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Predicting Cyberbullying–Cybervictimization Experience Based on Parent–Child Relationship, Psychological Well-Being, and Internet Addiction in Adolescents in Isfahan City

Zahra. Gharagozloo[1], Tayebeh. Taheri Jebeli[1], Solmaz. Dabiri[1], Somayeh. Ashrafifard[*1]

[1] Department of Educational Psychology and Personality Psychology, NT.C., Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

*** Corresponding author email address**: s.ashrafifard@iau.ir

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: The present study aimed to predict cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience based on parent–child relationship, psychological well-being, and internet addiction among adolescents in Isfahan City.

Methods and Materials: The present study employed a descriptive-correlational design. The statistical population consisted of all male and female high school students enrolled during the 2024–2025 academic year in Isfahan City. Based on Morgan's table, 382 students were selected using cluster random sampling. Data were collected using Young's Internet Addiction Test (1998), the Cyber Bullying–Victimization Experience Questionnaire developed by Antoniadou et al. (2016), Ryff's Short Form Psychological Well-Being Scale (1989), and Pianta's Parent–Child Relationship Scale (2011). Data analysis was conducted using Pearson correlation coefficients and multiple linear regression analysis through SPSS version 27.

Findings: The findings demonstrated that internet addiction had a significant positive relationship with cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience ($\beta = 0.886$, $p < .001$), whereas psychological well-being had a significant negative relationship with cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience ($\beta = -0.154$, $p < .001$). However, the overall parent–child relationship did not significantly predict cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience ($\beta = -0.002$, $p = .959$). The regression model was statistically significant ($F = 208.95$, $p < .001$) and explained 62.5% of the variance in cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience. In addition, the closeness component of the parent–child relationship showed a significant negative correlation with both cybervictimization and cyberbullying, whereas the conflict component demonstrated a significant positive correlation with these variables. No significant relationship was found between the dependency component and cyberbullying–cybervictimization.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that internet addiction and psychological well-being are important predictors of cyberbullying–cybervictimization among adolescents. Excessive internet use may increase adolescents' exposure to harmful online interactions, whereas higher psychological well-being may function as a protective factor against involvement in cyberbullying behaviors.

Keywords: *cyberbullying–cybervictimization, parent–child relationship, psychological well-being, internet addiction, adolescent*

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a sensitive developmental period in which cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, and behavioral changes interact with expanding digital participation. Contemporary developmental psychology views adolescence not merely as a transitional phase but as a period in which brain–behavior systems become increasingly responsive to social evaluation, peer belonging, autonomy, and identity formation (Insel & Cohen, 2025). In this context, digital environments have become central arenas for social interaction, emotional expression, learning, entertainment, and peer comparison. Although online communication may provide opportunities for social connection and access to information, it can also expose adolescents to psychological risks, especially when internet use becomes excessive, poorly regulated, or embedded in hostile peer interactions. Among these risks, cyberbullying and cybervictimization have received growing attention because they extend aggressive peer dynamics beyond physical settings and may occur repeatedly, anonymously, publicly, and without clear spatial or temporal boundaries (Alfarizy et al., 2024; Kumar & Goldstein, 2020).

Cyberbullying refers to intentional and repeated aggressive behavior carried out through digital technologies, whereas cybervictimization refers to the experience of being targeted by such behaviors. These experiences may include insulting messages, online humiliation, social exclusion, spreading rumors, identity misuse, threats, and the nonconsensual circulation of private content. The measurement of cyberbullying and cybervictimization has been strengthened through instruments such as the Cyber-Bullying/Victimization Experiences Questionnaire, which conceptualizes cyberbullying and cybervictimization as related but distinguishable dimensions of online aggression (Antoniadou et al., 2016). Evidence from Iranian student samples has also supported the psychometric adequacy of this instrument, allowing researchers to examine cyberbullying–cybervictimization experiences with greater methodological precision in adolescent populations (Basharpoor & Zardi, 2019). This distinction is important because adolescents may be perpetrators, victims, or bully-victims, and these roles can overlap within reciprocal online interactions.

The psychological consequences of cyberbullying and cybervictimization are broad and clinically meaningful. Cybervictimization has been associated with anxiety, depressive symptoms, reduced self-esteem, psychological distress, sleep disturbance, somatic complaints, and broader impairments in well-being (Albikawi, 2023; Bozduman Çelebi & Cambaz Kurt, 2025). Research on gifted youth has similarly shown that cybervictimization is linked to subjective well-being and that protective resources such as self-esteem and perceived social support may buffer its negative effects (Kara & Aslan, 2025). In educational and developmental contexts, cyberbullying is therefore not only a behavioral problem but also a psychosocial phenomenon that reflects vulnerabilities in emotion regulation, social support, peer relationships, and mental health. Recent research in Isfahan has specifically demonstrated a relationship between cyberbullying and psychological well-being among secondary high school students, indicating the local relevance of this issue for Iranian adolescents (Amini-Rarani et al., 2024).

Psychological well-being represents one of the central protective constructs in the study of adolescent adjustment. Based on Ryff's multidimensional model, psychological well-being includes self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. The short form of Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale has been validated among Iranian students, providing a culturally usable framework for assessing this construct in adolescent and young populations (Khanjani et al., 2014). From this perspective, adolescents with stronger psychological well-being may be better able to regulate emotions, maintain supportive relationships, resist maladaptive peer pressure, and cope with online stressors. Conversely, low psychological well-being may increase vulnerability to both cybervictimization and participation in online aggression, particularly when adolescents seek validation, escape, or control through digital interactions.

Several recent studies support the relevance of psychological well-being to cyberbullying and cybervictimization. Psychological well-being has been identified as a predictor of cyberbullying victimization in university students, and Bayesian evidence has further emphasized the probabilistic role of well-being in explaining vulnerability to online victimization (Sergeeva & Zheltukhina, 2025). Studies on adolescents have also linked cyberbullying involvement with emotional maturity, identity styles, perceived social support, anger, and psychological functioning (Mohamadi et al., 2022; Sabet & Khayatan, 2023). In intervention and educational contexts, anti-bullying approaches have increasingly emphasized emotional understanding, empathy, perspective taking, and role exchange, including immersive virtual environments

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designed to reduce aggressive behavior by improving awareness of victim experiences (Gu et al., 2023). These findings suggest that psychological well-being may operate both as a direct correlate of cyberbullying–cybervictimization and as a broader indicator of adolescents' capacity to adapt to online interpersonal stress.

Another major construct associated with cyberbullying–cybervictimization is internet addiction. Internet addiction generally refers to excessive, uncontrolled, and functionally impairing internet use that may interfere with academic, social, emotional, and family functioning. Theoretical models such as the Interaction of Person–Affect–Cognition–Execution model explain problematic internet use as the outcome of interactions among individual predispositions, affective and cognitive responses, executive control deficits, and reinforcement processes (Brand et al., 2016). At the same time, conceptual critiques have argued that problematic internet use should be understood carefully, distinguishing clinically meaningful impairment from compensatory or context-dependent internet engagement (Kardefelt-Winther, 2014). Despite these debates, the growing prevalence of internet addiction among adolescents has made it a major concern in mental health research. A comprehensive meta-analysis of Chinese adolescents, for example, showed that internet addiction is a widespread phenomenon requiring systematic prevention and monitoring (Zheng et al., 2025).

Internet addiction may increase cyberbullying–cybervictimization risk through several mechanisms. Adolescents who spend more time online have greater exposure to digital peer interactions, online conflict, social comparison, anonymous communication, and risky virtual contexts. Excessive internet use may also be associated with impulsivity, reduced self-control, sleep problems, academic burnout, and weakened offline social connectedness (Hosseinpour et al., 2016; Sadeghi Bimorgh et al., 2023; Savci & Aysan, 2017). Research among Iranian university students has shown that internet addiction is associated with mental health difficulties, highlighting its psychological burden in Iranian populations (Lebni et al., 2020). Among high school students, internet addiction has also been linked to academic procrastination and psychological well-being, suggesting that problematic online engagement may disrupt both educational functioning and internal adjustment (Sharifirahnmo et al., 2021). A literature review similarly reported associations between internet addiction, self-efficacy, and adolescent cyberbullying behavior, indicating that excessive internet use may be connected to both personal vulnerability and online aggression (Zulfa et al., 2020).

Recent research has increasingly examined internet addiction as a predictor of cybervictimization and cyberbullying. A structural model of cybervictimization found that internet addiction, perceived social support, and personality traits were relevant explanatory variables, indicating that cybervictimization is shaped by both behavioral exposure and psychosocial resources (Kamran et al., 2024). Intervention studies also show that internet addiction is modifiable, with evidence supporting the effectiveness of psychological and behavioral interventions, including positive psychology, cognitive-behavioral therapy, preventive programs for children, and sports-based interventions for adolescents (Pourrosta et al., 2024; Theopilus et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024). These findings indicate that internet addiction is not only a risk factor but also a practical target for prevention programs aimed at reducing adolescents' exposure to harmful online behaviors. The educational value of internet use should also be acknowledged, as digital engagement can support learning and self-efficacy when used adaptively; however, unregulated use may shift from functional engagement to problematic dependency (Wang et al., 2023).

Family context, especially the parent–child relationship, is another critical factor in understanding adolescents' online behaviors. The parent–child relationship includes emotional closeness, conflict, dependency, communication, monitoring, warmth, and perceived support. In early and middle development, parent–child interaction patterns influence emotional security, self-regulation, autonomy, and social competence, which can later shape adolescents' peer interactions in both offline and online contexts. Iranian evidence has shown that psychosocial training aimed at improving mother–child interaction can enhance parental self-efficacy and mother–child relationships, supporting the modifiability and developmental importance of parent–child interaction quality (Abareshi et al., 2009). Recent Iranian family research has also emphasized the mediating role of the parent–child relationship in children's behavioral problems, showing that parenting methods and relationship quality are closely connected to adjustment outcomes (Moradi et al., 2023). In clinical family contexts, mindful parenting interventions have been shown to improve parent–child relationships, further supporting the relevance of relationship quality as a target for psychological intervention (Bitarafan et al., 2024).

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The association between parent–child relationships and cyberbullying has been supported by several empirical and review studies. Perceived parenting may influence adolescent cyberbullying through autonomy and relatedness need satisfaction, empathic concern, and recognition of others' humanity (Fousiani et al., 2016). A systematic review of family variables concluded that family functioning, parental monitoring, parental warmth, communication, and parenting style can influence both cyberbullying perpetration and cybervictimization (López-Castro & Priegue, 2019). Similarly, parental connectedness and monitoring of online activities have been identified as protective factors against cyberbullying victimization and perpetration (Doty et al., 2018). A meta-analysis of parental risk and protective factors in bullying victimization further confirmed that family processes can either buffer or intensify children's and adolescents' vulnerability to bullying experiences (Grama et al., 2024). These findings indicate that adolescents' online behaviors cannot be separated from their relational ecology.

More specifically, parent–child emotional support and attachment may moderate the negative consequences of cyberbullying and cybervictimization. Youth perceptions of parental emotional support have been associated with cyberbullying behaviors, highlighting the importance of adolescents' subjective experience of parental availability and responsiveness (Grunin et al., 2021). Parent–child attachment has also been shown to moderate the association between cyberbullying victimization and adolescent health and mental health problems, suggesting that secure family bonds may reduce the psychological harm associated with online victimization (Zhu et al., 2021). In another study, the parent–child relationship and child sex moderated the association between cyberbullying victimization and internalizing and externalizing problems, indicating that family relationships can shape how cybervictimization translates into psychological and behavioral outcomes (Sampasa-Kanyinga et al., 2020). Research on Iranian children and adolescents has also indicated that the quality of marital and parent–child relationships can predict bullying and victimization, further supporting the relevance of family relational factors in the Iranian cultural context (Khalilinejad & Latif Zanjani, 2021).

In addition to family and individual predictors, school climate and broader digital culture influence adolescents' cyberbullying experiences. The role of parent–child relationship, school climate, happiness, and empathy in predicting cyberbullying behavior indicates that online aggression is multidetermined and embedded in emotional, interpersonal, and institutional contexts (Safaria & Suyono, 2020). School-based digital action research has also highlighted the need to address social media use within educational settings, because platforms such as Instagram have become part of adolescents' everyday school-related social worlds (Castiglione, 2024). From a prevention standpoint, cyberbullying requires integrated approaches that combine family education, digital literacy, emotional skills training, monitoring of problematic internet use, and promotion of psychological well-being. Such integration is especially important because adolescents may simultaneously experience low well-being, excessive internet use, weak family communication, and exposure to online aggression.

Taken together, previous studies show that cyberbullying–cybervictimization is associated with psychological well-being, internet addiction, and the parent–child relationship, yet the relative predictive role of these variables remains an important empirical question, particularly among secondary high school students in Isfahan. The local context is important because adolescent internet use, family interaction patterns, educational pressures, and peer dynamics may vary across sociocultural settings. Although prior Iranian studies have examined cyberbullying, internet addiction, and psychological well-being separately or in partial models, fewer studies have simultaneously examined parent–child relationship, psychological well-being, and internet addiction as predictors of cyberbullying–cybervictimization in adolescents. Clarifying these relationships can help identify whether online behavioral risk, internal psychological resources, or family relational quality has the strongest predictive contribution and can guide more precise preventive and school-based interventions.

The aim of the present study was to predict cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience based on parent–child relationship, psychological well-being, and internet addiction among adolescents in Isfahan City.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study was conducted using a descriptive correlational design. The statistical population consisted of all male and female high school students enrolled during the 2024–2025 academic year in Isfahan City, with an estimated population of approximately 74,635 students. Based on

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Morgan's table, the sample size was determined to be 382 participants. Due to the geographical dispersion and large size of the statistical population, cluster random sampling was employed. Initially, six educational districts of Tehran City were considered as the main clusters. Subsequently, several high schools were randomly selected from each district. In the next stage, classes and then students were randomly selected from the chosen schools as the statistical sample, and the questionnaires were administered to them. Data were collected using demographic questionnaires, Young's Internet Addiction Questionnaire (1996), Antoniadou et al.'s Cyberbullying Experience Questionnaire (2016), Ryff's Short Form Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire (1989), and Pianta's Parent–Child Relationship Questionnaire (2011). After receiving explanations regarding the study objectives and assurances about the confidentiality of responses, students voluntarily participated in the study. Inclusion criteria included informed consent, being between 15 and 18 years of age, enrollment in the second cycle of secondary education, and living under the supervision of both parents. Exclusion criteria included unwillingness to cooperate, being older than 18 or younger than 15 years of age, and enrollment in educational levels other than secondary high school.

2.2. Measures

Cyber Bullying–Victimization Experience Questionnaire (CBVEQ): The Cyber Bullying–Victimization Experience Questionnaire is a 24-item instrument developed by Antoniadou et al. (2016) to assess this construct among students. The questionnaire consists of two subscales, namely cybervictimization and cyberbullying, each containing 12 items. Scoring is based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from never (1) to every day (5), such that higher scores indicate a higher level of cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience and vice versa. Convergent validity with the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire was reported as 0.78, while Cronbach's alpha coefficients were reported as 0.89 for the bullying factor and 0.80 for the victimization factor (Antoniadou et al., 2016). In the Iranian population, internal consistency and test–retest methods demonstrated Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.75 for cyberbullying, 0.78 for cybervictimization, and 0.79 for the total scale, while confirmatory factor analysis indices indicated a good fit for the measurement model (Basharpoor & Zardi, 2019). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.93 for cyberbullying and 0.93 for cybervictimization.

Pianta Parent–Child Relationship Scale (CPRS): The 33-item Parent–Child Relationship Scale was developed by Pianta (2011) to assess parents' perceptions of the quality of their relationship and interactions with their children. The instrument includes three subscales: conflict (17 items), closeness/intimacy (10 items), and dependency (6 items) (Bitarafan et al., 2024). Responses are scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from definitely applies to definitely does not apply. Interpretation of scores indicates that higher scores on the conflict and dependency subscales reflect a more negative parent–child relationship, whereas higher scores on the closeness subscale indicate a more positive and intimate relationship (Moradi et al., 2023). The reliability and validity of the instrument were confirmed by Pianta (2011), with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.75, 0.74, 0.69, and 0.80 reported for the conflict, closeness, dependency, and total score components, respectively. Construct validity was also supported through correlations with parent and child reports on family assessment and parental emotionality measures. In the Iranian population, content validity confirmed by specialists and reliability analyses demonstrated Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.84, 0.70, 0.61, and 0.86 for the conflict, closeness, dependency, and total score subscales, respectively (Abareshi et al., 2009). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the conflict, closeness, dependency, and total score components were 0.91, 0.79, 0.72, and 0.88, respectively.

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (RSPWB): The 18-item Psychological Well-Being Scale was developed by Ryff (1989) to assess psychological well-being across multiple dimensions. The scale includes six factors: self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and autonomy, measured on a 6-point Likert scale. Total scores range from 18 to 108, with higher scores indicating greater psychological well-being. In Ryff's (1989) study, internal consistency coefficients for the dimensions of self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and autonomy were reported as 0.51, 0.76, 0.75, 0.52, 0.73, and 0.72, respectively, while the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total scale was 0.71 (Ryff, 1989). In the Iranian population, the internal consistency of the short form, assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was reported as 0.78 (Khanjani et al., 2014). In the present study, the reliability of

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the questionnaire, assessed through Cronbach's alpha, was 0.78.

Internet Addiction Test (IAT): The 20-item Internet Addiction Test was developed by Kimberly Young (1998) to assess internet addiction and the severity of users' dependency on the internet. Scoring is based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very rarely) to 5 (very frequently) (Sadeghi Bimorgh et al., 2023). Scores ranging from 20 to 49 indicate a normal user, scores from 50 to 79 indicate an at-risk user, and scores from 80 to 100 indicate an addicted user. Soltani et al. (2010) reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94 for the questionnaire, while Bakhshayesh (2015) reported a coefficient of 0.96. Concurrent validity in the study conducted by Jafari and Fatehizadeh (2012) was reported as 0.81, and discriminant validity was reported as 0.62 (Hosseinpour et al., 2016). In the present study, the reliability of the questionnaire, assessed through Cronbach's alpha, was 0.97.

2.3. Data Analysis

Finally, the collected data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficients and multiple linear regression analysis through SPSS version 27.

3. Findings and Results

Among the total sample of 382 high school students from Isfahan City who participated in the study, 191 participants were female (50%) and 191 were male (50%). The mean age of the participants was 16.51 years. Regarding fathers' educational level, the highest frequency belonged to high school diploma and below diploma education with 304 individuals (79.58%), followed by associate degree with 22 individuals (5.76%), bachelor's degree with 45 individuals (11.78%), and master's degree with 11 individuals (2.88%). Regarding mothers' educational level, 299 individuals (78.27%) had diploma and below diploma education, 21 individuals (5.50%) had associate degrees, 54 individuals (14.14%) had bachelor's degrees, and 8 individuals (2.09%) had master's degrees. All participating students in this study were living under the supervision of both parents.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients

Variable	Component	Possible Score Range	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's Alpha
Internet Addiction	Total	1–5	2.86	1.15	-0.14	-1.38	0.97
Cyberbullying–Cybervictimization Experience	Cybervictimization	1–5	1.66	0.70	0.89	-0.44	0.93
	Cyberbullying	1–5	1.43	0.51	1.34	1.39	0.93
	Total	1–5	1.54	0.57	0.91	-0.32	0.96
Psychological Well-Being	Autonomy	1–6	3.99	0.86	-0.33	0.03	0.70
	Environmental Mastery	1–6	3.18	0.72	0.75	1.10	0.69
	Personal Growth	1–6	3.64	0.92	0.05	-0.89	0.77
	Positive Relations with Others	1–6	3.35	1.09	0.31	-0.27	0.73
	Purpose in Life	1–6	4.01	1.09	-0.28	-0.84	0.71
	Self-Acceptance	1–6	3.88	1.08	-0.42	-0.08	0.72
	Total	1–6	3.74	0.55	0.58	0.69	0.78
Parent–Child Relationship	Closeness	1–5	3.16	0.65	-0.02	-0.68	0.79
	Conflict	1–5	2.78	0.68	0.29	-0.39	0.91
	Dependency	1–5	3.11	0.62	0.24	0.53	0.72
	Total	1–5	3.14	0.49	-0.22	0.26	0.88

Based on the Cronbach's alpha coefficients reported in Table 1 (ranging from 0.69 to 0.97), the questionnaires demonstrated acceptable reliability. Furthermore, skewness values ranged from -0.42 to 1.34, while kurtosis values ranged from -1.38 to 1.39. According to Kline's (2023) criteria, data are considered normally distributed when skewness values range between -2 and +2 and kurtosis values range between -7 and +7. Based on these criteria, the distribution of the data related to the study variables demonstrated adequate normality. Table 2 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among the main study variables.

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Table 2

Pearson Correlation Coefficients Among the Research Variables

No.	Variable	1	2	3	4
1	Internet Addiction	1			
2	Cyberbullying–Cybervictimization Experience	0.782**	1		
3	Psychological Well-Being	-0.667**	-0.435**	1	
4	Parent–Child Relationship	-0.549**	-0.389**	0.614**	1

As shown in Table 2, the results of the Pearson correlation matrix indicated that all correlation coefficients among the research variables were significant at the .01 level and, consequently, at the .05 level. Since significant correlations existed among the study variables, further analysis was justified. To examine the main hypothesis of the study—that parent–child relationship, psychological well-being, and internet addiction are capable of predicting cyberbullying–cybervictimization—a linear regression model was employed in which internet addiction, psychological well-being, and parent–child relationship served as predictor variables, while cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience served as the criterion variable. First, the analysis of variance results for this regression model are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Analysis of Variance Results for the Regression Model Predicting Cyberbullying–Cybervictimization Based on Parent–Child Relationship, Psychological Well-Being, and Internet Addiction

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	77.017	3	25.672	208.950	< .001
Residual	46.197	376	0.123	—	—
Total	123.214	379	—	—	—

According to Table 3, the regression F statistic, which was used to examine the overall significance of the regression model, was significant ($F = 208.95$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the regression model was significant overall, and the main hypothesis of the study was supported. The overall results of the regression model are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Overall Results of the Regression Model

Dependent Variable	Correlation Coefficient (R)	Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	Adjusted R^2	Standard Error	Durbin–Watson Statistic
Cyberbullying–Cybervictimization Experience	0.791	0.625	0.622	0.350	2.012

As presented in Table 4, the coefficient of determination for the regression model was 0.625, indicating that approximately 62.5% of the variance in the criterion variable was explained by the predictor variables. The adjusted coefficient of determination was 0.622, and the closeness of this value to the coefficient of determination indicates the adequacy of the regression model. The Durbin–Watson statistic was 2.012, which falls between 1.5 and 2.5, indicating the absence of autocorrelation in the regression model.

Table 5 presents the coefficients of the regression model.

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Table 5

Regression Model Coefficients

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t	Significance	VIF
Constant	-0.315	0.230	—	-1.367	0.172	—
Internet Addiction	0.437	0.022	0.886	20.319	< .001	1.906
Psychological Well-Being	-0.160	0.048	-0.154	-3.331	< .001	2.140
Parent–Child Relationship	-0.002	0.048	-0.002	-0.051	0.959	1.701

According to Table 5, internet addiction (β = 0.886, p < .001) demonstrated a significant positive coefficient, whereas psychological well-being (β = -0.154, p < .001) demonstrated a significant negative coefficient. Therefore, internet addiction had a significant positive effect, and psychological well-being had a significant negative effect on cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience. In contrast, the effect of parent–child relationship was not significant (β = -0.002, p = .959). Overall, these findings indicate that internet addiction and psychological well-being play significant roles in predicting cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience, whereas the role of parent–child relationship in predicting cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience was not significant. Table 5 also reports the variance inflation factor (VIF), which is used to assess multicollinearity. Since the VIF values for all independent variables were below 10, it can be concluded that no multicollinearity problem existed.

To examine the secondary hypotheses of the study, which involved investigating the relationships between the components of parent–child relationship, psychological well-being, and internet addiction with cyberbullying–cybervictimization, the results presented in Table 6 were used. This table reports the Pearson correlation coefficients for the aforementioned variables.

Table 6

Pearson Correlation Results for the Components of Parent–Child Relationship, Psychological Well-Being, and Internet Addiction With Cyberbullying–Cybervictimization

Variable/Component	Correlation With Cybervictimization	Significance	Correlation With Cyberbullying	Significance
Parent–Child Relationship: Closeness	-0.418	< .001	-0.411	< .001
Parent–Child Relationship: Conflict	0.336	< .001	0.279	< .001
Parent–Child Relationship: Dependency	0.076	0.140	0.098	0.058
Psychological Well-Being	-0.428	< .001	-0.383	< .001
Internet Addiction	0.751	< .001	0.714	< .001

According to Table 6, the correlation coefficients between the closeness component and cybervictimization (r = -0.418, p < .001) and cyberbullying (r = -0.411, p < .001) were significant and negative. The correlation coefficients between the conflict component and cybervictimization (r = 0.336, p < .001) and cyberbullying (r = 0.279, p < .001) were also positive and significant. In contrast, the correlation coefficients between the dependency component and cybervictimization (r = 0.076, p = .140) and cyberbullying (r = 0.098, p = .058) were not significant. Furthermore, as shown in Table 6, the correlation coefficients between psychological well-being and cybervictimization (r = -0.428, p < .001) and cyberbullying (r = -0.383, p < .001) were significant and negative. In addition, the correlation coefficients between internet addiction and cybervictimization (r = 0.751, p < .001) and cyberbullying (r = 0.714, p < .001) were significant and positive.

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to predict cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience based on parent–child relationship, psychological well-being, and internet addiction among adolescents in Isfahan City. The findings demonstrated that internet addiction and psychological well-being significantly predicted cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience, whereas the overall parent–child relationship did not significantly predict the criterion variable in the regression model. Furthermore, the correlational findings indicated that the closeness component of the parent–child relationship had a significant

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negative association with both cybervictimization and cyberbullying, while the conflict component demonstrated a significant positive association with these variables. However, the dependency component was not significantly associated with cyberbullying–cybervictimization. These findings emphasize the multidimensional nature of cyberbullying experiences in adolescence and indicate that individual psychological characteristics and patterns of internet use may play stronger predictive roles than general family relationship indices when examined simultaneously.

One of the most important findings of the present study was the significant positive relationship between internet addiction and cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience. Adolescents with higher levels of internet addiction reported greater involvement in cyberbullying and cybervictimization experiences. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that problematic internet use increases adolescents' exposure to harmful online interactions, risky communication patterns, and emotionally dysregulated digital behavior (Kamran et al., 2024; Zulfa et al., 2020). The findings are also aligned with studies demonstrating that excessive internet use is associated with broader psychological and social difficulties, including reduced social connectedness, emotional instability, academic burnout, and impaired self-regulation (Hosseinpour et al., 2016; Sadeghi Bimorgh et al., 2023; Savci & Aysan, 2017). Adolescents who spend excessive time online may become more vulnerable to peer conflict, online harassment, impulsive reactions, and retaliatory behavior because prolonged internet engagement increases both exposure and emotional dependence on online social environments.

The present findings can also be interpreted in light of theoretical perspectives regarding internet-use disorders. The I-PACE model proposes that problematic internet use emerges through interactions among affective responses, cognitive biases, executive dysfunction, and individual vulnerabilities (Brand et al., 2016). Adolescents experiencing emotional distress or social insecurity may increasingly rely on online environments as compensatory spaces for emotional relief or interpersonal validation. In such conditions, internet overuse may weaken offline coping resources and increase susceptibility to cybervictimization or engagement in cyberaggression. Similarly, the compensatory internet use framework suggests that some individuals excessively use the internet to compensate for unmet emotional or social needs (Kardefelt-Winther, 2014). Adolescents with poor emotional regulation or interpersonal dissatisfaction may therefore become trapped in maladaptive digital engagement patterns that increase the likelihood of cyberbullying involvement.

The strong relationship observed between internet addiction and cyberbullying–cybervictimization in the present study is also consistent with epidemiological and intervention research. High prevalence rates of internet addiction among adolescents have been reported internationally, indicating that problematic internet use has become a widespread developmental concern (Zheng et al., 2025). In addition, studies have shown that internet addiction negatively affects mental health and psychosocial adjustment among Iranian adolescents and young adults (Lebni et al., 2020). Preventive and therapeutic interventions aimed at reducing internet addiction, including positive psychology approaches, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and sports-based interventions, have demonstrated effectiveness in improving adolescents' psychological functioning and reducing problematic internet behaviors (Pourrosta et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024). Therefore, the present findings support the idea that reducing problematic internet use may simultaneously decrease adolescents' vulnerability to cyberbullying and cybervictimization.

Another important finding of the present study was the significant negative relationship between psychological well-being and cyberbullying–cybervictimization experience. Adolescents with higher psychological well-being reported lower involvement in both cybervictimization and cyberbullying. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that psychological well-being functions as a protective factor against online aggression and victimization (Amini-Rarani et al., 2024; Sergeeva & Zheltukhina, 2025). Adolescents with higher levels of self-acceptance, autonomy, purpose in life, and positive relationships may possess greater emotional stability and stronger interpersonal competencies, enabling them to cope more effectively with online stressors and peer conflicts. Such adolescents may also be less likely to engage in aggressive online behavior because they have more adaptive emotion regulation strategies and stronger empathy capacities.

The negative association between psychological well-being and cyberbullying–cybervictimization may also be explained through developmental and emotional mechanisms. Adolescence is characterized by heightened sensitivity to peer evaluation and social comparison, particularly within online environments (Insel & Cohen, 2025). Adolescents with lower psychological well-being may experience loneliness, insecurity, frustration, or

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emotional vulnerability, making them more susceptible to online victimization or maladaptive online coping strategies. Studies examining cyberbullying among adolescents and university students have similarly found associations between cybervictimization and anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and emotional distress (Albikawi, 2023; Bozduman Çelebi & Cambaz Kurt, 2025). The findings of the present study therefore reinforce the importance of positive psychological functioning as a protective factor in digital social environments.

The current findings are also aligned with studies highlighting the roles of social support, empathy, and emotional maturity in cyberbullying dynamics. For example, subjective well-being, self-esteem, and perceived social support have been identified as protective resources against cybervictimization among adolescents (Kara & Aslan, 2025). Similarly, emotional maturity and identity-related variables have been associated with cyberbullying behaviors among adolescents in Isfahan (Sabet & Khayatan, 2023). Research has also shown that immersive educational interventions focused on empathy and role exchange can reduce aggressive online behaviors by improving emotional understanding and perspective taking (Gu et al., 2023). Consequently, the present findings suggest that enhancing adolescents' psychological well-being may reduce cyberbullying involvement by strengthening emotional regulation, resilience, and interpersonal functioning.

The findings related to the parent–child relationship require more nuanced interpretation. Although the overall parent–child relationship variable did not significantly predict cyberbullying–cybervictimization in the regression model, correlational analyses showed that closeness was negatively associated with cyberbullying and cybervictimization, whereas conflict was positively associated with these variables. These findings are generally consistent with prior literature indicating that family emotional climate and parent–child interaction quality are important correlates of adolescents' online behaviors (Fousiani et al., 2016; López-Castro & Priegue, 2019). Adolescents who experience warm, supportive, and emotionally close relationships with parents may feel more secure, valued, and emotionally regulated, reducing the likelihood of involvement in harmful online interactions. In contrast, high levels of parent–child conflict may contribute to emotional distress, anger, oppositional tendencies, and social maladjustment, which can increase vulnerability to cyberbullying involvement.

The negative association between parent–child closeness and cyberbullying–cybervictimization is consistent with studies emphasizing parental support and connectedness as protective factors (Doty et al., 2018; Grunin et al., 2021). Adolescents who perceive parents as emotionally available and supportive may be more willing to discuss online problems, seek guidance, and regulate digital behavior effectively. Likewise, secure attachment relationships may buffer the psychological impact of cybervictimization and reduce maladaptive reactions to peer aggression (Zhu et al., 2021). The significant positive association between parent–child conflict and cyberbullying involvement also aligns with findings indicating that poor family functioning and hostile interpersonal dynamics contribute to bullying-related behaviors (Khalilinejad & Latif Zanjani, 2021). Family conflict may weaken emotional security and increase aggressive coping patterns, thereby facilitating participation in cyberaggression or increasing sensitivity to online peer hostility.

However, the lack of a significant predictive role for the overall parent–child relationship variable in the regression model suggests that its effects may overlap with stronger predictors such as internet addiction and psychological well-being. It is possible that the influence of family relationships on cyberbullying operates indirectly through emotional adjustment, self-esteem, social competence, or problematic internet use. Previous studies have similarly indicated that family variables interact with psychological and contextual factors rather than acting independently (Safaria & Suyono, 2020; Sampasa-Kanyinga et al., 2020). Therefore, when internet addiction and psychological well-being are simultaneously considered, the direct predictive contribution of parent–child relationship may become less prominent. Another explanation may relate to developmental changes during adolescence, as peer influence and digital social networks increasingly shape adolescents' emotional and behavioral experiences.

The nonsignificant relationship between the dependency component and cyberbullying–cybervictimization is also noteworthy. Dependency may reflect relational closeness that differs qualitatively from emotional warmth or conflict. In adolescence, excessive dependency may not necessarily indicate maladaptive family functioning, nor may it directly influence online aggressive behavior. Consequently, dependency may play a less central role in adolescents' digital interpersonal experiences compared with emotional support and conflictual communication patterns.

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Overall, the present study supports ecological and multidimensional perspectives on cyberbullying–cybervictimization. Adolescents' involvement in cyberbullying cannot be explained solely by technological exposure or individual psychopathology. Instead, cyberbullying emerges through interactions among emotional well-being, internet-use patterns, interpersonal relationships, developmental vulnerabilities, and social contexts. The findings emphasize that adolescents with low psychological well-being and high internet addiction constitute particularly vulnerable groups requiring preventive attention. At the same time, emotionally supportive family relationships appear to reduce risk, even if their direct predictive role is weaker when broader psychological variables are considered simultaneously.

5. Conclusion

The findings have important implications for school-based mental health services and adolescent intervention programs. Since internet addiction demonstrated the strongest predictive role in the present study, educational institutions and families should monitor adolescents' digital engagement patterns and promote healthy internet use habits. Preventive programs focused on emotional regulation, resilience, social competence, and digital literacy may help adolescents navigate online environments more safely. Furthermore, strengthening psychological well-being through school counseling, peer support programs, positive psychology interventions, and family-based education may reduce adolescents' vulnerability to cyberbullying involvement. Given the increasing integration of social media into adolescents' educational and social lives, cyberbullying prevention should become a central component of adolescent mental health promotion and school psychological services (Castiglione, 2024; Theopilus et al., 2024).

6. Limitations & Suggestions

One limitation of the present study was the use of a correlational research design, which limits causal interpretations among the variables. In addition, the data were collected through self-report questionnaires, which may have been influenced by social desirability, response bias, or inaccurate self-perceptions. The study sample was limited to adolescents in Isfahan City; therefore, the generalizability of the findings to adolescents from other cultural, geographical, or socioeconomic backgrounds should be made cautiously. Another limitation was the exclusion of potentially influential variables such as peer attachment, personality traits, emotional regulation strategies, and school climate, which may also contribute to cyberbullying experiences.

Future studies are recommended to employ longitudinal and experimental designs to examine causal relationships among internet addiction, psychological well-being, family relationships, and cyberbullying–cybervictimization. Researchers may also investigate mediating and moderating variables such as self-esteem, emotional intelligence, loneliness, social support, empathy, and peer pressure. Comparative studies across different age groups, educational levels, and cultural settings may further clarify developmental and contextual differences in cyberbullying dynamics. In addition, future research should evaluate the effectiveness of preventive interventions targeting internet addiction reduction, emotional well-being enhancement, and family communication improvement in decreasing cyberbullying involvement among adolescents.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that schools, counselors, and families should collaboratively implement preventive programs focused on healthy internet use, emotional well-being promotion, and supportive parent–child communication. Educational workshops for parents may help improve emotional closeness and reduce conflictual interactions with adolescents. Schools can also provide psychoeducational programs addressing digital citizenship, empathy, emotional regulation, and safe online communication. Furthermore, screening programs aimed at identifying adolescents with problematic internet use or poor psychological well-being may help mental health professionals intervene before cyberbullying behaviors become chronic or psychologically harmful.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this article.

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