PREVENTIVE AND CURATIVE STRATEGIES FOR CYBERBULLYING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Salsabila Firanandy Sanhaji[1], Evi Winingsih [2]

[1]State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia, salsabila.22040@mhs.unesa.ac.id

[2]State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia, eviwiningsih@unesa.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying is a major factor with increasingly serious impacts on the mental health, academic performance, and social relationships of secondary school students. Therefore, this study, using the PRISMA protocol, conducted a scientific review report (SLR) of 10 peer-reviewed articles published by leading publishers between 2015 and 2025. The report identified these strategies as the best prevention strategies to improve the safety of secondary school students in the digital environment. In this context, digital literacy, awareness training, and the role of teachers and parents should be considered as immediate interventions to reduce risk through prevention strategies. Counseling, cognitive behavioral therapy, and peer support are described as recovery strategies for students who have been victims of cyberbullying. This provides evidence that prevention and intervention should not be addressed in isolation but should be integrated into a framework promoted by schools and families with the support of policymakers. Future research should focus on cross-cultural and longitudinal studies to ensure that prevention and intervention strategies are applicable across educational settings and cultures.

Keyword**s:** cyberbullying, preventive strategies, remedial efforts, secondary school, systematic literature review.

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has reshaped how young people interact, communicate, and learn. Among the most active users of social media are secondary school students, who experience both the benefits and risks of this development. One of the most serious risks is cyberbullying, which can be defined as intentional and repeated aggressive behaviour conducted through electronic media to harm others (Chicote, González-Víllora, & García-Ceberino, 2024). Compared with traditional bullying, cyberbullying is often anonymous, can persist over time, and may spread quickly, making it particularly difficult to prevent and control (Dailey & Roche, 2025).

The effects of cyberbullying are wide-ranging, impacting students' mental health, academic outcomes, and social interactions. Many victims struggle with psychological issues such as anxiety, depressive symptoms, and reduced self-confidence, and in more severe cases, some may even develop post-traumatic stress (Florang, 2020). Academic performance can also be disrupted, as cyberbullying is linked to difficulties in concentration, loss of motivation, and higher rates of absenteeism. Socially, many victims withdraw from peers and become isolated, which may lead to unhealthy coping behaviours and hinder their personal development over time. These outcomes demonstrate that cyberbullying is not only a personal issue but also an educational concern that undermines efforts to build safe and inclusive learning environments.

The significance of the issue is further underscored by its damning global prevalence. As reported in a UNICEF (2020) survey, ev ery fifth adolescent from thirty different countries has been a victim of cyberbullying. In Europe, the figures range from 21% in Spain to almost 37% in Romania while in the United States, around 15% of high school students reported being victimized in the past year (CDC, 2021). Hernandez et al (2021) also estimate prevalence rates of 20-30% in a myriad of contexts. This means that cyberbullying is a largely ignored and critical issue deserving of thoughtful, comprehensive focus.

Though there has been a growing body of literature concerning cyberbullying, it isclear there has been a lack of proper integration of preventative and curative approaches. Preventive strategies such as digital literacy training, social and emotional learning, and awareness campaigns can help reduce risk, while treatment approaches such as counseling, cognitive behavioral therapy, and technology-based interventions can support victims after the incident. However, these strategies have been shown to be extremely harmful when used alone (Ranjith et al., 2025).

To address this gap, the current research conducts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following the PRISMA methodology. The review aims to analyse particular preventive and intervention strategies used in the context of secondary schools to address cyberbullying. This study aspires to deepen the understanding of the ways in which recent international research integrates by formulating strategies that apply to each of the constituent elements. In so doing, it aspires to offer practical recommendations to supplement the existing academic literature in relation to counsellors, educators, and policymakers to assist in more comprehensive and durable strategies.

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METHOD

This study used the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method under the PRISMA approach^1 making it preferred since it allows accumulation, comparison, and critical appraisal of earlier studies on preventive and intervention strategies in managing cyberbullying against secondary school students.

The articles were limited to peer-reviewed journal articles at both national and international levels published within the last decade (2015–2025). Studies that focused on adult populations or non-educational settings were not included; only those conducted in formal school settings were.

A number of keywords, including "cyberbullying," "preventive strategies," "curative strategies," "school counseling," and "secondary school students," were developed to direct the literature search.
Six databases were systematically searched: MDPI, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, ERIC, Google Scholar, and SpringLink.

Criteria for inclusion:

1. Publications issued between 2015 and 2025.
2. Studies explicitly addressing preventive and/or curative strategies for cyberbullying in secondary school students.
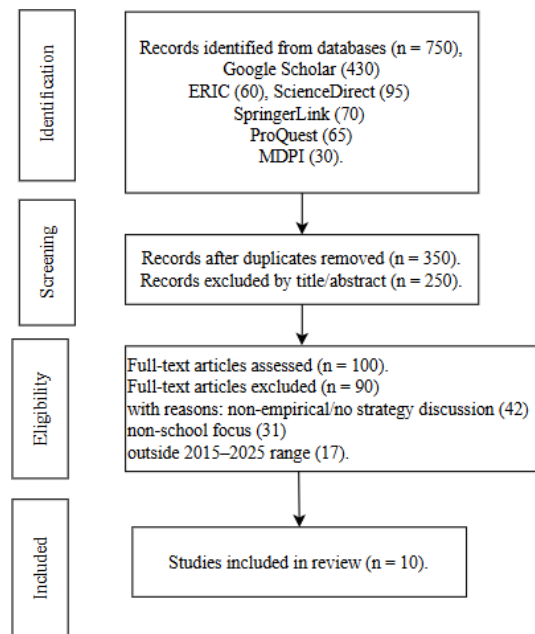3. Full-text empirical research or reviews are accessible.

Criteria for exclusion:

1. Non-empirical articles without discussion of strategies.
2. Studies with a non-school focus.
3. Articles published outside the 2015–2025 range.

The article selection process followed the four PRISMA stages:

1. Identification – Initial database search based on the specified keywords and databases.
2. Screening – Title and abstract screening to ensure relevance to the research theme.
3. Eligibility – Full-text assessment against the inclusion and exclusion criteria.
4. Included – Final selection of articles that met all criteria for systematic analysis.

All included articles were read in full, and key findings were extracted. The effectiveness of the identified strategies was assessed after they were divided into preventive and curative categories. The findings were categorized thematically, and a mapping table of the study's attributes was created.

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The literature selection through the PRISMA protocol resulted in 10 recent articles (2015-2025) that met the inclusion criteria of addressing preventive and/or curative strategies against cyberbullying in the secondary school context. These publications ranged from conceptual articles to systematic reviews and quasi-experimental studies coming from different nations with different methodological approaches. Such diversity provides a more comprehensive perspective about trends in managing and preventing cyberbullying cases around the world.

To provide a more structured understanding, the ten articles were then summarised based on the author's identity, year of publication, country or research context, methods used, strategic focus, and full access links. A summary of the article characteristics can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Characteristics of Articles Discussing Preventive and Curative Strategies for Cyberbullying in Secondary School Students

No	Author & Year	Country/ Context	Method	Strategy Focus	Key Findings
1	(Florang, 2020)	US	Conceptual	Preventive & curative	New paradigm of counsellors needed holistically
2	Ortega-Ruiz et al. (2021)	Spain	Mixed-methods /technology	Digital preventive & curative	Effective early detection and adaptive coaching
3	Yurdakul & Ayhan (2022)	Turkey	Quasi-experimental	Preventive	Digital literacy improves coping
4	Chicote et al. (2024)	Spain	Systematic Review	Basic preventive & curative	Need for school ecosystem involvement

					(ScienceDirect)
5	Dailey & Roche (2025)	International	Conceptual	Trauma-informed resilience	SHIELD framework offers a comprehensive approach (MDPI)
6	Siddiqui & Krumbholz (2023)	International	Narrative Review	Preventive (17 interventions)	Many verified successful global programmes (MDPI,
7	Cantone et al. (2015)	International	Systematic Review	School prevention	School-wide interventions are more effective (Mental Epidemiology)
8	Ranjith et al. (2025)	India	Validation Design	Preventive & curative	Local needs-based school intervention manual (Lippincott)
9	Jantzer et al. (2025)	International	Review	Digital health interventions	Only 13-16 ICT-based programmes available (BioMed Central)
10	Jitaru & Candel (2022)	Romania	Review report	School counsellors	The important Role of counsellors in national interventions (ResearchGate)

Preventive Strategies

Prevention strategies work at the risk level by reducing risks before they have been fully materialized. Such strategies include digital literacy programs, empathy training, awareness campaigns, and social-emotional learning. For example, in the study by Yurdakul & Ayhan (2022), Turkish students indicated higher coping abilities as a result of participation in digital literacy initiatives. School-wide prevention programs were indicated as the proper long-term successful route over isolated initiatives to keep the menace away from schools; hence preventive strategies also require teacher and parental involvement to inculcate a positive school environment and early monitoring of risky behavior.

A few other studies emphasized the role of cultural adaptation concerning prevention. As per Chicote et al. (2024) in the absence of a broad ecosystem wherein schools, families, and communities do not work together, preventive programs can be either temporary or superficial. Cultural adaptation also has to integrate a broader concept of cooperation between school, family, and community for the sustenance of effective prevention articulated by Chicote et al. (2024).

Curative Strategies

Curative approaches are applied after the occurrence of events. They include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), peer-support groups, and technology monitoring applications. Ortega-Ruiz et al. (2021) affirmed that applications could assist in fast detection and immediate intervention. Dailey & Roche (2025) described the SHIELD framework which emphasizes resilience and comprehension of trauma recovery.

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This framework is significant because it is relevant to most victims who suffer extended periods of psychological distress.

Ranjith et al. (2025) developed and validated a school-based intervention manual in India, which was oriented toward indigenous needs. They thereby proved the fact that interventions developed in the particular cultural and institutional context manner work better than imported models.

Comparing Preventive and Curative Approaches

Preventive strategies do not eliminate the risk of cyberbullying, they reduce it. Victim support strategies can help heal the scars of a victim, they are reactive and resource intensive. Hence integrated approaches make more sustainability. Florang (2020) emphasized holistic paradigms among counselors. Consistent with that view, Chicote et al., (2024) argued that school ecosystems need both strategies to achieve long-term success, e.g. prevention by means of digital literacy reducing risks while counseling and cognitive behavioral therapy support when prevention fails. This The SHIELD framework demonstrates how resilience building (treatment) can be integrated with prevention training to develop into a comprehensive model.

Contextual Considerations

Socio -economic and cultural factors. In high-income countries, IT tools can be used for identification and monitoring, while in development settings, community engagement and consulted interventions can be implemented (Ranjith et al., 2025). This suggests that although global principles may guide policy, their implementation must be sensitive to local realities. Future research should investigate the efficiency of integrated models across cultures and resource levels.

Extended Discussion and Implications

This study further develops the understanding that without a holistic approach, cyberbullying cannot be eliminated. Therefore, policy formulators should finance and be trained in the integrated models of all stakeholders. This implies some school investment in preventive education and recovery support systems, varying in cultural and institutional environments in immediate applications. Most importantly, long -term monitoring and evaluation of sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This study systematically reviewed ten recent articles (2015–2025) using the PRISMA protocol to examine preventive and curative strategies for addressing cyberbullying in secondary schools. The findings show that preventive efforts such as digital literacy programmes, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), empathy training, parental and teacher involvement, and creating a positive school climate play a key role in reducing risks before incidents occur. Curative efforts, including CBT-oriented counselling, crisis intervention, peer support, and digital monitoring tools, are vital in helping victims recover. Frameworks like SHIELD additionally stress the importance of resilience and trauma-sensitive methods to ensure holistic care.

There is no evidence that cyberbullying has no impact on a variety of outcomes. However, research suggests that a holistic approach involving teachers, counselors, and parents can help reduce and eliminate bullying. Therefore, this article suggests a variety of strategies and partnerships to achieve this goal, and

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encourages the development of programs that offer affordable education, emotional support, and technological tools. The best way to develop such programs is through longitudinal cross-cultural research to increase basic awareness of the long-term effects of creating safe and secure learning environments for children in online communities.

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