

Mapping the Global Research Landscape on Cyberbullying in Guidance and Counseling: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

This study conducted a bibliometric analysis to map the global research landscape on cyberbullying in the context of guidance and counseling. A total of 195 scientific papers indexed by Scopus from 2015 to 2025 were analyzed quantitatively using RStudio (Bibliometrix) and VOSviewer. The analysis showed a significant increase in scientific productivity, with the United States, Spain, and Turkey as the main contributors. Most publications (78%) use quantitative methods and focus on adolescent populations (63%). The thematic evolution analysis revealed a shift in research focus from behavioral identification towards preventive interventions, detection systems, counseling, and the use of technology such as machine learning. The article by Radovic et al. (2016) received the highest number of citations (223). Developing thematic areas emphasize mental health, digital identity, and technology-based counseling strategies. The implications of this study highlight the urgency of developing adaptive, evidence-based digital counseling policies and integrating digital literacy into prevention programs.

Keywords: cyberbullying, guidance and counseling, bibliometric analysis, research map, digital intervention

Abstrak

Studi ini melakukan analisis bibliometrik untuk memetakan lanskap riset global mengenai perundungan siber dalam konteks bimbingan dan konseling. Sebanyak 195 dokumen ilmiah yang terindeks Scopus dari periode 2015 hingga 2025 dianalisis secara kuantitatif menggunakan perangkat lunak RStudio (Bibliometrix) dan VOSviewer. Hasil analisis menunjukkan peningkatan produktivitas ilmiah yang signifikan, dengan Amerika Serikat, Spanyol, dan Turki sebagai negara kontributor utama. Sebagian besar publikasi (78%) menggunakan metode kuantitatif dan berfokus pada populasi remaja (63%). Analisis evolusi tematik mengungkap pergeseran fokus penelitian dari identifikasi perilaku ke arah intervensi preventif, sistem deteksi, konseling, serta pemanfaatan teknologi seperti pembelajaran mesin. Artikel karya Radovic et al. (2016) meraih sitasi tertinggi (223 sitasi). Tematik yang berkembang ke depan menekankan pada kesehatan mental, identitas digital, dan strategi konseling berbasis teknologi. Implikasi studi ini menyoroti urgensi pengembangan kebijakan konseling digital yang adaptif dan berbasis bukti, serta integrasi literasi digital dalam program pencegahan.

Kata kunci: perundungan siber, bimbingan dan konseling, analisis bibliometrik, peta penelitian, intervensi digital

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INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has fundamentally changed the way individuals, especially adolescents and students, interact in everyday life (Kerr & Willis, 2018; Picatoste et al., 2018; Thulin & Vilhelmsen, 2019; Astra et al., 2024; Henukh & Astra, 2021). Social media, instant messaging platforms, and other digital spaces have not only expanded the reach of communication but also introduced new challenges, including deviant behavior such as cyberbullying (Myers & Cowie, 2019; Wagner, 2019). This phenomenon is characterized by repeated, bold aggressive actions, aimed at hurting or strengthening others. Cyberbullying differs from conventional forms of bullying because it occurs anonymously, continuously, and can spread widely in a short time (Casas et al., 2020).

In the world of education, cyberbullying is a serious concern because it has a negative impact on the psychological, social, and academic aspects of students (Alomar et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown that victims of cyberbullying are at risk of experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, and even suicidal tendencies (Martínez-Monteaugudo et al., 2020). In addition, long-term impacts affect the sense of security in the school environment, social relationships, and participation in learning. Therefore, mitigation efforts through guidance and counseling services are crucial to creating a safe and supportive learning environment (Sciaraffa et al., 2018).

Guidance and counseling play a strategic role in detecting, preventing, and addressing cases of cyberbullying (Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2018). Through this service, students can gain the understanding, social skills, and psychological support needed to deal with the pressures of the digital world. School counselors are required to not only understand the psychosocial dynamics of adolescents, but also have adequate digital literacy in order to respond to the ever-evolving forms of cyberbullying. In this context, scientific studies on cyberbullying in guidance and counseling services are becoming increasingly relevant and urgent (Chan et al., 2020).

Along with increasing awareness of the importance of this issue, there has been a surge in the number of scientific publications discussing cyberbullying in the context of education and counseling services (Fauzi, 2024). However, most of these studies are partial, limited to specific regions or approaches, and do not provide a comprehensive picture of the global research landscape in this field. There are a few studies that systematically evaluate the trends, scientific productivity, and academic influence of works published over the past decade.

Bibliometrics is a quantitative approach that can be used to study scientific publication patterns in a particular field (Lawani, 1981; Pessin et al., 2022). Through this technique, researchers can identify the most influential articles, collaborations between countries, and the dynamics of the evolution of research themes over time. In the context of cyberbullying and guidance and counseling, this approach is highly relevant for understanding how this issue develops, who the main actors are, and where further research can be directed. Thus, bibliometric mapping has the potential to serve as an essential reference for academics, practitioners, and policymakers (Skute et al., 2019). This study specifically aims to map the descriptive characteristics of research on cyberbullying in guidance and counseling services during the period 2015 to 2025. In addition, this study analyzes trends in annual scientific productivity, the most-cited articles, the dominant countries of origin of authors, and emerging themes that are projected to be the focus of future research. The data used comes from the Scopus



database and is analyzed using bibliometric software such as RStudio and VOSviewer which are commonly used in similar studies. Specifically, this research aims to answer several main questions that form the basis of the analysis. First, what are the descriptive characteristics of the empirical studies that have been conducted on cyberbullying? Secondly, what are the trends in annual scientific productivity and how has the evolution of cyberbullying research themes evolved over time? Furthermore, this study also asks which articles are the most cited and have the greatest influence in academia. In addition, which countries are the most relevant centers of author contributions in the development of cyberbullying research? Finally, what research themes are currently emerging and have the potential to become the main focus for future research in this field?

METHOD

This research uses a bibliometric analysis approach. The term bibliometrics was first introduced by Pritchard (1969), who explained that this method can be applied in various studies aimed at measuring the process of written communication (Mokhtari et al., 2020). Donthu et al. (2021) state that bibliometric analysis is an approach that uses quantitative methods to measure, track, and analyze scientific literature (Donthu et al., 2021a). This approach allows the identification of publications by author, the most influential journals, the methodology used, and the conclusions reached (Pessin et al., 2022).

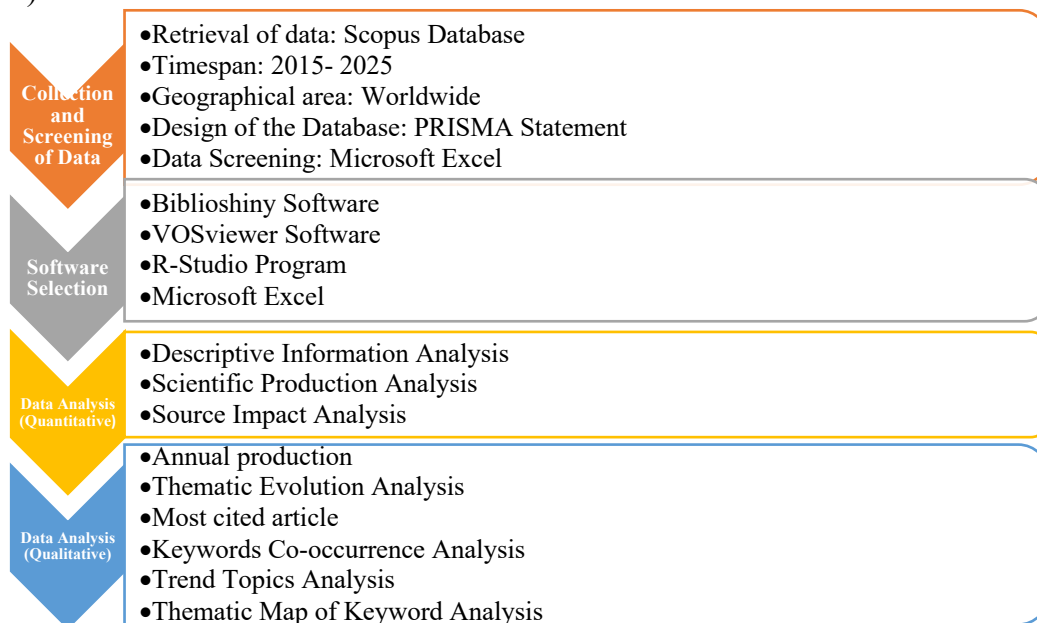
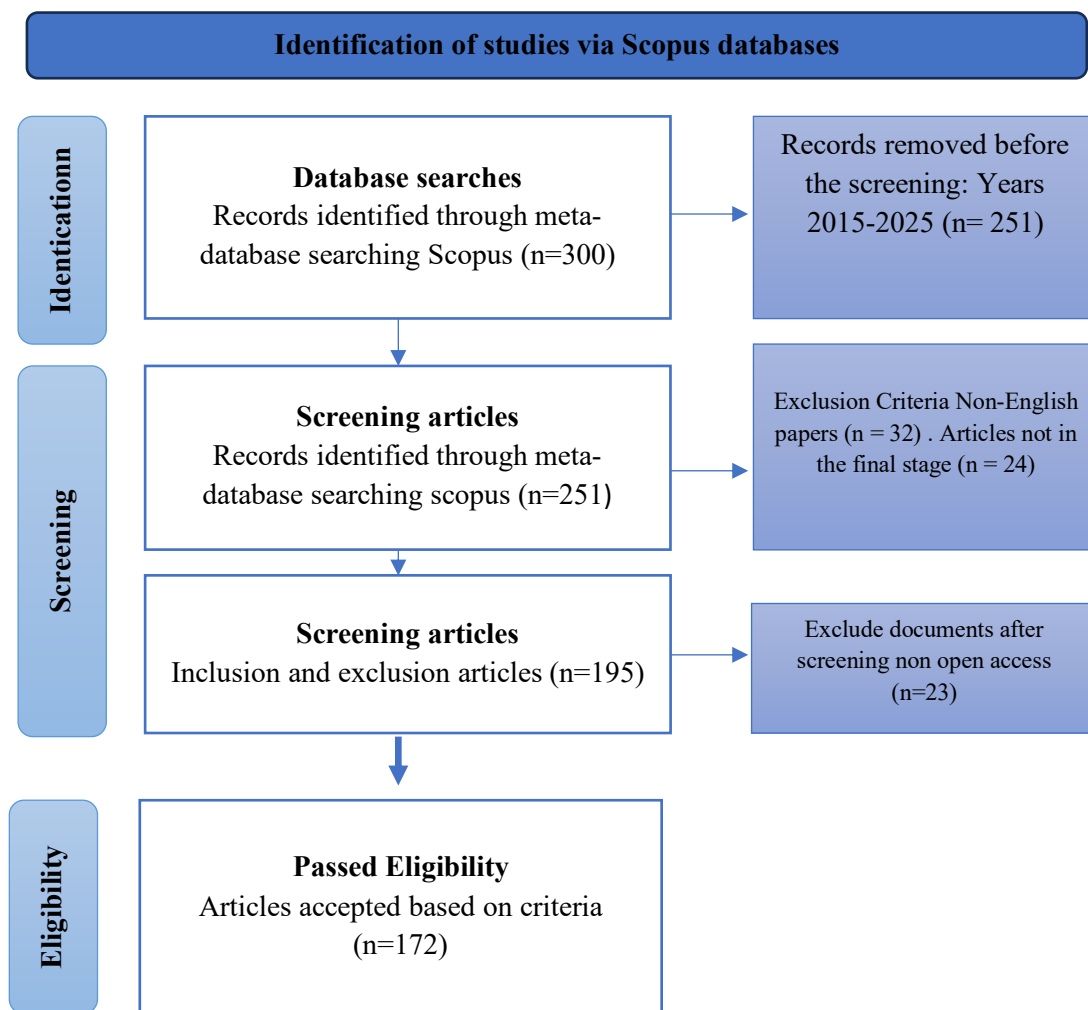


Figure 1. Summary of Research Method



Diagram 1.
 Prisma Methods Flow Diagram



The PRISMA flow diagram above outlines the stages of article identification, screening, and eligibility in this study. The process begins with a Scopus database search, which initially identified 300 relevant articles. However, 251 articles from the 2015–2025 time frame were excluded prior to the screening phase because they did not meet the relevance criteria. The next step involved screening the articles; 251 records were evaluated according to inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in 195 that met the initial eligibility requirements.

The following phase was a more refined screening process, during which non-English articles and those that did not reach the final stage of review were excluded, leaving 172 eligible articles. This process illustrates how the PRISMA methodology was employed to minimize selection bias and ensure that selected articles were high-quality and relevant to the research topic under analysis. A detailed explanation is available in the stages below.



Data Collection and Screening

The data collection and filtering stage is very important in this analysis because it affects the effectiveness of the bibliometric techniques used (Donthu et al., 2021). The data in this study were extracted from the Scopus database, which is widely regarded as one of the largest databases, with more than 50 million documents published since 1823 (Salam & Senin, 2022). The search using the keywords "TITLE-ABS-KEY (cyberbullying) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (guidance OR counseling)" was conducted only on the title, abstract, and keywords, yielding 172 documents as of May 28, 2025. The inclusion criteria in this study included publications in English, published between 2015 and 2025, in the form of journal articles, and that had passed the final stage of publication. This time frame was selected based on the consideration of the increasing relevance of the cyberbullying theme in the context of guidance and counseling, particularly among teenagers and children who are increasingly active in the digital world. This period also reflects a time when literature related to cyberbullying began to see a significant rise, in line with the development of technology and growing awareness of its negative impacts.

The data filtering process was carried out according to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines, which enhance the transparency and quality of systematic literature reviews. The decision to limit the analysis to publications written in English is based on several practical and methodological considerations. One reason is to ensure that the literature analyzed includes research with broad international influence. Given that Scopus is a database that predominantly features articles in English, this restriction maintains consistency and the quality of the data used in the bibliometric analysis. The PRISMA flowchart illustrates the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of articles analyzed (Figures 1 and Diagram 1).

Software Selection

To perform bibliometric analysis optimally, selecting the appropriate software is crucial. Various software is used for content analysis, quantitative analysis, and data visualization, such as "Bibliometrix," "VOSviewer," "CiteSpace," and others. In this study, the VOSviewer program and the Biblioshiny web application were used, along with the latest version of the Bibliometrix package in RStudio. The open-source Bibliometrix package was developed by Aria and Cuccurullo (2017), and is continuously updated (Bhat et al., 2023). Compared to other software, Bibliometrix and VOSviewer offer higher analysis speeds and can comprehensively produce data matrices and scientific visualizations from bibliographic databases.

Data Analysis

The analysis in this study involves quantitative and qualitative evaluation. Descriptive aspects of the filtered empirical studies were analyzed using Bibliometrix, including annual scientific publications, the most impactful sources, the most cited articles, and the countries that contribute most to cyberbullying and counseling. In addition, several qualitative analysis techniques were used, including Bradford's Law for source analysis, thematic evolution analysis, analysis of the author's scientific productivity, keyword co-occurrence analysis, thematic maps, and tree maps to trace the direction of the research theme. All data were compiled in CSV format and analyzed in RStudio during the pre-analysis and visualization stages.



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RQ1. What are the Descriptive Characteristics of the Empirical Studies Conducted on Cyberbullying?

To answer the first research question (RQ1), a bibliometric analysis was conducted to identify the descriptive characteristics of empirical studies related to cyberbullying. This analysis includes quantitative aspects that reflect the scope, distribution, and trends of research from 2015 to 2025. The information collected includes the number of documents published, the number of journal sources, the number of authors, the keywords used, the level of international collaboration, and the average number of citations per document. By understanding these characteristics, this study provides a comprehensive picture of the structure and dynamics of the developing scientific literature on cyberbullying. Full details of the characteristics of the data analyzed are presented in figure 1 below.



Figure 2. Descriptive Features Of The Retrieved Data

Figure 1 presents descriptive characteristics of empirical studies on cyberbullying identified through a bibliometric analysis in RStudio. The data analyzed included publications from 2015 to 2025, reflecting the last decade of research development in this field. A total of 172 scientific documents published across 145 journals were identified, demonstrating the diversity and wide distribution of research in the field of cyberbullying.

The total number of authors involved was 578, with an average of 3.54 per document, indicating active collaboration among researchers in producing scientific work. In addition, international collaboration was recorded at 14.53%, which shows that research on cyberbullying is not only limited to the national realm, but also involves cross-country cooperation, thus enriching the perspective and quality of the resulting studies.

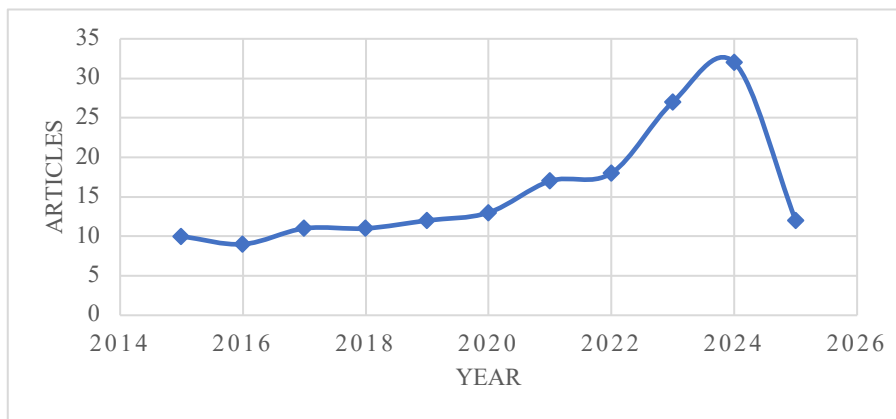
The annual growth of publications of 1.84% indicates an increase in academic interest and attention to the issue of cyberbullying from year to year. The 473 keywords used in this study reflect the wide variety of themes and research focuses in the context of cyberbullying. The average document age of 4.02 years indicates that most of the works analyzed remain highly relevant and contribute to the development of current theory and practice. The average citations per document of 9,802 demonstrate the significant influence and academic impact of these publications within the research community. In addition, the total number of references used (7,658) indicates that the research on cyberbullying is grounded in a comprehensive literature review, providing a strong basis for further study development (Saleem et al., 2022; Shahzad et al., 2024).



RQ2. What are the Tendencies of the Annual Scientific Production and the Thematic Evolution Of Cyberbullying?

To understand the dynamics of research on cyberbullying, the trends in annual scientific production were analyzed. This aims to identify patterns in the growth of publications and changes in thematic focus from year to year. By mapping scholarly production annually, it is possible to identify peak periods of academic attention and to track how the main themes in cyberbullying studies evolve over time. Graph 1 shows the number of publications per year from 2015 to 2025, reflecting the level of interest and research development in this field.

Graph 1.
Annual Scientific Production



Graph 1 illustrates the trend of annual scientific production on cyberbullying from 2015 to 2025. From 2015 to 2019, the number of publications remained relatively stable, averaging around 10 articles per year. Starting in 2020, there was a significant increase in the number of publications, indicating increased academic attention and urgency to the issue of cyberbullying. The highest peak was reached in 2024, with more than 30 articles published, almost tripling the number from previous years. However, in 2025, there was a drastic drop in the number of publications, down to around 10 articles. This fluctuation may reflect a transitional phase in research focus or the influence of external factors such as changes in public policy, research funding, or social conditions that affect academic productivity in the field of cyberbullying (López-Meneses et al., 2020; Shahzad et al., 2024). However, it should be emphasized that the 2025 data used in this study are still provisional because they only include publications until mid-year. This is very likely to result in a lower number of publications recorded than in previous years.



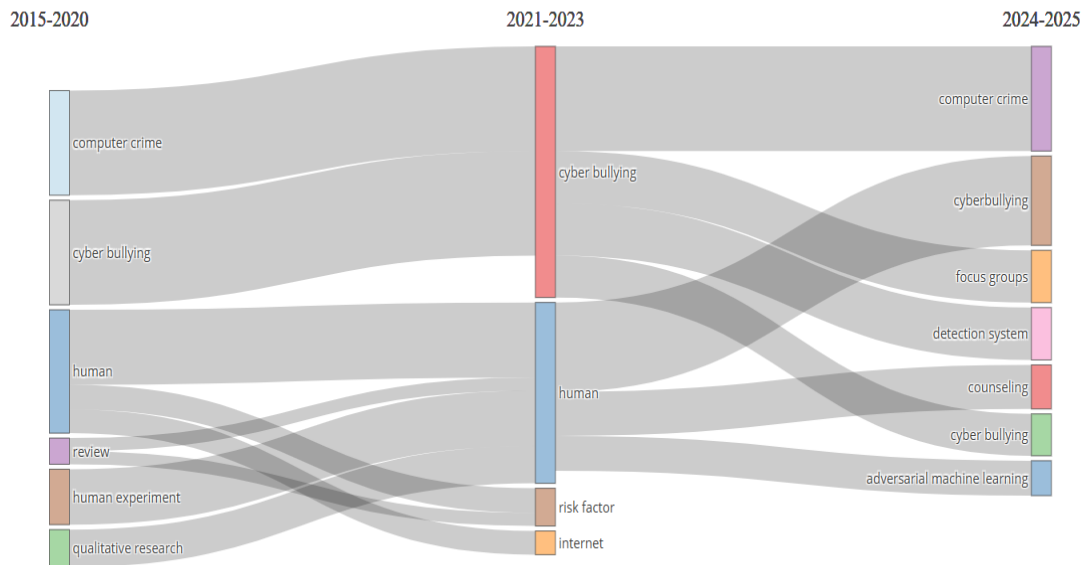


Figure 3. Thematic Evolution

Figure 3 the thematic evolution of cyberbullying-related research across three time periods: 2015-2020, 2021-2023, and 2024-2025. In the initial period (2015-2020), the main research themes focused on "computer crime," "cyber bullying," and human-related topics such as "human," "human experiment," and "qualitative research." These themes reflect the study's initial focus on digital crime and empirical studies of human behavior in the context of cyberbullying.

Entering the 2021-2023 period, these themes consolidated and expanded. The theme of "cyber bullying" takes center stage, linking with other topics such as "human," "risk factors," and "internet." This suggests an increased focus on understanding human behavior in the context of cyberbullying. This suggests an increased focus on understanding risk factors, the impact on people, and the use of the internet as a medium that is the main arena for cyberbullying. In addition, qualitative studies and human experiments remain necessary for analyzing this phenomenon.

In the current period 2024-2025, the research theme has become more diverse and specific. The theme of "computer crime" remains a relevant topic. Still, the focus on 'cyberbullying' has strengthened and expanded into applied areas such as "focus groups," "detection systems," "counseling," and "adversarial machine learning." This development shows the progress of research that is not only oriented towards understanding the phenomenon, but also towards detecting, intervening in, and preventing cyberbullying using advanced technological approaches such as machine learning. This multidisciplinary approach marks a significant evolution in how cyberbullying studies are conducted, from mere conceptual studies to practical applications that support mitigating the problem (Pérez Sánchez, 2024; Rejeb et al., 2025).

RQ3. What are the Most Cited Articles on Cyberbullying?

To answer the third research question (RQ3), the most globally cited articles in the field of cyberbullying were identified. Table 1 presents the top 10 articles by citations, reflecting their influence and significant contributions to the development of



cyberbullying studies. This analysis helps uncover seminal works that serve as key references for other researchers and provides insight into the topics and approaches that receive the most attention within the academic community.

Table 1.
 Top Ten Globally Cited Articles

Authors	DOI	Total Citations	TC per Year	Normalized TC
Radovic A	10.1016/j.adolescence.2016.12.002	223	24.78	5.51
Varghese ME	10.1002/jocc.12055	86	9.56	2.13
Sasson H	10.1080/00221325.2016.1195330	82	9.11	2.03
Smith PK	10.1111/1471-3802.12114	81	7.36	4.43
Garaigordobil M	10.5093/pi2019a3	73	10.43	5.65
Khine AT	10.1371/journal.pone.0227051	60	10.00	3.86
Macaulay PJR	10.1016/j.avb.2018.08.004	59	7.38	3.09
Calvo-morata A	10.1109/TLT.2018.2879354	45	7.50	2.90
Musharraf S	10.1080/10926771.2017.1422838	38	4.75	1.99
Topcua C	10.1080/07481756.2017.1395705	36	4.50	1.89

Table 1 displays the ten articles with the highest number of citations globally in the field of cyberbullying research. The most cited article is by Radovic A (DOI: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2016.12.002), with 223 citations, an average annual citation of 24.78, and a normalized total citation (TC) value of 5.51. This shows that the article has a significant influence on the literature on cyberbullying.

Varghese I occupies the second and third positions (DOI: 10.1002/jocc.12055) and Sasson H (DOI: 10.1080/00221325.2016.1195330), who received 86 and 82 total citations, respectively. These two articles also made notable contributions, averaging 9 citations per year, signaling their continued relevance and traction within the research community.

Furthermore, the articles by Smith PK and Garaigordobil M showed high normalized TC values of 4.43 and 5.65, respectively, despite having lower total citations than the top articles. This normalized TC indicates the article's relative impact in its field, accounting for publication age.

Other articles on the list, such as Khine AT, Macaulay PJR, Calvo-Morata A, Musharraf S, and Topcua C, had varying numbers of citations but still made important contributions to the development of cyberbullying research. The average citations per year recorded ranged from 4.5 to 10, indicating a high level of academic activity.

RQ4. What are the Most Relevant Countries of Authors for Cyberbullying?

To answer the fourth research question (RQ4), the country of origin of the most dominant authors in cyberbullying-related publications was analyzed. Figure 5 presents the geographical distribution of authors based on the countries listed as affiliations in the research documents. This information is important for understanding the distribution of



research and academic contributions across countries in the field of cyberbullying, as well as identifying countries that are centers of study and development in this field.

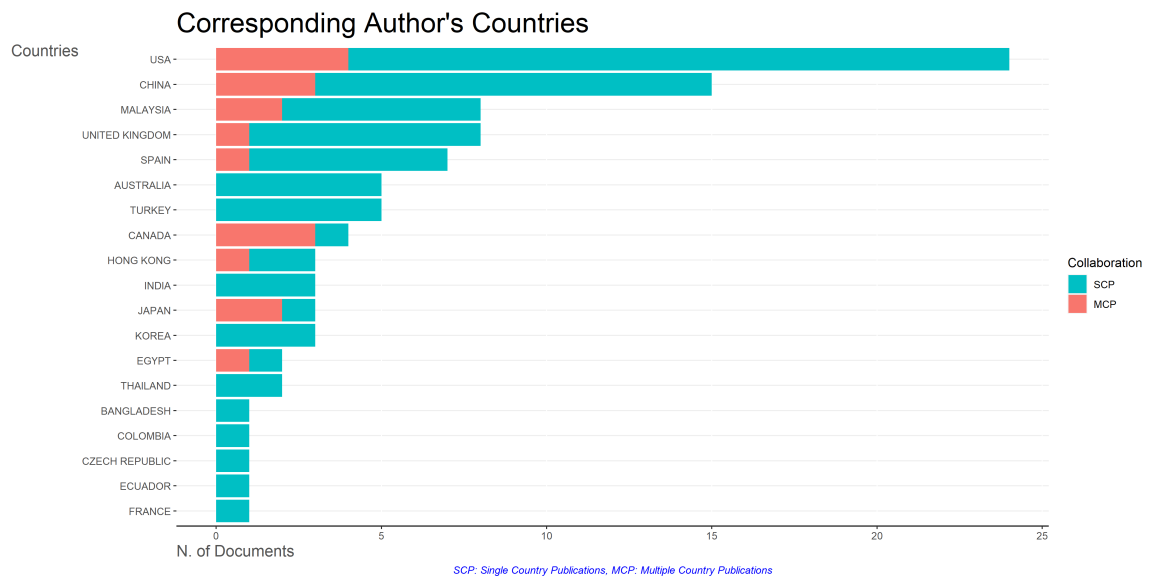


Figure 4. Corresponding Author's Countries

Figure 4 shows the distribution of authors' countries of origin for documents published in the field of cyberbullying. The United States leads in the number of publications, both independently (Single Country Publications/SCP) and collaboratively across countries (Multiple Country Publications/MCP), totaling nearly 25 documents. China took second place with a significant contribution, especially in SCP publications, followed by Malaysia and the UK, which also had a high number of publications. Other countries, such as Spain, Australia, and Turkey, show stable contributions, though lower than those of the top three countries.

The color difference in the graph indicates the proportion between national publications (SCP) and international collaborations (MCP). The United States and China exhibit a high level of international cooperation, suggesting that cyberbullying research in these countries is conducted not only locally but also within a global network. In contrast, some countries, such as Malaysia and Turkey, have more national publications. This distribution reflects that cyberbullying research has a global character with strong research centers in certain countries, particularly the United States and China. It also emphasizes the importance of cross-country collaboration in expanding the scope and impact of international research on cyberbullying (Garaigordobil & Martínez-Valderrey, 2018; Chatzakou et al., 2019).

RQ5. What are the Trending Research Themes for Future Investigations in the Field of Cyberbullying?

To answer the fifth research question (RQ5), a network visualization analysis was conducted using VOSviewer to identify emerging research themes and potential future research foci in the field of cyberbullying. This visualization illustrates the relationships among the main keywords that frequently appear in the literature, revealing developing thematic clusters and interconnectivity among research topics. This information is critical



for mapping future research directions and priorities, as well as for providing an overview of areas receiving greater attention within the academic community.

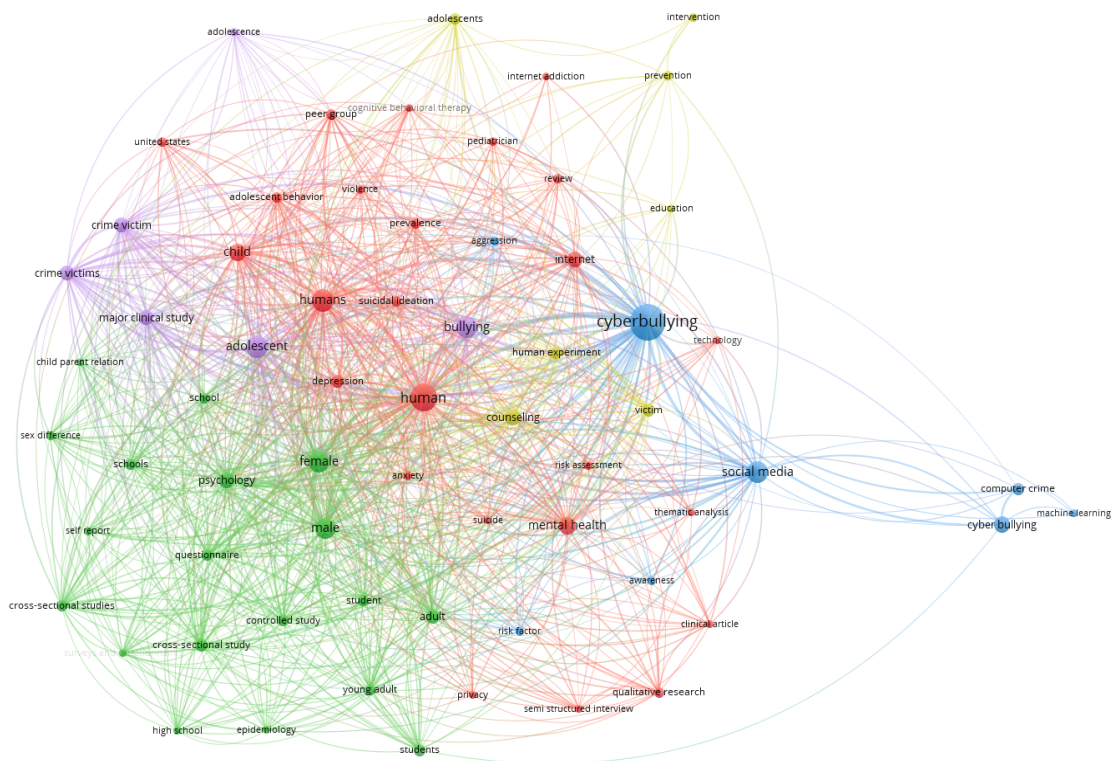


Figure 5. Network Visualization

Figure 5 shows a network visualization using Vosviewer that illustrates the interconnectedness and clustering of current and potential research themes in the field of cyberbullying. In this visualization, each dot represents a research keyword, and the lines connecting the dots show the co-occurrence relationships between keywords in the literature.

It can be seen that the theme "cyberbullying" is at the center of the network with strong links to several large clusters representing different focus areas. The blue cluster, for example, is closely related to "social media," "internet," and technologies such as "machine learning," showing attention to digital aspects and automated detection methods. The red cluster highlights psychosocial topics such as "human," "mental health," "depression," and "counseling," reflecting studies on the psychological impact and interventions related to cyberbullying.

Meanwhile, the green cluster involves terms related to demographics and education, such as "students," "adolescent," "female," and "school," indicating that young age groups and educational environments are a major focus of research. Smaller yellow clusters indicate interest in intervention and prevention, with keywords such as "prevention" and "intervention."

This visualization reveals that cyberbullying research is evolving in a multidimensional manner, encompassing technological, psychological, social, and educational aspects (Mikhaylovsky et al., 2019). The integration of these themes



demonstrates the need for a cross-disciplinary approach to understand and effectively address the phenomenon of cyberbullying in the future (Ferreira & Deslandes, 2018).

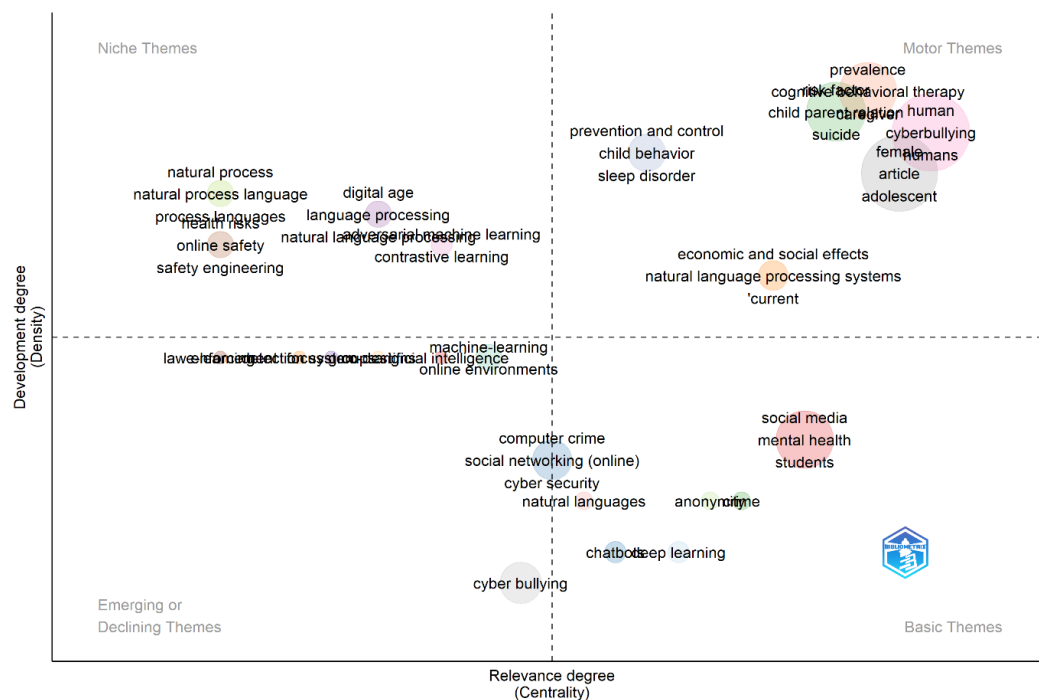


Figure 6. Thematic Map

Figure 6 shows a thematic map that classifies cyberbullying research themes along two main dimensions: degree of development (density) and degree of relevance (centrality). The map is divided into four quadrants that indicate the position of the research themes based on their maturity and influence in the field of study.

In the upper right quadrant, known as Motor Themes, there are highly relevant and rapidly growing major themes, such as “cyberbullying,” “human,” “cognitive behavioral therapy,” “prevalence,” “mental health,” and “adolescent.” These themes are the main drivers of research as they have significant influence and strong development in the field of cyberbullying.

The upper left quadrant, or Niche Themes, contains themes that, while highly developed, have relatively low relevance in the context of the overall field. Examples include “digital age,” “online safety,” “natural process language,” and “contrastive learning.” These themes indicate particular, in-depth research areas with potential for further development.

In the lower right quadrant, called Basic Themes, are themes that are highly relevant but still in an earlier or basic stage of development, such as “social media,” “mental health,” “students,” and “prevention and control.” These themes are important foundations that continue to be the focus of research and may develop into motor themes in the future.

The lower left quadrant, known as Emerging or Declining Themes, includes themes that have low relevance and development, such as “cyber bullying,” “chatbots,” “machine learning,” and “cyber security.” These themes may be emerging and developing fields, or conversely, experiencing a decline in research interest.



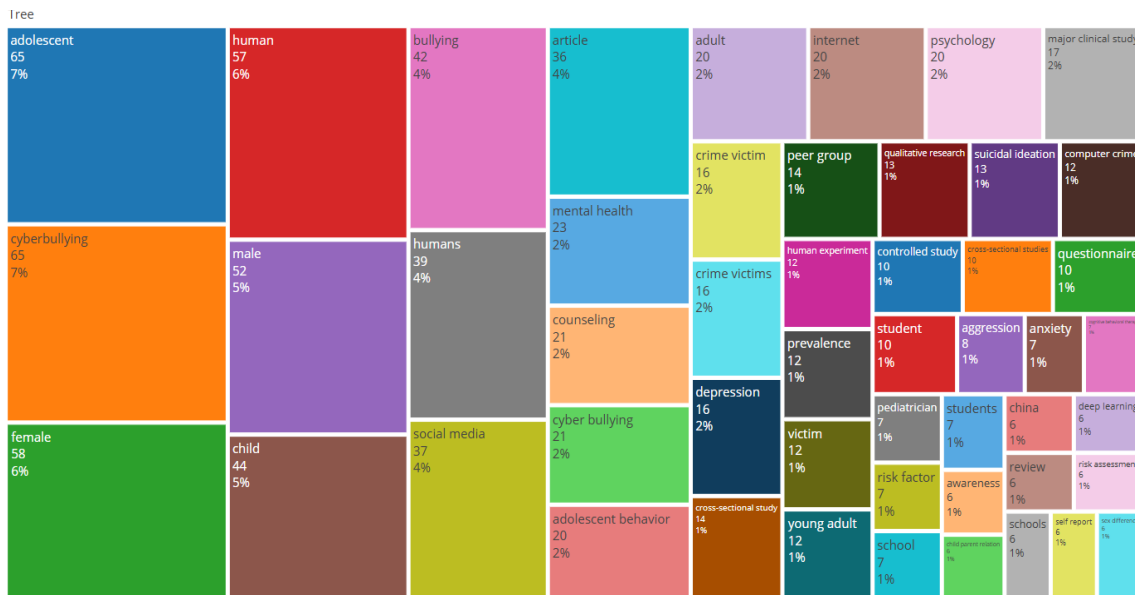


Figure 7. Tree Map

The image in figure 7 shows a Tree Map representation of the frequency of occurrence of the main keywords in cyberbullying research. The size of each box indicates the proportion of occurrences of that keyword in the dataset, thereby identifying the topics that are most frequently the focus of research.

The most dominant keywords include “adolescent” and “cyberbullying,” each with a large frequency of occurrence, indicating that adolescents are the main subjects in cyberbullying studies. In addition, keywords such as “human,” “female,” “male,” and “child” account for a significant share, indicating a strong focus on the demographic aspects and characteristics of both victims and perpetrators.

Other prominent topics include “bullying,” “social media,” “mental health,” “counseling,” and “depression,” indicating that social, psychological, and intervention aspects are essential themes in this study. Keywords related to research methods, such as “questionnaire,” and study types, such as “major clinical study,” also appear, indicating the variety of approaches used to study cyberbullying. This Tree Map provides a comprehensive overview of the concentration of research themes in the field of cyberbullying, highlighting researchers' primary concerns with young people, psychological impacts, and associated social and technological mechanisms. This information helps chart research directions and identify areas for further development.

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric study provides a comprehensive overview of the global research landscape on cyberbullying in the context of guidance and counseling from 2015 to 2025, showing a significant increase in scientific publications since 2017. The United States, Spain, and Turkey were noted as major contributors, reflecting international collaboration and intensive knowledge exchange. Thematic evolutionary analysis reveals a shift from early studies of computer crime to applied research emphasizing prevention, detection systems, counseling, and the use of technologies such as machine learning. The emerging future thematic highlights the importance of mental health, digital identity, and technology-based counseling strategies, confirming the multidisciplinary nature of this research. However, this study has limitations due to the exclusive use of the Scopus



database which has the potential to overlook non-English publications, as well as the inability of bibliometric methods to assess the contextual nuances of each study. Caution is needed when interpreting the decline in publications in 2025, which may be due to incomplete indexing. Therefore, this study recommends strategically using bibliometric evidence to develop adaptive, evidence-based digital counseling policies and curricula, emphasizing the integration of digital literacy and interdisciplinary approaches.

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