MILLENIALS IN JAKARTA AND THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH CYBERBULLYING ON INSTAGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research aims to describe and understand the phenomenon of cyberbullying on Instagram within the context of millennial generation's experiences in Jakarta. Using a phenomenological approach and descriptive qualitative methods, the study explores how millennials experience cyberbullying, the types of content that are frequently targeted, and changes in their self-perception after experiencing cyberbullying. The findings show that cyberbullying on Instagram takes many forms, including offensive comments (flaming), repeated harassment, stalking, spreading false information (denigration), pretending to be someone else (impersonation), and deceptive threats (trickery). Many perpetrators use fake or anonymous accounts to carry out their attacks. The most common targets of cyberbullying are personal posts, such as selfies and updates about achievements. This often leads to a decrease in victims' self-confidence and negative changes in how they view themselves. The study emphasizes the need for effective policies and interventions to address cyberbullying and highlights the importance of educating users about safe and responsible social media use. By providing insights into the challenges faced by millennials in Jakarta, the research aims to support the development of strategies to better protect individuals and reduce the harmful effects of cyberbullying.

Keywords: *Cyberbullying, Instagram, Millennial, Phenomenology, Social media, Good health and Well- Being*

1.   INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, social media has become an inescapable phenomenon, especially for millennials who have grown up in a world where information technology and the internet are rapidly advancing. Raised in an environment of evolving electronic devices, millennials have integrated these technologies as essential components of their daily lives. The evolution of digital technology has made social media a primary platform for social interaction, information exchange, and network building. This shift has drastically transformed communication, allowing individuals to connect across geographical boundaries.

However, with the convenience and freedom of expression that social media offers, there has been a rise in a troubling phenomenon: cyberbullying. Cyberbullying represents a form of digital intimidation where individuals exploit

the internet to harm others through actions that contravene social norms. These actions can range from insults and rumor-mongering to threats, often carried out with little to no accountability. This phenomenon has become increasingly pervasive, especially given the intense social media usage by millennials. Research indicates that cyberbullying is a common experience among millennials, with data showing that this generation (born between 1980-1996) is the most frequently targeted group, with a reported 54% experiencing cyberbullying [1]. This statistic underscores the significant impact of social media, where easy access and anonymity are often misused for negative purposes.

Amid the complexities of social media usage, Instagram has emerged as a leading platform where cyberbullying occurs. According to a 2024 report by Broadband Search [2], Instagram has the highest rate of cyberbullying among social media platforms, with incidents reaching 42%. Despite its undeniable popularity among millennials, this brings significant risks for its users. As the platform continues to be a central part of millennials' social lives, it also becomes a hotspot for harmful behaviors, necessitating a deeper understanding and response to the challenges posed by cyberbullying on Instagram.

This article aims to investigate the experiences of millennials in Jakarta with cyberbullying on Instagram. Specifically, it seeks to address the following research questions:

1.   How does the phenomenon of cyberbullying in Instagram among millennials in Jakarta?

2.   Are there specific types of content that become targets for cyberbullying on Instagram among millennials in Jakarta?

3.   How do millennials in Jakarta perceive themselves   after   experiencing cyberbullying on Instagram?

Research on cyberbullying on social media platforms has been a subject of interest for researchers in recent years. Several previous studies have highlighted the significant impact of this phenomenon on different age groups, especially among adolescents. For example, a study by Oldimeji and Kyobe [3] provided a detailed and holistic overview of the factors that influence cyberbullying, as well as an understanding of the behavioral patterns that occur among university students on the Instagram platform. Another study by Bukhori et al [4] showed that there are various kinds of causes and forms of cyberbullying behavior in adolescents in the form of the development of social media which are increasingly developing in their forms, lack of information and assistance from those closest to them.

However, while several studies have explored adolescents' experiences and the impact of cyberbullying in general, very few studies have focused on millennials' experiences on the social media platform Instagram. This study builds on previous findings by providing a new perspective on how millennials in Jakarta interact with the Instagram platform and experience cyberbullying. By focusing on millennials in Jakarta, this study makes a new contribution to the existing literature, expanding our understanding of how cyberbullying affects this age group, as well as the broader impact on their social and emotional dynamics. And by gaining a deeper understanding of how millennials in Jakarta deal with cyberbullying on Instagram, this study also hopes to provide greater insight into the challenges faced by individuals in the digital age and assist in developing strategies to address and mitigate the negative effects of cyberbullying on social media platforms.

2.   LITERAL REVIEW

2.1   Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology
In the early 20th century, Edmund Husserl founded Phenomenology, that is, a philosophical examination of a phenomena. Husserl envisioned phenomenology as a foundational philosophy, one that would serve as the "first philosophy," built upon a solid and

rigorous foundation that could underpin all other forms of philosophy and scientific inquiry [5]. This ambition drove him to seek and uncover the fundamental roots or core realities that underlie philosophical thought. In his pursuit, Husserl deliberately distanced himself from existing philosophical frameworks, aiming to discover the essence of phenomena through a completely new and original method. He believed that in order to truly understand and uncover the meaning of a phenomenon, one must observe it directly and honestly, free from external biases or preconceived assumptions.

Husserl's phenomenology focuses not only on analyzing the structure of an individual's "self-experience"—their conscious awareness of their own experiences—but also on exploring the innovative idea of understanding the experiences of other [6]. He posited that phenomenology provides a unique framework that allows us to study different forms of experience from the perspective of those who live through them directly, as if we ourselves are experiencing the events firsthand.

One of the key aspects of Husserl's phenomenology is its emphasis on the intentionality of consciousness—the idea that all conscious acts are directed toward something, whether it be an object, an idea, or an experience. This intentionality is central to how individuals interact with the world and how they make sense of their experiences. Husserl argued that by examining these intentional acts, we can gain a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed and how experiences are shaped by the individual's perception and interpretation.

Moreover, phenomenology, does not merely classify each conscious act performed by an individual. It also includes an analysis of how these acts are connected to the individual's future actions, based on relevant aspects of their previous experiences. This forward-looking aspect of phenomenology is rooted in the way individuals ascribe meaning to the objects of their experience, suggesting that our current and past experiences play a crucial role in shaping our expectations and actions in the future. Edmund Husserl's phenomenology give an astonishing rich source of insights and analyses approached from the phenomenological point of view related to the nature of the self and its association with others. It aims to study from the of intentional sense-making by and between conscious subject's point of view [7].

2.2 Computer-Mediated Communication Theory

In the era of globalization and rapid advancements in information technology, communication through electronic media has become an essential media for communication in daily basis. As technology continues to evolve, a field of study has emerged to learn more about the dynamic of humans interaction with electronic media, known as Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) Theory. According to [8], CMC refers to communication between two or more individuals interacting through different computers. Andrew F. Wood and Matthew J. Smith [9] further define CMC as the integration of computer technology into everyday life, often encompassing both mediated and unmediated communication with invisible boundaries. Arnus adds that CMC allows individuals to communicate using computers, supported by the internet and applications, enabling us to read the latest news from online newspapers, communicate and discuss with people in various locations, and even conduct online transactions through social networks like Facebook, Twitter, BBM, Instagram, and others [10].

1.   Impersonal Perspective

This concept is based on Social Presence Theory, which posits that the closer the relationship between the communication channel and the codes available within a medium, the less attention is given to the other participants [11]. In other words, as communication technology advances, we tend to pay less attention to the presence of others in interactions through electronic media.

2.   Interpersonal Perspective

This perspective responds to the impersonal perspective by emphasizing communication that involves personal understanding and empathetic interaction. Although nonverbal communication may not be involved, the language and verbal messages conveyed play a key role in

building deep interpersonal relationships[12].

3. Hyperpersonal Perspective

This perspective suggests that CMC enables users to reflect, edit, filter the information and cues sent to the recipient, making communicators in CMC more cautious in shaping their self-image. The underlying theory behind the hyperpersonal concept in Social Idenitity of the Deindividuation Effecr (SIDE).

CMC Theory highlights the various ways in which technology influences communication, from reducing the perceived presence of others to enabling more controlled and deliberate self-presentation. Each perspective provides valuable insights into the complexities of digital communication and its impact on social interactions.

2.3 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a form of harassment and intimidation where individuals use technology and social media to harm, insult, or threaten others. It is characterized by the repeated, aggressive behavior towards a victim who finds it difficult to defend themselves. [13] Describe cyberbullying as persistent abusive actions that target a person unable to retaliate effectively. Willard, as cited in [14] expands on this by noting that cyberbullying encompasses a variety of harmful acts such as defamation, insult, discrimination, disclosure of private information, or the spread of vulgar content.

The motivations behind cyberbullying are complex and multifaceted. According to Kowalski, as referenced by Putra [15], these motivations can stem from a range of negative emotions. Anger, resentment, revenge, or frustration are often key drivers. In some cases, individuals engage in cyberbullying to assert their ego, display their power, or flaunt their technological prowess. There are instances where the behavior is driven by the desire for entertainment, while in other situations, it occurs impulsively, fueled by emotional outbursts. Willard categorizes cyberbullying into several distinct types [16]:

1. Flaming
This involves sending provocative and inflammatory messages with the intent to demean or belittle the victim.

2. Harassment
Repeatedly sending threatening or offensive messages, often accompanied by encouraging others to join in, thereby increasing the victim's distress.

3. Denigration
The act of spreading false information or malicious rumors aimed at damaging the reputation of the victim.

4. Impersonation
Pretending to be someone else by stealing their identity, typically to harm the victim's reputation or to create embarrassing situations.

5. Outing
Publicly disclosing someone's personal secrets or private photos without their consent, leading to potential humiliation.

6. Trickery
Deceiving someone into revealing personal information or photos, which are then used to blackmail or humiliate them.

7. Exclusion
Deliberately excluding someone from an online group or community, which fosters feelings of isolation and loneliness.

8. Cyberstalking
Sending threatening or intimidating messages over a prolonged period, causing the victim to feel fear and anxiety.

The nature of cyberbullying can be likened to what is known as the "cockpit effect," a term that originated during World War II. The cockpit effect refers to the disconnect between fighter pilots and their targets. Pilots, from the safety and detachment of their cockpits, dropped bombs, destroyed villages, and killed hundreds of people without witnessing the

immediate suffering of their victims [17]. This detachment allowed them to carry out these actions without experiencing the emotional and psychological consequences typically associated with such acts. Similarly, in the realm of cyberbullying, perpetrators often do not engage directly with their victims. This lack of face-to- face communication allows them to inflict harm without confronting the emotional impact of their actions, thereby reducing any feelings of guilt or empathy.

Cyberbullying represents a profound issue in the digital age, where the anonymity and distance provided by online platforms facilitate harmful behaviors that would be less likely to occur in direct, physical interactions. The complexity and varied nature of cyberbullying underscore the need for a deeper understanding of the motivations behind it and the severe impact it can have on victims.

2.4   Social Media

Social media is an integral part of modern communication, representing a significant shift in how individuals connect, share, and interact in the digital age. Defined broadly, social media refers to internet-based platforms that enable users to represent themselves, interact, collaborate, share content, and communicate virtually. The evolution of social media has fundamentally transformed the landscape of communication, blurring the lines between personal and public communication.

Meike and Young, as cited in [14] describe social media as a fusion of personal communication and public media. This description highlights the dual nature of social media, where private interactions occur within a public or semi-public framework. On these platforms, users can engage in personal dialogues while simultaneously participating in broader, more public conversations.

This combination creates a dynamic environment where personal and collective experiences are intertwined, allowing for a new form of social interaction that is both intimate and expansive. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein offer a more specific definition, describing social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content [18]."

Social media represents a complex and multifaceted platform that merges personal and public communication. Its defining characteristics—networking, information sharing, archiving, interaction, social simulation, user- generated content, and sharing—underscore its role as a transformative force in the digital age. By enabling users to connect, create, and communicate on a global scale, social media has reshaped the way individuals and communities interact, share information, and engage with the world around them.

2.5   Instagram

One of the biggest platform in social media focusing on sharing photos and videos is Instagram. Unlike other social media platforms such as Twitter, which primarily focus on text-based interactions, Instagram is distinct in its emphasis on visual content. According to [19], Instagram sets itself apart by prioritizing the display of photos and videos, allowing users to share visually rich content with their audience. This visual-centric approach aligns with the growing trend of multimedia communication in the digital age, where images and videos often convey messages more powerfully and quickly than text alone.

Instagram enables users to upload photos and videos, which can be accompanied by captions or textual descriptions, thereby enhancing the context and narrative behind the visual content. This combination of visual and textual elements allows for a more nuanced and engaging form of storytelling, making Instagram a preferred platform for individuals, influencers, and brands looking to connect with their audience in a visually compelling way. Furthermore, Instagram's integration with other social media networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter facilitates seamless cross-platform sharing, allowing users to reach a broader audience and

increase the visibility of their content.
Instagram's origins can be traced back to its launch by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in October 2010. The platform quickly garnered

attention, achieving 10 million users by September 2011, less than a year after its inception [20]. This rapid growth illustrates the platform's immediate resonance with users and its ability to meet the growing appetite for visual content sharing. By 2018, Instagram's user base had expanded to over 800 million registered users,cementing its position as one of the most influential social media platforms worldwide. In the three months preceding April 2023, the number of Instagram users reachable through advertising increased by about 310 million, or twenty three point five percent growth, according to data from DataReportal. This means that around 20.3% of the global population currently uses Instagram [21]. The platform's success can be attributed to several factors, including its intuitive interface, innovative features like Stories and IGTV, and the cultural shift towards visual communication that characterizes the digital era. This shift not only reflects changing preferences in how individuals consume content but also highlights the role of visual storytelling in modern marketing strategies, further solidifying Instagram's impact in the social media landscape.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a phenomenological approach, aiming to deeply interpret the experiences of millennials related to cyberbullying on Instagram in both a contextual and comprehensive manner. Creswell [20] Explains that the goal of phenomenology is to reveal the realities and experiences that individuals encounter, providing insight into aspects that may not be immediately visible from their subjective perspectives. By focusing on these subjective experiences, the study seeks to uncover the essence of what it means to experience cyberbullying in the specific context of Instagram use among millennials.

Furthermore, the study adopts a qualitative descriptive method, which is designed to thoroughly depict the situation or condition of the research subjects or objects. This method does not rely on numerical data but instead uses narrative descriptions to present the situations being investigated. Creswell (20) describes qualitative research as a type of study where the researcher depends heavily on the information obtained from participants or objects within a broad scope. The research questions are generally open- ended, with data collection primarily consisting of words or texts from participants, allowing for a rich, detailed understanding of the phenomenon under study.

In addition, this study is grounded in a constructivist paradigm, which views reality as a product of individual social experiences. Constructivism is normative, offering guidelines for the researcher without requiring deep existential or epistemological considerations [22]. This paradigm is chosen to understand social reality through a co- construction between the researcher and participants. The study involves millennials as participants to depict the phenomenon of cyberbullying on Instagram through their subjective interpretations and experiences, which are shaped by their personal encounters and the challenges theyface in the digital environment.

Data collection in this study is carried out using three techniques: interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. Interviews are conducted to identify issues and deeply understand the respondents' experiences. These interviews involve six millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) who are active on Instagram, have experienced cyberbullying, and fall under the categories defined by Willard [14], and reside in Jakarta. The second technique, non-participant observation, is chosen because it does not require direct interaction with the subjects, allowing the researcher to obtain an objective depiction of the observed behaviors. The third technique, documentation, is employed to enhance the validity and objectivity of the data.

By gathering information from various documented sources, this study provides a more accurate understanding of the experiences and perceptions of millennials regarding cyberbullying on Instagram. Documentation helps illustrate how these millennials respond to and experience cyberbullying on the social media platform, offering a well-rounded view of the phenomenon.

4. RESULT & DISCUSSION

4.1 Cyberbullying Phenomenon on Instagram Among Millennials in Jakarta

The study reveals that the respondents, who are millennials aged between 29-32 years, started using Instagram around 2011-2017 and became more active as the platform introduced additional features. Instagram has become their primary platform, accessed immediately upon using their phones for an average duration of 20 minutes to 1 hour per session, with a total daily usage of about 6-8 hours. The features most frequently used by these individuals include Instagram Stories and Reels. During their usage, they often encountered various forms of cyberbullying, including flaming (provocative or offensive comments), harassment (repeated abuse), cyberstalking (online stalking), denigration (defamation), impersonation (pretending to be the victim), and trickery (threats or deception).

The respondents reported that most of the perpetrators use fake or anonymous accounts to attack their victims through direct messages or in the comment sections. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate their experiences:

"It was around 10 in the morning when I opened the Instagram DM request. There was an account, like a second or fake account. They DM'd me saying there was an illegal website with my photo on it, which was linked to sexual content. But it wasn't me. That night, a lot of unknown accounts started following me on Instagram, and they were all suspicious accounts."

"There was a photo edited in a somewhat explicit manner, using a picture from my Instagram. All my Instagram photos show me wearing a hijab, but they cropped my head and placed it on a photo of a woman without clothes."

These experiences of cyberbullying on Instagram had a significant emotional and psychological impact on the respondents. They described feelings of fear, sadness, anger, shame, and diminished self-confidence after being subjected to cyberbullying. The victims often attached profound meanings to their experiences, frequently relating to their personal identities and social interactions. Some victims felt that these experiences shook their self-confidence and altered their self-perception. For instance, one respondent stated:

"I started blaming myself, feeling scared and insecure. It made me wonder, why do people see me like that? Am I really that low?"
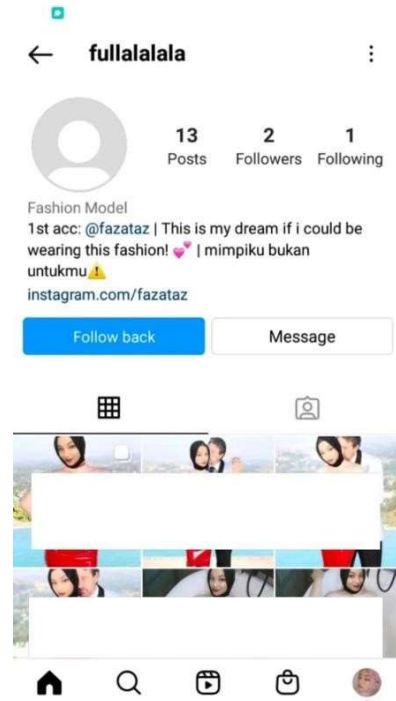

1.1 Evidence of Cyberbullying Victims on Instagram

According to Computer-

Mediated Communication (CMC) Theory, social media facilitates more anonymous interactions. CMC suggests that anonymity allows individuals to shed their personal identities, enabling them to interact without the fear or social pressures typically experienced in face-to-face interactions. This aligns with the finding that cyberbullying perpetrators often hide behind anonymous identities to attack without fear of being recognized. One respondent explained:

"There are always some bullies, and usually, they use fake accounts. These people are mostly brave only on social media. If you meet them in person,
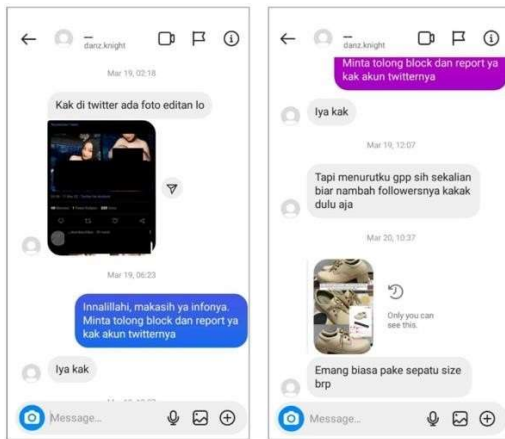

they just stay quiet."

1.2 Cyberbullying Perpetrators Using Fake Accounts

Furthermore, the content on Instagram is visible to many people, which can exacerbate the psychological impact on victims. Negative comments and personal attacks are often difficult to remove and can be seen by the victim's friends and family, thereby increasing feelings of shame and stress. The combination of the perpetrator's anonymity and the permanence of the content creates an environment that is particularly damaging for the victims.
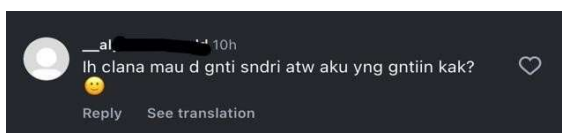
1.3 Cyberbullying in Instagram Comment Sections
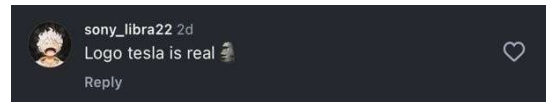
1.4 Cyberbullying in Instagram Comment Sections

4.2 Types of Content Targeted by Cyberbullying on Instagram

The respondents (victims) revealed that personal content, such as identity-related posts or selfies and achievements in academic or professional fields, are the types of content most frequently targeted by cyberbullying. Personal content tends to attract more attention and comments, both positive and negative. Instagram features, such as the comment section and direct messages, also facilitate attacks on this content. One respondent explained:

"I think the type of content that's more vulnerable is selfies. Because, as I've mentioned before, people's fetishes can sometimes be unreasonable."

Moreover, respondents added that content depicting a seemingly successful or happy personal life often draws negative attention from people who may feel envious.
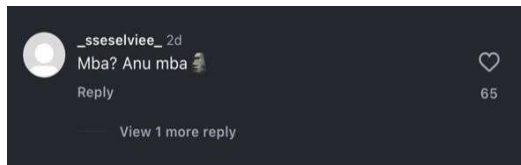
"When we upload content showing a good life, there are people out there who become obsessed and jealous of us." Additionally, another respondent shared:

1.5 Perpetrators Harassing Victims Through Instagram Direct Messages
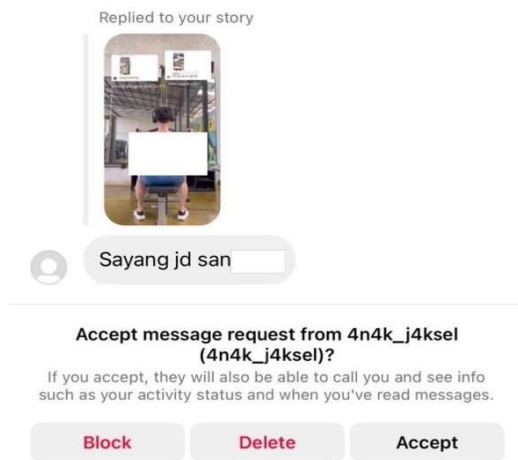
"My content at that time was a selfie and a photoof my work success team."

1.6 Cyberbullying in Instagram CommentSections

The study further indicated that cyberbullying often focuses on content that the victims perceive as highly sensitive.

"Content that's revealing or shows the body. When we work out or go to the gym, of course, we wear comfortable workout clothes. Even though I'm just taking a simple selfie or mirror selfie, they still consider it 'inviting'."

It becomes increasingly clear that, even though the content uploaded might seem ordinary from the victim's perspective, cyberbullies often interpret it differently, seeing it as an 'invitation' for negative comments. This misinterpretation highlights the disconnection between the intention of the content creator and the perception of the cyberbully, leading to unwarranted and

harmful interactions.

4.3 Perception of Millennials

AfterExperiencing Cyberbullying

Interviews with seven millennial respondents revealed that cyberbullying on Instagram significantly impacts their emotions and self-perception. Many respondents expressed feelings of fear, anxiety, anger, shame, and a lack of confidence after experiencing such incidents. As one respondent stated:

"I was really sad, couldn't accept it, and angry. Like, who do you think you are? Honestly, even now, I'm still really angry and can't accept it."

In addition, some respondents mentioned that this experience led to changes in how they view themselves. For example, one respondent said, *"Honestly, I've become insecure about taking selfies. There's a feeling of trust issues too, which iswhy I'm less confident now."* This change indicates that after experiencing cyberbullying, they feel less comfortable and confident in sharing personal content on Instagram. According to Edmund Husserl's phenomenological theory, these subjective experiences reveal that cyberbullying affects how they perceive themselves and how they believe others see them. The targeted content, suchas personal photos or achievements, holds significant meaning in shaping their identity. When this content is attacked or criticized negatively, their self-confidence and self-perception related to that content change dramatically. As one respondent shared:

"...of course, there is. I definitely feel less confident because it's like, oh, it turns out people still see us as lacking. If others see us as lacking, what more can we feel ourselves, right?"

This shows that others' perceptions of them, often based solely on judgments from social media, can influence the victims' feelings and self- perception.

Overall, the findings from this study illustrate that cyberbullying on Instagram can alter how millennials see themselves and how they

interact socially on the platform.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the cyberbullying phenomenon on Instagram among millennials in Jakarta, revealing that Instagram has become a central platform for millennials, who engage with it extensively for an average of 6-8 hours daily. Such high engagement makes them vulnerable to various forms of cyberbullying, including flaming, harassment, cyberstalking, denigration, impersonation, and trickery. The use of fake or anonymous accounts by perpetrators to execute these attacks highlights the significant role of anonymity in facilitating cyberbullying.

The findings suggest that the emotional and psychological impacts of cyberbullying onInstagram related posts, selfies, and professional achievements. The study also reveals that theperception of content by cyberbullies—often as an 'invitation' for negative comments—furtherexacerbates the victims' distress.

The analysis aligns with Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) Theory, which underscores how anonymity on social media platforms can lead to more aggressive interactions. The combination of anonymous perpetrators and the public visibility of content creates an environment that magnifies the psychological impact on victims. This is compounded by the permanent nature of online content, which can continue to affect victims long after the initial attack.

Novel insights from this study emphasize that cyberbullying leads to significant changes in self- perception and social behavior. Victims often report a noticeable reduction in self-confidence and increased self-consciousness in sharing personal content on Instagram post-bullying. These changes reflect how cyberbullying not only impacts their online behavior but also reshapes their sense of

identity and self-worth. While previous studies have explored cyberbullying on social media, this research contributes novel insights by focusing on the specific experiences of millennials in Jakarta and the deeper psychological effects associated with the evolving nature of Instagram features. It builds upon existing literature by presenting data from real-life experiences and revealing how the platform's distinct characteristics influence cyberbullying dynamics.

In terms of impact, this study highlights the urgent need for proactive strategies to combat cyberbullying on platforms like Instagram. This includes not only technical solutions such as improved reporting and moderation tools but also fostering greater digital literacy and resilience among users. By understanding these dynamics, social media platforms, educators, and policymakers can develop more effective interventions to protect users and promote safer online environments for all.

are   profound.   Victims reported experiencing

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