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The Level of Cyberbullying Among Primary School Students in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman

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Abstract

Objectives: The study aimed to identify the level of cyberbullying among primary school students in the University District of Amman, during their use of social media, the internet and email, and while playing electronic games.

Methods: The study used a descriptive approach, which was suitable for the study's procedures, and a simple random sampling method to select the sample.

Results: The results showed that the level of cyberbullying was moderate among primary school students in the University District of Amman. The most common forms of cyberbullying were through social media, followed by electronic games, and finally the use of the internet and email.

Conclusions: The study concluded that the level of awareness among parents about the phenomenon of cyberbullying is low, as is their knowledge of how to protect their children from it. It also highlighted the impact of social media, the dangers of electronic games, and the internet on their children**.**

Keywords: Bullying, Cyberbullying, primary school students.

مستوى التنمر الإلكتروني بين طلبة المدارس الابتدائية في لواء الجامعة في عمان

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ملخّص

الأهداف: هدفت الدراسة إلى التعرف على مستوى التنمر الإلكتروني لدى طلبة المدارس الابتدائية في لواء الجامعة في عمان، أثناء استخدامهم لمواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، وأثناء استخدامهم للإنترنت والبريد الإلكتروني، وأثناء استخدامهم للألعاب الإلكترونية.

المنهجية: اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج الوصفي لملاءمته لإجراءات هذه الدراسة، وتم استخدام العينة العشوائية البسيطة لاختيار عينة الدراسة.

النتائج: أظهرت النتائج أن مستوى التنمر الإلكتروني متوسط لدى طلبة المرحلة الأساسية في لواء الجامعة في عمان، وأن أبرز استخدامات التنمر الإلكتروني كانت استخدام مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، ثم التنمر بالألعاب الإلكترونية، وأخيراً استخدام الإنترنت والبريد الإلكتروني.

الخلاصة: أن مستوى الوعي لدى أولياء الأمور حول ظاهرة التنمر الإلكتروني منخفض، وكذلك كيفية حماية أبنائهم من هذه الظاهرة، ومدى تأثير مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، وخطورة الألعاب الإلكترونية واستخدام الإنترنت على ابنائهم.

الكلمات الدالة: التنمر، التنمر الإلكتروني، طلاب المدارس الابتدائية.

1. Introduction

Cyberbullying is aggressive and unwanted behavior that involves using the Internet to harm or abuse others by posting or sharing negative and harmful content about a person (Al-Badour & Ghanmi, 2020). According to Al-Shennawy (2014), it refers to any behavior conducted through communication tools and modern information technology with the aim of harming an individual or a group of individuals.

Researchers such as Al-Badour and Ghanmi (2010) and Muhammad (2019) note that cyberbullying can manifest in various forms. One common form is harassment, which includes sending inappropriate, degrading, or offensive messages, or posting such comments online. Another form is defamation, involving the sharing of false or misleading information about a person, posting images intended to ridicule them, or spreading rumors. Cyberbullying can also take the form of extreme criticism, where the perpetrator speaks in a humiliating or harmful manner for personal enjoyment at the victim's expense.

Other forms include impersonation, where a bully hacks into someone's personal account to deceive others, and deception, in which a person is tricked into revealing private information that is later published or shared. Additionally, exclusion is a form of cyberbullying that involves deliberately and intentionally preventing someone from participating in online groups or communities. These behaviors, while varying in method, share the common goal of causing psychological, emotional, or social harm to the target.

1.1 Cyberbullying Methods

With remarkable technological progress, cyberbullying has spread across multiple digital channels. One such channel is phone calls, including both traditional voice calls and internet-based calls, which are used to intimidate victims through insults, slander, threats, and harassing text messages. Cyberbullies also exploit photos and videos, often seizing personal media shared by the victim or their friends online without consent, sometimes taking advantage of weak account security. Through email, bullies can access victims' private messages, data, and conversations by exploiting links or hacking into accounts. Similarly, web chat rooms provide a platform for bullies to communicate directly with victims using fake accounts, with the intent of causing harm, publishing private images, sharing links to pornographic content, or using deceptive web links to trick victims into posting inappropriate content on their own profiles (Muhammad, 2019).

Due to society's growing dependence on technology in daily life, cyberbullying has become increasingly prevalent through instant messaging applications, social networking sites, chat rooms, blogs, and online games. Bullies exploit these platforms to harass, threaten, or humiliate victims, making electronic bullying a pervasive issue in the digital age (Al-Badour & Ghanmi, 2020).

1.2 Effects of cyberbullying

Cyberbullying has serious effects on people of all ages, impacting them mentally, emotionally, and physically. Mentally, victims may feel upset, embarrassed, and angry, while emotionally, they can experience shame and a loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed. Physically, cyberbullying can lead to exhaustion and symptoms such as headaches and stomach pain. These effects may cause individuals to withdraw, avoid addressing the problem, and develop low self-esteem, which can in turn negatively affect their health and academic performance (McFair, 2020).

Al-Shaqran (2020) further emphasized the severe consequences of cyberbullying, noting that it can be driven by pathological or occupational obsessions, unemployment, or professional failures on the part of the aggressors. Aggressors may misuse online platforms to spread abuse, ridicule, or degrading images and videos, targeting victims for expressing differing opinions. As a result, victims often experience lower self-esteem, increased suicidal ideation, and a range of emotional responses such as persistent fear, frustration, anger, and depression. These effects can lead victims to isolate themselves, avoid friends, refrain from participating in social activities, or even lose their jobs, outcomes that are sometimes the intended consequence of the bully's actions.

According to Muhammad (2019), cyberbullying has painful, humiliating, and deeply distressing effects. Victims may suffer misery, sadness, and a loss of social status, leading them to feel unwanted and rejected. Prolonged exposure to cyberbullying can result in long-term psychological, behavioral, and emotional issues, including depression, loneliness, anxiety, self-harm, and sleep disturbances. Social relationships often deteriorate, and victims may withdraw from social

activities, gatherings, and meetings. In extreme cases, cyberbullying can even contribute to suicidal behavior. Physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, and frequent panic or fear episodes are also common (Muhammad, 2019).

1.3 Reasons for cyberbullying

Muhammad (2019) identified several key factors that contribute to cyberbullying. One major factor is school climate, which refers to the unwritten beliefs, values, trends, and cultural frameworks that govern interactions among students, as well as between students and teachers or administration. A negative school climate can create an environment conducive to bullying. Family factors also play a significant role; studies indicate that many bullies come from homes characterized by difficult relationships, financial challenges, or social problems, and may themselves have experienced victimization within the family.

Peer groups are another influential factor. The quality of peer relationships, individual peer characteristics, and experiences of rejection or hostility can increase an individual's risk of being involved in cyberbullying. Peers may also act as spectators, which can reinforce and escalate bullying behaviors. Furthermore, media and technological factors contribute to the spread of cyberbullying. Electronic games that emphasize domination, competition, and achieving victory at any cost, without educational purpose, can normalize aggressive behaviors. Similarly, the widespread availability of violent films and media content, including graphic scenes of killing or cruelty, can desensitize individuals and foster violent tendencies.

Finally, societal factors also play a role in the prevalence of cyberbullying. A general lack of awareness about the dangers of violence, weak community engagement in addressing violent behavior, and the promotion of violent content through electronic and media channels contribute to the normalization and perpetuation of bullying behaviors in society. Together, these factors illustrate that cyberbullying is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by individual, familial, peer, technological, and societal dimensions.

1.4 Cyberbullying dangers:

- Cyberbullying is a certain degree of technological expertise, requiring more skills and proficiency to send emails and text messages, and disguise to deny attacks such as pretending to be someone else and defaming the victim and posting online.
- It is difficult to escape from cyberbullying, as the victim of cyber-bullying does not find a place to hide, so they bullied wherever they are through messages to their mobile phones or offensive comments on the Internet
- One of the unique features of electronic bullying is also the ability of the bully to be unknown, and to bully a large number of peers, with minimal effort, anywhere and anytime during the day.
- Cyberbullying distinguished from traditional bullying in that it allows the bully to harass the victim at any time and reduces the level of responsibility and accountability for the bully.
- Non-confrontation, where the bully is not face to face with the victim and therefore has a greater opportunity to remain anonymous and reduce the risks he may be exposed to. (McFair, 2020).

1.5 Indications that show a person exposed to cyberbullying

Many individuals who experience cyberbullying and harassment may be reluctant to share their experiences with others, often due to feelings of shame or fear of stigma. Signs of cyberbullying can vary, but commonly include emotional distress during or after using the Internet or a phone, heightened concern for digital privacy, and extreme efforts to protect one's online presence. Victims may also withdraw from family, friends, and social activities, avoid public gatherings, or display noticeable changes in mood, behavior, sleep, and appetite. Additionally, they may deliberately reduce or stop using their phones or the Internet, feel anxious or fearful when receiving messages or emails, and avoid discussions related to digital technology altogether (Al-Shammari, 2019).

2. Literature Review

Al-Barashdiya (2020) conducted a study aimed at summarizing previous research on cyberbullying and providing a critical review, with a particular focus on factors that predict victimization. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, the study analyzed 107 studies—96 foreign and 11 Arab—across four databases: PubMed, PsycINFO, Dar Almaandumah, and

Al Manhal. The results highlighted the high global prevalence of cyberbullying among children and adolescents. Key predictors of victimization included age, gender, country, social network size, and certain socio-economic factors, while predictors of cyberbullying included excessive Internet use, lack of empathy, anger, narcissism, and authoritarian or permissive parenting. The study also noted serious risks for victims, including repeated suicide attempts, and recommended urgent multivariate longitudinal studies to better identify predictive factors and guide the design of preventive programs.

Abdullah (2019) examined common manifestations of cyberbullying and their relationship to demographic variables, daily Internet usage, and personality traits among a sample of 224 adults (68 males, 156 females) aged 20–39. Using a comparative-correlative descriptive approach, the study found that privacy violation was the most prevalent form of cyberbullying, followed by electronic harassment, exclusion, insult and threat, and mockery. Gender and social status showed statistically significant differences in exposure, while age was only significantly correlated with privacy violation. Additionally, daily hours of Internet use were directly correlated with most dimensions of cyberbullying exposure, except for exclusion and privacy violation.

Abdel-Qader and Al-Rimawi (2019) explored the relationship between cyberbullying and academic achievement motivation among secondary school students in suburban Jerusalem. Using a descriptive-correlative approach, the study found that levels of cyberbullying were low, while academic achievement motivation was moderate. An inverse relationship was observed between cyberbullying and achievement motivation, with significant differences in cyberbullying levels based on study variables, though no differences appeared in academic achievement motivation.

Al-Rifai (2018) studied middle school students in Kuwait City to assess their engagement in and exposure to cyberbullying, as well as the influence of gender. The sample consisted of 600 students from 35 schools, and two instruments (30-item and 27-item scales) were used. Results indicated high levels of both engagement in and exposure to cyberbullying. Students primarily used electronic communication tools, while victims were most often affected through Internet sites. Gender did not significantly impact engagement or exposure. Recommendations included implementing laws to reduce cyberbullying, community awareness programs, and integrating anti-cyberbullying content into school curricula.

Al-Hiyari (2018) examined cyberbullying among behaviorally and emotionally disturbed students in Zarqa, Jordan, focusing on differences according to gender and age. The sample consisted of 117 students from four schools during the 2015–2016 academic year, using the Electronic Bullying Scale and Behavioral Disorders Scale. Results showed high levels of cyberbullying, with male students and those over 14 years old experiencing higher levels.

Al-Mustafa (2017) investigated the main motives for cyberbullying among children, and differences according to gender and city. The sample included 600 children, and the study employed a descriptive-analytical approach using a questionnaire. Findings indicated high levels of motives for cyberbullying across most items, with males demonstrating significantly higher motives than females. The study recommended further research across diverse age groups.

3. The study Problem

With rapid technological development and increasing reliance on technology in daily life, particularly in education, the role of technology has shifted from being a supplementary tool to serving as a primary solution and alternative to traditional face-to-face instruction. The transition to digital and distance education has made it increasingly difficult to separate learners from technology.

This study aims to answer the main question: What is the level of cyberbullying among primary students in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman? To address this, the study seeks to answer the following sub-questions:

1) What is the level of cyberbullying among primary school students in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman while using social networking sites?
2) What is the level of cyberbullying among primary school students in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman while using the Internet and email?
3) What is the level of cyberbullying among primary school students in Amman while using electronic games?

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Study Methodology

The study relied on the descriptive approach for its suitability to the procedures of this study, which aims to identify the reality of cyberbullying in Liwa'a Aljamiea in the capital Amman, Jordan.

4.2 Study population

The study population is the primary school students from the first to the tenth grade who registered in the records of the Directorate of the Liwa'a Aljamiea in the capital Amman governorate in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, who numbered 109106 students during the academic year 2023/2024.

4.3 The study sample

It relied on the random simple method to choose the study sample, Table No. (1) Shows the distribution of the study sample according to the variables:

Table No. (1): Distribution of the study sample

Category	Number	study sample
Private School	73268	250
Governmental School	35838	150
Total	109106	400

4.4 Objectives of the study

This study aims to find out the following:

- The level of cyberbullying among primary school students in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman while using social networking sites.
- The level of cyberbullying among primary school students in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman while using the Internet and email.
- The level of cyberbullying among primary school students in Amman while using electronic games.

4.5 The importance of studying

Theoretical significance through:

- Exposing the reality of cyberbullying in Jordan during distance learning.
- The need for studies on cyberbullying to reveal the risks and the social, economic, educational and health dimensions that may lead to cyberbullying of students, whether in the short or long term.
- Enriching the theoretical literature and previous studies regarding electronic school dropout.

Practical importance through:

- Decision makers in the Ministry of Education may benefit from the results and recommendations of the current study to find out the reality of cyberbullying in Jordan during distance learning.
- The study may produce a framework that can be relied upon in determining ways to confront cyberbullying.

4.6 Data Collection:

A questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was developed after reviewing previous studies and theoretical literature related to the subject and its various dimensions.

4.7 Validity and Reliability:

To verify the validity of the tools, they were presented in their initial form to a group of specialized faculty members in the disciplines of psychology, curricula, teaching, educational technology and sociology, and their number was (10) members, and their comments were taken in terms of modification, deletion and addition.

The stability of the tools was verified by calculating the stability coefficient using the Cronbach-Alpha equation. The total stability coefficient of the tool was (0.72). These values are valid for measuring what the tools placed to measure in the field. Table No. (2) Shows the values of the coefficients for the study tools:

Table No. (2): Cronbach's Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficient for Study Instruments

practice	stability coefficient
Use of social networking sites	.075
Use of the Internet and e-mail	0.73
Use of electronic games	.070
overall	0.72

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Main question Results: What is the level of cyberbullying among primary student in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman?

Table 3 shows that the fields' means ranged between 3.69 and 3.50, with standard deviations of 0.560–0.396 The value of the total arithmetic mean was 3.61, with a standard deviation of 0.383; this indicates that the level of cyberbullying among primary student in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman is average.

Table No. (3): Means and standard deviations of the level of cyberbullying among primary student in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman

#	Field	Mean	standard deviation	level	Rank
2	Use of social networking sites	3.69	.0560	High	1
3	Use of electronic games	3.63	0.596	Average	2
1	Use of the Internet and e-mail	3.50	.0564	Average	3
	Overall	3.61	0.383	Average	

*Standard grade: Low, 1–2.33; Average, 2.34–3.67; High, 3.68–5.

Table 3 shows that the use of social networking sites came in first place, with a mean of 3.69 and standard deviation of .0560, in second place Use of electronic games with a mean of 3.63 and standard deviation of .0596, Use of the Internet and e-mail came in the last order with a mean of 3.50 and standard deviation of .0564.

5.2 The First Question Results: What is the level of cyberbullying among primary school students in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman while using social networking sites?

Table 4 shows that the fields' means ranged between 4.11 and 3.20, with standard deviations of 0.873–0.411. The value of the overall mean was 3.69, with a standard deviation of 0.560; this indicates that the level of cyberbullying among primary student in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman while using social networking sites is high.

Table No. (4): Means and standard deviations of the level of cyberbullying among primary student in Liwa'a Aljamiea in Amman while using social networking sites

#	Item	Mean	standard deviation	level	Rank
5	I post comments on embarrassing photos and videos about other people	4.11	.0522	High	1
3	I share photos and videos, the owners do not want to share them without their consent	4.01	0.425	High	2
6	I share text messages with the intent of hurting a specific person	3.89	.0635	High	3
7	Send threatening text messages directly to others	3.73	0.411	High	4
1	Share explicit videos and photos with others	3.71	.0690	High	5

#	Item	Mean	standard deviation	level	Rank
2	You sent text messages that hurt someone to many other people	3.69	.0873	High	6
4	I exchanged photos and videos with other people to threaten and embarrass them	3.51	.0543	Average	7
9	I communicate with direct text messages with other people	3.35	.0412	Average	8
8	I communicate directly with voice messages with other people	3.20	.0534	Average	9
	Overall	3.69	0.560	High	

*Standard grade: Low, 1–2.33; Average, 2.34–3.67; High, 3.68–5.

Table (4) shows that the most common practices of bullying students were “I post comments on embarrassing photos and videos about other people” (Mean=4.11, standard deviation= 0.522), followed by "I share photos and videos, the owners do not want to share them without their consent" (Mean=4.01, standard deviation= 0.425), while "I communicate directly with voice messages with other people " was in the last place (Mean=3.20, standard deviation= 0.534).

5.3 The second question: What is the level of cyberbullying among primary school students in Liwa’a Aljamiea in Amman while using the Internet and email?

Table 5 shows that the fields' means ranged between 3.89 and 3.22, with standard deviations of 0.236–0.981. The value of the overall mean was 3.50, with a standard deviation of 0.564; this indicates that the level of cyberbullying among primary student in Liwa’a Aljamiea in Amman while using the Internet and email is average.

Table No. (5): Means and standard deviations of the level of cyberbullying among primary student in Liwa’a Aljamiea in Amman while using the Internet and email

#	Item	Mean	standard deviation	level	Rank
14	Publish someone's personal information online without their consent	3.89	0.425	High	1
4	I created an email with fake data that I use to harm others	3.77	.0690	High	2
13	I hide my identity online to threaten people	3.68	.0635	High	3
7	Send threatening messages directly to other people over the Internet	3.66	0.411	High	4
11	Send threatening emails to others	3.56	.0522	High	5
12	Published photos or videos of people without their consent and the owners do not want to publish them	3.54	.0873	High	6
5	Messing with webcams to get clips of people without them knowing	3.50	.0412	Average	7
8	Post photos and videos directly to other people online without their consent	3.48	.0534	Average	8
10	I deliberately exclude others from groups on the Internet such as: blogs with the intention of harming them	3.46	0.879	Average	9
2	I use email to threaten others	3.32	0.425	Average	10
1	I email others with abusive messages	3.30	0.236	Average	11
6	I share emails to hurt someone	3.28	0.560	Average	12
3	Email embarrassing photos and videos about someone to other people	3.27	0.981	Average	13
9	Posting hurtful messages to other people online for others to know	3.22	0.321	Average	14
		3.50	0.564	Average	

*Standard grade: Low, 1–2.33; Average, 2.34–3.67; High, 3.68–5.

Table (5) shows that the most common practices of bullying students were “Publish someone's personal information online without their consent” (Mean=3.89, standard deviation= 0.425), followed by "I created an email with fake data that I use to harm others" (Mean=3.77, standard deviation= 0.690), while "Posting hurtful messages to other people online for others to know " was in the last place (Mean=3.22, standard deviation= 0.321).

5.4 The third question: What is the level of cyberbullying among primary school students in Amman while using electronic games?

Table 6 shows that the fields' means ranged between 3.90 and 3.26, with standard deviations of 0.322–0.879. The value of the overall mean was 3.63, with a standard deviation of 0.596; this indicates that the level of cyberbullying among primary student in Liwa’a Aljamiea in Amman while using electronic games average.

Table No. (6): Means and standard deviations of the level of cyberbullying among primary student in Liwa’a Aljamiea in Amman while using electronic games

#	Item	Mean	standard deviation	level	Rank
6	I remove other players from the game without their permission and for no reason	3.90	0.411	High	1
5	Hack other people's accounts in the game	3.88	.0670	High	2
3	Use insults and profanity when playing	3.87	.0635	High	3
2	Boycott the game if you lose	3.69	0.411	High	4
1	Rely on cheating to win the game	3.68	.0532	High	5
10	I don't care about other people's feelings when playing	3.57	.0866	High	6
9	I'm so proud of myself when I win	3.53	.0322	Average	7
8	I brag about the devices and technologies I own that others do not have	3.49	.0534	Average	8
7	Use physical expressions and gestures to motivate other players	3.44	0.879	High	9
4	Choose interesting characters for others while playing	3.26	.0700		10
		3.63	0.596		

*Standard grade: Low, 1–2.33; Average, 2.34–3.67; High, 3.68–5.

Table (6) shows that the most common practices of bullying students were “I remove other players from the game without their permission and for no reason” (Mean=3.90, standard deviation= 0.411), followed by "Hack other people's accounts in the game" (Mean=3.88, standard deviation= 0.670), while "Choose interesting characters for others while playing" was in the last place (Mean=3.26, standard deviation= 0.700).

6.1 Discussion

The results of the study showed that the level of cyberbullying among the primary student in Liwa’a Aljamiea in Amman was average, and this result differs with most previous studies, as it showed that the spread of cyberbullying is high, and the researchers attribute this result to the high degree of awareness among students, and the success of the efforts of the Ministry of Education and institutions concerned with In educating society about the dangers of cyberbullying and its negative effects.

Researchers also believe that the official institutions legislating deterrent penalties for bullies and activating the role of electronic censorship was one of the reasons that helped reduce and limit this phenomenon.

The researchers find that bullying in social networking sites was high, due to the lack of applications and software that help in the work of censorship, and the expansion of social networking applications in an unorganized manner, and the indifference of many companies that create these sites to put strict controls and laws to reduce electronic bullying, making it a suitable place for bullying groups.

The researchers also find that the use of electronic games ranked second in the level of spread of this phenomenon due to the addiction of many children, especially in the period of Corona period, to these games, and the companies that design these games compete to provide games for free greatly contributed to the emergence of this phenomenon, but the fact that children are attracted to games Which were created by large companies interested in securing the appropriate environment for the continuation of their work and achieving their goals helped to reduce this phenomenon.

The researchers find that the use of the Internet and e-mail came in last place is logical because this age group does not care about the use of the Internet and e-mail and its reliance on social networking sites more, as well as the presence of censorship and laws regulating the use of the Internet and e-mail, and the students' fear of using them in bullying, especially because official institutions do the work A large-scale awareness campaign that shows that the Internet and e-mail can be monitored and the person using it can be identified and the law is applied to the bully

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the study results, the study recommended the following:

- The need to increase the interest of local community institutions in conducting awareness campaigns against the phenomenon of electronic bullying
- Activating the role of censorship, especially by parents and schools, to reduce the phenomenon of electronic intimidation, especially in social networking sites
- Conducting more applied studies to investigate the issue of cyberbullying and to search for ways to reduce it

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