Exploring the Impact of Cyberbullying in Video Games: Types, Causes, and Ethical Implications.

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Abstract— Cyberbullying has become a major concern due to the tragic consequences associated with it, including cyberbully victim suicides. Despite the gravity of the issue, research on cyberbullying within online gaming environments remains limited, with most existing studies focusing on young adolescents rather than older gamers. Given that 57.8% of gamers are estimated to be 18 years of age or older, there is a need to understand the different forms and causes of cyberbullying within this demographic.

This analytical research request aims to assess people's perceptions of the causes of cyberbullying in online gaming environments. A survey was conducted with 45 respondents, gathering their insights on the issue. Content analysis of the survey responses revealed that gamers perceive the main causes of cyberbullying to be anonymity, lack of accountability, and hate. Additionally, the most common forms of cyberbullying were identified as verbal abuse, exclusion, cheating, and disruptive behavior. In order to reduce bullying without violating the privacy of others, we suggested three options, and most people prefer accountability.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rise of cyberbullying within video games has sparked widespread concern in recent years, drawing attention not only to the psychological impact on victims but also to the ethical implications of such behavior. While cyberbullying has long been a prominent issue in online spaces, its manifestation within the immersive and interactive environment of video games presents unique challenges and complexities. Despite growing recognition of this phenomenon, there remains a significant gap in understanding both the underlying reasons for cyberbullying within video games and the ethical dilemmas it poses.

Traditionally, research on cyberbullying has focused predominantly on social media platforms and adolescent populations, leaving a critical void in our understanding of cyberbullying dynamics within the context of video gaming, particularly among older and more diverse demographics. Given that a substantial portion of the global population engages in video gaming, estimated at 68% of gamers being 18 years of age or older—it is imperative to examine the specific factors driving cyberbullying within this environment.

Moreover, addressing cyberbullying in video games necessitates a nuanced consideration of ethical issues. Unlike traditional forms of bullying, cyberbullying within video games blurs the lines between virtual and real-world consequences, raising questions about accountability, responsibility, and the moral implications of in-game actions. Understanding the ethical dimensions of cyberbullying in video games is essential for devising effective strategies to mitigate harm and promote a safer and more inclusive gaming community.

The purpose of this study is to understand the types of cyberbullying and its causes on gaming platforms, and how it impacts ethical issues, and how we can solve it without violating any privacy. The research is taking a comprehensive approach, including literature review, primary data collection, and analysis, to help create safer and more enjoyable experiences for all gamers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Background*

The rapid development of the Internet has significantly changed the way people interact, with both positive and negative effects. Cyberbullying, the use of electronic communications to harm others, is a major problem that can cause serious psychological and physical harm, especially to young people and students. Although the incidence of cyberbullying varies widely across studies due to differences in definitions, it is associated with anxiety, depression, and in some cases, actual violence. Cyberbullying is especially prevalent in social media and online gaming environments, where hostility and harassment are common. Despite its seriousness, there are gaps in research regarding cyberbullying among undergraduate students. The purpose of this study is to understand the prevalence of cyberbullying on social media and online games among university students and identify associated factors to develop effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Engagement with games varies by gender, with boys playing games more often than girls. However, girls' participation in video games is increasing. Play can lead to positive outcomes, including improved social behavior and cognitive skills, and opportunities to develop friendships. However, high-level gaming can have negative effects such as physical health problems, mental and emotional problems, and decreased academic performance. Cyberbullying is a major problem in the

video gaming environment, with negative psychological effects on both victims and perpetrators. Social dominance theory suggests that video game culture can reinforce social hierarchies and stereotypes, especially regarding gender. Although research on gaming and cyberbullying is limited, the social aspects of gaming provide unique opportunities for such behavior, and the impact of gaming on adolescents and the prevalence of cyberbullying on various gaming platforms is significant. The need for further investigation is highlighted.

B. *Related works*

[1] The study investigated the prevalence and experience of online gaming among students and its impact on cyberbullying. Using Social Dominance Theory, the research analyzed secondary data from a mixed methods study involving a quantitative sample of 4th, 7th, and 10th grade students and a qualitative interview sub-sample. The findings highlighted significant engagement in internet gaming, particularly among boys, and identified themes of aggression, anonymity, and different understanding of cyberbullying within gaming culture. Despite some participants downplaying the impact of cyberbullying, their actions suggested otherwise. These insights underscore the need for practitioners and researchers to consider the varied online contexts youth engage in and the potential effects on well-being. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding how gaming experiences influence social hierarchies and cyberbullying.

[2] The findings of this exploratory research shed light on the perceptions of gamers regarding the causes of cyberbullying in online multiplayer gaming environments. Through the analysis of responses from 936 survey respondents, several key factors emerged as significant contributors to cyberbullying within this context. Firstly, anonymity was identified as a major factor driving cyberbullying, providing individuals with a sense of detachment and impunity. Secondly, the perceived disconnect between online actions and real-life consequences was highlighted, leading cyberbullies to disregard the impact of their behaviors on others. Finally, ineffective enforcement mechanisms of punishment, highlighted by a lack of fear of punishment, allow cybercriminals to engage in harmful activities without consequences. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of cyberbullying within online gaming communities and highlight the importance of addressing underlying factors to promote a safer and more inclusive gaming environment.

[3] This study examined adolescents' and adults' perceptions of cyberbullying in an online gaming environment. This was a survey of 1,033 people on the Animal Crossing Community Gaming Forum, who reported playing a variety of games, from "games for toddlers" to "games for adults." The survey explored cyberbullying perpetrators' experiences as witnesses, victims or bullying, and the psychological impact. This study found that cyberbullying occurs in these settings and can have negative psychological effects. Age, gender, and experience influence perceptions of cyberbullying. However, the sample drawn was primarily female, with an average age of 22, and may not be representative of the entire gaming population. Future research

aims to increase the diversity of respondents and investigate predictors and mitigation strategies of bullying.

[4] This study examined the prevalence of cyberbullying and related factors in social media and online gaming among Chinese university students. Research shows that cyberbullying can have negative effects on the physical and mental health of participants, including anxiety, depression, and suicidal tendencies. In this study, through a survey that included demographic information, anxiety symptoms, Internet addiction, etc., 64.32% of students reported being victims of cyberbullying, and 25.98% were bullied by others online. Factors such as gender, anxiety symptoms, Internet addiction, gaming time, and violent elements in games are all associated with cyberbullying. The study recommends targeted and effective measures to prevent cyberbullying, including counseling, teaching responsible Internet use, and managing exposure to violent online games. Despite its contributions, this study has limitations, including its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data. Future research should focus on identifying the impact of risk factors on cyberbullying to provide reliable data for the development of effective policies.

C. *Ethical issues*

1.phscological harm: Cyberbullying in video games causes psychological harm through continuous harassment, leading to suffering and low self-respect. It disrupts enjoyment and performance, causing frustration and alienation within the gaming community. Escalating conflicts create toxic environments, potentially resulting in verbal abuse. This can contribute to mental health issues like depression and anxiety, underscoring the need for proactive measures to foster safer gaming environments.

2.privacy violation: Cyberbullying in video games can affect privacy by involving the dissemination of personal information without consent, such as real names, addresses, or other sensitive details. Perpetrators may exploit gaming platforms to access and share this information, violating victims' privacy rights and potentially exposing them to further harassment or real-world harm. Additionally, cyberbullying incidents within online gaming communities can erode individuals' sense of privacy and safety, as they may feel constantly monitored or targeted by malicious actors. This loss of privacy can have profound psychological effects, exacerbating feelings of vulnerability and contributing to a sense of insecurity both online and offline.

3. Anonymity: Cyberbullying in video games thrives on anonymity, shielding perpetrators from accountability. This lack of consequences enables harassment and fosters a toxic gaming culture, undermining player well-being.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study examines the causes of cyberbullying through video games and explores how different types of cyberbullying influence moral outcomes. A survey was conducted among 45 participants from Saudi Arabia representing different age and

gender groups. The methods used in the study include data collection and analysis.

Data collection was conducted through a structured survey distributed to participants. The survey collected information about participants' experiences with cyberbullying in video games, including their opinions on the causes of cyberbullying. The survey also attempted to identify different types of cyberbullying and their ethical implications.

After collecting the data, perform data analysis to interpret the results and identify trends or patterns in the responses. Analysis involves a quantitative approach to obtaining insights from survey data. The results of the data analysis provide a basis for understanding the causes of cyberbullying in video games and the ethical considerations associated with it.

IV. Results

For the first question, as shown in Figure 1: we found 57.8% of people are between the ages 19-30, while 31.1% are between 13-18 and 6.7% are 31 and above the rest of people are 4.4%.

Age

45 responses

- under 12
- 13-18
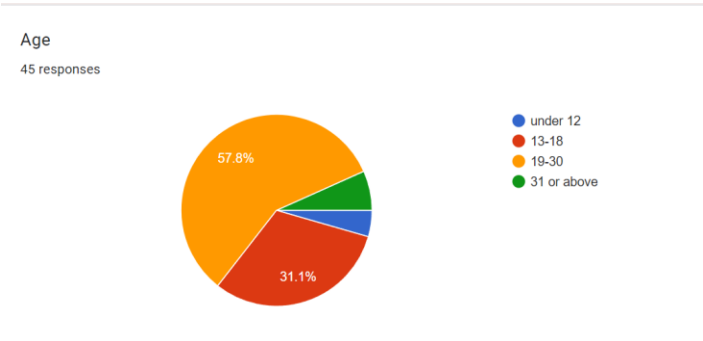- 19-30
- 31 or above

57.8%

31.1%

Figure 1. result of the first question

For the second question, as shown in Figure 2: we found 40% of people were being bullied while 37.8% are not and 22.2% are not sure about it.

Have you been exposed to cyberbullying on gaming platform?

45 responses

- Yes
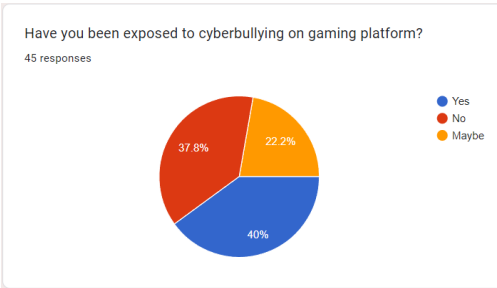- No
- Maybe

37.8%   22.2%

40%

Figure 2. result of the second question

For the third question, as shown in Figure 3: we found 40% of people were being bullied because of their gender or skin color, 51.1% they haven't been bullied because of it, 8.9% being not sure.

Have you been bullied because of your gender or skin color on gaming ?

45 responses
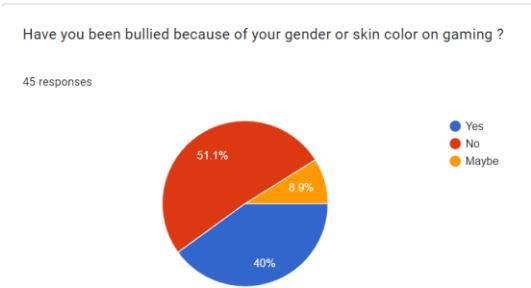
- Yes
- No
- Maybe

51.1%

8.9%

40%

Figure 3. result of the third question

For the fourth question, as shown in Figure 4: we have 77.8% of them encountered or seen someone sending or receiving harmful, offensive, or threatening messages via gaming platform and 22.2% of them did not see or encountered.

Have you ever encountered or seen someone sending or receiving harmful, offensive or threatening messages via gaming platform?
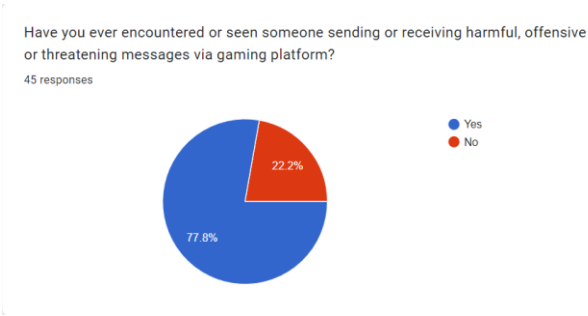
45 responses

- Yes
- No

22.2%

77.8%

Figure 4. result of the fourth question

For the fifth question, as shown in Figure 5: 44.4% feel fear from gaming because of someone's behavior, 40% feel nothing, 15,6% not sure about their feeling.

Have you ever felt fear in gaming due to someone else's behavior?
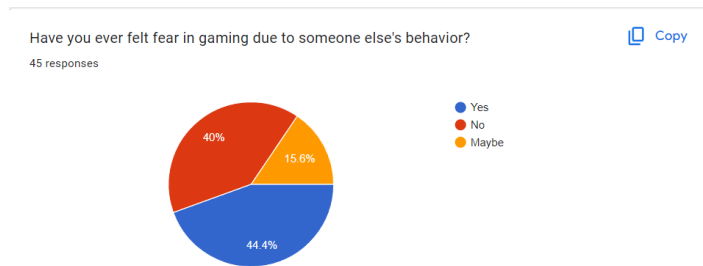45 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

40%
15.6%
44.4%

Figure 5. result of the fifth question

For the sixth question, as shown in Figure 6: 42.2% chose that Anonymity is the reason of cyberbullying through video games, and 31.1% chose hate, and 17.8 chose lack of accountability, and 8.9% competition and envy.

In your opinion, what are the most prominent reasons that lead to bullying on gaming platform
45 responses

- Lack of Accountability
- Anonymity
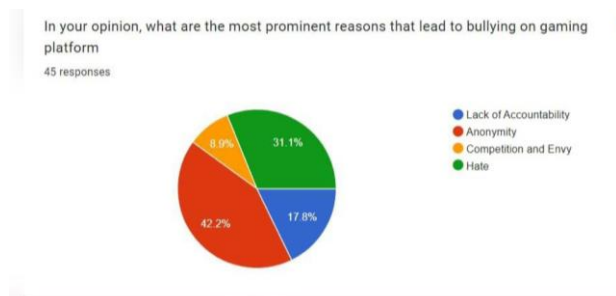- Competition and Envy
- Hate

8.9%   31.1%
42.2%   17.8%

Figure 6. result of the sixth question

For the seventh question, as shown in Figure 7: we notice that 44.4% think cyberbullying through video games can happen without any reason, 33.3% think between it, 22.2% think no.

Do you think that bullying in gaming can happen for no reason?
45 responses

- Yes
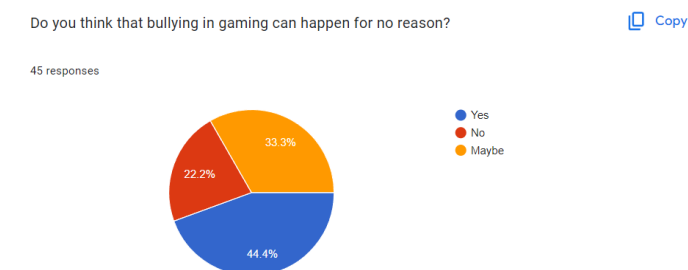- No
- Maybe

33.3%
22.2%
44.4%

Figure 7. result of the seventh question

For the eighth question, as shown in Figure8: we found that 40% didn't report, 37.8% reported, and 22.2% maybe they did it maybe not.

Have you ever reported incidents of gaming bullying to anyone?
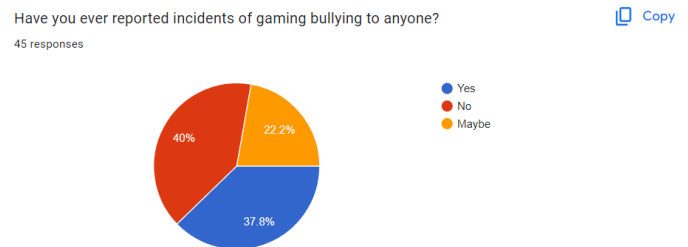45 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

40%   22.2%
37.8%

Figure 8. result of the eighth question

For the ninth question, as shown in Figure 9: we found that 62.2 think Verbal Abuse is the most widespread type of bullying on gaming, 20% think exclusion, and 11.1% think cheating, 6.7 think causing trouble.

In your opinion, what is the most widespread type of bullying on gaming?
45 responses

- Verbal Abuse. (insults, derogatory comments made towards other players)
- Exclusion. (involves leaving a player out of a team or group, either intentionally...
- Cheating (Players who use cheats can ruin the experience for others and lea...
- Causing trouble.(This involves players intentionally disrupting or other player...
- Causing trouble. (This involves players intentionally disrupting or other player...
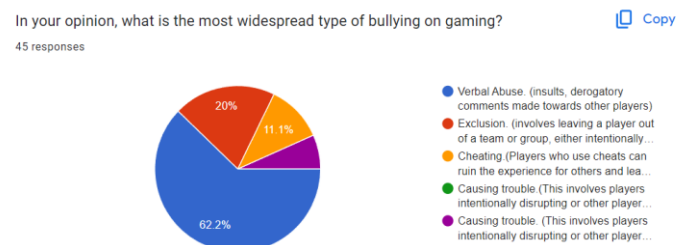
20%   11.1%
62.2%

Figure 9. result of ninth question

For the tenth question, as shown in Figure 10: we suggest which of choices is better to not violate privacy, 44.4% chose accountability, 44.4% chose privacy controls, 11.1% chose Community Trust Networks.

which one do you think is the best for replacement with requesting and verifying the identity of users without violate any privacy in gaming platform?

45 responses

- Accountability.(Players can use unique, anonymous identifiers that are linked to their accounts for accountability. This allows moderation and reporting of mi...
- Privacy Controls.(Players can customize their privacy by including options to block or mute other players, limit who can interact with them)
- Community Trust Networks.(Establish trust networks within the gaming community where verified players vou...
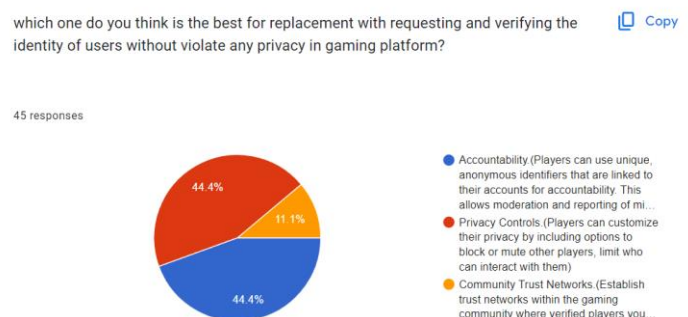
44.4%
11.1%
44.4%

Figure10. result of tenth question

for the last question, as shown in Figure 11: 44.4% think social isolation is most effect of cyberbullying on gaming platform, 22.2% think fear and anxiety, 17.8% think hatred of society, 11.1% think suicide or self-harm, 4.4 think intolerance.
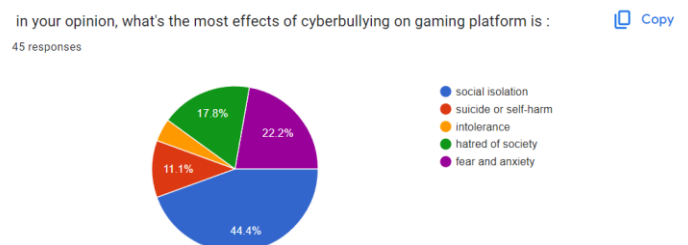
in your opinion, what's the most effects of cyberbullying on gaming platform is :
45 responses

- social isolation
- suicide or self-harm
- intolerance
- hatred of society
- fear and anxiety

17.8%   22.2%
11.1%
44.4%

Figure 11. result of the last question

V. DISCUSSION

In this pivotal section, we navigate critical dimensions related to our topic of study, revealing the complex dynamics of cyberbullying through video games. The survey results highlight interesting aspects of participants' experiences, and provide a, A nuanced perspective on the interaction of morality Considerations, Gaming Habits and Age-Related Dynamics. Despite encountering cases of cyberbullying, our study It reveals that most participants did not face significant ethical challenges in their interactions. Moving on to the basic analysis of the results, we focus on several central questions. The first question deals with the percentage of people who were exposed to bullying, and we found that the percentage of those who were exposed to bullying was greater, reaching about 40%, compared to 37.8% who were not exposed to bullying. Through the second question, we identified the reasons that led to bullying, and we found the color of 40% of those who reported that they were exposed to bullying because of Their gender or skin color, and 51.1% were not bullied because of their gender or skin color. As we delve deeper into the discussion, the focus is on age. Relevant insights and gaming habits become useful in Addressing our overarching hypothesis. We emphasize this moral disengagement, not the explicit content of the violence, Video games are a primary trigger for cyberbullying behaviors. By weaving together the complex threads of age distribution and gaming behaviors, our discussion aims to provide specific interventions for safe online environments and a deeper understanding of the role of video games in cyberbullying. It achieves this through an integrated research approach that combines primary data collection with a review of existing literature. It is important to recognize the elements that contribute to the pleasant online experiences of those who have not been, victims of cyberbullying to provide a welcoming gaming environment for them. On the other hand, qualitative investigations on the kinds of cyberbullying incidents and the effects they have on the victims provide vital data for the targeted creation of efficient solutions.
A wider range of responses emerge as more questions are asked

42.2% of most people believe that anonymity is the main reason for cyberbullying through video games. 31.1% believe that this is due to hatred, 17.8% chose lack of accountability, and 8.9% chose competition and envy. We discussed the sixth question: Is it possible for this cyberbullying to occur without a reason? Fayed 33.3%, excluding 22.2%, believe that it occurs for a reason.Through the sixth question, we noticed that most people agreed that concealing identity is a major cause of bullying in general, at a rate of 42.2% This presents an ethical dilemma as shielding perpetrators from accountability fosters an environment conducive to harassment and perpetuates a toxic gaming culture. To mitigate the negative impact of anonymity, it is essential to implement measures aimed at reducing its benefits. By introducing mechanisms that promote transparency and enforce accountability, such as robust reporting systems and stringent moderation policies, we can deter misconduct and create a safer and more inclusive gaming environment. Additionally, fostering a culture of respect and empathy within gaming communities can help cultivate a sense of responsibility among players and discourage harmful behaviors. These proactive steps are crucial in addressing the ethical challenges posed by anonymity and

advancing the well-being of all participants in the gaming ecosystem. During our discussion on privacy preservation, we observed that 44.4% of participants favored accountability, while an equal percentage opted for privacy control. Interestingly, 11.1% of respondents chose community trust networks as their preferred option. These results shed light on the diverse viewpoints regarding privacy protection measures. It is noteworthy that both accountability and privacy control received equal support, indicating a balanced consideration of personal responsibility and individual autonomy. Meanwhile, the choice of community trust networks by a smaller proportion of participants suggests an acknowledgment of the potential benefits of collaborative approaches to privacy management. This variety of preferences underscores the complexity of privacy concerns and emphasizes the need for comprehensive strategies to address them effectively. It's troubling to note that the incidence of electronic bullying surpasses what is reported to competent authorities. This discrepancy suggests a significant gap in addressing the problem effectively and may reflect a lack of confidence in the authorities' ability to address such issues. Furthermore, it underscores a concerning disregard for the serious impact of bullying.

However, it's imperative for authorities to take proactive steps to educate players and combat bullying effectively. By raising awareness about the prevalence and consequences of bullying in online environments, authorities can empower individuals to recognize and address bullying behavior. Education initiatives can include teaching players about digital citizenship, empathy, and respectful online communication.

Additionally, authorities should implement robust reporting mechanisms and ensure swift and appropriate responses to reports of bullying. By establishing clear guidelines and consequences for bullying behavior, authorities can send a strong message that such conduct will not be tolerated. Furthermore, providing support services for both victims and perpetrators of bullying can help address underlying issues and prevent future incidents.
Ultimately, by prioritizing education, prevention, and intervention strategies, authorities can work towards creating a safer and more respectful online environment for all individuals.

VI. CONCLOSION

This research significantly contributes to our understanding cyberbullying. Through an exploration of the underlying psychological mechanisms, the study not only elucidates these relationships but also proposes interventions to foster empathy, raise awareness, and cultivate safer online environments. Implications and Applications:

Significance of Online Anonymity: Highlighting the importance of online anonymity in cyberbullying, the study informs interventions targeting this factor, crucial for establishing a safer online environment.

Tailoring Interventions: The study advocates for interventions that address both moral disengagement and individual characteristics, stressing the need to combat cyberbullying by

addressing psychological processes alongside video game content.

Promoting Online Safety: By striving to reduce instances of cyberbullying, the findings contribute to the broader objective of creating a respectful and secure online community.

Advancements in Academic Understanding: Beyond filling research gaps, this study offers practical insights, advancing academic knowledge by providing a more comprehensive understanding of cyberbullying dynamics within the context of violent video games.Conclusion:Overall, this research serves as a pivotal step towards addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by cyberbullying in the digital age. Through continued exploration and implementation of evidence-based interventions, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and empathetic online environment for all individuals.

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