



# The self esteem and cyberbullying behaviour of islamic students on social media

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JAGC |  
123

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## Abstract

**Purpose** - This research investigates the correlation between self-esteem and cyberbullying behavior among Islamic higher education students on social media platforms, addressing a critical gap in understanding these behaviors within a specific cultural and religious context.

**Method** - Employing a descriptive-correlational quantitative survey design, the study involved 321 participants. Data analysis was conducted using Pearson correlation to explore the relationship between self-esteem and cyberbullying behaviors among students in Islamic higher education institutions.

**Results** - The analysis revealed a strong and significant relationship between self-esteem and cyberbullying behaviors in this population, emphasizing the interplay between psychological factors and online behaviors in a distinct cultural setting.

**Implication** - This study offers crucial insights into cyberbullying within a unique cultural and religious framework, paving the way for targeted interventions, informed policymaking, and further academic inquiry into the dynamics of cyberbullying in similar contexts.

**Originality/Value** - As the first research to focus specifically on the cyberbullying behavior of Islamic students on social media, this study contributes a novel perspective to the broader cyberbullying literature and highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity in understanding and addressing online behaviors

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**Keywords:**

Harga Diri,  
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**Abstract**

**Tujuan** - Penelitian ini menyelidiki korelasi antara harga diri dan perilaku cyberbullying di kalangan mahasiswa pendidikan tinggi Islam di platform media sosial, untuk mengatasi kesenjangan kritis dalam memahami perilaku ini dalam konteks budaya dan agama tertentu.

**Metode** - Menggunakan desain survei kuantitatif deskriptif-korelasional, penelitian ini melibatkan 321 peserta. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan korelasi Pearson untuk mengeksplorasi hubungan antara harga diri dan perilaku cyberbullying di kalangan mahasiswa di lembaga pendidikan tinggi Islam.

**Hasil** - Analisis mengungkapkan hubungan yang kuat dan signifikan antara harga diri dan perilaku cyberbullying dalam populasi ini, yang menekankan interaksi antara faktor psikologis dan perilaku online dalam lingkungan budaya yang berbeda.

**Implikasi** - Studi ini menawarkan wawasan penting tentang cyberbullying dalam kerangka budaya dan agama yang unik, membuka jalan bagi intervensi yang ditargetkan, pembuatan kebijakan yang terinformasi, dan penyelidikan akademis lebih lanjut tentang dinamika cyberbullying dalam konteks yang sama.

**Keaslian/Nilai** - Sebagai penelitian pertama yang secara khusus berfokus pada perilaku cyberbullying siswa Islam di media sosial, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi perspektif baru pada literatur cyberbullying yang lebih luas dan menyoroti pentingnya kepekaan budaya dalam memahami dan menangani perilaku online

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## **Introduction**

The widespread use of social media platforms has fundamentally changed how individuals interact and view themselves, creating a complex relationship between self-esteem and vulnerability to online harassment. This phenomenon is especially evident among students in Islamic higher education, who actively interact with social media while contending with cultural and religious influences (Vranjes et al. 2018). Cyberbullying, as a continuation of these interactions, presents distinct challenges that necessitate culturally sensitive and context-specific solutions. Comprehending cyberbullying behaviors within the framework of Islamic higher education is essential for formulating effective interventions and support systems that resonate with the values and needs of students.

Self-esteem, characterized as an individual's comprehensive perception of self-worth, significantly influences emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects (Extremera et al. 2018). JAGC | 125

In Islamic contexts, self-esteem is shaped by a combination of cultural norms, academic accomplishments, religious doctrines, and social interactions. These factors collectively influence an individual's self-worth, highlighting dignity, mutual respect, and the inherent value of persons as informed by Islamic principles (Sutarni et al. 2021).

Social media functions as a dual-edged instrument in influencing self-esteem. It offers a platform for positive reinforcement and community development; conversely, it enables social comparisons and exposure to detrimental content, both of which can adversely affect psychological well-being. The accessibility and anonymity provided by social media intensify these effects, significantly impacting students who are in the process of developing their social identities.

Cyberbullying, defined as the utilization of digital technologies to harass, intimidate, or harm individuals, is exhibited through actions such as disseminating rumors, disclosing private or humiliating information, and transmitting threatening communications. These behaviors, frequently anonymous, are exacerbated in culturally diverse environments where religious and societal values converge.

In Islamic higher education institutions, cyberbullying possesses unique dimensions related to students' religious identities. Nurhayati, Dwiningrum, and Efaningrum (2020) observe that cyberbullying frequently targets students due to their religious beliefs, political views, or individual traits. This is especially pertinent in areas where religious identities are politicized or disputed, resulting in a heightened probability of sectarian conflicts extending into online environments.

Numerous studies have underscored the distinct challenges encountered by Islamic students in addressing cyberbullying. Mohd Nor, Syed Abdullah, and Hadis A Rahman (2019) discovered that Islamic students are disproportionately subjected to targeting on social media because of their conspicuous religious symbols or affiliations. This targeting frequently encompasses disparaging remarks, hate speech, and disinformation campaigns designed to subvert their beliefs or foster societal discord. Erliyani (2021) underscores that although Indonesian constitutional frameworks provide substantial protections against cybercrimes, the enforcement of these laws in managing sectarian cyber conflicts is insufficient, rendering numerous students susceptible.

Investigations into the correlation between self-esteem and cyberbullying indicate a multifaceted, reciprocal relationship. Students with diminished self-esteem are more vulnerable to victimization, as they internalize adverse remarks and endure increased anxiety and helplessness. In contrast, individuals

possessing elevated self-esteem demonstrate enhanced resilience and are less susceptible to the adverse effects of online harassment (Rahmatullah, Suud, & Azis, 2022).

Cultural and religious beliefs significantly influence this relationship. In Islamic contexts, where self-esteem is frequently anchored in spiritual values and communal support, the effects of cyberbullying may diverge from those seen in secular environments. Alfiah et al. (2022) demonstrate that students with a robust sense of belonging to their religious community may display elevated self-esteem, thus alleviating the detrimental impacts of cyberbullying. Conversely, students who experience isolation or marginalization within their communities are more susceptible to the psychological impact of online harassment.

Peer relationships significantly influence self-esteem and vulnerability to cyberbullying. Constructive peer interactions, both virtual and in-person, can enhance self-esteem and serve as a safeguard against cyberbullying. In contrast, adverse peer interactions, such as exclusion or mockery, can intensify feelings of inadequacy and heighten the risk of victimization.

The cultural and regional context profoundly affects the interplay between self-esteem and cyberbullying. In Islamic societies, where communal and collective welfare is paramount, the ramifications of cyberbullying transcend individual victims, impacting their families and communities. Sa'adillah (2021) emphasizes the significance of educational initiatives that amalgamate Islamic principles with legal structures to combat cyberbullying among Generation Z learners. These programs underscore the ethical application of technology and the significance of digital literacy in promoting respectful online engagement.

Research conducted by Alfiah et al. (2022) underscores the significance of inclusivity and respect in promoting positive self-esteem among Islamic students. By fostering values such as empathy, tolerance, and mutual respect, educational institutions can establish supportive environments that reduce the likelihood of cyberbullying. Furthermore, incorporating Islamic principles into digital citizenship education can assist students in managing the complexities of social media while remaining aligned with their cultural and religious values.

Notwithstanding these insights, a paucity of research exists regarding the specific relationship between self-esteem and cyberbullying among students in Islamic higher education institutions. This study aims to address this gap by examining the psychological well-being of this demographic and offering practical recommendations for educators, administrators, and policymakers.

The research utilizes multiple theoretical frameworks to analyze the relationship between self-esteem and cyberbullying. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) offers a valuable framework for analyzing the impact of religious and cultural identities on students' experiences with cyberbullying. This theory posits that individuals obtain a substantial part of their self-esteem from their affiliation with social groups. For Islamic students, their religious identity constitutes a fundamental source of self-esteem, enhancing their resilience against cyberbullying that targets their personal attributes. Nonetheless, when these assaults compromise their group identity, the effect on self-esteem can be significant.

The General Aggression Model (Anderson & Bushman, 2002) provides significant insights into the behavioral dynamics of cyberbullying. This model posits that personal and contextual factors, including diminished self-esteem and social stressors, contribute to aggressive behaviors. Cultural and religious

norms may either exacerbate or alleviate the propensity of Islamic students to engage in or be victimized by cyberbullying.

This study's findings have considerable implications for combating cyberbullying in Islamic higher education institutions. By comprehending the distinct cultural and religious influences that shape students' experiences, educators and administrators can formulate targeted interventions that enhance psychological well-being and cultivate a supportive campus environment.

A primary recommendation is the incorporation of digital literacy programs into the curriculum. These programs should prioritize the ethical application of technology, guided by Islamic principles, to assist students in addressing the challenges posed by social media. Furthermore, institutions ought to offer training for educators and staff on identifying and mitigating cyberbullying, emphasizing victim support and the promotion of inclusive communities.

An additional crucial strategy involves the creation of peer support networks that promote constructive interactions and offer a secure environment for students to express their experiences. By cultivating a sense of belonging and reciprocal respect, these networks can enhance self-esteem and mitigate the risks of cyberbullying.

This study examines the intricate relationship between self-esteem and cyberbullying among Islamic higher education students, emphasizing the distinct challenges and opportunities arising from their cultural and religious context. The research analyzes the interaction of these factors, offering essential insights for creating interventions that are consistent with Islamic values and enhance psychological well-being.

Subsequent research ought to expand upon these findings by investigating the experiences of students in various Islamic societies and assessing the enduring effects of cyberbullying on their mental health and academic performance. By cultivating a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics, educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals can collaborate to establish supportive environments that enable Islamic students to excel both online and offline.

## **Research Methods**

This research utilized a descriptive-correlational quantitative survey approach to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and cyberbullying behavior among students in Islamic higher education institutions, focusing on their activities on social media platforms. The choice of a quantitative approach was motivated by the necessity to gather numerical data, facilitating the application of statistical methods to identify patterns and relationships within the studied phenomena (Oliveira, 2005). The main aim was to understand the psychological well-being and online interaction patterns of students, specifically in relation to self-esteem and cyberbullying behavior.

The research collected data from 321 students, utilizing convenience sampling for participant selection. This method, although practical for accessibility, exhibits limitations regarding generalizability and potential bias. Participants were selected from a range of Islamic higher education institutions to ensure sample diversity. The geographic distribution of participants may indicate a bias towards urban or centrally located areas. The demographic analysis indicated a gender imbalance, with females constituting 58% of respondents and males 42%. The age distribution indicated that 51% of participants were between 18 and 21 years old, 41% were aged 22 to 23, and merely 7% were under 24 years of age.

The current demographics offer insights into the student population; however, employing stratified sampling may enhance the representativeness of future studies.

The study's framework was significantly shaped by Islamic identity, which affected the design of the survey and the selection of participants. The survey incorporated questions that reflect Islamic ethical and moral perspectives to assess students' online behaviors. Participants were selected solely from Islamic higher education institutions, ensuring that the sample accurately reflected a population rooted in Islamic educational and cultural values. This approach enhanced the study by integrating Islamic principles into the examination of self-esteem and cyberbullying.

Surveys were selected as the main data collection method because of their efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and ability to address sensitive topics while reducing interviewer bias (Mehrad & Tahriri Zangeneh, 2019). The structured questionnaire enabled participants to self-assess their self-esteem and experiences related to cyberbullying. Responses were analyzed with SPSS 25, utilizing statistical techniques including Pearson correlation to determine significant relationships among the variables. This method facilitated thorough and accurate data analysis. The demographic breakdown of the 321 participants is as follows:

**Table 1. Demographic Information**

Demographic	Respondents	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	135	42
	Female	186	58
Age	18-21	164	51
	22-23	132	41
	<24	25	7

## Results and Discussion

Descriptive data analysis is a statistical method designed to offer a comprehensive summary of the essential characteristics of a dataset. The main aim is to illustrate patterns, distributions, and fundamental characteristics present in the data. This entails the application of fundamental statistical methods to examine the primary variables within the dataset.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Esteem	321	1.1	4.6	2.801	1.0593
Cyberbullying Behavior	321	1.5	4.8	2.88	1.773
Valid N (listwise)	321				

The average self-esteem score of 2.801 indicates that students in Islamic higher education typically possess a moderate level of self-esteem, as measured on a scale from 1.1 to 4.6. The midpoint of this scale indicates a neutral position, rendering the findings relevant for educators, counselors, and policymakers focused on improving student well-being. The observed moderate self-esteem level indicates a necessity for focused interventions aimed at enhancing students' confidence and psychological resilience.

The mean score of 2.88 for cyberbullying behavior suggests that students participate in cyberbullying activities at a moderate level. The findings are essential for formulating interventions and educational initiatives aimed at mitigating cyberbullying in Islamic higher education institutions. Utilizing faith-based and ethical frameworks that are specifically designed for the cultural and educational contexts of Islamic institutions may prove to be particularly effective in addressing these behaviors.

The standard deviations for self-esteem (1.0593) and cyberbullying behavior (1.773) indicate the variability in students' responses. The data indicate varied perspectives and experiences among students regarding self-esteem and involvement in cyberbullying. This diversity highlights the necessity for tailored strategies to meet the needs of students with differing levels of self-esteem and involvement in cyberbullying.

Self-esteem scores range from 1.1 to 4.6, whereas cyberbullying behavior scores range from 1.5 to 4.8. The broad distribution of scores demonstrates considerable variability among the sampled student population, highlighting diverse personal experiences and behavioral patterns. This dispersion highlights the necessity for tailored strategies in tackling self-esteem challenges and cyberbullying behaviors among students.

The analysis highlights the necessity of evaluating both mean scores and variability measures, including standard deviation and range. An in-depth analysis of these statistics can inform the creation of targeted interventions and policies. Counseling programs can be developed to support students with lower self-esteem, while anti-cyberbullying campaigns can be customized to target the diverse behavioral levels among students.

The findings advocate for the incorporation of these insights into the overarching educational and cultural framework of Islamic higher education. This involves integrating Islamic ethical principles into counseling and awareness initiatives to cultivate a positive and respectful online environment, thereby enhancing psychological well-being.

The statistical results of the data analysis were presented, followed by a discussion on the correlation between self-esteem and cyberbullying behavior among students in Islamic higher education institutions on social media platforms. The analysis utilized the Pearson correlation method within SPSS version 25. Prior to data analysis, the author normalized the data to a scale of 100%, thereby ensuring consistency across all factors by applying an equal score standard to each score.

The results shown a significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.724$ ) between self-esteem and cyberbullying behavior among students on social media platforms. This finding indicates that higher self-esteem is associated with an increased likelihood of engaging in cyberbullying. The significance value (2-tailed) of 0.000, which is below the conventional threshold of 0.05, confirms that the observed relationship is statistically significant.

A correlation coefficient of 0.724 indicates a strong association, reflecting a significant relationship between the two variables. The findings underscore the intricate nature of the relationship between self-esteem and cyberbullying. Self-esteem, while generally linked to favorable personal outcomes, may in specific contexts lead to behaviors such as cyberbullying, potentially stemming from overconfidence or the inappropriate exercise of social power on digital platforms.

This correlation highlights the necessity for educational institutions, especially within Islamic contexts, to create targeted interventions that focus on improving self-esteem and reducing detrimental

online behaviors. Programs emphasizing Islamic ethics, promoting digital literacy, and encouraging respectful online interactions may play a crucial role in addressing these issues.

Understanding this relationship enables educators, counselors, and policymakers to formulate strategies that harmonize the enhancement of self-esteem with the promotion of ethical online behavior.

These initiatives may reduce cyberbullying and promote a more respectful and supportive digital community within Islamic Higher Education institutions.

The behavior of cyberbullying in Islamic higher education settings may be shaped by socio-cultural and religious factors specific to these institutions. Islam underscores the importance of values such as mutual respect, humility, and kindness in social interactions, providing a framework for ethical conduct in both online and offline contexts. When these values are insufficiently instilled or maintained, negative behaviors like cyberbullying may arise, often intensified by the anonymity and accessibility of digital platforms.

A significant socio-cultural factor is the degree of religious comprehension and commitment among students. Students with a solid foundation in Islamic teachings may internalize values such as respect and accountability, which could decrease their propensity for cyberbullying. In contrast, individuals with a limited understanding or inconsistent application of these principles may overlook the ethical and spiritual consequences of detrimental online behavior. Institutions that prioritize holistic Islamic education, combining ethical teachings with digital literacy, are more likely to cultivate respectful online environments.

The influence of Islamic identity on online behavior merits examination. Students with a strong identification with Islamic values may encounter cognitive dissonance when participating in cyberbullying. Nonetheless, the influence of peer norms on social media, frequently motivated by the pursuit of popularity or the apprehension of exclusion, can occasionally supersede ethical considerations. This highlights the necessity for interventions that both strengthen Islamic values and tackle the socio-psychological factors contributing to cyberbullying.

Gender significantly influences the dynamics of cyberbullying. This study found that 58% of respondents were female and 42% were male, indicating a marginally higher representation of women. Studies indicate that males are more prone to participate in overt cyberbullying behaviors, including threats and public ridicule, while females are more likely to exhibit relational aggression, such as exclusion and the dissemination of rumors online. Behaviors are influenced by societal expectations and gender roles in Islamic contexts, where modesty, reputation, and interpersonal relationships are particularly valued for women.

Islamic teachings emphasize respect and dignity for both genders and can be utilized to address these differences. Programs designed to engage students in discussions regarding gender-specific online challenges, grounded in Islamic principles, can effectively reduce instances of cyberbullying.

The educational attainment of students in Islamic higher education institutions may impact cyberbullying behavior. Students in earlier stages of education may exhibit greater susceptibility to peer pressure and possess a limited awareness of the consequences of their actions, as their moral and intellectual maturity is still in development. Senior students with greater exposure to Islamic ethical teachings and academic training may exhibit enhanced self-regulation and critical thinking, which could reduce their participation in cyberbullying.



Educational interventions must be customized to align with varying academic levels. Junior students may gain from foundational workshops integrating Islamic ethics and digital etiquette, whereas senior students could participate in peer mentoring programs that promote exemplary online behavior.

The interaction of socio-cultural, gender, and educational factors underscores the complexity of cyberbullying in Islamic higher education. Addressing this issue necessitates a comprehensive approach that incorporates Islamic teachings, fosters gender sensitivity, and customizes interventions according to the developmental stages of students. Institutions can create an environment that promotes respect, accountability, and compassion in both online and offline contexts.

The results are supported by Alsawalqa (2021), who examined the correlation between cyberbullying and self-esteem levels among university students from East and Southeast Asian backgrounds residing in Jordan during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research examined the relationship and differences between gender and nationality, as well as their connection to the prevalence of cyberbullying. The research findings on cyberbullying in a university context within an Arab nation can significantly inform the development of policies and interventions to address this issue, especially regarding interactions between domestic and international students. Rigby and Slee (1992) found no statistically significant correlation between self-esteem and the tendency to engage in bullying behavior. O'Moore and Kirkham (2001). Shaikh et al. (2021) confirm that subjective norms exert a significant positive influence on the cyberbullying attitudes of Malaysian undergraduates. The study seeks to enhance research on cyberbullying behavior by presenting a validated conceptual model that predicts the cyberbullying behavior of Malaysian university students. This study found that social media usage moderates the relationship between cyberbullying intention and cyberbullying behavior. Abdul Ghani et al. (2022) identified a significant association between social media use and depression, encompassing factors such as body image, online harassment, sleep, and self-esteem. It is essential to propose guidelines and educational initiatives for the improved and safe use of social media in our country as a preventive measure for the future.

Although cyberbullying is prohibited in Islamic teachings, it continues to occur in Islamic higher education. Abdul Hamid et al. (2021) utilized a qualitative approach, employing the library method to analyze the texts of the Quran and Hadith, alongside the scholarly discourse regarding the phenomenon of cyberbullying among Muslims. The use of content analysis tools is applied to examine the patterns and characteristics of cyberbullying incidents within digital media. Safaria (2015) argues that cyberbullying, while it may offer perpetrators a sense of pleasure, is fundamentally immoral and constitutes a breach of legal standards. Islam unequivocally prohibits such actions, regardless of the victims' backgrounds. It is essential for individuals using digital media to demonstrate appropriate conduct and ethical behavior when interacting with others, especially on cyber platforms, to promote a more cohesive and secure digital environment (Shaikh, Rehman, and Amin 2020).

## **Conclusion**

To address cyberbullying in Islamic higher education institutions, educational policies must prioritize the enhancement of positive self-esteem and ethical behavior in both online and offline contexts. Programs aimed at improving students' self-worth through Islamic teachings, social skills, and emotional intelligence may decrease the probability of involvement in detrimental online behaviors. Digital literacy campaigns must be integrated into the curriculum to emphasize the implications of

cyberbullying and to promote a culture of respect and empathy. Educational interventions ought to promote online self-reflection among students, thereby mitigating the adverse effects of social comparisons and decreasing the likelihood of cyberbullying as a form of self-validation.

JAGC | 132 Social interventions must not only promote a culture of positive self-esteem but also tackle the cultural and societal pressures encountered by students, especially within Islamic contexts. Interventions that foster inclusivity, empathy, and ethical behavior in online environments, informed by Islamic principles, can mitigate the disinhibition effect observed in digital interactions. Implementation of peer support systems, counseling services, and awareness campaigns is essential for assisting students in navigating social media responsibly. Institutions must establish explicit anti-cyberbullying policies that incorporate proactive measures and offer resources to assist victims of cyberbullying. Customizing these interventions to the unique cultural and contextual factors of Islamic higher education will enhance their efficacy in reducing cyberbullying and promoting a healthier digital environment.

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Ningsih, W.

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