statements aimed at assessing respondents' attitudes toward the cognitive domain of anti-cyberbullying behavior.
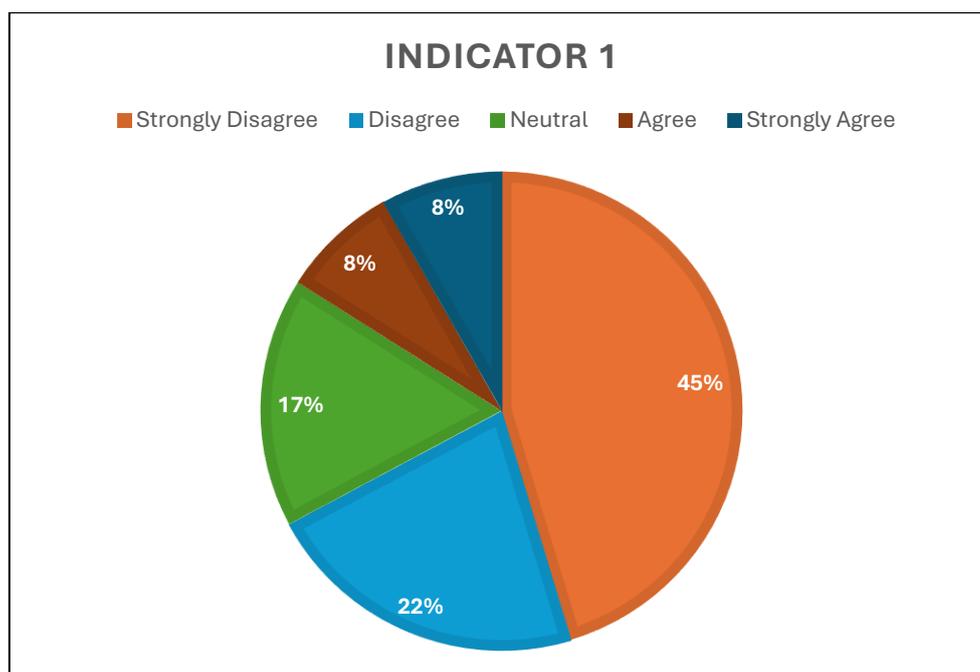

Figure 2. Indicator Diagram (1) Cognitive (Source: Researcher's Internal Data)

The pie chart presented illustrates the respondents' answers to the statement included in the survey under the Cognitive Indicator category. The responses are categorized into five levels: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

The data reveals that the largest proportion of respondents, amounting to 45%, selected the "Strongly Disagree" option. This was followed by 22% who chose "Disagree," while 17% responded with "Neutral," indicating they held no clear opinion either in favor or against the statement. Only a small minority provided positive responses, with 8% selecting "Agree." Notably, no respondent chose the "Strongly Agree" option. Overall, these findings suggest that the majority of respondents expressed negative attitudes toward the given statement, with only minimal support observed. These findings suggest that the statement within the Cognitive Indicator was largely not accepted by the respondents.

Based on the data presented in Graph Indicator (2) Affective, the majority of respondents selected the response

option Strongly Disagree, accounting for 65%. This represents the highest percentage compared to other categories. It is followed by 14% of respondents who chose Strongly Agree, 9% who selected Agree, 8% who indicated Disagree, and only 4% who opted for Neutral. The distribution of responses suggests that most participants tend to disagree with the given statement, although a small proportion expressed positive views. Overall, the data reveals a clear dominance of negative responses toward the issue or statement addressed in the survey.
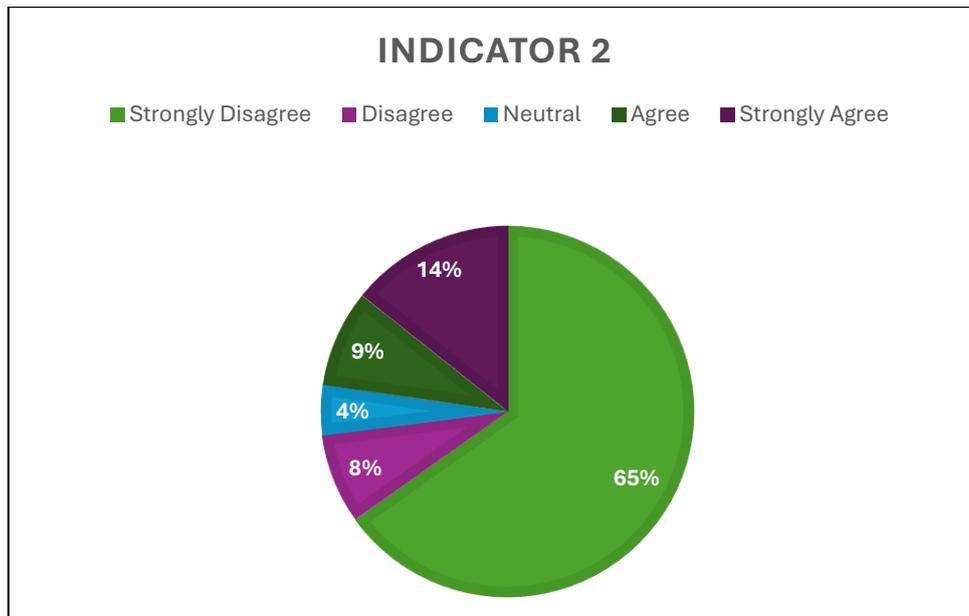

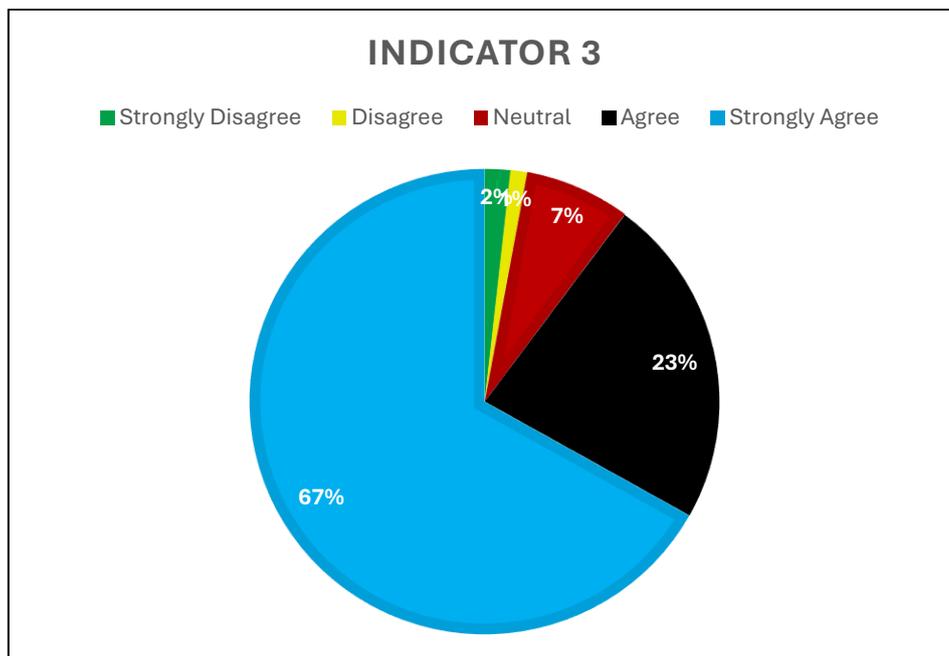Figure 3. Indicator Diagram (2) Affective (Source: Researcher's Internal Data)

Figure 4. Indicator Diagram (3) Conative (Source: Researcher's Internal Data)

The graph presented is the result of Indicator 3, which illustrates the respondents' responses to a particular

statement or issue. The responses are categorized into five levels: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. A majority of the respondents, accounting for 67%, indicated that they Strongly Agree with the statement representing the highest proportion among all categories. Additionally, 23% of the respondents reported Agreeing with the statement, resulting in a total positive response rate of 90% (67% + 23%). Conversely, only a small percentage of respondents expressed negative opinions: 2% Strongly Disagree and 1% Disagree, contributing to a combined negative response rate of just 3%. Meanwhile, 7% of the respondents selected the Neutral option, suggesting that they held no strong opinion either in favor of or against the statement. Overall, this data indicates that the majority of respondents hold highly positive views toward the surveyed issue or statement, with most expressing full agreement.

Discussion

Cognitive Indicators: Understanding of Cyberbullying

A total of 45% of respondents strongly disagreed, and 22% disagreed with negative statements such as "provoking others is something entertaining" and "it is acceptable for me to have fake accounts to spy on others". With as many as 84% of respondents tending to reject these statements, it can be concluded that the majority of Generation Z possess a solid foundational understanding of behavioral boundaries in the digital world.

These findings support the theory that Generation Z is more familiar with issues of digital citizenship, as they were born and raised during the digital era (Twenge, 2017). Nevertheless, the presence of 17% of neutral respondents and 8% who agreed suggests that a minority group still lacks awareness of the risks associated with cyberbullying. This aligns with the study by Chornelius & Astuti (2020), which highlights the need for more intensive digital media education (Chornelius & Astuti, 2020). From the perspective of global citizenship theory, a strong understanding of rights and responsibilities as internet users serves as a crucial foundation in shaping global civic identity (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013). Therefore, these findings present both optimism and challenges in efforts to enhance digital awareness among young people. Consequently, interventions aimed at youth should begin by reinforcing basic understanding through broader and more tailored digital media education, aligned with their daily contexts and lived experiences (Haleem, Javaid, Qadri, & Suman, 2022).

Affective Indicators: Emotional Responses to Cyberbullying

A majority of respondents (65% strongly disagreed and 8% disagreed) indicated emotional discomfort toward statements such as "I am allowed to defame others" and "excluding others makes me feel better." In contrast, only 23% agreed or strongly agreed with these statements. These findings suggest that most members of Generation Z demonstrate a negative emotional response to cyberbullying, which may serve as an early indicator of anti-cyberbullying attitudes. According to Lazarus (1991), emotions are psychological responses to situations perceived as significant, and in this context, cyberbullying is viewed as an unacceptable behavior [35]. Nevertheless, the 14% of respondents who strongly agreed with the statements warrant particular attention. This subgroup may hold different normative beliefs, potentially perceiving cyberbullying as a form of retaliation or informal social control. This phenomenon deserves further investigation, especially in relation to local cultural

contexts and the influence of social media. From the perspective of global citizenship moral responsibility theory, strong emotional reactions against online injustice represent a form of solidarity with other internet users, reflecting a core principle of global citizenship [36].

Prior research has shown that engagement in cyberbullying is closely linked to the emotional regulation skills developed during adolescence. Emotional regulation is a crucial skill that contributes to building social relationships, enhancing social competence, maintaining psychological well-being, and managing aggressive impulses. The use of maladaptive or negative emotion regulation strategies may increase the risk of individuals becoming involved in cyberbullying—either as perpetrators or victims. Furthermore, unhealthy emotional approaches can create recurring patterns, wherein victims of cyberbullying may transition into perpetrators at later stages [37].

Conative Indicators: Tendency to Act Accordance to Norms

The conative indicator reveals highly positive results, with 67% of respondents strongly agreeing and 23% agreeing that they would act in line with established norms—such as avoiding deception, providing truthful information, and accepting responsibility for any violations. Altogether, 90% of the respondents demonstrated a strong commitment to digital ethical standards.

According to Fishbein & Ajzen (2010), the conative component reflects an individual's intention or tendency to behave in a particular way. These findings suggest that the majority of Generation Z expresses a strong intention to refrain from cyberbullying, although it must be acknowledged that intentions do not always translate directly into actual behavior. Nevertheless, this positive inclination supports the argument that today's youth hold significant potential to serve as agents of change in fostering a healthier digital culture (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). This aligns with Bandura's (1991) theory of self-regulation, which posits that individuals with high levels of self-control are better equipped to resist impulsive urges to engage in harmful behaviors. Furthermore, from a digital ethics perspective, this adherence to normative standards indicates that Generation Z is beginning to develop a more mature digital awareness an essential prerequisite for fulfilling their responsibilities as global digital citizens (Bandura, 1991).

Underpinning these observations is the Bartlett & Gentile Cyberbullying Model (BCGM), which offers a framework for understanding the personal and situational factors that influence cyberbullying behavior. This model integrates personality traits, social norms, and digital contexts to explain why individuals may become involved in cyberbullying.

The Barlett & Gentile Cyberbullying Model (BGCM) is a theory grounded in learning concepts, which explains how individuals may come to engage in cyberbullying behaviors. According to this model, positive attitudes toward cyberbullying shaped by perceived anonymity and the belief that physical identity is irrelevant in online environments can encourage individuals to participate in such harmful actions. In essence, BGCM posits that cyberbullying is a learned behavior, wherein individuals develop specific attitudes that increase the likelihood of

engaging in cyberbullying based on their online experiences and situational contexts (Barlett, Bennardi, Williams, & Zlupko, 2021).
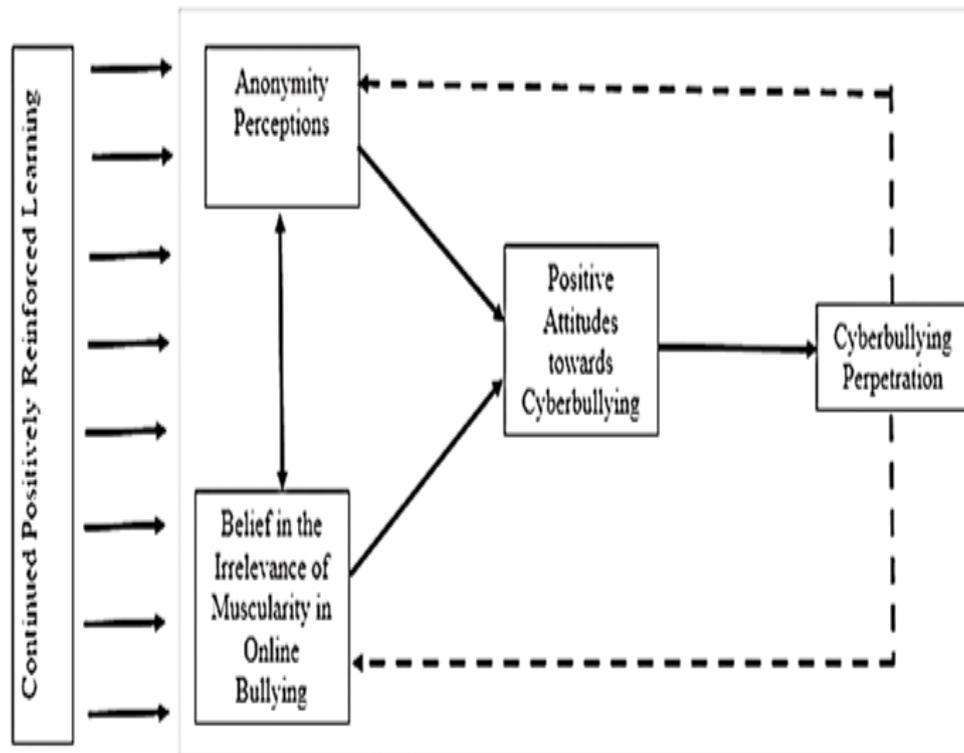

Figure 5. Bartlett & Gentile *Cyberbullying* Model (BCGM) (Source: (Barlett, Bennardi, Williams, & Zlupko, 2021))

The Barlett & Gentile Cyberbullying Model (BGCM) outlines how psychological and situational factors influence cyberbullying behavior. It highlights two key elements: the perception of anonymity and the belief that physical strength is irrelevant in online interactions. These perceptions contribute to the formation of favorable attitudes toward cyberbullying. When individuals feel protected by anonymity and believe they are unlikely to face physical retaliation, they may begin to view cyberbullying as acceptable or even enjoyable. These attitudes then serve as a strong predictor of actual cyberbullying behavior. Thus, BGCM emphasizes that cyberbullying is not a spontaneous act but rather a learned behavior shaped by individual experiences and perceptions within digital spaces (Scott & Barlett, 2023).

Cortés-Pascual et al. (2020), explain that increasing evidence supports the link between relational bullying and cyberbullying. One theoretical framework that explains this connection is the Barlett & Gentile Cyberbullying Model (BGCM), which argues that positive attitudes toward cyberbullying can predict online aggressive behavior. This model suggests that perpetrators often hold the belief that the online environment allows them to harm others without consequence due to perceived anonymity. In Spain, research has also been conducted using preventive approaches and gender-based perspectives to promote healthier social interactions (Cortés-Pascual, Cano-Escorianza, Elboj-Saso, & Iñiguez-Berrozpe, 2020).

Hellsten et al. (2021) explain that BGCM is built upon findings indicating that although related, cyberbullying

and traditional bullying differ psychologically. Unlike conventional bullying, which typically involves physical dominance, cyberbullying occurs in an environment where perpetrators perceive themselves as anonymous and physical differences do not influence power dynamics. The BGCM illustrates how a single act of cyberbullying can evolve into repeated behavior through a process of social learning, integrating principles from two major social learning theories. According to the model, individuals learn that they can bully others without being identified, without regard to body size, and without immediate physical consequences for the victim. As these experiences accumulate, individuals gradually develop more favorable attitudes toward cyberbullying. This sense of anonymity has also been linked to increased aggression and a higher likelihood of future cyberbullying incidents (Hellsten, Crespi, Hendry, & Fermani, 2021).

Hannako et al. (2024) further emphasize that the feeling of anonymity plays a central role in cyberbullying behavior. Their research confirms a strong correlation between perceived invisibility and the tendency to engage in cyberbullying, suggesting that the greater the sense of being unseen, the higher the probability of involvement in such acts (Hannako, Latifah, & Riany, 2024).

According to this theory, cyberbullying is not an isolated or spontaneous behavior, but rather one that is learned through experiences and situations in the online environment. The greater an individual's sense of anonymity and belief that they can act aggressively without facing immediate consequences, the higher the likelihood of engaging in cyberbullying behavior. Therefore, anti-cyberbullying efforts should focus on reshaping individuals' perceptions and attitudes toward online anonymity, as well as instilling the understanding that actions taken in cyberspace still have real-world consequences. Additionally, it is crucial to establish social norms that reject cyberbullying and to enhance digital awareness so that individuals become more responsible in their use of social media. In this way, the BGCM theory can serve as a foundational framework for designing effective educational programs aimed at preventing cyberbullying at an early stage.

Another theoretical perspective that can explain the formation of anti-cyberbullying attitudes is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). According to this theory, an individual's attitude toward a particular behavior is shaped by three key components: personal beliefs about the behavior, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control. These elements collectively influence the individual's intention to resist engaging in cyberbullying. As illustrated in the conceptual diagram (see Figure 6).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) serves as a psychological framework that helps explain the reasons behind an individual's decision to engage in or refrain from a particular behavior (Ajzen, 1991). According to TPB, human actions are primarily shaped by three key constructs: first, behavioral beliefs, which refer to an individual's perception of the outcomes associated with a specific behavior; second, normative beliefs, which reflect the perceived expectations of others regarding the behavior; and third, control beliefs, which pertain to one's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior. These underlying beliefs collectively shape three corresponding components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Attitude emerges from behavioral beliefs, subjective norm is derived from normative expectations, and perceived behavioral control arises from control beliefs. The interplay between these components ultimately influences

behavioral intention the most proximal determinant of actual behavior (Bosnjak, Ajzen, & Schmidt, 2020). In essence, when individuals perceive strong personal control over their actions, they are more likely to act in accordance with their intentions, particularly when opportunities arise.
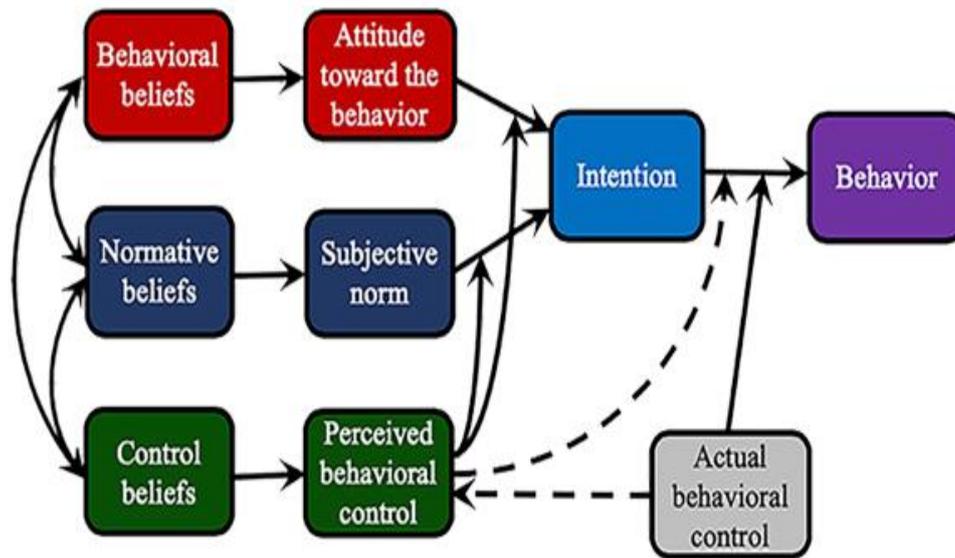

Figure 6. Theory of Planned Behavior (Source: (Bosnjak, Ajzen, & Schmidt, 2020))

TPB emphasizes that human behavior is not solely driven by personal desires but also significantly influenced by social norms and self-efficacy. This theory has been widely applied in various behavioral domains, including health, education, and social behavior, offering valuable insights into the cognitive processes that precede action (Brehmer, 2023). According to this model, an individual's willingness to resist cyberbullying is shaped by three main factors: (1) their belief about the consequences of engaging in such behavior (behavioral beliefs), (2) the influence of social norms (subjective norms), and (3) their perception of personal control over their actions (perceived behavioral control). When individuals believe that cyberbullying leads to harmful consequences, perceive disapproval from their social circle, and feel capable of resisting such behaviors, they are more likely to develop a strong intention to oppose cyberbullying (Madon & Chin, 2021). Hence, TPB offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing how internal beliefs and external pressures interact to shape behavioral intentions and, eventually, actual conduct in digital environments.

Research conducted by Siriporn Santre (2021) supports the role of TPB in explaining how attitudes toward certain behaviors are constructed based on perceived consequences. Individuals who anticipate positive outcomes from a behavior tend to hold favorable attitudes toward it, while those who foresee negative consequences are more likely to reject it. For instance, if someone perceives aggressive behavior during online interactions as acceptable or justified, they may be more inclined to engage in cyberbullying. There is a strong correlation between the level of justification individuals assign to aggression and their likelihood of participating in cyberbullying. Many perpetrators view their actions as harmless jokes, yet these behaviors often cause significant emotional distress and harm to victims (Santre, 2021).

Further research by Auemaneekul et al. (2019) highlights differences between cyberbullies and their victims. Perpetrators often exhibit antisocial tendencies and endorse violent behaviours, whereas victims are more prone to psychological distress such as anxiety and depression. Those with a history of traditional bullying are more likely to become cyberbullies, while prior victimization in real-life settings increases the risk of becoming a victim online. Additionally, individuals with poor peer relationships are more vulnerable to cyberbullying due to a lack of social support. These findings were explored in depth within the context of Thai adolescents, integrating TPB with self-esteem as a moderating factor (Auemaneekul, Powwattana, Kiatsiri, & Thananowan, 2020).

In another study, Wang (2024) found a positive relationship between students' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control with their intention to engage in cyberbullying. However, the study did not examine whether these intentions translated into actual behavior, suggesting the presence of mediating variables that warrant further investigation (Wang, 2024).

In summary, TPB offers a robust theoretical foundation for understanding how anti-cyberbullying attitudes are developed. An individual's stance against cyberbullying is shaped by their beliefs about its consequences, social pressures, and perceived ability to control their own behavior. When individuals recognize the harmful effects of cyberbullying, receive discouragement from their social environment, and feel empowered to avoid participation, a strong intention to resist cyberbullying can emerge. By addressing these psychological determinants, prevention programs can be more effectively designed to foster awareness, reinforce prosocial norms, and strengthen self-regulation in digital spaces.

The concept of global citizenship encourages individuals to cultivate social responsibility, respect human rights, and promote peace principles closely aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) (TeachUNICEF, 2013). In the digital age, adopting an anti-cyberbullying stance represents a form of global responsibility, as every individual plays a role in maintaining a safe and respectful online environment. Digital citizenship, characterized by ethical behavior, mutual respect, and responsible use of technology, has been shown to serve as a protective factor against cyberbullying (Gottschalk, 2022). Individuals who demonstrate empathy, uphold moral values, and practice positive online behavior are less likely to engage in harmful digital practices.

Research by Winarno et al. (2024) explain that digital ethics should be incorporated into higher education curricula, particularly as a preventive measure against cyberbullying. Given the increasing prevalence of unethical behavior in digital spaces, there has been a noticeable moral decline, especially among students. Such education goes beyond merely teaching the correct use of technology it also involves guiding students to understand their responsibilities and the potential consequences of their online actions. The importance of teaching digital ethics lies in its capacity to shape character and raise awareness of appropriate online behavior. By integrating digital ethics into the curriculum, students can develop a stronger sense of responsibility and avoid engaging in cyberbullying. Furthermore, educators must also possess the necessary competence and up-to-date knowledge to effectively deliver this content in a rapidly evolving digital era. Thus, digital ethics education plays a crucial role in fostering a positive and respectful culture in online environments (Winarno, Destiny, & Kardiman, 2024).

The overall findings indicate that respondents exhibited a relatively high level of cognitive understanding of cyberbullying, accompanied by strong negative affective responses and a high tendency to act positively against such behavior. This consistency across cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions reflects an ideal condition for the formation of a resilient anti-cyberbullying attitude. However, the presence of a minority group with pro-cyberbullying views suggests that theoretical knowledge does not always translate into appropriate emotional or behavioral responses. This finding underscores the importance of complementing knowledge acquisition with environmental reinforcement, character education, and digital regulation to ensure that awareness leads to meaningful behavioral change.

Conclusion

Based on data analysis and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) The majority of Generation Z in Surakarta demonstrates a good understanding of cyberbullying, although a minority still lacks awareness of its negative consequences. (2) Most respondents expressed emotional discomfort toward cyberbullying behavior; however, a small proportion exhibited pro-cyberbullying attitudes. (3) Nearly all respondents (90%) reported a strong commitment to adhering to digital norms and ethics, indicating their readiness to act responsibly as global digital citizens. (4) There is a consistent alignment between their understanding, emotional responses, and behavioral tendencies, which supports the development of an anti-cyberbullying attitude. (5) Despite these positive trends, further education is still needed through digital literacy programs, emotional training, and social media platform regulations to strengthen anti-cyberbullying behaviors among Generation Z.

Recommendations

In light of these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. For Schools and Educational Institutions: It is essential to develop digital literacy programs and character education that specifically address cyberbullying and digital responsibility.
2. For Parents: Parents should provide guidance and supervision regarding their children's social media use, while fostering open communication about digital issues.
3. For Future Researchers: Further qualitative studies or case studies are recommended to explore the underlying reasons behind pro-cyberbullying attitudes among certain individuals.
4. For Social Media Platforms: More effective reporting mechanisms and content filtering systems are needed to protect young users from cyberbullying.

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