

Predicting Cyberbullying Victimization Experiences Based on Family Communication Patterns and Inner Self-Talk in Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The present study aimed to predict adolescents' experiences of cyberbullying victimization based on family communication patterns and dimensions of inner self-talk.

Methods and Materials: This applied correlational study was conducted among high school students in Shiraz, Iran, during the 2026 academic year. The statistical population consisted of adolescents enrolled in secondary schools, from which 200 participants were selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using the Cyber Bully/Victim Experience Questionnaire, the Family Communication Patterns Questionnaire, and the Inner Self-Talk Questionnaire. After data collection, the responses were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Pearson correlation coefficients were employed to examine relationships among variables, and multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of family communication patterns and inner self-talk dimensions in explaining cyberbullying victimization experiences.

Findings: The results of the multiple regression analysis indicated that the combined dimensions of inner self-talk and family communication patterns explained 31.5% of the variance in cyberbullying victimization experiences. Social assessment emerged as a significant negative predictor of cyberbullying victimization ($\beta = -0.256, p = 0.005$), indicating that higher levels of constructive social evaluation were associated with lower victimization experiences. Self-regulation was also a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -0.311, p < 0.001$), suggesting that adolescents with stronger self-regulatory inner dialogue reported fewer cyberbullying victimization experiences. Regarding family communication patterns, conversation orientation significantly and negatively predicted cyberbullying victimization ($\beta = -0.298, p < 0.001$), whereas conformity orientation significantly and positively predicted victimization experiences ($\beta = 0.303, p < 0.001$). These findings demonstrate that both personal cognitive processes and family communication dynamics contribute significantly to adolescents' vulnerability to cyberbullying victimization.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that inner self-talk and family communication patterns play substantial roles in understanding and predicting cyberbullying victimization among adolescents. Specifically, higher levels of self-regulation, constructive social assessment, and open family conversation are associated with reduced vulnerability to cyberbullying, whereas greater conformity-oriented family communication is linked to increased victimization risk.

Keywords: Cyberbullying Victimization Experience; Family Communication Patterns; Inner Self-Talk; Adolescents; Self-Regulation.

1. Introduction

Cyberbullying has emerged as one of the most significant psychosocial challenges facing adolescents in the digital era. The rapid expansion of internet access, social networking platforms, and mobile communication technologies has transformed the ways young people interact with one another, creating new opportunities for social connection while simultaneously exposing them to novel forms of aggression and victimization. Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying can occur at any time and in any location, often allowing perpetrators to remain anonymous and enabling harmful content to spread rapidly among large audiences. These characteristics increase the intensity and persistence of victimization experiences and contribute to a wide range of negative psychological, emotional, social, and academic consequences. Research has demonstrated that cyberbullying victimization is associated with reduced psychological well-being, increased emotional distress, social withdrawal, anxiety, depression, and impaired academic functioning (Giumetti & Kowalski, 2022). Adolescents frequently encounter difficulties in distinguishing between ordinary online conflicts and cyberbullying incidents, making the phenomenon even more complex to identify and address (Menin et al., 2021). Recent investigations have also highlighted the growing prevalence of cyberbullying among adolescents and its association with other problematic behaviors and psychosocial risk factors (Saeidi & Soleimani, 2025). Consequently, identifying the individual and family-related factors that may protect adolescents from cyberbullying victimization has become an important priority for researchers, educators, and mental health professionals.

Contemporary theories of adolescent development emphasize that cyberbullying experiences do not occur in isolation but are influenced by a complex interaction of cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, and environmental variables. Among individual-level protective factors, self-talk has attracted increasing scholarly attention. Self-talk refers to the internal dialogue through which individuals interpret experiences, regulate emotions, guide behavior, evaluate personal performance, and construct meaning from everyday events (Kompa, 2025). Self-talk has been conceptualized as a fundamental component of inner speech and self-regulation processes that influences how individuals respond to challenges and stressful situations (Racy & Morin, 2024). Positive forms of self-talk can

strengthen coping capacities, enhance self-esteem, facilitate adaptive emotional regulation, and promote resilience in the face of adversity (Temel, 2025). Studies have shown that constructive self-talk is associated with improved performance, psychological adjustment, and greater self-regulatory functioning across diverse populations (Uhrich et al., 2023). In contrast, maladaptive internal dialogues may increase vulnerability to emotional difficulties and negative social experiences. Research examining intervention programs has demonstrated that training individuals to engage in positive self-talk can improve resilience, reduce hostility, and increase positive emotional experiences (Babaei et al., 2019). Similarly, therapeutic approaches targeting internal self-talk have been found to promote healthier lifestyles and psychological functioning among clinical populations (Besharatian et al., 2025). Experimental findings further suggest that motivational self-talk can significantly enhance performance and self-confidence, indicating its broader influence on behavioral adaptation and psychological well-being (Baghban & Dana, 2026). These findings suggest that adolescents who engage in more adaptive forms of self-talk may possess greater psychological resources for coping with peer aggression and cyberbullying experiences.

The relevance of self-talk to cyberbullying victimization can be understood through several psychological mechanisms. Adolescents with effective self-regulatory inner dialogue are more likely to interpret stressful online interactions in adaptive ways, employ constructive coping strategies, and maintain emotional stability when confronted with digital aggression. Positive self-talk can strengthen self-esteem, enhance problem-solving skills, and reduce emotional reactivity, thereby decreasing susceptibility to victimization. Indeed, intervention studies have reported that positive self-talk training improves coping mechanisms that help individuals deal with bullying-related stressors (Chaizuran et al., 2020). Moreover, self-talk has been linked to self-regulation, mindfulness, self-concept clarity, and adaptive cognitive processing, all of which may serve protective functions against harmful online experiences (Racy & Morin, 2024). Theoretical analyses have further emphasized that inner speech represents an essential cognitive mechanism through which individuals monitor and regulate their emotions and social behavior (Kompa, 2025). Despite the growing body of literature on self-talk, relatively few studies have examined its role in explaining cyberbullying victimization among adolescents. Existing research has primarily focused on educational, athletic, or

clinical outcomes rather than online peer victimization, creating an important gap in the literature that warrants further investigation.

Alongside individual cognitive factors, family-related variables have consistently been identified as major determinants of adolescent psychosocial adjustment. Among these factors, family communication patterns occupy a central position because they shape how young people learn to express emotions, resolve conflicts, interpret social experiences, and establish interpersonal relationships. Family communication patterns theory proposes two primary dimensions of family interaction: conversation orientation and conformity orientation. Conversation-oriented families encourage open discussion, exchange of ideas, emotional expression, and collaborative problem-solving, whereas conformity-oriented families emphasize obedience, uniformity of beliefs, and adherence to parental authority (Craig et al., 2022). Research has demonstrated that family communication patterns influence numerous developmental outcomes, including identity formation, creativity, academic functioning, psychological well-being, and social competence (Amanollahi et al., 2025; Monjezi et al., 2022). In contemporary digital environments, family communication remains highly relevant despite technological transformations in interpersonal interaction. Scholars have argued that effective family communication continues to serve as a critical protective factor in helping adolescents navigate online environments and cope with digital challenges (Anisti et al., 2023). Furthermore, evidence from diverse populations indicates that healthy communication patterns facilitate emotional support, adaptive coping, and constructive problem-solving within families (Ramazanu et al., 2022). These characteristics may be particularly important for adolescents facing cyberbullying and other online risks.

Empirical findings increasingly support the association between family communication patterns and cyberbullying-related outcomes. Adolescents raised in families characterized by open communication and emotional support tend to report lower involvement in cyberbullying and other risky behaviors, whereas restrictive or highly controlling family environments are often associated with greater vulnerability to maladaptive outcomes (Abbasi-Rad et al., 2024). Studies examining cyberbullying behavior have identified parental communication patterns as significant correlates of online aggression, self-esteem, and moral disengagement among adolescents (Octavia et al., 2022). Research grounded in family communication theory further

suggests that supportive family interactions can serve as protective resources against cyberbullying victimization by strengthening emotional security and social competence (Craig et al., 2022). Recent structural modeling studies have demonstrated that family communication patterns exert both direct and indirect effects on cyberbullying through their influence on interpersonal relationships and personality characteristics (Forouzesh Salami et al., 2025). Similarly, investigations into adolescent risk behaviors have shown that communication patterns play a crucial role in shaping behavioral outcomes and psychological adjustment (Rashidi et al., 2017). Emerging evidence also indicates that family communication influences the development of identity, emotional regulation, and interpersonal competence, factors that may affect how adolescents respond to cyberbullying experiences (Amanollahi et al., 2025). Beyond the adolescent context, family communication has been recognized as a critical mechanism for facilitating trust, knowledge exchange, and adaptive functioning in various social systems, further highlighting its broad developmental significance (Romano & D'Allura, 2025).

Recent studies have also emphasized the importance of cognitive and socio-emotional mechanisms underlying cyberbullying involvement. Variables such as empathy, theory of mind, executive functioning, anger rumination, and emotional intelligence have been identified as significant predictors of cyberbullying behaviors and experiences (Khazaei et al., 2025; Saeidi & Soleimani, 2025). Interventions designed to enhance empathy and perspective-taking have shown positive effects on emotional competencies among adolescents involved in cyberbullying situations (Safari et al., 2021). These findings suggest that both cognitive self-regulatory processes and interpersonal environments contribute substantially to adolescents' vulnerability or resilience in online contexts. However, despite the growing literature on cyberbullying, comparatively little attention has been devoted to investigating the simultaneous contributions of inner self-talk and family communication patterns in predicting cyberbullying victimization. Most previous studies have examined these constructs separately, leaving unanswered questions regarding their relative and combined roles in explaining adolescents' experiences of online victimization. Given the increasing prevalence of cyberbullying and its detrimental consequences for adolescent development, a more comprehensive understanding of these factors may contribute to the design of more effective prevention and intervention programs.

Therefore, the present study aimed to predict cyberbullying victimization experiences based on family communication patterns and inner self-talk among secondary school students.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study was conducted using a quantitative approach with a descriptive-correlational design of the predictive type. The primary objective was to examine the extent to which family communication patterns and inner self-talk could predict experiences of cyberbullying victimization among adolescents. The target population consisted of all secondary school students enrolled in public and private high schools in Shiraz, Iran, during the 2026 academic year. A total of 200 students were selected through convenience sampling. Data collection was carried out at both the library and field levels. Initially, a comprehensive review of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature was conducted to establish the conceptual framework of the study. Subsequently, after obtaining the necessary permissions from school authorities and participants, the research instruments were administered to the selected students. Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the study. Participants were informed that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for research purposes. They were assured that the findings would be reported only in aggregate form and that participation was voluntary. Students were also informed that providing their names or other identifying information on the questionnaires was not required. After the completion of data collection, the questionnaires were coded and prepared for statistical analysis.

2.2. Measures

Cyberbullying victimization was assessed using the Cyber Bullying-Victim Experience Questionnaire (CBVEQ) developed by Antoniadou and colleagues (2016). This instrument was specifically designed to measure adolescents' experiences as perpetrators and victims of cyberbullying. The questionnaire consists of 24 items divided into two major dimensions: cyberbullying behavior and cybervictimization, with 12 items assigned to each dimension. Responses are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Every day). The questionnaire evaluates both direct and indirect forms of cyberbullying. Direct cyberbullying includes behaviors such as sending

threatening messages, verbal harassment, and intentional dissemination of harmful digital content, whereas indirect cyberbullying involves covert actions intended to harm or socially isolate others through electronic media. Previous psychometric evaluations have demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability for the instrument. Antoniadou et al. reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.89 for the cyberbullying dimension and 0.80 for the cybervictimization dimension, indicating good internal consistency and suitability for adolescent populations.

Family communication patterns were measured using the Family Communication Patterns Questionnaire developed by Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990). This self-report instrument contains 26 items designed to assess how communication is structured and experienced within the family environment. Participants indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a five-point scale ranging from complete disagreement to complete agreement. The questionnaire measures two fundamental dimensions of family communication: conversation orientation and conformity orientation. The first 15 items assess conversation orientation, which reflects the degree to which family members are encouraged to engage in open discussion and exchange of ideas. The remaining 11 items assess conformity orientation, which reflects the extent to which family members are expected to share similar beliefs, values, and attitudes. Higher scores on each dimension indicate stronger perceptions of that communication pattern within the family. Previous studies have confirmed the content validity and criterion validity of the questionnaire. Furthermore, Fitzpatrick and Ritchie reported high test-retest reliability coefficients over a three-week interval, with coefficients approaching 1.00 for conversation orientation and ranging between 0.73 and 0.93 for conformity orientation, demonstrating strong measurement stability.

Inner self-talk was assessed using the Self-Talk Scale developed by Brinthead, Hein, and Kramer and later refined by Brinthead, Schubert, and colleagues. The version employed in this study was based on the scale developed by Tappet, Bowling, and Wilson (2008). The instrument consists of 16 items designed to measure the frequency and functions of internal self-directed speech. The questionnaire includes four subscales: social assessment, self-reinforcement, self-management, and self-criticism. Participants respond to each item using a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 4 (Very much). Higher scores indicate more frequent engagement in self-talk behaviors. The instrument has demonstrated strong

psychometric properties in previous research. Brinthaup and colleagues reported an internal consistency coefficient of 0.94 for the overall scale. Test-retest reliability coefficients have also been reported as satisfactory, with an overall coefficient of 0.66 and subscale coefficients ranging from 0.50 to 0.69. Validation studies conducted with Iranian samples have similarly confirmed the reliability and validity of the instrument, supporting its applicability for assessing adolescents' internal cognitive dialogue and self-regulatory processes.

2.3. Data Analysis

Following data collection, all responses were entered into SPSS version 26 for statistical analysis. Data analysis was conducted at both descriptive and inferential levels. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and score ranges, were calculated to summarize the characteristics of the study variables. Inferential statistical analyses were then performed to test the research hypotheses. Pearson correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationships among cyberbullying

victimization, family communication patterns, and inner self-talk dimensions. Subsequently, multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the predictive power of family communication patterns and inner self-talk in explaining variations in cyberbullying victimization among adolescents. Statistical significance was evaluated using conventional confidence levels, and the results were interpreted based on the magnitude and direction of the obtained coefficients.

3. Findings and Results

The study sample consisted of 200 secondary school students from Shiraz. Regarding gender distribution, 100 participants (50%) were female and 100 participants (50%) were male, indicating an equal representation of both genders in the study. With respect to age, 60 students (30%) were 16 years old, 78 students (39%) were 17 years old, and 62 students (31%) were 18 years old. These findings indicate that the sample included adolescents from different stages of late secondary education, with the largest proportion belonging to the 17-year-old age group.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Variables	Dimensions	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Inner Self-Talk	Social Assessment	8.33	3.45	4	16
	Self-Reinforcement	9.68	3.00	4	15
	Self-Management	8.09	3.78	4	15
	Self-Criticism	7.28	2.12	4	16
Family Communication Patterns	Conversation Orientation	35.54	5.73	19	56
	Conformity Orientation	26.19	4.57	14	42
Cyberbullying Victimization Experience	Total Score	31.69	6.70	15	48

As shown in Table 1, the mean score for the social assessment dimension of inner self-talk was 8.33 (SD = 3.45). The mean scores for self-reinforcement, self-management, and self-criticism were 9.68 (SD = 3.00), 8.09 (SD = 3.78), and 7.28 (SD = 2.12), respectively. Regarding family communication patterns, participants reported a mean score of 35.54 (SD = 5.73) for conversation orientation and

26.19 (SD = 4.57) for conformity orientation. The mean cyberbullying victimization score was 31.69 (SD = 6.70), with observed scores ranging from 15 to 48. Overall, the descriptive findings suggest moderate levels of cyberbullying victimization, family communication dimensions, and inner self-talk among the participating students.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Matrix among the Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Social Assessment	1						
2. Self-Reinforcement	.237**	1					
3. Self-Management	.413**	.328**	1				
4. Self-Criticism	.244**	.231**	.289**	1			

5. Conversation Orientation	.332**	.280**	.428**	.279**	1		
6. Conformity Orientation	-.432**	-.299**	-.369**	-.231**	-.254**	1	
7. Cyberbullying Victimization	-.327**	-.287**	-.257**	-.328**	-.231**	.238**	1

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant associations among the study variables. As presented in Table 2, all dimensions of inner self-talk were significantly and negatively correlated with cyberbullying victimization. Specifically, social assessment ($r = -.327, p < .01$), self-reinforcement ($r = -.287, p < .01$), self-management ($r = -.257, p < .01$), and self-criticism ($r = -.328, p < .01$) were associated with lower levels of cyberbullying victimization. Furthermore, conversation orientation was negatively related to cyberbullying victimization ($r = -.231, p < .01$),

indicating that students who perceived greater openness and dialogue within their families reported fewer experiences of cyberbullying victimization. In contrast, conformity orientation demonstrated a positive and significant relationship with cyberbullying victimization ($r = .238, p < .01$), suggesting that students from families emphasizing uniformity and obedience were more likely to report victimization experiences. The intercorrelations among the predictor variables were generally low to moderate, indicating the absence of severe multicollinearity concerns.

Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Cyberbullying Victimization from Inner Self-Talk Dimensions and Family Communication Patterns

Predictor Variable	R	R ²	F	p	β	t	p
Social Assessment	.562	.315	76.094	.001	-.256	-2.769	.005
Self-Reinforcement					-.109	-1.168	.176
Self-Management					-.311	-3.298	.001
Self-Criticism					-.121	-1.328	.145
Conversation Orientation					-.298	-3.143	.001
Conformity Orientation					.303	3.179	.001

The results of the multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 3. The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(6, 193) = 76.094, p = .001$, with a multiple correlation coefficient of $R = .562$. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .315$) indicated that the dimensions of inner self-talk and family communication patterns jointly explained approximately 31.5% of the variance in cyberbullying victimization among adolescents. Examination of the standardized beta coefficients revealed that social assessment significantly and negatively predicted cyberbullying victimization ($\beta = -.256, p = .005$). Similarly, self-management emerged as a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -.311, p = .001$), indicating that higher levels of self-regulatory inner dialogue were associated with lower levels of victimization. Among the family communication dimensions, conversation orientation was a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -.298, p = .001$), whereas conformity orientation significantly and positively predicted cyberbullying victimization ($\beta = .303, p = .001$). In contrast, self-reinforcement ($\beta = -.109, p = .176$) and self-criticism ($\beta = -.121, p = .145$) did not make significant unique contributions to the prediction model. These findings suggest that both cognitive self-regulatory processes and family communication environments play important roles in

explaining adolescents' experiences of cyberbullying victimization.

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to predict cyberbullying victimization experiences based on family communication patterns and inner self-talk among secondary school students. The findings demonstrated that all dimensions of inner self-talk, including social assessment, self-reinforcement, self-management, and self-criticism, were significantly and negatively associated with cyberbullying victimization. In addition, conversation orientation within the family showed a significant negative relationship with cyberbullying victimization, whereas conformity orientation exhibited a significant positive relationship. The results of the multiple regression analysis further indicated that social assessment, self-management, conversation orientation, and conformity orientation significantly predicted cyberbullying victimization, while self-reinforcement and self-criticism did not make unique contributions to the prediction model. Collectively, the predictor variables explained approximately 31.5% of the variance in cyberbullying victimization, suggesting that both cognitive self-regulatory processes and family communication environments play

important roles in shaping adolescents' experiences in digital contexts.

One of the major findings of the present study was the significant negative relationship between inner self-talk dimensions and cyberbullying victimization. Adolescents who reported higher levels of adaptive self-talk were less likely to experience cyberbullying victimization. This finding is consistent with theoretical perspectives that conceptualize self-talk as an essential component of self-regulation, emotional control, and cognitive processing (Kompa, 2025). Internal dialogue serves as a mechanism through which individuals evaluate social situations, regulate emotional reactions, and formulate adaptive responses to stressful experiences. Adolescents who engage in constructive self-talk may be better equipped to cope with online conflicts, interpret ambiguous social interactions more accurately, and avoid becoming trapped in cycles of victimization. The findings are consistent with the work of (Racy & Morin, 2024), who reported significant associations between self-talk, self-regulation, mindfulness, and self-concept clarity. These characteristics are likely to enhance adolescents' resilience when confronted with negative online experiences.

The predictive role of social assessment and self-management is particularly noteworthy. Social assessment reflects the tendency to mentally evaluate social interactions and interpersonal experiences, while self-management involves the use of internal dialogue to guide behavior and regulate actions. Adolescents with stronger capacities in these areas may possess superior social awareness and emotional regulation skills, enabling them to respond more effectively to cyberbullying incidents. These findings align with studies demonstrating the beneficial effects of self-talk on psychological adaptation and performance across various domains (Baghban & Dana, 2026; Temel, 2025). Research has shown that positive and adaptive self-talk enhances self-confidence, coping abilities, and behavioral adjustment, all of which may reduce vulnerability to victimization. Similarly, intervention studies have indicated that self-talk training can strengthen resilience and improve emotional functioning (Babaei et al., 2019; Besharatian et al., 2025). The current findings extend this literature by suggesting that self-talk may also function as a protective factor against cyberbullying victimization among adolescents.

The negative association between self-talk and cyberbullying victimization may also be explained through coping theory. Adolescents who engage in adaptive internal dialogue are likely to use more constructive coping strategies

when confronted with online aggression. Rather than internalizing negative comments or responding impulsively, they may be more capable of seeking social support, reframing adverse experiences, and maintaining emotional stability. This interpretation is consistent with findings showing that positive self-talk interventions improve coping mechanisms and help individuals manage bullying-related stressors more effectively (Chaizuran et al., 2020). Furthermore, self-talk may enhance emotional intelligence and social competence, which have previously been identified as important protective factors in cyberbullying contexts (Safari et al., 2021). Consequently, fostering adaptive self-talk may represent a valuable target for interventions designed to reduce cyberbullying victimization.

Another important finding of the study was the significant negative relationship between conversation orientation and cyberbullying victimization. Adolescents who perceived greater openness, discussion, and emotional expression within their families reported lower levels of cyberbullying victimization. This finding is highly consistent with family communication theory, which proposes that conversation-oriented families encourage the sharing of thoughts, feelings, and experiences, thereby promoting emotional security and interpersonal competence (Craig et al., 2022). Adolescents raised in such environments are more likely to develop effective communication skills, healthy self-esteem, and supportive relationships with family members. These resources may help them navigate online environments more safely and seek assistance when confronted with cyberbullying.

The present findings support previous research demonstrating the positive effects of healthy family communication on adolescent development. Studies have shown that conversation-oriented communication patterns contribute to identity formation, social competence, and psychological well-being among adolescents (Amanollahi et al., 2025). Similarly, open family communication has been linked to positive educational and psychosocial outcomes, including academic vitality and creativity (Monjezi et al., 2022). The findings are also consistent with evidence suggesting that family communication serves as a protective factor against various risky behaviors during adolescence (Abbasi-Rad et al., 2024; Rashidi et al., 2017). In the context of cyberbullying, adolescents who maintain open communication with parents may be more likely to disclose online problems, receive emotional support, and obtain guidance regarding appropriate responses to victimization.

Such support can mitigate the psychological impact of cyberbullying and reduce the likelihood of continued victimization.

The positive relationship between conformity orientation and cyberbullying victimization constitutes another significant finding. Adolescents who perceived higher levels of conformity orientation within their families reported greater experiences of cyberbullying victimization. Conformity-oriented families typically emphasize obedience, uniformity of beliefs, and parental authority while discouraging independent expression and open discussion (Craig et al., 2022). Although such environments may provide structure and stability, they may also limit opportunities for adolescents to develop autonomous problem-solving skills and effective communication strategies. As a result, adolescents raised in highly conformity-oriented families may be less likely to discuss cyberbullying experiences with their parents or seek support when encountering online difficulties.

This finding aligns with research indicating that restrictive communication environments may contribute to maladaptive psychosocial outcomes. Studies have demonstrated that family communication patterns influence adolescents' behavioral adjustment and involvement in risky behaviors (Abbasi-Rad et al., 2024). Furthermore, investigations of cyberbullying have identified significant associations between parental communication styles and adolescents' online experiences (Octavia et al., 2022). More recent research has shown that family communication patterns contribute directly and indirectly to cyberbullying-related outcomes through their effects on interpersonal relationships and personality characteristics (Forouzeh Salami et al., 2025). The current findings suggest that conformity-oriented communication may reduce adolescents' access to emotional support and increase their vulnerability to victimization in digital environments.

The overall predictive model explained a substantial proportion of variance in cyberbullying victimization, highlighting the combined importance of individual cognitive processes and family environmental factors. These findings are consistent with contemporary ecological perspectives that emphasize the interaction between personal and contextual influences in adolescent development. Cyberbullying victimization is not merely the result of online interactions but reflects broader psychosocial processes involving emotional regulation, social competence, family relationships, and cognitive functioning. Previous research has identified a range of psychological

variables associated with cyberbullying, including empathy, executive functioning, theory of mind, and anger rumination (Khazaei et al., 2025; Saeidi & Soleimani, 2025). The present study contributes to this literature by demonstrating that inner self-talk and family communication patterns represent additional factors that help explain why some adolescents are more vulnerable to cyberbullying victimization than others.

5. Conclusion

The findings support broader evidence regarding the enduring significance of family communication in contemporary digital societies. Although adolescents increasingly engage with peers through digital technologies, family interactions continue to shape their social development and psychological functioning (Anisti et al., 2023). Effective communication fosters trust, support, and adaptive coping across diverse social contexts (Ramazanu et al., 2022). Research has further highlighted the role of communication processes in facilitating knowledge exchange, adjustment, and resilience within interpersonal systems (Romano & D'Allura, 2025). These principles appear equally relevant in understanding adolescent experiences of cyberbullying. Consequently, prevention efforts should address not only online behavior but also the quality of communication and emotional support available within families.

6. Limitations & Suggestions

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of the present study. First, the study employed a cross-sectional correlational design, which limits causal interpretations of the observed relationships. Second, the sample consisted exclusively of secondary school students from one city, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to adolescents from different geographical, cultural, or educational contexts. Third, all variables were assessed through self-report questionnaires, creating the possibility of response biases such as social desirability and inaccurate self-perceptions. Finally, other potentially influential factors, including peer relationships, school climate, personality characteristics, and online behavioral patterns, were not examined and may account for additional variance in cyberbullying victimization.

Future studies should employ longitudinal and experimental designs to clarify the causal relationships among self-talk, family communication patterns, and

cyberbullying victimization. Researchers may also investigate the mediating and moderating roles of variables such as emotional intelligence, self-esteem, resilience, social support, empathy, and digital literacy. Expanding research to include adolescents from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds would enhance the generalizability of findings. In addition, qualitative investigations could provide deeper insight into how adolescents perceive family communication and internal dialogue in relation to their online experiences. Future studies may also compare cyberbullying victims, perpetrators, and bystanders to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underlying cyberbullying involvement.

The findings suggest that cyberbullying prevention programs should incorporate components aimed at strengthening adaptive self-talk and self-regulation skills among adolescents. Schools can implement psychoeducational workshops that teach students positive internal dialogue, emotional regulation strategies, and effective coping mechanisms for dealing with online aggression. Family-based interventions should encourage open communication, active listening, and supportive parent-adolescent relationships while reducing excessively restrictive communication practices. School counselors, psychologists, and educators may collaborate with parents to create environments in which adolescents feel comfortable discussing online challenges. Finally, digital citizenship programs should integrate cognitive and family-centered approaches to help adolescents develop the psychological and interpersonal resources necessary for safe and healthy participation in online environments.

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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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