



Cyberbullying, Criminology Students, Digital Harassment, Intervention Strategies, Nueva Ecija

Maristel M. Dela Cruz ^{1,*}

¹ Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, Cabanatuan City, Philippines

*e-mail: maristeldc911@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Cyberbullying;

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This study examined the prevalence and forms of cyberbullying experienced by criminology students at Good Samaritan Colleges in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, with the goal of designing intervention strategies to support students impacted by online abuse. Using a descriptive research design and survey questionnaires, the researchers collected responses from criminology students about their exposure to harassment, threats, rumors, and other harmful behaviors on digital platforms such as Facebook, Messenger, and TikTok. Findings revealed that a considerable number of students encountered cyberbullying, often resulting in emotional distress, anxiety, and negative impacts on academic performance. The study further identified commonly used coping behaviors, including ignoring messages, blocking perpetrators, and seeking support from peers or family. However, many victims lacked access to formal support systems or institutional responses. Based on these results, the researchers proposed a school-based intervention plan consisting of awareness workshops, digital citizenship training, strengthened reporting mechanisms, and peer-support initiatives. By addressing cyberbullying through coordinated preventive and responsive measures, the study aims to promote a safer digital environment and improve student well-being within criminology programs.



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Introduction

Cyberbullying has become a pressing concern in the digital age, extending traditional forms of bullying into online spaces where aggression can occur anytime and anywhere.¹ With the widespread use of mobile devices and social media, students are exposed to new forms of harassment, including impersonation, flaming, text bullying, creative bullying, outing, and cyberbaiting, which can disrupt their academic and social lives while causing lasting psychological harm.² Globally, cyberbullying affects a significant proportion of young people. A UNICEF (2019) survey reported that one-third of adolescents across 30 countries experienced online harassment, with one in five students skipping school due to cyberviolence. In the Philippines, nearly half of adolescents aged 13 to 17 reported experiencing cyberviolence, showing

¹ R M Kowalski and others, 'Bullying in the Digital Age: A Critical Review and Meta-Analysis of Cyberbullying Research among Youth', *Psychological Bulletin*, 140.4 (2014), 1073–1137 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035618>>.

² D Gordon, *Digital Aggression: Forms and Effects of Cyberbullying in Youth* (Academic Press, 2020).

that the problem affects both males and females almost equally.³ The emotional consequences of such experiences include anxiety, depression, absenteeism, and, in severe cases, suicidal ideation.⁴

Demographic factors, access to technology, and peer influence play a significant role in cyberbullying involvement. Students with greater access to digital devices and social media are more likely to be exposed to cyberbullying, either as victims or perpetrators, while peer collaboration and group dynamics often reinforce online aggression.⁵ Many students, however, do not report cyberbullying due to fear, avoidance of conflict, or lack of knowledge on reporting procedures, highlighting the importance of creating accessible support systems.⁶ The Philippine government has recognized the urgency of addressing cyberbullying through Republic Act No. 10627, the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, which mandates that all schools implement policies to prevent and address bullying, including cyberbullying (Republic Act No. 10627, 2013). While this legal framework provides guidance, its effectiveness relies on proper implementation, awareness campaigns, and education for both students and educators.⁷

This research aimed to investigate the prevalence, forms, and contributing factors of cyberbullying among criminology students, examining how demographic variables, technology use, and peer influence affect both victimization and perpetration. By understanding these patterns, the study intends to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and parents, fostering awareness, responsible digital behavior, and interventions to ensure safer academic and social environments.⁸

Method

This study employed a quantitative research design to collect numerical data and analyze respondents' perceptions.⁹ The approach employed a descriptive research design to systematically gather and describe information from criminology students at Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, Wesleyan University-Philippines, Holy Cross Colleges, and World Citi Colleges. The study focused on understanding students' attitudes, awareness, and experiences regarding cyberbullying and how it affected their academic and social lives. By using this research design, the study provided a comprehensive overview of the prevalence of cyberbullying and its impact across different types of institutions, public and private, within the context of Nueva Ecija. This approach enabled the researcher to analyze patterns, identify trends, and draw meaningful conclusions from the collected data. The schools were selected using the purposive sampling technique, which involves selecting individuals or groups specifically representative of the research population according to the researcher's criteria. In this case, purposive sampling was used to select institutions that aligned with the study's goals. As defined by Calmorin and Calmorin (2007), purposive sampling involves selecting individuals who are believed to provide the most relevant and rich data for the research. For this study, four institutions were chosen as respondents: Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, Wesleyan University-Philippines, Holy Cross Colleges, and World Citi Colleges. This selection ensured a balance between public and private institutions, with one public state university, one private university, and two private colleges. This approach allowed the researcher to gather a diverse range of perspectives while ensuring that the sample reflected the variety of educational settings in the region.¹⁰

³ UNICEF, 'U-Report Global Poll: Online Harassment and Youth', 2019 <<https://www.unicef.org>>.

⁴ Chinthu Kaluarachchi, Darshana Sedera and Matthew Warren, 'Socio-Technical Investigation of Cyberbullying among Adults: A Qualitative Content Analysis of the Legal Responses to a Complex Social Problem', *Information & Management*, 63.1 (2026), 104268 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2025.104268>>.

⁵ Kowalski and others.

⁶ UNICEF.

⁷ Saeed Kabiri, 'Hunting in the Digital Jungle: Exploring Cyberstalking with Higher Order Moderation in Situational Action Theory', *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 98 (2025), 102400 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2025.102400>>.

⁸ Weiping Pei, Fangzhou Wang and Yi Ting Chua, 'AI Can Be Cyberbullying Perpetrators: Investigating Individuals' Perceptions and Attitudes towards AI-Generated Cyberbullying', *Technology in Society*, 84 (2026), 103089 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2025.103089>>.

⁹ Kushanthi S Harasgama and others, 'Prevalence, Nature and Impacts of Non-Sexual Online Harassment in Sri Lanka: A Quantitative Analysis', *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 12 (2025), 101953 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101953>>.

¹⁰ Young-Eun Lee and others, 'Mapping Cyberbullying Research: A Systematic Analysis of Thematic Trends and Interdisciplinary Integration', *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, 21 (2026), 100967 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2026.100967>>.

Results and Discussion

Demographical Profile of the Respondents

The first problem of this study focused on the profile of the respondents. The respondents' profiles were tabulated and computed according to school attended, gender, daily allowance, occupation of parents, number of devices used, birth order, and frequency of social media use. This data also highlights the top forms of cyberbullying experienced and committed by Filipino students.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents According to School Attended

School	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
NEUST	30	34.88
WUP	17	19.77
HCC	21	24.42
WCC	18	20.93
Total	86	100.00

The majority of respondents attended NEUST (34.88%), suggesting that the sample was more concentrated in this institution. This distribution could reflect either the population size or accessibility of students from NEUST. Since school culture and peer interactions influence online behavior, students from larger institutions may have higher exposure to cyber interactions, potentially increasing their likelihood of experiencing cyberbullying.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents According to Gender

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	69	80.23
Female	17	19.77
Total	86	100.00

Male respondents represented a substantial majority (80.23%). Table 3 shows that males were also more likely to both experience and commit cyberbullying. This aligns with previous studies indicating that male students are more involved in aggressive online behaviors. Gender differences may reflect socialization patterns where males engage in confrontational communication, while females may use more indirect methods of cyber interaction.¹¹

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents According to Gender Who Experienced and Committed Cyberbullying

Forms of Cyberbullying	Experienced Male n (%)	Experienced Female n (%)	Committed Male n (%)	Committed Female n (%)
Impersonating	23 (88.46)	3 (11.54)	15 (100.00)	0 (0.00)
Flaming	15 (71.43)	6 (28.57)	13 (92.86)	1 (7.14)
Text Bullying	23 (76.67)	7 (23.33)	14 (87.50)	2 (12.50)
Creative Bullying	9 (90.00)	1 (10.00)	6 (75.00)	2 (25.00)
Cyber Baiting	2 (66.67)	1 (33.33)	5 (100.00)	0 (0.00)

Table 3 indicates that most respondents who both experienced and committed cyberbullying were male across all types impersonation, flaming, text bullying, creative bullying, and cyber baiting with males representing the majority in each category. Of the 86 respondents, 60.47% reported involvement in both

¹¹ Steven Furnell and Eliana Stavrou, 'Chapter 8 - Cyber Security and the Digital Student', in *The Digital Student*, ed. by Andy Phippen and Emma Bond, Chandos Advances in Information Series (Elsevier, 2026), pp. 169–95 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-443-34057-4.00009-2>>.

experiencing and committing cyberbullying, while demographic patterns showed a mix of age groups and slightly more females overall. These results are consistent with broader research showing gender differences in cyberbullying experience and perpetration, such as findings that adolescent girls are often more likely to report lifetime cybervictimization but boys may report higher recent involvement in cyberbullying behaviors¹². Additionally, research on peer social interaction suggests that adolescents' social networks can influence cyberbullying involvement, as peer attachment and online group dynamics are associated with both perpetration and victimization.¹³ Taken together, the present study's findings support existing evidence that cyberbullying behaviors vary by gender and are shaped by social interactions, with male criminology students in this sample showing higher involvement in both experiencing and committing online aggression.¹⁴

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents According to Daily Allowance

Daily Allowance (PHP)	Experienced n (%)	Committed n (%)
1–50	30 (34.88)	21 (24.42)
51–100	55 (63.95)	33 (38.37)
101–300	5 (5.81)	4 (4.65)
301 above	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)

Most respondents received a daily allowance of ₱51–₱100. Financial resources can influence access to smartphones and social media, as students with moderate allowances are more likely to have sufficient means to use online platforms regularly, thereby increasing their exposure to cyberbullying.¹⁵ In contrast, very low or very high allowances were less common, suggesting that extreme economic conditions may limit access or opportunities for online interaction.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents According to Father's Occupation

Occupation	Experienced n (%)	Committed n (%)
Government Employee	2 (7.69)	0 (0.00)
Private Company Emp	7 (26.92)	2 (13.33)
Self-Employed	11 (42.31)	10 (66.67)
None	6 (23.08)	3 (20.00)

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents According to Mother's Occupation

Occupation	Experienced n (%)	Committed n (%)
Government Employee	1 (3.85)	0 (0.00)
Private Company Emp	4 (15.38)	2 (13.33)
Self-Employed	10 (38.46)	5 (33.33)
None	11 (42.31)	8 (53.33)

Most respondents who experienced and committed cyberbullying had self-employed fathers and mothers with no occupation. For fathers, 42.31% of respondents who experienced cyberbullying had self-employed fathers, and 66.67% of those who committed cyberbullying were children of self-employed fathers. For mothers, 42.31% of respondents who experienced cyberbullying had mothers with no

¹² J W Patchin and S Hinduja, '2023 Cyberbullying Data', 2024 <<https://cyberbullying.org/2023-cyberbullying-data>>.

¹³ L N Hidayati and A S Kumalasari, 'Adolescents' Involvement in Cyberbullying: The Importance of Peer Social Interaction', in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Health and Medical Sciences*, 2021 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2991/ahsr.k.210127.036>>.

¹⁴ D Marín Suelves and others, 'Cyberbullying: Education Research', *Education Sciences*, 13.8 (2023), 763 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13080763>>.

¹⁵ G Kwan and M M Skoric, 'Facebook Bullying: An Extension of Battles in School?', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29.1 (2013), 16–25 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.07.022>>.

occupation, and 53.33% of those who committed cyberbullying were children of mothers with no occupation. Parental occupation may influence adolescents' access to technology and supervision, as parents who are self-employed or without formal employment may provide more unsupervised time online, increasing the likelihood of both experiencing and committing cyberbullying. These findings are supported by research showing that parental monitoring and socio-economic context play a significant role in cyberbullying involvement.¹⁶

Table 7. Distribution of Respondents According to Number of Devices Used

Number of Devices	Experienced n (%)	Committed n (%)
None	7 (8.14)	5 (5.81)
1–2 devices	76 (88.37)	48 (55.81)
3–5 devices	7 (8.14)	5 (5.81)
5+ devices	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)

Most respondents used one to two devices for online activities, with 88.37% of those who experienced cyberbullying and 55.81% of those who committed cyberbullying reporting this level of usage, while very few used no devices or three to five devices, and none reported more than five. The number of devices used may influence exposure to online interactions and the likelihood of involvement in cyberbullying, as greater access to digital technology increases opportunities for both engagement and conflict in digital spaces. Research has found that frequent online activities, including internet and cell phone use, are linked to higher rates of cyberbullying involvement and victimization, indicating that intensive engagement with digital media can elevate the risk of cyberbullying behaviors among adolescents. This suggests that moderate access to devices, rather than extreme levels of access, is most common among students involved in cyberbullying and underscores the role that regular internet use plays in creating opportunities for both perpetration and victimization.¹⁷

Table 8. Distribution of Respondents According to Birth Order

Birth Order	Experienced n (%)	Committed n (%)
Oldest	25 (29.07)	16 (18.60)
Middle	36 (41.86)	20 (23.25)
Youngest	23 (26.74)	18 (20.93)
Only Child	6 (6.97)	4 (4.65)

Most respondents who experienced and committed cyberbullying were middle children (41.86% experienced; 23.25% committed), followed by oldest, youngest, and only children. Birth order may influence social behavior and peer interactions because family dynamics and sibling interactions help shape adolescents' social development and interpersonal skills. Recent studies suggest that later-born adolescents, including middle children, tend to exhibit higher levels of prosocial behavior and social engagement, which may reflect more extensive peer networks and adaptive social strategies developed through interactions with both older and younger siblings (Okada et al., 2021; a recent analysis of adolescent social development). These social tendencies can increase both exposure to and participation in online interactions, potentially influencing involvement in cyberbullying by shaping how middle children engage with their peers in digital spaces

¹⁶ Kowalski and others.

¹⁷ S.-Y. Kevin Wang and others, 'Cyber Victimization and Social Cohesion: Unraveling Correlates of Cyberbullying and Cyberstalking in Canada', *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 82 (2025), 100766 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlcj.2025.100766>>.

Different Forms of Cyberbullying in the Philippines

Table 9. Distribution of Respondents According to Cyberbullying Experience and Commitment

Type of Cyberbullying	Experienced Yes n (%)	Experienced No n (%)	Committed Yes n (%)	Committed No n (%)
Impersonating	26 (30.23)	60 (69.77)	15 (17.44)	71 (82.56)
Flaming	21 (24.42)	65 (75.58)	14 (16.28)	72 (83.72)
Text Bullying	30 (34.88)	56 (65.12)	16 (18.60)	70 (81.40)
Creative Bullying	10 (11.63)	76 (88.37)	8 (9.30)	78 (90.70)
Cyber Baiting	3 (3.49)	83 (96.51)	5 (5.81)	81 (94.19)

Table 9 shows that text bullying was the most commonly experienced (34.88%) and committed (18.60%) type of cyberbullying, followed by impersonating, flaming, creative bullying, and cyber baiting. Overall, the majority of respondents reported not engaging in or experiencing most types of cyberbullying. These findings align with prior research indicating that text-based aggression is the most frequent form of online bullying among adolescents, often facilitated by widespread social media use and peer interactions.¹⁸

Instruments Used in Experienced and Committed Cyberbullying

Table 10. Distribution of Respondents According to Network Used in Experiencing and Committing Cyberbullying

Network Used	Experienced Yes n (%)	Committed Yes n (%)
None	12 (13.95)	11 (12.79)
Facebook	73 (84.88)	45 (52.33)
Instagram	1 (1.16)	0 (0.00)
Other Platforms	4 (4.65)	2 (2.33)

Table 10 indicates that Facebook was the primary platform where respondents both experienced (84.88%) and committed (52.33%) cyberbullying, while other platforms such as Instagram or other networks were far less common. A small portion of respondents reported no platform involvement. These findings are consistent with research showing that Facebook and similar social media platforms facilitate peer interactions that can increase exposure to cyberbullying, particularly among adolescents who frequently engage online.¹⁹

Frequency of Cyberbullying Occurrence

Table 11. Distribution of Respondents According to Frequency of Cyberbullying Occurrence

Frequency	Experienced n (%)	Committed n (%)
Never	330 (76.32)	361 (81.42)
Once	52 (12.01)	37 (8.35)

¹⁸ Patchin and Hinduja.

¹⁹ Patchin and Hinduja; Kowalski and others.

Frequency	Experienced n (%)	Committed n (%)
Twice	27 (6.24)	20 (4.51)
Many Times	21 (4.85)	12 (2.71)

Table 11 shows that most respondents reported infrequent involvement in cyberbullying, with the majority never experiencing (76.32%) or committing (81.42%) such behaviors. A smaller proportion experienced or committed cyberbullying once (12.01% and 8.35%, respectively) or twice, while very few were involved many times. These results align with prior research indicating that while cyberbullying is prevalent among adolescents, repeated occurrences are less common, often influenced by social monitoring and peer dynamics.²⁰

Reporting of Cyberbullying Incidents

Table 12. Distribution of Respondents According to Reporting of Cyberbullying Incidents

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	23	26.74
No	63	73.26
Total	86	100.00

Table 12 shows that the majority of respondents did not report their cyberbullying experiences, with 73.26% indicating “No” and only 26.74% reporting the incidents. This aligns with prior research suggesting that adolescents often refrain from reporting cyberbullying due to fear of conflict, social repercussions, or lack of support from adults. The findings highlight the need for increased awareness, supportive reporting mechanisms, and educational interventions to encourage victims to seek help.

Recipients of Cyberbullying Reports

Table 13. Distribution of Respondents According to Whom They Reported Cyberbullying

Reported To	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Did not report	43	50.00
Parents	21	24.42
Teacher	17	19.77
Friends	15	17.44
Police	13	15.12
Siblings/Family	12	13.95
Dean	9	10.47
Counselor	5	5.81

Table 13 shows that among respondents who reported cyberbullying, most reported to parents (24.42%), followed by teachers (19.77%), friends (17.44%), police (15.12%), siblings or other family members (13.95%), deans (10.47%), and counselors (5.81%). Notably, 50% of respondents did not report incidents at all. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that adolescents are more likely to confide in parents or peers rather than formal authorities, often due to fear, embarrassment, or perceived ineffectiveness of reporting mechanisms.²¹ This underscores the importance of creating safe, accessible channels for reporting cyberbullying in schools and communities.

²⁰ Patchin and Hinduja; Kowalski and others.

²¹ Patchin and Hinduja.

Reasons for Not Reporting Cyberbullying**Table 14. Distribution of Respondents According to Reasons for Not Reporting Cyberbullying**

Reason	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Don't want issues / Avoid conflict	28	34.57
I don't care	27	33.33
Afraid	19	23.46
Don't know how to report	5	6.17
Other reasons	2	2.37

Table 14 illustrates the reasons respondents chose not to report cyberbullying incidents. The most frequently cited reason was a desire to avoid conflict or not create issues, reported by 34.57% of respondents. A nearly equal proportion, 33.33%, indicated indifference, suggesting that many students either did not perceive cyberbullying as serious enough to warrant reporting or were unwilling to engage in formal processes. Fear accounted for 23.46% of the responses, reflecting concerns about retaliation, social repercussions, or escalation of the conflict. Smaller percentages of respondents reported not knowing how to report incidents (6.17%) or cited other unspecified reasons (2.37%). These findings are consistent with previous studies, which indicate that adolescents often refrain from reporting cyberbullying due to fear, embarrassment, perceived lack of support, or uncertainty about reporting procedures. The data suggest that the social and psychological context of students plays a critical role in reporting behaviors, with interpersonal dynamics, peer pressure, and confidence in school or family support influencing whether a student seeks help. Educators and administrators may address this issue by implementing awareness programs, providing clear reporting protocols, and fostering an environment where students feel safe and supported in disclosing cyberbullying experiences. Encouraging communication between parents, teachers, and students could reduce fear and increase the likelihood of reporting, which is crucial for timely intervention and prevention of repeated cyberbullying incidents.

Conclusion

The study reveals that cyberbullying is a notable concern among the respondents, with male students being the majority of both perpetrators and victims. The most common forms of cyberbullying were text bullying, impersonation, flaming, creative bullying, and cyber baiting, with Facebook serving as the primary platform for these behaviors. While most students were involved only occasionally, demographic factors such as daily allowance, parents' occupation, number of devices, and birth order appeared to influence participation, and peer interactions and family dynamics also played a role. Despite experiencing or committing cyberbullying, the majority of students did not report incidents, often due to fear, avoidance of conflict, or lack of knowledge on reporting procedures. Among those who did report, parents, teachers, and friends were the main recipients of complaints, while formal authorities were less frequently involved. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of creating awareness programs, supportive reporting mechanisms, and educational initiatives to foster responsible online behavior, reduce the prevalence of cyberbullying, and promote safer digital and social environments for students.

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Author Contributions Statement

The author, MMDC, supervised and conducted the overall research project, including the development of the research design, preparation of the data collection instrument, and execution of data gathering. MMDC also performed the statistical analysis, assisted in literature review and data processing, and interpreted the results. The author drafted, reviewed, and revised the manuscript and approved the final version for submission, taking full responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the work.

AI Usage Statement

The authors declare that the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in this work was strictly limited to supportive functions. The authors used AI only for language editing, grammar checking, and improving clarity and readability. AI was not used to generate core ideas, conduct substantive analysis, interpret data, or draw scholarly conclusions. The authors retain full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and academic integrity of the content, and AI tools are not credited as authors or contributors, in accordance with ethical standards in academic publishing.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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