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# CLASSIFICATION OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF CYBERBULLYING BY LEVELS OF SOCIAL RISK BASED ON THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

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**Abstract:** This article deals with the issues based on analyzing the different forms of cyberbullying and proposes their classification according to levels of social risk based on the psychological consequences experienced by victims. Drawing on theoretical analysis and international research, the study considers cyberbullying as a complex socio-psychological phenomenon that can negatively affect individuals' emotional, cognitive, volitional, and communicative functioning. The identified forms are grouped into four categories: relatively low, substantial, severe, and extremely severe levels of social risk. The analysis demonstrates that the psychological consequences may range from anger, humiliation, social rejection, and emotional distress to social withdrawal, impaired interpersonal communication, psychological instability, and other serious behavioural consequences. The article emphasizes the importance of early identification, prevention, psychological support, and coordinated educational and legal measures to protect young people from cyberbullying and strengthen their information and psychological safety.

**Keywords:** forms of cyberbullying with relatively low social risk; ostracism; griefing; forms of cyberbullying with substantial social risk; fraping; impersonation; catfishing (kitten-fishing); disclosure of secrets; outing; forms of cyberbullying with severe social risk; dissing; defamation and slander; forms of cyberbullying with extremely severe social risk; sexting; happy slapping; cyberstalking (cybergrooming); cyberaggressor.

**Introduction.** International studies, including research conducted by the United Nations, the Korean Ministry of Education, European institutions, and studies focusing on the Arab States, indicate that cyberbullying is becoming increasingly widespread among adolescents and young people and that its adverse consequences are intensifying (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2018; Lobe et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2019). The development of the global Internet information network has created enormous opportunities to satisfy the material and intellectual needs of individuals and society; at the same time, it has also created conditions for the emergence and rapid spread of cyberbullying. Many developed countries have therefore strengthened measures aimed at countering cyberbullying and protecting individuals in online environments.

In Uzbekistan, the growing visibility of cyberbullying among adolescents and young people has likewise increased the need for prevention, diagnosis, and coordinated technical, legal, and psychological assistance. Victimization may affect several areas of psychological functioning and may lead to pedagogical, psychological, and sociological consequences. This makes the

development of young people's skills for protecting themselves from online threats an important educational and social task. The broader national security context also recognizes cyberattacks and new methods of undermining stability as contemporary threats.

Issues related to non-traditional threats to information and psychological security, the Internet, and youth have been examined by Uzbek scholars, including Boboqulov and Umarov (2010), Islomov (2023), Islamov et al. (2012), Raimov (2006), Umarov and Ahmedova (2013), Karimov (2019),

Pakhrutdinov (2006), To'rayev (2020), Muratova et al. (2019), Davlatov (2018), Taylaqova (2018),

Raximova (2018), Dalimova (2018), Husanov (2023), Fazliddinov (2023), and Azimova (2023). These works address information security, psychological safety, media influence, Internet dependence, cyberattacks, and preventive measures. However, the specific phenomenon of cyberbullying, its manifestations, and its psychological consequences require further integrated analysis.

Russian-language scholarship has also addressed cyberbullying prevention, its psychological impact on young people, and the factors contributing to its emergence. Relevant contributions include the work of Voiskunsky (2010), Bengina and Grishaeva (2018), Zintsova (2014), Volkova and Volkova (2017), Ivanova (2018), Baranov and Rozhina (n.d.), and Soldatova et al. (2012). Together, these studies demonstrate that cyberbullying should be considered not only as an online communication problem but also as a psychological and social phenomenon.

International research has examined cyberbullying and related dimensions of information and psychological safety from several perspectives. Psychological safety has been discussed by Edmondson (1999) and Geraghty (2020), while cyberbullying itself has been analysed by Belsey (n.d.), Kowalski et al. (2019), Hinduja and Patchin (2020), Cheung (2012), Krumbholz et al. (2009), and Sheldon et al. (2021). These works cover legal regulation, prevention, school-based responses, social-media risks, and the psychological consequences of digital aggression.

Educational literature emphasizes that information threats, including cyberbullying, can have consequences that extend beyond the immediate online interaction. They may influence an individual's worldview, psychological stability, socialization, communication, and emotional-volitional functioning (Pakhrutdinov, 2006). Cyberbullying can negatively affect cognitive processes, emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships, and a person's sense of security.

Data from international organizations also illustrate the scale of the problem. Child Helpline International reported a substantial number of requests for assistance associated with cyberbullying, while the EU Kids Online project documented online risks experienced by children and adolescents (Child Helpline International, 2016; Soldatova et al., 2012). A UNICEF U-Report poll conducted across 30 countries found that one in three young people reported having experienced online bullying and one in five reported missing school because of cyberbullying and violence (UNICEF, 2019). Table 1 summarizes selected international statistics reported in the source document.

**Table 1. Selected international cyberbullying statistics, 2018–2023**

| Year | Location / scope | Organization | Reported result |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2018 | International survey | United Nations / OHCHR | Women were reported as being substantially more exposed to online violence and cyberbullying than men (OHCHR, 2018). |
| 2019 | International survey (30 countries) | UNICEF / United Nations | One in three young people reported being a victim of online bullying; one in five reported missing school because of cyberbullying and violence (UNICEF, 2019). |
| 2020 | South Korea | Korean Ministry of Education | During the COVID-19 period, conventional school bullying declined, whereas cyberbullying and group-based harassment increased; the source document reports cyberbullying rising to 12.3%. |
| 2021 | Europe | Publications Office of the | The source document reports that 49.0% of |
| | | European Union | surveyed students experienced cyberbullying, with particularly high figures for Italy and Ireland (59%) and Germany (58%) (Lobe et al., 2021). |
| 2021 | Canada | UNICEF | The source document reports a comparatively lower cyberbullying figure of 17.0% during the COVID-19 period (UNICEF Canada, 2020). |
| 2022 | Arab States | UNESCO | The source document reports cyberbullying through text messages and images, with differences by gender (UNESCO, 2019). |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2023 | United States | UNESCO source cited in original document | The source document reports that 26.5% of students had experienced cyberbullying during the previous month and describes an upward trend in online violence (UNESCO, 2023). |

According to Baranov and Rozhina (n.d.), cyberbullying commonly includes sending threatening messages to a victim, posting humiliating photographs or videos on social networks, or creating false websites containing fabricated information. The final consequences of cyberbullying are not always predictable.

A review of the literature shows that researchers describe a wide range of cyberbullying forms. The classifications used in different fields are not completely uniform; therefore, the forms identified in the source document were brought together and analysed comparatively. Figure 1 presents the English-language version of the original figure.

**Figure 1. Forms of cyberbullying**

| **FORMS OF CYBERBULLYING** | |
|---|---|
| **Cyberbullying refers to hostile or aggressive acts carried out through electronic or digital means with the intention of harming, humiliating, intimidating, or causing discomfort to another person. Terminology differs across countries and research traditions.** | |
| **1** | Flaming |
| **2** | Ostracism (social exclusion) |
| **3** | Griefing |
| **4** | Fraping |
| **5** | Catfishing / kitten-fishing |
| **6** | Impersonation |
| **7** | Disclosure of secrets / outing |
| **8** | Dissing |
| **9** | Defamation / slander |
| **10** | Sexting |

| | |
|---|---|
| **11** | Happy slapping |
| **12** | Cyberstalking / cybergrooming |

**1. Forms of cyberbullying with relatively low social risk**

Flaming (from "flame") refers to an online conflict in which two or more participants exchange insulting or hostile messages in social networks, chats, forums, or similar environments. A dispute that begins between two people may become public when other users join the exchange. Muratova et al. (2019) discuss patterns of online participation and the small proportion of highly active users who can strongly influence the direction and tone of online discussion.

Ostracism derives from the Greek term ostrakismos and denotes isolation or exclusion. Human beings seek belonging to social groups, yet a person may be excluded against his or her will. Such rejection may first produce immediate psychological pain and threats to belonging, self-esteem, control, and recognition. The individual may then attempt to restore social connection and control; prolonged exclusion may eventually be associated with helplessness, hopelessness, and depressive feelings.

Griefing refers to behaviour in online games that deliberately disrupts another participant's experience and causes material or psychological harm. In these relatively lower-risk forms, the cyberaggressor's behaviour may involve insults and humiliation in flaming, exclusion in ostracism, and deliberate disruption or damage in griefing.

**2. Forms of cyberbullying with substantial social risk**

Fraping involves gaining unauthorized access to another person's correspondence or online profile and using it for malicious purposes, for example by sending inappropriate messages in the victim's name, changing profile information, or posting false content. Such actions may humiliate the victim and damage relationships (Kozonina, n.d.).

Impersonation involves creating a false profile or assuming another person's identity in order to distribute false information or post inappropriate or offensive material. Catfishing or kitten-fishing similarly involves using another person's photographs or personal data to construct a deceptive profile or misleading online identity (Bochaver & Khlomov, 2014). Warning signs may include an unusually rapid development of an online relationship, communication limited to text messages, an

implausible personal history, an unrealistically idealized persona, avoidance of daytime communication, or repeated requests for help accompanied by excuses.

Disclosure of secrets refers to publishing private information that a person does not wish to make public. Outing involves disseminating personal information without the person's consent. A cyberaggressor may disclose a victim's phone number, address, private correspondence, personal

photographs, or other individual facts. These practices can undermine privacy, trust, and psychological security.

### 3. Forms of cyberbullying with severe social risk

Dissing refers to publishing, broadcasting, or displaying online information intended to discredit or humiliate a victim. Defamation and slander involve spreading fabricated or unfounded allegations online with the intention of damaging a person's reputation. One related practice is the creation of online "slam books," in which peers post and comment on humiliating rankings or labels. These practices can intensify reputational harm and emotional distress.

### 4. Forms of cyberbullying with extremely severe social risk

Sexting, in the context used in the source document, refers to the non-consensual sending or distribution of another person's intimate photographs or videos. Happy slapping involves recording physical attacks or humiliating treatment, often using a smartphone or camera, and then distributing the recording. Cyberstalking and cybergrooming involve persistent online harassment, intrusive pursuit, or deliberate attempts to gain the trust of minors for exploitative purposes (Katzer, 2014). These forms may combine psychological harm with serious threats to privacy, safety, and bodily integrity.

Research among Korean youth found that cyberbullying involvement was associated with problematic Internet use and a range of psychopathological symptoms; depressive symptoms were associated with victimization, whereas rule-breaking and aggressive behaviours were related to perpetration (Jung et al., 2014). The study involved 4,531 young people aged 11–14 and found that 9.7% were involved in cyberbullying as victims, perpetrators, or victim-perpetrators (Jung et al., 2014).

### Psychological consequences by level of social risk

Based on the analysis in the source document, relatively low-risk forms may produce negative emotional reactions, including anger, resentment, depressed mood, helplessness, and hopelessness. The individual may perceive threats to belonging, self-esteem, control, and recognition.

Forms categorized as having substantial social risk may lead the victim to feel deceived and may destabilize emotional and cognitive functioning. In such cases, practical and psychological assistance may become necessary.

Severe forms may undermine reputation and contribute to instability in the emotional-volitional and emotional domains. Extremely severe forms may produce more profound changes in emotional, volitional, and cognitive functioning.

The social-psychological consequences described in the source document include avoidance of communication with relatives, refusal to attend school or college, withdrawal from previous friendship groups, alienation, reduced willingness to communicate, and avoidance of social adaptation. Prolonged isolation may also increase vulnerability to problematic Internet use and other

maladaptive forms of online engagement. Timely professional psychological support is therefore important.

A test conducted to identify communicative attitudes related to young people's protection from cyberbullying showed that 88% of respondents were at the lowest level of communicative tolerance (intolerance), 9.3% were at the medium level, and 2.7% were at the high level. The results were used in developing a psychocorrectional programme. To determine which attitudes were most prominent, the mean values of responses from 350 participants were calculated across nine dimensions.

**Table 2. Mean values of control-group responses for each communicative-attitude factor (n = 350)**

| Communicative attitudes | Arithmetic mean |
|---|---|
| 1. Ability to understand and accept the individuality of others | 6.9 |
| 2. Viewing oneself as the standard when evaluating other people's behaviour, thinking, and individual characteristics | 5.2 |
| 3. Rigidity and conservatism in judgments | 5.5 |
| 4. Ability to mitigate or conceal unpleasant feelings caused by a partner's lack of communicativeness | 8.6 |
| 5. Tendency to remake or re-educate a communication partner | 7.0 |
| 6. Desire to adapt a partner to oneself and make the partner more convenient | 7.5 |
| 7. Inability to forgive mistakes that cause discomfort or problems | 8.4 |
| 8. Intolerance of a partner's physical or psychological discomfort | 6.4 |
| 9. Inability to adapt to other people's character, habits, attitudes, or aspirations | 7.4 |
| Overall indicator of communicative tolerance | 62.9 |

**Practical recommendations**

When measures against cyberbullying and relevant regulatory documents are developed, they should protect users' safety without unjustifiably restricting freedom of expression. They should also take account of the protection of persons with disabilities from harm to physical or psychological health and from interference with professional activity.

International experience suggests that public and non-governmental organizations can play an important role in protecting adolescents and young people from cyberbullying. Government support for projects aimed at media literacy, online safety education, and the preparation of practical materials for school administrators, teachers, and parents can strengthen prevention.

A comprehensive national response may be organized in four directions: (1) further development of the legal framework regulating cyberbullying-related social relations; (2) inclusion of topics such as non-traditional threats and bullying/cyberbullying prevention in professional development programmes for teachers, juvenile inspectors, psychologists, and other specialists working with young people; (3) development of training programmes for practising psychologists on prevention and individual or group support for victims and other participants; and (4) sustained cooperation between state educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations in prevention and information-psychological safety.

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