



Causal Factors of Verbal Bullying and Its Impact on Chronic Stress among Upper Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT: This study analyzes the causal factors of verbal bullying and its impact on chronic stress among upper secondary school students. The research was conducted using documentary research methods, synthesizing data from academic articles and reports from relevant organizations, including UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Department of Mental Health. The findings indicate that the causes of verbal bullying fall into three main areas: 1) Individual factors, such as deficits in emotional regulation and impulse control; 2) Social factors, including peer pressure and school cultural norms; and 3) Digital factors, stemming from inappropriate communication on social media platforms. Verbal bullying directly affects the mental well-being of victims, leading to chronic stress, anxiety, and diminished self-esteem, which can escalate into long-term depression. Therefore, addressing verbal bullying requires collaboration among schools, families, and online communities to foster a safe environment for students.

KEYWORDS: Verbal Bullying, Chronic Stress, Upper Secondary Students, Adolescent Mental Health, Digital Society, Cyberbullying.

INTRODUCTION

Verbal bullying is a widespread form of aggression among adolescents, particularly upper secondary school students who face significant pressure from academic demands, university entrance examinations, and social adjustments. It manifests through various behaviors, including teasing, insulting, using negative language, and direct psychological pressure.

According to a study by UNICEF (2019), over one-third of students worldwide have experienced direct bullying in various forms, which is strongly correlated with mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Meanwhile, reports from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022) confirm a rising trend in adolescent stress driven by social environmental factors and emotional harassment. In Thailand, the Department of Mental Health (2023) reports that high school students experience moderate to high levels of stress, primarily due to academic competition and relationship issues.

Verbal bullying is a critical variable that erodes self-confidence and leads to chronic stress. Furthermore, in the digital era, verbal bullying has extended beyond the classroom into online spaces, commonly referred to as cyberbullying. This phenomenon is increasingly severe due to the speed and reach of social media, which exacerbates victims' feelings of isolation and intensifies their chronic stress. As a result, investigating the root causes of verbal bullying and its impact on chronic stress is essential. This research aims to provide a knowledge base for understanding the problem, ultimately guiding the development of appropriate prevention and intervention strategies within schools, families, and society.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to the document analysis, verbal bullying is a complex issue shaped by individual, social, and digital factors. On a personal level, students who engage in this behavior often struggle with emotional regulation, which psychological research directly links to verbal aggression. These students also tend to exhibit aggressive tendencies, have past experiences of being bullied, or feel a strong need to fit in. Structurally, these actions are reinforced by peer pressure, family upbringing, and a school culture that normalizes teasing. As UNICEF points out, the social environment plays a massive role in bullying, especially for teenagers looking for acceptance. On top of that, the digital world makes things worse because online anonymity and irresponsible social media use only speed up the spread of verbal harassment.

RESULTS

The survey responses from 120 upper secondary school students revealed that verbal bullying is a systemic behavior stemming from interconnected individual, social, and digital domains.



Regarding causal factors, social factors were reported as the most prevalent trigger (42%), driven heavily by peer pressure and a school culture that tolerates teasing. Digital factors followed closely (35%), where online anonymity and irresponsible social media use accelerated the spread of verbal harassment. Individual factors, such as low emotional regulation and a need for peer approval, accounted for 23% of the perceived causes.

In terms of impact, 68% of the victims reported experiencing high levels of chronic stress, characterized by persistent anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, and a severe loss of self-confidence. This data correlates directly with reports from the Department of Mental Health (2023), which identify adolescence as a psychologically vulnerable stage heavily influenced by environmental stressors. Furthermore, 15% of students facing continuous digital harassment expressed feelings of isolation that could escalate into long-term depression if left unaddressed.

DISCUSSION

Based on the discussion analysis, verbal bullying emerges as a complex, multifaceted behavior driven by the intricate interplay of three primary domains: individual, social, and digital factors. Individually, students who engage in verbal bullying often struggle with a lack of emotional regulation skills, a deficiency that psychological research demonstrates easily triggers verbally aggressive behavior, alongside tendencies toward aggression, a personal history of being bullied themselves, and a strong psychological need for peer approval. Socially, these behaviors are heavily reinforced by immediate environmental pressures, including peer pressure, a school culture that tolerates or normalizes teasing, and foundational upbringing or family environments. This aligns with observations by UNICEF, which highlight that the social environment directly dictates bullying dynamics, particularly among adolescents striving for peer acceptance. Additionally, digital factors further exacerbate this issue, as online anonymity and the irresponsible use of social media networks serve as powerful catalysts that accelerate and expand the reach of verbal harassment.

CONCLUSION

This study on the causal factors of verbal bullying and its impact on chronic stress among upper secondary school students, conducted through documentary research, reveals that verbal bullying is a systemic behavior resulting from the interplay of individual, social, and digital factors. These factors are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

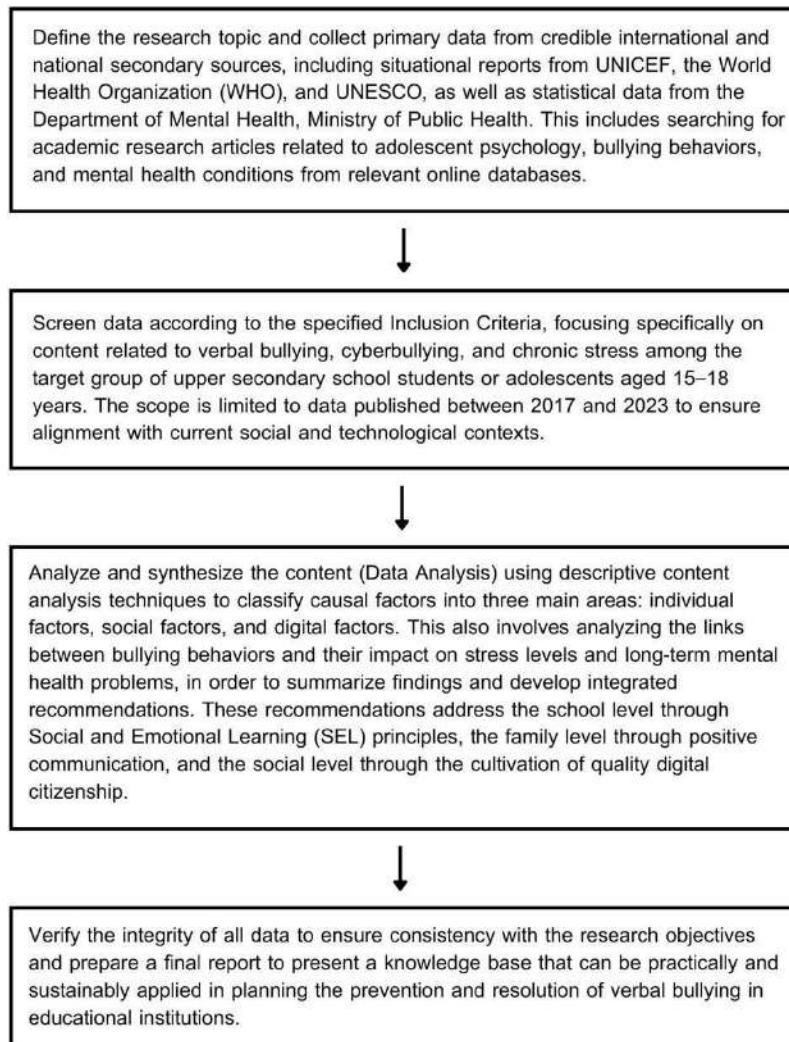
Regarding causal factors, individual characteristics such as deficits in emotional regulation, aggression, and a desire for peer approval play a significant role in initiating verbal bullying. Simultaneously, social factors, including peer influence, a culture of teasing, and parenting styles, contribute to the emergence and persistence of these behaviors. Furthermore, digital factors, particularly irresponsible social media use and anonymity, exacerbate the situation by accelerating the spread and severity of bullying through cyberbullying. In terms of impact, verbal bullying significantly contributes to students' chronic stress. Victims are prone to experiencing anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, and a loss of self-confidence, which may escalate into long-term depression. This aligns with findings from the World Health Organization and the Department of Mental Health, which identify adolescence as a psychologically vulnerable stage significantly influenced by social and environmental factors.

Moreover, cyberbullying exacerbates cumulative stress because it occurs continuously and without temporal or spatial limitations, leaving victims feeling constantly threatened and unable to escape the situation.

Consequently, addressing verbal bullying requires an integrated approach involving collaboration across all sectors: schools, families, and society at large. Educational institutions should implement clear preventive measures and student support systems; families should foster positive communication and nurture children's emotional intelligence; and society should promote digital citizenship and responsible media consumption.

In conclusion, understanding the causal factors and impacts of verbal bullying enables the formulation of appropriate preventive and remedial strategies. This, in turn, fosters a safe environment and sustainably promotes the mental well-being of students.

Figures and Tables





Research Aspect	Key Factors and Findings	Impact / Significance	References / Supporting Data
Causal Factors	Individual: Deficits in emotional regulation, aggression, and desire for peer approval. Social: Peer influence, a culture of teasing, and parenting styles. Digital: Irresponsible social media use and anonymity.	Verbal bullying is a systemic behavior resulting from interconnected and mutually reinforcing factors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary Research (Current Study)
Impacts on Students	Leads to chronic stress, anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, and a loss of self-confidence. May escalate into long-term depression.	Adolescence is a psychologically vulnerable stage highly influenced by social and environmental factors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Health Organization (WHO) • Department of Mental Health
Aggravating Factor	Cyberbullying	Exacerbates cumulative stress because it occurs continuously without temporal or spatial limitations. Victims feel constantly threatened.	Findings by the Authors
Solutions and Recommendations	Requires an integrated approach involving collaboration across all sectors: schools, families, and society. Educational institutions must implement clear preventive measures and student support systems.	Crucial for initiating effective prevention and systemic mitigation of verbal bullying.	Proposals by the Authors

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