

The Role of Empathy in Social Intelligence to Reduce Cyberbullying Among Adolescents

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Abstract

The increasingly widespread phenomenon of online bullying among adolescents raises concerns about the social and emotional development of the younger generation. Although various interventions have been implemented, efforts to reduce this negative behavior often fail to address the root cause, which is related to adolescents' psychosocial aspects. One important dimension of social intelligence believed to play a significant role in reducing digital bullying is empathy, especially in the context of online interactions. This study used a qualitative approach, collecting data from various literature sources, previous study findings, and in-depth analysis of narratives relevant to the research focus. This study aims to explore how the empathy dimension of social intelligence can contribute to reducing cyberbullying among adolescents. The results show that strengthening empathy can be an important foundation in shaping adolescents' social awareness in the digital space. Empathy has been shown to reduce the urge to engage in verbal and non-verbal aggression online and increase an individual's willingness to act as a mediator or advocate for victims. Fostering empathy through character education, meaningful social interactions, and empathetic communication training is a strategic step in creating a healthier and safer digital space for adolescents.

Keywords: *Empathy, Social Intelligence, Cyberbullying, Adolescents.*



A. INTRODUCTION

The increasingly widespread phenomenon of digital violence among adolescents is a serious concern in the context of the social and psychological development of the younger generation. In an era of limitless connectivity marked by the presence of social media and online communication, non-physical but profoundly impactful forms of violence, such as cyberbullying, have seen a significant increase (Tirocchi et al., 2022). Easy access to the virtual world opens up a space for interaction that not only strengthens relationships but also creates opportunities for aggressive acts disguised behind anonymity or emotional distance. In this context, adolescents are the most vulnerable group because they are undergoing a complex emotional and social transition, while the digital world offers a free arena and not always adequate supervision (Chawki et al., 2024).

This situation is exacerbated by the fact that many adolescents lack the maturity to manage healthy social relationships in the digital realm. The speed of information received, social pressure from peers, and the demand to appear ideal in cyberspace often trap them in unhealthy interaction patterns (Odgers & Jensen, 2020). When feelings of insecurity, anxiety, or the need for approval become dominant, verbal harm through social media emerges as a form of outlet or a quest for social power. This reality illustrates that the root of cyberbullying lies not solely in technology, but in the

social dynamics that shape it. Furthermore, emotional responses and the ability to understand others' situations don't develop evenly across individuals, making it easier for some teens to engage in hurtful online behavior (O'Keeffe & Daley, 2023).

One of the biggest challenges in reducing aggressive behavior in the digital space is building social awareness that touches the deepest dimensions of human relationships. Prevention efforts cannot rely solely on punishment or prohibition, as the roots of problematic behavior often stem from unmanaged emotional experiences, low sensitivity to others, and weak, healthy social relationships (Della Longa et al., 2022). In this context, the role of families, schools, and the social environment is crucial in creating a climate that supports the formation of positive relationships, both in the real world and online. However, these structural interventions are insufficient without an approach that addresses the internal aspects of each individual, particularly how they understand, feel, and respond to the presence of others in social interactions (Liu et al., 2020).

Despite various cyberbullying prevention policies and campaigns, a gap remains between collective awareness and actual behavioral change among adolescents. Many programs emphasize technical aspects or behavioral norms, but fail to deeply address the emotional underpinnings of this deviant behavior (Siddiqui & Schultze-Krumbholz, 2023). Adolescents who experience or become perpetrators of cyberbullying often experience complex emotional states, such as feelings of isolation, rejection, or a desire for power. In such situations, online violence can be a form of miscommunication of unmet needs. Therefore, attention to the emotional and social dimensions of adolescents is crucial in formulating more comprehensive strategies (Cañas et al., 2020).

Furthermore, various observations of the dynamics of adolescent relationships in the digital space demonstrate that the ability to put oneself in another person's perspective and perceive the emotional impact of an action on others significantly determines the extent to which an individual can refrain from hurtful acts. This lack of ability is not simply a result of a lack of formal education, but also due to daily interaction patterns that do not provide space for the development of deep emotional experiences (Granic et al., 2020). An affectively depleted environment, a lack of role models exemplifying healthy social relationships, and a culture of harsh and sarcastic communication in everyday life contribute to adolescents' tendency to perceive verbally hurtful acts online as normal or even humorous. In situations like this, developing social sensitivity based on authentic emotional experiences is one path that must be seriously considered (Fine & Love-Nichols, 2023).

The emergence of various forms of harassment, insults, and threats spread through social media platforms is not only an indicator of low self-control but also reflects a lack of social experiences that shape the ability to build healthy relationships. When digital interaction becomes the primary arena for adolescents to express themselves, what they display often reflects their inner world, untouched by meaningful social experiences (Turner et al., 2023). In this context, it is not surprising that cyberbullying has increased along with the increasing use of communication

technology. Ironically, even though adolescents are highly accustomed to technology, they do not necessarily possess adequate social skills to interact constructively. This suggests that adaptation to technology does not always align with social and emotional maturity, especially if it is not accompanied by experiences that foster concern and sensitivity to others (Pyżalski et al., 2022).

These conditions pose significant challenges for all parties seeking to create a healthier and safer digital space for the younger generation. If efforts to address cyberbullying are limited to digital monitoring and formal sanctions, the underlying issues will remain unaddressed. Therefore, an approach that addresses the psychosocial aspects of adolescents is needed, emphasizing social experiences as key to developing critical awareness and moral responsibility in online interactions. Amidst the complexity of these issues, building a supportive emotional climate and fostering a caring attitude toward others is a strategic step that deserves attention. Only in this way can adolescents' social relationships in the digital world be directed toward healthier, more humane interactions, free from aggressive behavior that is emotionally and psychologically damaging.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Willard's theory, cyberbullying is the activity of uploading or sending harmful or socially aggressive content via the internet and other technologies. Kowalski, in Karyanti, states that electronic communication tools have moved the discussion about bullying into cyberspace. Bullying here has similarities with traditional bullying, but in modern terms, it is better known as cyberbullying, which is defined as electronic bullying or bold social crime (Zhang et al., 2022) which involves the use of information and communication technologies (e.g., email, mobile devices, or websites) by individuals or groups of individuals to harm other individuals, spread information and insults that can be seen by people, and cover up the target (Hoareau et al., 2023). Aftab states that cyberbullying generally occurs online using digital and internet-based tools, including blogs, online forums, social networking sites, email, instant messaging, and mobile devices such as smartphones, SMS, and MMS which are intentionally and repeatedly used to harass, threaten, or annoy others. Its primary purpose is to socially isolate, harass, intimidate, threaten, insult, or damage the reputation of another individual (Sweet et al., 2020). It can also be said that cyberbullying is a practice that can negatively impact the morale and well-being of its victims (Buçaj & Haziri, 2024).

In essence, bullying is negative behavior carried out by a person or group of people to another person repeatedly over time, resulting in the victim being uncomfortable/injured or suffering, both physically and psychologically (Olweus, 1993) which is carried out via the internet (Jean, C. 1996). Cyberbullying, according to Willard, includes seven aspects, a) Flaming: The act of sending direct messages accompanied by harsh words. This usually occurs in social media chat groups, usually by sending images intended to insult someone; b) online harassment: sending offensive messages repeatedly via email or other text messages to someone; c)

defamation: posting negative comments on social media with the intention of defaming someone's good name or reputation and thus causing negative opinions among others; d) impersonation/defamation: the act of pretending to be someone else and then sending offensive messages to them; e) defamation and fraud: defamation is the act of spreading personal photos or confidential information about another person. Fraud is the act of tricking another person to obtain confidential and personal information; f) exclusion: the act of intentionally removing someone from an online group without a clear reason; and g) cyberstalking: is an act of threats or intimidation carried out repeatedly through electronic communication.

The causes of bullying are not singular, but multifactorial (Olweus, 1993; Coloroso, 2006). These factors can be categorized into two factors, namely personal and situational factors. One personal factor that influences bullying is a low level of empathy in the perpetrator of bullying (Staryer & Roberts, 2004; Caravita, Balsio & Salmivalli, 2008; Munoz, Qualter & Padgett, 2011). Various research results show that empathy is correlated with bullying. In addition, various forms of bullying were found, namely physical bullying such as hitting or physically injuring and psychological bullying, namely actions that cause psychological wounds (Rauskina et al., 2005). The findings of Jean (1996) called psychological bullying as nonverbal/nonphysical bullying and verbal bullying where the perpetrator uses words to hurt others through teasing, insults, making racist comments, threats, spreading rumors, or harassment, whether delivered directly or indirectly. Indirect forms of verbal bullying have developed along with technological advances such as the internet, telecommunications, and the rise of social media. The reality of bullying through the virtual world is often referred to as cyberbullying (Franek, in Milsom & Gallo, 2006). Both physical and psychological bullying can be direct and indirect Olweus (1993) and Jean, J. (1996).

Facts show that one of the factors that can encourage someone to become a bully is a low ability to empathize (Ozkan and Cifci (2009) which is in line with the findings of Olweus (2005) and Coloroso (2006) that bullies generally have a high level of aggressiveness and lack empathy, and have antisocial behavior that causes a deficiency of affection to empathize (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2006). According to Davis (1980), empathy includes the affective capacity to feel feelings with others and the cognitive capacity to understand other people's points of view. In line with this concept, Herri Zan Pieter (2012) states that empathy is a willingness to understand others completely, both visible and invisible in the aspects of feelings, thoughts, and desires which include the ability to identify and understand other people's feelings, take other people's points of view, and the emotional aspect of the situation faced by others (Cartledge & Milburn, 1995). A person's ability to empathize can be in the form of cognitive capacity and affective.

The results of Andayani's (2012) meta-analysis study, conducted through two artifact corrections: correction for sampling error and correction for measurement error in 23 primary studies on the role of empathy in bullying, showed that the relationship between empathy and bullying is real/positive. This means that the

higher the ability to empathize, the lower the bullying behavior, and conversely, lower empathy will increase bullying. Someone with high empathy will not let others get into trouble, so they will not engage in bullying behavior that will hurt or make others suffer.

Although research has shown that increasing empathy can reduce bullying behavior, Chaux et al.'s (2009) research suggests that family environmental factors also play a role in bullying. Bullying behavior will be lower if children are raised in a peaceful family environment and with democratic parenting. Research by Baldry, Baldry, and Farrington (in Chaux et al., 2009) shows that children raised in families characterized by violence and authoritarian parenting are more likely to become bullies. Furthermore, the individual's psychosocial condition also requires in-depth study.

C. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach as a basis for in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of social barriers to developing interpersonal sensitivity, particularly among adolescents. This approach was chosen because it can explain complex social realities through the interpretation of meanings, experiences, and social interactions experienced by individuals. The primary focus of this study is not on quantitative measurements, but rather on a deeper understanding of the various social, emotional, and cultural factors that shape the ability to empathize with individuals' social responses. The results indicate that strengthening cognitive and affective empathy can be an important foundation for developing adolescents' social awareness in the digital space.

Therefore, this method allows researchers to more deeply explore the role of empathy in the environmental context that influences interpersonal sensitivity in everyday life. This includes: (1) how adolescents' emotional complexity in digital interactions is portrayed; (2) how adolescents' internal mechanisms respond to online social conflict; (3) how social barriers to developing interpersonal sensitivity are portrayed; and (4) how strengthening social relationships plays a role in preventing cyberbullying.

Data collection in this study was conducted through a search of various relevant sources, such as previous research, literature reviews, and scientific publications that support thematic analysis. Each piece of data obtained was systematically reviewed to identify patterns of social meaning and frequently encountered obstacles in the development of social sensitivity, specifically empathy. After all data was collected, the next step was to process and analyze it using a descriptive-qualitative approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the four research focuses mentioned above. This analysis process was conducted reflectively and contextually to produce conclusions that were not only descriptive but also critical and relevant to the social dynamics developing in today's society (Sulistiyo, 2023).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Emotional Complexity of Adolescents in Digital Interactions

In a fast-paced and stressful digital world, teenagers face increasingly complex emotional challenges due to interactions that are no longer limited by time and space. Social media and online communication platforms have become an integral part of their daily lives, but behind the ease of access and connectivity, lingering inner tensions lurk. The pressure to meet social expectations, gain attention, or maintain a desired self-image leaves many teenagers in a state of psychological instability. When every post, comment, or even an absence online can be a measure of social acceptance, teenagers face emotional pressures that are difficult for them to understand and manage. The anxiety that arises from the fear of losing recognition from their group or peers often triggers prolonged inner tension, especially when they lack mature coping mechanisms to deal with such situations.

In such situations, the need for acceptance becomes one of the most powerful drivers shaping adolescent behavior in the digital space. The desire for likes, positive comments, or simply a response from others on social media often forms a fragile standard of self-esteem. When these expectations aren't met—whether by not receiving a response, or by being the target of ridicule or negative comments—a profound internal conflict arises (McCrory et al., 2022). On the one hand, teens desperately want to be part of a virtual community they deem important, but on the other hand, when they experience rejection, they feel devastated and lost. The struggle between the desire for recognition and the response to these unpleasant experiences creates emotional instability that is difficult to manage. In many cases, these experiences lead to feelings of low self-esteem, shame, and even a desire to isolate oneself, even though all of this occurs behind the scenes (Jones et al., 2024).

The recurring emotional instability resulting from social dynamics in the online world makes teenagers highly vulnerable to disproportionate emotional outbursts. Comments that may have been intended neutrally or even jokingly can be overreacted to due to the accumulated emotional burden. In many cases, negative emotions such as anger, sadness, or offense are not expressed constructively, but rather through impulsive actions, such as responding with sharp comments, sharing content that corners others, or even withdrawing from social interactions altogether. These unstable emotional responses become a recurring pattern, especially when they feel there is no safe space to process their feelings healthily. This indicates that the digital world not only expands social networks but also increases the likelihood of emotional distortion, especially when teenagers lack sufficient social experience to manage their reactions wisely.

Furthermore, when faced with these uncomfortable emotional states, teenagers often choose to mask their vulnerability by constructing an image of strength and indifference. One common form of self-protection is the use of aggressive or sarcastic expressions in digital interactions. When they feel cornered or humiliated, teenagers tend to fight back, not by expressing their true feelings, but by creating a cynical,

sharp, or even aggressive persona. This pattern isn't necessarily a form of malice, but rather a defense mechanism against deep-seated insecurities. They don't want to appear weak or inferior in front of the digital public, so attacking or cornering others becomes a way to maintain their social standing within the group. Unfortunately, this mechanism often not only hurts others but also worsens their emotional well-being.

Virtual group dynamics further complicate adolescents' emotional structures in digital spaces. When they are in active online groups with established interaction norms, the pressure to conform becomes intense. Attitudes and decisions made in digital forums are no longer entirely based on personal reflection, but are heavily influenced by group consensus or prevailing dominant trends. If a group tends to encourage behavior that ridicules, ridicules, or puts down others, the tendency to follow that pattern becomes even greater. In this situation, adolescents' emotions become not only a reflection of their personal feelings but also a result of social conditioning in the virtual environment. The drive for group acceptance often causes them to abandon moral considerations and replace them with behavior that aligns with group dynamics, even if it means hurting others. As a result, emotional tension arises not only from internal conflict but also from the conflict between personal values and collective pressures.

2. Internal Mechanisms of Adolescents in Responding to Online Social Conflict

When faced with the social dynamics of the digital world, teenagers often exhibit spontaneous responses that are not always rational or proportionate to the situation they face. The instantaneous and real-time nature of social media platforms fosters an environment that demands quick reactions, where time becomes a measure of participation and existence. In such contexts, the emergence of negative stimuli—such as hurtful comments, provocative posts, or hidden forms of sarcasm—often triggers impulsive reactions in teenagers. They tend to respond without sufficient reflection, as emotional impulses often overpower logical considerations. These reactions can manifest as sharp replies, emotional posts, or hasty, inflammatory actions, often without considering the long-term impact of these actions. This reflects the fact that in the digital world, teenagers' thought processes are easily interrupted by poorly managed emotional pressure.

Another difficulty teenagers often face in responding to online social conflict is their limited ability to understand the intent and nuances of other parties' communications. The absence of facial expressions, vocal intonation, or body language in online communication leaves messages highly open to interpretation. Teenagers, who are generally still developing interpersonal communication skills, often misinterpret messages because they rely on personal assumptions heavily influenced by emotions or previous experiences. A brief comment can be interpreted as sarcasm, a silent response can be interpreted as rejection, and even a compliment can be received with suspicion, depending on their emotional state at the time of receiving the message. This inability to read the full context often leaves them on the

defensive, feeling attacked or ignored, increasing the likelihood of conflict even when the other person has no ill intentions (Notley et al., 2023).

The process of forming perceptions of others' actions in digital spaces is heavily influenced by the adolescent's emotional background. When they are mentally unstable, suppressed feelings of anxiety, loneliness, or anger can shape how they interpret social interactions. A general post from someone else may be associated with personal sarcasm, a random comment may be perceived as rejection, and even a neutral attitude may be interpreted as hostility. This pattern suggests that social perceptions in cyberspace are influenced not only by the content of the message but also by the adolescent's mental state at the time of receiving it. In situations like this, the emotional responses often do not reflect reality but are instead the result of subjective interpretations created by the accumulation of unresolved feelings. This exacerbates conflicts, as initially minor issues can escalate due to unfounded assumptions.

In the social decision-making process, adolescents also tend to be heavily influenced by the need for validation from their peers. The digital world has created a kind of social performance arena, where every reaction, comment, and post become part of a symbolic battle for recognition from others. When engaging in conflict, many adolescents consider not solely the rightness or wrongness of an action, but rather the level of support or defense they can expect from peers (Icenogle & Cauffman, 2021). Consequently, decisions to respond to comments, retaliate, or even humiliate someone in digital public spaces are influenced not only by personal anger but also by the urge to demonstrate courage, power, or group solidarity. In this logic, responding aggressively to online social conflict becomes a tool for maintaining social standing within the group, even if it undermines broader social relations.

The inability to resist the urge to spontaneously retaliate against verbal attacks is a manifestation of the weak self-control that often occurs among adolescents. When they feel attacked, ignored, or humiliated, the urge to retaliate becomes overwhelming, as if such swift action were a legitimate form of self-defense. However, in reality, retaliating without careful thought escalates the conflict and increases the likelihood of a never-ending cycle of mutual harm. When one party responds with a negative comment, the other party responds in kind, and so on. This pattern creates an increasingly violent and unhealthy digital interaction space, where emotional sensitivity is eroded by the desire to win in social conflicts. This demonstrates that adolescents' internal mechanisms for responding to online social conflict are still very fragile, and they often fall into destructive reaction patterns because they cannot manage emotional stress healthily.

3. Social Barriers to Cultivating Interpersonal Sensitivity

In the context of today's adolescent social life, one of the biggest challenges hindering the development of interpersonal sensitivity is the lack of quality interactions in real life. Although adolescents are increasingly digitally connected, they are becoming increasingly emotionally and socially distant in their daily

interactions. Many physical encounters do not foster closeness or deep understanding, as more attention is focused on digital devices than on genuine, meaningful conversations. This situation leaves adolescents with insufficient space to directly observe others' emotional expressions or to fully experience the impact of someone's presence. As a result, their ability to subtly perceive others' feelings and respond empathetically is blunted. This lack of emotionally rich interactions contributes significantly to a decline in social sensitivity, which in turn creates emotional distance that limits the quality of their interpersonal relationships.

Furthermore, adolescents often struggle to develop sensitivity to others because they lack a safe space to express their feelings honestly. In a social environment filled with pressure to appear strong, confident, and agreeable, many adolescents choose to hide their true feelings. Fear of negative judgment, ridicule, or exclusion can lead them to shut down open and honest conversations (Clonan-Roy et al., 2021). This creates a culture of shallow communication, where authentic expressions of feelings are rare. Without spaces that allow them to learn to understand and respond to others' emotions naturally, adolescents miss out on opportunities to develop empathy and build caring relationships. This lack of emotional safety not only makes them more vulnerable to social isolation but also reinforces a tendency to be indifferent to the feelings and emotional well-being of others.

Communication patterns established within the family and peer group also play a significant role in shaping how adolescents view differences and conflict. In families that tend to emphasize obedience and discourage open dialogue, adolescents lack the experience of safely voicing their opinions, let alone learning to listen to others' perspectives equally (Zhou et al., 2023). Conversely, if their peer group is accustomed to seeing conflicts resolved harshly or cynically, these patterns will become a template for shaping their responses to differences. As a result, conflict is often viewed as confrontational rather than cooperative, and sensitivity to others' positions and emotions is neglected. In these circumstances, interactions that should be a platform for building understanding and closeness become arenas for defending one's position or winning an argument, leaving no room for empathy.

Traumatic or painful past experiences can also shape negative emotional responses that are difficult to resolve in social relationships. Adolescents who have experienced betrayal, bullying, or rejection from those close to them tend to develop protective, often aggressive, defense mechanisms. They may treat others with suspicion, refuse to open up, or even exhibit cynicism as a way to prevent the pain from recurring. These experiences instill emotional wounds that shape the mindset that others cannot be trusted or will always pose a threat. Within this framework, it is very difficult for them to develop sensitivity to the suffering or hardships of others, as they are still grappling with unhealed wounds. Social sensitivity is hampered not by inability, but by the need to protect themselves from the possibility of further harm.

Furthermore, in the dynamic social environment of adolescents, the line between jokes and insults often becomes blurred. Many interactions packaged as humor or jokes carry hurtful content, but are tolerated because they are considered

"funny" or "casual." Teenagers accustomed to this environment may have difficulty distinguishing between entertaining and demeaning interactions. When a joke turns out to hurt someone's feelings, the response often involves not reflection, but defense or reversal of the accusation. This pattern not only blurs ethical boundaries in communication but also weakens sensitivity to the impact of words on others. Sensitivity gradually dies because it is never honed, while emotional violations are allowed to become part of everyday life without healthy correction from the environment.

4. The Role of Strengthening Social Relations in Preventing Online Aggressive Behavior

In the increasingly complex landscape of digital interactions, the role of strong and healthy social relationships is increasingly crucial as a foundation for preventing aggressive online behavior. When individuals have positive social experiences from an early age, both in the real world and in constructive online communities, they tend to develop more mature skills in managing their feelings toward others. These social experiences foster sensitivity to both their own and others' emotions, making them more cautious in expressing opinions or responding to differences in the digital space. The existence of stable, safe, and respectful relationships provides a natural learning environment for individuals to understand that interactions are not simply the exchange of information but also involve emotional and social responsibility for their impact.

When individuals are in supportive relationships, they not only have the space to express themselves authentically but also receive feedback that fosters empathy and a willingness to understand others' perspectives. In such relationships, an indirect learning process occurs in each individual who has a different background, experience, and sensitivity (Suyemoto et al., 2021). This process of mutual understanding then creates a kind of internal social brake that can restrain the impulse to react aggressively or demean others in online conversations. Furthermore, social support not only provides calm in conflict situations, but also acts as a bridge-to-bridge differences through a more dialogical and open approach, so that online interactions change from potential conflict to opportunities to build understanding.

A consistent and healthy pattern of social engagement gradually fosters a sense of responsibility in interactions, including in the digital space. Individuals who are actively involved in social life, whether through friendships, communities, or participation in collective activities, are accustomed to considering the consequences of their actions on others. This instills an understanding that every word, comment, or action online impacts the psychological well-being of others, leading to ethical considerations before taking action. The more frequently a person engages in healthy social relationships, the stronger their sense of social responsibility becomes, and this indirectly serves as a barrier against impulsive impulses that can lead to hurtful, demeaning, or verbally aggressive behavior in the digital space.

The internal drive to maintain the harmony of established relationships with others is also a powerful force in preventing aggressive behavior online. When someone feels emotionally and socially connected to those around them, they tend to be more cautious about damaging the dynamics of those relationships (Khanagha et al., 2022). The feeling of belonging and being valued within a group or community makes individuals more aware that their attitudes, including those expressed through digital media, have the potential to impact the quality of established relationships. The desire to maintain harmonious connections motivates people to avoid confrontational behavior, hurting others, or damaging their reputations. In this context, social relationships serve not only as a refuge but also as a mirror that reflects the impact of one's actions and words.

Active involvement in social environments also provides a reflective medium for individuals to understand the impact of their digital behavior. Through repeated social interactions, individuals are exposed to various responses to their actions, both directly and through observation of the social dynamics around them. This process encourages individuals to engage in introspection, evaluate their communication methods, and reconsider the values and principles underlying their actions. This kind of reflection serves as an important starting point for understanding that aggressive actions not only harm others but also create self-defeating social distance. Therefore, active and conscious social engagement can internalize positive values that gradually shape self-control, ethical awareness, and a commitment to maintaining a healthier and more humane digital space.

Thus, social relationships strengthened through positive experiences, emotional support, a sense of responsibility, and collective social reflection play a key role in shaping individuals who are not only emotionally competent but also socially responsible. In situations where digital media is often used as a platform for venting frustration or expressing dissatisfaction, the existence of healthy social relationships serves as a support system capable of curbing these tendencies. It serves as the foundation for creating a more empathetic online culture that values difference and strengthens the values of coexistence necessary for living in an increasingly connected and complex digital society.

E. CONCLUSION

The empathy dimension of social intelligence plays a central role in efforts to reduce cyberbullying behavior among adolescents. Empathy is not simply the ability to sense others' emotions, but also reflects an individual's capacity to form healthier social connections, manage emotional dynamics in digital interactions, and strengthen the internal drive to avoid verbally or emotionally harming others online. In this context, strengthening positive social relationships provides a foundation that enriches adolescents' ability to manage conflict, delay aggressive responses, and foster responsibility for the social impact of their digital behavior. Quality social interactions filled with emotional support and active engagement can form psychological and moral filters in adolescents' minds to respond more wisely to digital provocations. A

healthy social environment not only strengthens empathetic abilities but also serves as a medium for reflection on how online actions affect one's relationships and overall social identity. Therefore, cyberbullying prevention strategies cannot simply focus on technical or regulatory aspects; they need to place the development of social empathy as a key pillar in shaping a more humane, just, and respectful digital culture among adolescents.

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