Cyberbullying and Cyberstalking in Academia: Women's Experiences, Coping Responses, and Institutional Support – A Case Study

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Abstract
Cyberbullying and Cyberstalking have become major threats in today's increasingly digital environment, especially for female students in higher education. This article explores the coping strategies and support systems female students adopted to overcome cyberbullying and cyberstalking at public university in Haryana, India. Using a case study method, the data were collected through observation, case history, and semi-structured interviews. Sample consists of females studying in higher education and suffered with cyberbullying and cyberstalking. Confidentiality and privacy maintained regarding the data. Sample consists of 3 students from Department of Chemistry, Political Science and Education from the university. Major dimensions of interview were used to explore how the females responded, what protective measures they took and the role of the institution, peer, and family as supportive mechanism. Results show that affected females chosen multiple ways to block, report and overcome the situation with the support from institution, peer and families. Furthermore, the research underscores the urgent need to improve digital safety policies, effective complaint mechanism, and support services to combat cyber harassment within academic institutions.

Keywords
Cyberbullying, Cyberstalking, Female Students, Higher Education, Support Systems

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1. Introduction

In today's digitally connected world, mobile phones, laptops, and social media have become integral to academic and social life, especially for female students in higher education. While digital technology offers convenience and opportunities, it has also increased exposure to online crimes. Despite privacy safeguards, the misuse of digital platforms continues to rise. Cybercrime refers to criminal activities that use digital tools or networks to cause harm (Narnolia, 2022) and occur in cyberspace, where information is shared and exchanged through technology.

Among various forms of cybercrime, cyberbullying and cyberstalking are serious threats to young women in academic spaces. Cyberbullying involves repeated online harassment through false information, abusive messages, or sharing private content without consent, often leading to anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression (UNICEF, 2024). Cyberstalking, on the other hand, refers to continuous digital harassment or monitoring through emails or social media, even after the victim asks the offender to stop (Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, 2022).

Female students face greater vulnerability due to their active online engagement for academic and professional purposes. Poorly regulated digital spaces, blurred boundaries between public and private interactions, and limited institutional safeguards heighten these risks.

As digital environments become central to learning, it is crucial to understand how female students cope with such experiences and the support systems available to them. Despite existing laws, many still struggle to seek help or recover from these incidents.

This study explores:

1. What coping strategies do female students in higher education adopt when facing cyberbullying or cyberstalking?
2. What formal and informal support systems assist them, and how effective are these systems?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to promote safer and more gender-sensitive digital spaces within academic institutions.

2. Review of Related Literature

Social media platforms have become central to communication, learning, and self-expression, but they also serve as major facilitators of cyberbullying and cyberstalking. Alutaybi et al. (2020) introduced the FoMO-R model to address the Fear of Missing Out linked with compulsive social media use, showing that managing anxiety through features like auto-replies and self-talk reduced stress and dependence on digital platforms. Rasheed et al. (2020) revealed that while social media enhances creativity and engagement in academic research, its benefits decline when cyberbullying occurs, discouraging collaboration and knowledge sharing. Steer et al. (2020) examined how humour among adolescents can blur into harm, as online banter often turns into bullying due to misinterpretation and lack of emotional cues. Similarly, Al-Rahmi et al. (2019) found that although social media supports open learning, cyberstalking and harassment negatively affect academic performance and peer interaction. Singh et al. (2017) observed that excessive social media use among

Indian youth leads to anxiety, fatigue, and reduced productivity, while digital addiction remains under-addressed. Manjunatha (2013) also reported high engagement with social networking sites among Indian students, acknowledging both educational advantages and psychological risks. Collectively, these studies show that while social media fosters connection and learning, it simultaneously exposes users, especially youth, to emotional vulnerabilities, demanding urgent preventive, educational, and institutional interventions.

Cyberbullying and cyberstalking exert profound academic and psychosocial effects on university students. Buçaj and Haziri (2024) found that victims often experience depression, hopelessness, and low self-esteem, emphasizing the need for early intervention and family engagement. Similarly, Bussu et al. (2024) highlighted the vulnerability of university students to online harassment and called for proactive institutional efforts to mitigate psychological harm and build self-regulation. Collen and Onan (2021) showed that resilience, particularly among older and male students, helps reduce the emotional impact of cyberbullying. In the UAE, Abaido (2020) noted that cultural barriers often suppress reporting, though victims still face significant mental distress, underscoring the need for stronger institutional education and support. Fissel and Reyns (2020) reported that 75% of cyberstalking victims faced negative outcomes across academic, social, health, and work domains, even without physical contact. Begotti and Maran (2019) found that those subjected to multiple forms of stalking showed higher depression and used varied coping strategies. Peled (2019) linked cyberbullying to poor academic and emotional adjustment among Israeli undergraduates, while Kamali (2015) stressed the lack of legal safeguards in higher education, where frequent online interactions heighten risk. Collectively, these studies call for inclusive policy, institutional accountability, and targeted mental health interventions.

Victims employ diverse coping strategies shaped by harassment severity and context. Sanchez-Danday (2023) found that Filipino college students responded through withdrawal, blocking offenders, or confrontationoften without institutional support. Bussu and Longpre (2022) identified the growing prevalence of cybervictimization and urged universities to implement evidence-based prevention frameworks. Gendered coping patterns emerged in Begotti et al. (2020), with females favoring avoidance and proactive measures, while males used passive responses linked to greater anxiety and depression. Tokunaga and Aune (2015) classified seven coping types, noting that technological disengagement (blocking, deleting accounts) was among the most effective. They emphasized that online abuse requires adaptive, media-specific strategies supported by awareness and policy. Collectively, the research shows that while personal coping provides temporary relief, lasting recovery depends on institutional support, gender-sensitive approaches, and comprehensive digital safety policies.

2.1 Research Gap

Despite growing recognition of cyberbullying and cyberstalking as major concerns for female university students, research in higher education remains limited. Most studies generalize youth experiences, focusing more on cyberbullying while neglecting cyberstalking and its unique aspects. Their overlap is often unclear, leading to inconsistent responses. Existing research largely addresses prevalence and psychological impact, with little focus on institutional, cultural, or gendered factors.

This gap calls for context-specific studies to build inclusive prevention and support frameworks for female students.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative case study with a narrative research design to explore the lived experiences of female students facing cyberbullying and cyberstalking. This approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of personal stories, highlighting how students experienced and coped with online harassment in academic and digital spaces.

3.2 Participants

The participants were three female postgraduate students from the Departments of Chemistry, Political Science, and Education at a public university in Haryana, India. Each had personally experienced cyberbullying or cyberstalking during their studies.

3.3 Sampling

Snowball sampling was employed to recruit participants. This non-probability method was appropriate given the sensitivity of the topic, enabling access to individuals who might not have volunteered without peer referrals.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Multiple methods were used to gather rich qualitative data. These included:

- Observation
- Case history
- Semi-structured interview with 21 open-ended items focusing on the emotional, academic, and social impacts of cyberbullying and cyberstalking, safety measures taken, and support systems received.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were strictly observed. Informed consent was obtained, and participants' anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. The study also applied trauma-informed practices to maintain a safe and respectful environment for sharing sensitive experiences.

3.6 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data. This method involved identifying, reviewing, and interpreting recurring patterns and themes within the responses. It was especially effective for exploring personal narratives, allowing the researcher to capture the depth and complexity of participants' experiences.

4. Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion of the Data

This section analyses qualitative data gathered from case histories, observations, and semi-structured interviews with three female postgraduate students. It explores key

themes from their experiences of cyberbullying and cyberstalking, including emotional, academic, and social impacts, coping mechanisms, and available support systems. The goal is to understand how these students navigated digital harassment in higher education and what their narratives reveal about personal and institutional responses to these challenges.

4.1 Case Histories

4.1.1 Case of respondent 1. Respondent 1, a 21-year-old Chemistry postgraduate living in the campus hostel, actively used WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, and Snapchat for study and leisure, spending about eight hours daily online. She faced anonymous cyberstalking through WhatsApp and phone messages despite having private accounts. Initially assuming the stalker was a students, she later discovered it was a stranger who used multiple numbers to contact her, tracked her location, and issued death threats. With help from a classmate, he accessed her address through university records. Though she reported the incidents to the provost and HOD, the harassment persisted until the case reached the proctorial board and ICC. Family support helped trace the stalker, and the classmate was penalized. The ordeal deeply affected her mental health and left lasting trust issues.

4.1.2 Case of respondent 2. Respondent 2, a 22-year-old Political Science student residing in the campus hostel, uses WhatsApp and Instagram mainly for learning and networking, spending about four hours online daily. She was cyberbullied on WhatsApp after expressing her views in an academic discussion. Having joined the hostel late, she purchased meal coupons instead of a mess card, which led a hostel mate to publicly shame her in a WhatsApp group by sharing screenshots of their private chat with her name and number. This sparked negative comments and social exclusion. Despite her requests, the post remained and the situation escalated. The incident left her anxious and isolated, especially away from home. While some friends offered support, the university took no formal action, leaving her to manage the distress alone.

4.1.3 Case of respondent 3. Respondent 3, a 27-year-old Teacher Education student residing in the campus hostel, uses WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, and Snapchat for learning and social interaction, spending about five hours online daily. Despite having five private accounts, she experienced cyberstalking through Instagram, WhatsApp, and calls. After a camp, she was contacted by a man claiming they had met there. Initially considering him an acquaintance, she chatted briefly before his messages became inappropriate. Though she blocked him, he repeatedly reached out through new numbers and fake accounts, sending abusive messages. The persistent harassment caused anxiety and fear of social media, undermining her trust in others and leaving her constantly uneasy online.

4.2 Awareness of Cyberbullying and Cyberstalking

This section explores how participants interpret harmful online behaviour through their experiences and supporting research. Bussu et al. (2024) note that students often miss early signs of cyberbullying and cyberstalking. Participants described how casual online interactions can quickly turn threatening. Respondent 1 recalled receiving a simple "*Hi*" that escalated into death threats: "*The problem comes when they start to threaten us…*" echoing Pittaro (2007), who found that offenders seek control after rejection. Respondent 2 said, "*Harmless jokes… not targeted at someone personally,*" aligning with Steer et al. (2020) on intent shaping perception.

Respondent 3 added, "*If I tell you not to say something and you still cross the line… it is harmful,*" reflecting Spitzberg and Hoobler's (2002) definition of persistent distressing behaviour.

All agreed that cyberbullying and cyberstalking overlap. Respondent 1 noted privacy breaches often start casually, supporting Kraft and Wang (2010). Respondent 2 viewed bullying as "*a form of stalking*," while Respondent 3 described withdrawal from online spaces, similar to Egwu et al. (2024). Gendered vulnerability emerged as key: Respondent 1 said, "*Females are hurt more*," consistent with Ahlgrim and Terrance (2021). Respondent 2 added that "*girls don't share this easily*," aligning with Bussu et al. (2024).

On online safety, Respondent 1 admitted, "*You cannot function without being into online spaces*," mirroring Singh et al. (2017). Respondent 2 criticized weak enforcement"*laws are on paper*"echoing Halder (2015). Respondent 3 stressed caution: "*If you talk to known people… otherwise it becomes problematic,*" supporting Das and Sahoo (2011). Overall, participants' views show that intent, repetition, and emotional harm define abuse, emphasizing the need for awareness, education, and institutional support.

4.3 Impact on the Overall Wellbeing of the Respondents

Cyberbullying and cyberstalking deeply affected the emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing of the participants. All three respondents reported feelings of fear, anxiety, and distress, with significant implications for their daily functioning and academic performance. Respondent 1 shared, "*He directly threatened me… I couldn't focus on my classes*," indicating how threats led to mental exhaustion and academic disruption. Similarly, Respondent 2 admitted, "*I stopped using social media… I only used WhatsApp for necessary things*," reflecting social withdrawal and anxiety. These reactions align with Bussu et al. (2024) and Rapisarda and Kras (2023), who emphasized that cybercrime contributes to stress, depression, and even physical health issues such as sleep disorders and appetite loss.

Physical symptoms like dizziness, loss of appetite, and disturbed sleep patterns were reported by Respondents 2 and 3. "*It keeps running in your head… It becomes annoying*," said Respondent 3, highlighting the psychological toll of constant fear. Cassidy et al. (2017) and Begotti and Maran (2019) support this, noting that cyber harassment often causes psychosomatic symptoms that disrupt victims' lives.

Academic performance also suffered. "*Even during sessionals, I was totally distracted*," recalled Respondent 1. In several studies along with Sanchez-Danday's (2023) highlighted that how cyberbullying negatively affects both academic performance and social interactions among students. Victims often experience a drop in self-esteem and a loss of confidence, which can make them less interested in their studies. While others managed to retain academic focus, they still noted emotional fatigue. Respondent 3 remarked, "*Being a girl, from childhood itself you start to experience these things*," suggesting normalization of such behaviour, which may suppress visible academic effects while masking deeper emotional harm.

Hesitancy towards social media was another lasting impact. Respondent 2 withdrew from platforms post-incident, while Respondent 3 admitted, "*It makes one hesitant… even when a genuine person tries to contact you*." As noted by Kaur et al. (2021) and

Egwu et al. (2024), this form of digital self-censorship is a common response to persistent online threats.

The findings reveal that the psychological and academic consequences of cyberbullying and cyberstalking are profound, often compounded by lack of institutional support and a persistent sense of vulnerability.

4.4 Safety Measures Taken by the Respondents

Faced with increasing online threats, students adopt varied coping strategies to protect themselves from cyberbullying and cyberstalking. Gangopadhyay and Dhar (2019) observed that while digital platforms offer privacy tools, users still bear much of the responsibility for their safety. Participants in this study used both proactive and reactive measures- blocking offenders, confronting them, reporting incidents, or seeking help from family and institutions. These responses reveal that coping with digital victimization is complex and personal, underscoring the need for flexible and supportive safety systems.

4.4.1 Blocking and Avoiding the Perpetrator. Respondents initially relied on digital tools such as blocking and ignoring the perpetrator. Respondent 1 described her repeated attempts to block the harasser, who kept returning with new SIM cards. "*I blocked four of his contact numbers… but he told me that he had 16 SIM cards,*" she recounted, emphasizing how persistent offenders often bypass digital barriers. Tokunaga and Aune (2015) found that confronting or provoking stalkers can backfire, intensifying the abuse. This was reflected in Respondent 1's experience, where basic technical measures proved ineffective against a determined stalker.

Respondent 2 tried a more personal approach, requesting the bully to delete harmful WhatsApp screenshots. "*I personally requested her… but she didn't respond well,*" she noted. The refusal made the situation worse, showcasing the limitations of informal conflict resolution. As Sticca (2013) observed, technical strategies like blocking, or even confronting the bully, are not always successful, especially when social dynamics or group hierarchies are involved.

In contrast, Respondent 3 initially attempted a polite warning: "*I told him nicely… but when nothing changed, I told him that I will take action*." She eventually blocked and ignored the harasser, which brought some relief. Begotti et al. (2020) explain that many victims adopt a combination of avoidance, emotional regulation, and help-seeking to regain stability. For Respondent 3, distance and assertiveness seemed to deter the perpetrator.

4.4.2 Confrontation and Reporting. While blocking may offer immediate relief, confronting or reporting cyber incidents led to mixed outcomes. Respondent 1 escalated the case through formal institutional channels: the HOD, Proctorial Board, and eventually the ICC cell. "*As the incident didn't involve direct threats of harming me or raping me, the case could not be sent to the ICC cell*," she explained. Eventually, with her uncle's intervention and the perpetrator's father was involved, the issue was resolved. Tokunaga and Aune (2015) support such external help-seeking as a more successful long-term strategy, especially when institutional mechanisms are not accessible or willing to respond.

Respondent 2 had a less successful outcome. "*No, the confrontation wasn't fruitful*," she admitted, expressing disappointment at the lack of change despite her efforts. Her

experience affirms Sticca's (2013) findings that direct confrontation can sometimes worsen emotional distress. Assertive strategies, particularly without institutional support, may escalate the situation or reinforce the perpetrator's power.

For Respondent 3, confrontation did work: "*The confrontation was effective. He stopped approaching me after some time*." This reflects findings by Begotti and Acquadro Maran (2019), who noted that questioning the stalker's motives and setting clear boundaries can, in some cases, discourage further interaction.

4.4.3 Insights on Coping. The respondents' experiences show that coping with cyberbullying and stalking requires an adaptive strategy tailored to the nature of the threat and the resilience of the victim. Blocking and avoiding the perpetrator may provide initial control, but persistent threats often demand external intervention. Institutional support, especially when responsive and victim-centered, can be pivotal in resolution. However, as the findings suggest, not all victims find these channels effective or accessible.

Moreover, while interpersonal confrontation can be empowering for some, it may increase distress for others, especially when perpetrators ignore social cues or derive satisfaction from escalation. As Tokunaga and Aune (2015) and Sticca (2013) caution, choosing the right strategy depends not just on the method, but on how well it aligns with the victim's emotional state and safety needs.
In sum, safety measures taken by victims underscore a critical need: comprehensive digital literacy and stronger institutional accountability. Students must be equipped with both technical know-how and emotional tools to safeguard themselves, while universities must ensure robust, accessible, and victim-friendly mechanism to support them in navigating these difficult situations.

4.5 Support Systems around the Students

Students' coping with cyberbullying and cyberstalking largely depends on the support systems around them. Recovery is shaped not only by personal resilience but also by emotional and practical help from peers, family, and university authorities. Tompson and Tomkins (2025) noted that because many offenders stay anonymous, relying solely on law enforcement is ineffective. Institutions must instead prioritize prevention and continued support for victims. In this study, even when institutional help was limited or delayed, encouragement from friends, family, and trusted faculty played a key role in restoring victims' emotional strength and helping them respond more confidently.

4.5.1 Role of Peers in Emotional and Practical Coping. Peers were often the first source of support for respondents, providing both emotional relief and practical assistance. Respondent 1 shared that she found it difficult to confide in others at first, especially because she was new to the university and had not yet built close connections. "*I couldn't trust people there*," she explained. When the perpetrator sent a video from the campus cafeteria, suggesting he was nearby, the respondent asked a few classmates to help identify him. Her peers noticed familiar items in the video, such as his sweater and ring, which helped confirm his identity. "*My classmates and friends were very helpful in identifying him*," she added. This peer involvement became a critical turning point in managing the situation. Egwu et al. (2024) found that nearly two-thirds of victims chose to confide in friends rather than in authority figures, suggesting that peer support is often more immediate and emotionally accessible.

In Respondent 2's case, her friends played a more direct role. They not only stood by her emotionally but also confronted the bully. "*This is the only fortunate thing that happened to me,"* she shared, grateful for their support. Her experience reflects the findings of Abaido (2020), who observed that a significant number of youth victims preferred speaking to friends over family members. Friends often offer validation, practical advice, and a sense of protection, which are vital in helping victims regain confidence and emotional balance.

Respondent 3 also relied on her peers for advice. "*They gave me suggestions that I shouldn't respond to it*," she recalled. Taking this advice helped her avoid escalating the situation. Kraft and Wang (2010) found that students often used self-initiated strategies such as blocking the harasser, changing contact details, or avoiding engagement. These strategies were frequently supported by friends, whose emotional presence and guidance were crucial when institutional avenues felt unavailable or unhelpful.

4.5.2 Family and Close Relationships as Emotional Anchors. Support from family members also played a vital role for some respondents. Respondent 1 described how her support system included friends, seniors, university staff, and particularly her uncle. "*My seniors supported me more... they used to walk with me to the hostel... my uncle got his address,*" she shared. Her uncle's efforts to locate and speak with the perpetrator's family helped bring the situation under control. This experience demonstrates how both emotional and practical assistance from family members can lead to resolution. Bussu et al. (2024) found that seeking support from trusted people is one of the most effective protective factors for students facing cyber harassment. The cooperation of family, peers, and university personnel allowed Respondent 1 to regain a sense of safety and control.

Respondent 2 also received consistent help from her roommates and close friends. "*They supported me and tried to confront the girl*," she noted. Their presence helped her feel emotionally secure during the incident.

On the other hand, Respondent 3 decided not to involve her family, fearing they would worry, especially since she lived far from home. "*I only involved my friends... they helped me ignore all this*," she explained. While she chose not to take further action, her friends played a significant role in providing emotional comfort. Collen and Onan (2021) emphasized that friendships formed at university often serve as emotional anchors, helping students manage personal stress and offering a sense of belonging. In the absence of family, these social ties provide stability and help students cope with adverse experiences more effectively.

4.5.3 Institutional Response. Institutional support received mixed feedback from respondents. Some noted that the university acted only after cases became severe. Respondent 1 shared, "*Yes, when the case became severe, the HOD, provost, proctorial board, and ICC cell all took the necessary steps*." However, the response was mostly reactive. Bussu et al. (2024) emphasize that universities must adopt proactive cyber safety measures within student programs.

Respondent 2 observed, "*There are measures for physical safety... but there are no measures for cyber safety,*" highlighting the lack of digital protection. Cassidy et al. (2017) similarly found that university staff often lack the training to handle online misconduct effectively.

Respondent 3 admitted, "*I don't think they take any measures... I don't have much idea about this*," revealing a communication gap about available resources. As Kraft and Wang (2010) noted, many students rely on peers or family rather than institutions, indicating the urgent need for stronger awareness and structured cyber safety mechanisms in higher education.

5. Discussion

The findings reveal the complex and emotionally challenging experiences of female students facing cyberbullying and cyberstalking in higher education. A key insight is the variety of coping strategies used and the crucial role of support systems in managing psychological and social consequences.

Most respondents began by blocking perpetrators or reducing online activity to regain control. However, as seen in Respondent 1's case, these measures often failed against persistent offenders using new accounts, echoing Tokunaga and Aune's (2015) finding that basic digital strategies alone are insufficient. Some participants attempted direct communication to resolve issues, but such efforts often caused more distress, consistent with Sticca's (2013) argument that assertive coping can backfire without institutional backing. Those who sought advice from peers experienced greater relief, reflecting Begotti et al.'s (2020) view that combining avoidance, emotional regulation, and external support fosters better coping.

Peer support emerged as the most immediate and trusted resource, with friends providing emotional comfort and practical help, aligning with Egwu et al. (2024) and Abaido (2020), who note victims' preference for informal over formal channels. Family support also proved valuable, as shown in Respondent 1's case, where relatives aided in resolving threats, reinforcing Bussu et al.'s (2024) claim that trusted adults enhance psychological strength.

Institutional responses were limited and reactive, lacking awareness programs or consistent reporting systems (Cassidy et al., 2017; Tompson & Tomkins, 2025). Strengthening coping mechanisms alongside peer, family, and institutional support is essential for building digital resilience and addressing the deep psychological and academic impacts of cyber victimization among university students.

6. Limitations

This study is limited by its small, all-female sample, which restricts generalizability and excludes diverse gender experiences. Participant hesitation may have led to underreporting, while reliance on self-reported data risks bias. The lack of longitudinal tracking prevents understanding long-term impacts. Additionally, institutional perspectives were not included, offering only the victims' viewpoint on support systems and responses.

7. Educational Implications

Higher education institutions must urgently address cyberbullying and cyberstalking through awareness, prevention, and education. Discussions on online safety and digital harassment should be integrated into curricula or workshops. Digital literacy training must include guidance on privacy settings, recognizing harassment, and understanding legal rights. Universities also need stronger policies on online behaviour, clear reporting procedures, and access to trauma-informed counselling for

affected students. Creating safe digital spaces requires active institutional support and well-defined codes of conduct. A comprehensive response should focus on prevention, protection, and empowering students to navigate online spaces safely.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Advice from Respondents

Respondents emphasized the need for strong institutional support and strict hostel discipline. They advised setting boundaries early and blocking the harasser if necessary. If abuse continues, victims should file formal complaints and seek legal help promptly. Speaking up was seen as vital, as silence only deepens emotional harm and empowers the perpetrator.

8.2 Institutional Preventive Measures

Universities should safeguard student data, use official emails, and include cyber safety in orientations. Regular awareness drives, counselling, and screenings are essential. A dedicated committee must address online safety, support victims, and handle complaints promptly. Policies should be updated regularly to tackle new digital threats.

9. Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should include a more diverse sample across gender, age, and educational settings to capture varied experiences of cyberbullying and cyberstalking. Including male, non-binary, and older participants can reveal different coping patterns and vulnerabilities. Studies should also ensure a safe and confidential space for open sharing. A gender-sensitive and inclusive approach will lead to more effective and targeted interventions.

10. Conclusion

Cyberbullying and cyberstalking cause serious psychological, academic, and social harm to female students. Many victims experience fear, anxiety, and social withdrawal, often intensified by the inaction or indifference of peers and institutions. The anonymity of offenders further deepens their sense of powerlessness. To address these challenges, institutions must promote awareness, establish safe reporting systems, and provide timely mental health support. Strong legal measures and consistent enforcement are also crucial. Encouraging empathy, accountability, and proactive institutional responses can help create safer digital spaces. Future research should include diverse populations to build more inclusive and effective interventions.

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