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The Influence of Negative Social Judgment Negative and Body Image on Cyberbullying Behavior Among Students

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Abstract. The increase in social media use among adolescents has led to a higher susceptibility to cyberbullying, which is closely linked to negative social judgment and body image dissatisfaction. This quantitative correlational study aims to analyze the partial and simultaneous effects of negative social judgment and body image on cyberbullying behavior. Data were collected from 180 high school students using a proportionate random sampling technique via a valid and reliable questionnaire. The results of the linear regression analysis revealed that negative social judgment acts as the most dominant predictor of cyberbullying, while body image also makes a significant contribution. Collectively, high levels of negative social judgment and poor body image increase adolescents' tendency to engage in cyberbullying. These findings underscore the urgency for guidance and counseling services to develop intervention programs focused on fostering self-acceptance, social skills, and digital literacy education to minimize the risk of cyberbullying in schools.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has significantly changed the way people communicate, particularly among adolescents who are the most active users of social media. Social media not only serves as a means of communication and entertainment but also provides a space for individuals to gain social recognition, build their identity, and express their opinions(Efianingrum dkk., 2020). In Indonesia, internet usage among adolescents continues to rise every year, triggering increasingly intense interactions on social media. While offering various benefits, this high level of digital activity also increases the risk of psychosocial problems, one of which is cyberbullying carried out through digital media (*APJII. (2024).*

Cyberbullying is a form of aggression intentionally carried out through electronic media with the aim of repeatedly hurting, humiliating, threatening, or degrading another individual. Unlike conventional

bullying, cyberbullying can occur without spatial or temporal boundaries, reaching a wider audience and leaving a digital footprint that is difficult to erase; consequently, its impact on the psychological well-being of the victim tends to be more severe (Willard, 2007; UNESCO, 2023). Victims of cyberbullying are at risk of experiencing decreased self-esteem, social anxiety, depression, loneliness, and even a decline in academic performance if they do not receive appropriate intervention (Kowalski dkk., 2012)

One of the factors believed to contribute to the emergence of cyberbullying behavior is negative social judgment. In the lives of adolescents, social media functions as a highly open space for various forms of evaluation, comments, criticism, and judgments from others. These judgments are often related to physical appearance, clothing style, or personal character, which in turn influences how individuals perceive themselves. According to Social Judgment Theory, individuals evaluate every social message based on their own attitudes; thus, repeated exposure to negative judgments can shape specific emotional responses and behaviors (Sherif et al., 1965). Research by Levinson & Rodebaugh, (2015) indicates that individuals with a high fear of negative social judgment tend to experience a decrease in self-esteem, an increase in social anxiety, and are more vulnerable to exhibiting aggressive behavior as a response to social pressure.

Besides negative social judgment, another psychological factor closely related to cyberbullying behavior is body image. Body image refers to an individual's perception, evaluation, thoughts, and feelings regarding their own physical condition, which can be either positive or negative (Puzinsky Cash, 2000). During adolescence, the biological changes that occur along with the increasing use of social media lead individuals to engage more frequently in social comparisons related to physical appearance. Exposure to unrealistic standards of beauty and attractiveness on social media often results in body dissatisfaction, lowers self-confidence, and increases vulnerability to various psychological problems (Perloff, 2014). These conditions have the potential to increase the involvement of adolescents both as victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying.

Various previous studies have shown that negative comments regarding physical appearance (body shaming) are one of the most common forms of cyberbullying experienced by adolescents. A study by Patchin & Hinduja, (2015) found that adolescents who frequently receive negative comments on social media are more likely to retaliate with aggressive behavior online. A study by Hawes et al., (2020) also explains that body dissatisfaction acts as a mediator between social pressure and aggressive behavior in adolescents. Furthermore, research by Aironi & Starry, (2021) indicates that adolescents with a negative body image have a higher risk of engaging in bullying or cyberbullying compared to those with a positive body image.

This phenomenon was also observed based on preliminary observations by researchers during the Field Introduction Program (PPL). It was found that student interactions on social media often contained comments criticizing physical appearance, mocking body shape, or making other forms of social judgments. This situation indicates that negative social judgment remains a part of adolescent digital interactions and has the potential to influence individuals' perceptions of their own bodies. If this continues, it can increase the probability of cyberbullying behavior, either as a victim or a perpetrator.

Although various studies have explored cyberbullying, most of the previous research tends to focus exclusively on single variables, such as social media addiction (Patchin & Hinduja, 2015) or emotion regulation in Western countries (Liu dkk., 2026). In the Indonesian context, existing studies mostly capture the general prevalence where the rate of cyberbullying among adolescents is reported to reach 80% (Safaria, 2016). However, empirical studies that simultaneously investigate the intersection between social judgment theory and body image dissatisfaction particularly in the context of body image-related cyberbullying (BRC) in adolescent populations in developing countries are still very limited (Prince dkk., 2024) . This study fills this research gap by offering novelty in the form of an integrated framework of Social Judgment Theory and the concept of Body Image to predict the probability of cyberbullying behavior among high school students(Festinger, 1954). This integration is

expected to map a more comprehensive psychological mechanism, from external evaluation to the internalization of physical perception (Berne dkk., 2013; Ramos Salazar, 2021).

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to analyze the influence of negative social judgment and body image as predictors of cyberbullying behavior among high school students(Grabe dkk., 2008). The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of Guidance and Counseling science, especially in designing preventive service programs to enhance self-acceptance, reduce the impact of negative social judgment, and prevent the emergence of cyberbullying behavior in educational environments.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design to analyze the effect of negative social judgment and body image as predictors of cyberbullying behavior among adolescents. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for an objective measurement of the relationship between variables through statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This research was conducted on high school students in the Special Region of Yogyakarta during December 2025.

Research Participants

The research population consisted of 324 grade XI students, while a sample of 180 students was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error. The sampling technique used was proportionate random sampling, ensuring that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected as a respondent. This technique was chosen so that the sample could proportionally represent the characteristics of the population (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The demographic distribution of the participants based on gender and class is presented in Table 1.

Tabel 1. Demographic distribution of the participants (N=180)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	75 students	41,7
	Female	105 students	58,3

Research Instruments

Data collection was carried out using a closed-ended questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The negative social judgment instrument was developed based on the Social Judgment Theory by (Sherif et al., (1965) the body image instrument adapted the dimensions developed by Puzinsky Cash, (2000), and the cyberbullying instrument was designed based on the indicators of cyberbullying behavior according to (Willard, 2007). Before being used in the main study, all instruments went through content validity testing (expert judgment) and a pilot test on 30 respondents who had similar characteristics to the research sample.

The test results showed that all instruments met the validity and reliability requirements. The Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.706 for the negative social judgment instrument, 0.792 for the body image instrument, and 0.855 for the cyberbullying instrument; thus, all instruments were considered to have good internal consistency (Taber, 2018).

Procedure and Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25 software. The analysis began with descriptive statistics to characterize the data, followed by classical assumption tests, which included a normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, a linearity test using the Test for Linearity, and a multicollinearity test based on the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values. Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression to determine the

effect of each independent variable on cyberbullying, as well as multiple linear regression to determine the simultaneous effect of both predictor variables on cyberbullying behavior. The magnitude of each variable's contribution was determined through the coefficient of determination (R^2) at a 5% significance level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of data analysis regarding the effect of negative social judgment and body image on cyberbullying behavior. The results are presented systematically, starting with a descriptive analysis to characterize the research data, followed by hypothesis testing using simple linear regression and multiple linear regression. The results are presented objectively based on empirical data without theoretical intervention.

Description of Research Variables

Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an overview of the data characteristics for each research variable. Descriptive statistics include the number of respondents (N), minimum and maximum values, range, mean, standard error, standard deviation, and variance. The presentation of these descriptive statistics aims to provide information regarding the trend of data distribution prior to inferential analysis.

Tabel 2. Descriptive Results of Negative Social Judgment

Descriptive Statistics	N tatistic	Range Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Mean Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic
X1 (Negative Social Judgment)	180	83	14	97	48.24	1.318	17.530	307.295
Valid N (listwise)	180							

Tabel 3. Descriptive Results of Body Image

Descriptive Statistics	N Statistic	Range Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Mean Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic
X2 (Body image)	180	71	36	107	57.16	1.027	13.782	189.946
Valid N (listwise)	180							

Tabel 4. Descriptive Results of Cyberbullying

Descriptive Statistics	N Sttistic	Range Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Mean Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	Variance Statistic
Y (Cyberbullying)	180	64	42	106	81.25	1.655	22.210	493.284
Valid N (listwise)	180							

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis, it is known that this study involved 180 respondents. The negative social judgment variable had a minimum value of 14, a maximum value of 97, a mean of 48.24, a standard error of 1.307, a standard deviation of 17.530, and a variance of 307.295. These results indicate that the respondents' level of negative social judgment is in the moderate category, with a fairly varied data distribution.

The body image variable had an empirical minimum value of 36 and an empirical maximum value of 107, resulting in a data range of 71. A mean value of 57.16 indicates the trend level of the X2 variable among the respondents, with a standard deviation of 13.78 indicating a variation in scores among the respondents.

The cyberbullying variable had an empirical minimum value of 42 and a maximum value of 106, resulting in a data range of 64. A mean value of 81.25 reflects the level of cyberbullying among the respondents, with a standard deviation of 22.21 indicating a variation in scores among the respondents.

Furthermore, to facilitate the interpretation of the respondents' conditions, the scores of each variable were categorized based on the categorization guidelines used in the study. This categorization aims to describe the trend level of each variable without altering the results of the statistical analysis. This section presents a description of the research findings regarding patterns or relationships between negative social judgment and body image as factors influencing the occurrence of cyberbullying. A detailed breakdown of the category distribution for the variables of negative social judgment, body image, and cyberbullying is presented in Table 5.

Tabel 5. Categorizatin of social judgment negative, body image, cyberbullying

Variable	Low	Moderate	High
Social judgment negative	28 students	122 students	30 students
Body image	29 students	122 students	29 students
Cyberbullying	29 students	122 students	29 students

Table 5 shows that for the 'negative social judgment' variable, 122 respondents (68%) were in the moderate category, 28 respondents (15%) were in the low category, and 30 respondents (17%) were in the high category. These results indicate that the majority of respondents still experience negative social judgment at a moderate level.

For the body image variable, 122 respondents (68%) were in the moderate category, while 29 respondents (16%) each were in the low and high categories. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents have a moderate perception of their physical condition.

Meanwhile, the cyberbullying variable also showed a similar distribution: 122 respondents (68%) were in the moderate category, while the low and high categories each had 29 respondents (16%). This indicates that the tendency for cyberbullying behavior among respondents is generally at a moderate level.

Furthermore, Table 6 and Table 7 respectively present a summary of the hypothesis testing results using simple regression analysis to evaluate the effects of variables X1 and X2 separately.

Tabel 6. Simple regression test (XI) social judgment negative

Variable	Beta	Sig
Social judgment negative	0,693	0,000

Tabel 7. Simple regression test (X2) body image

Variable	Beta	Sig
Body image	0,451	0,000

Based on the t-test results, X1 has a significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05; therefore, it can be concluded that X1 has a significant effect on variable Y. The regression coefficient (B) is 0.693, and the calculated t-value is 2.68, which indicates that the effect is positive, meaning that any increase in X1 will be followed by an increase in the value of Y. Thus, the hypothesis stating that X1 affects Y is accepted; therefore, it can be said that the higher the negative social judgment, the higher the incidence of cyberbullying.

Based on the t-test results for X2, the significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05; therefore, it can be concluded that the value of X2 has a significant effect on the dependent variable Y. The regression coefficient (B) is 0.451, with a calculated t-value of 2.69, which indicates that the effect is positive, meaning that every Table 8. Multiple Regression Test increase in X2 will be followed by an increase in Y. Thus, the hypothesis stating that X2 affects Y is accepted.

The F-test and regression coefficient test were used simultaneously to determine whether the independent variables collectively have a significant effect on the dependent variable. Based on the F-test results in the ANOVA table, a significance value of 0.000 was obtained, which is less than 0.05; therefore, it can be concluded that variables X1 and X2 simultaneously have a significant effect on variable Y. The calculated F-value of 154.786 indicates that the regression model used is effective in explaining the variation in the dependent variable Y. Thus, the regression model is considered valid, and the hypothesis stating that X1 and X2 jointly affect Y is accepted. A summary of the results of the multiple linear regression analysis is specifically presented in Table 8.

Tabel 8. Multiple Regression Test

Variable	F	Sig
Social judgment negative Body image terhadap cyberbullying	154,786	0,000

The F-test and regression coefficient test are used together to determine whether the independent variables collectively have a significant effect on the dependent variable. Based on the F-test results in the ANOVA table, a significance value of 0.000 was obtained, which is less than 0.05; therefore, it can be concluded that variables X1 and X2 simultaneously have a significant effect on variable Y. The calculated F-value of 154.786 indicates that the regression model used is effective in explaining the variation in the dependent variable Y. Thus, the regression model is deemed valid, and the hypothesis stating that X1 and X2 jointly influence Y is accepted. The following table presents the results of the multiple regression analysis.

Tabel 9. Coefficient of Determination

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
0,800	0,640	0,636

The coefficient of determination test was conducted using SPSS version 25. The purpose of the coefficient of determination test is to square the correlation coefficient and then multiply it by 100%. The R test is used to determine the degree of influence or the percentage value of R. Based on the results of the coefficient of determination test, a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.800 was obtained, indicating a strong relationship between variables X1 and X2 and Y. An R value of 0.640 and an Adjusted R-Square of 0.636 indicate that 64% of the variation in variable Y is explained by variables X1 and X2, with X1 contributing 48.9% to Y and X2 contributing 15.1% to Y. The standardized coefficients (Beta) for X1 and X2 can be seen in the simple regression test table. Meanwhile,

36.4% is influenced by other factors outside the research model.

Thus, the regression model used demonstrates a fairly strong relationship among its variables. These results indicate that X1 negative social judgment is a more dominant factor than X2 body image in the occurrence of cyberbullying behavior. The following table shows the coefficient of determination.

Discussion

The research results show that negative social judgment has a positive and significant effect on cyberbullying behavior among students. This finding indicates that the higher the level of negative social judgment an individual receives, the greater their tendency to engage in cyberbullying behavior. These results suggest that the experience of receiving negative judgments from one's social environment can influence how individuals interact in digital spaces, whether as perpetrators or in response to a social environment perceived as unsupportive.

These research findings align with the Social Judgment Theory proposed by Sherif, (2017), which explains that individuals form attitudes and behaviors based on the judgments they receive from their social environment. Negative evaluations can influence the self-evaluation process, making individuals more prone to exhibiting maladaptive social responses, including aggressive behavior in digital media. Thus, the more frequently individuals receive negative evaluations from their environment, the greater the likelihood of behavior leading to cyberbullying (Marco & Tormo-Irun, 2018) (Tylka, 2011).

The results of this study are also consistent with the research by Kowalski et al. (2012), which states that various psychosocial factors including negative experiences in social interactions are significantly associated with the emergence of cyberbullying behavior among adolescents. Similarly, Zych et al., (2019), through a systematic review, found that psychological conditions and the social environment are key factors influencing adolescents' involvement in cyberbullying. The consistency of these findings reinforces the notion that negative social judgment is one factor that can increase the risk of cyberbullying behavior(Geofani, 2019).

In addition to negative social judgment, this study indicates that body image also has a positive and significant effect on cyberbullying behavior (Ammar & Nurmala, 2020). These results suggest that an individual's perception of their physical appearance is associated with a tendency toward cyberbullying behavior. Individuals with less positive body perceptions tend to be more sensitive to social judgment and are therefore more vulnerable to engaging in negative interactions on digital media (Febrianti & Fitria, 2020) (Hasanah & Hidayati, 2021).

These findings align with the concept of body image proposed by Puzinsky Cash, (2000), who explains that body image is an individual's evaluation of their physical condition, encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. A less-than-positive body image can affect self-confidence, social interaction skills, and an individual's response to social pressure, including when using social media. Therefore, a negative body image can be one of the factors associated with an increased tendency toward cyberbullying behavior (Jalal dkk., 2021).

The results of this study are supported by research by Marco et al., (2018), which shows that body dissatisfaction is associated with various psychosocial problems in adolescents, including an increased risk of aggressive behavior and conflict in social interactions. These findings indicate that body perception not only affects an individual's psychological state but can also influence the social behavior exhibited in digital environments.

Multiple linear regression analysis shows that negative social judgment and body image simultaneously have a significant effect on cyberbullying behavior. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.640$) indicates that these two variables account for 64% of the variation in cyberbullying behavior, while the remaining 36% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. These results suggest that the research model is reasonably effective in explaining variations in cyberbullying behavior among the respondents.

Based on the contribution of each variable, negative social judgment accounts for 48.9%, while body image accounts for

15.1%. These findings suggest that negative social judgment is a more dominant predictor than body image. This indicates that the experience of receiving negative judgments from one's social environment has a greater influence on the tendency toward cyberbullying behavior than an individual's perception of their own body.

In practical terms, the results of this study have implications for the implementation of guidance and counseling services in schools. Guidance and counseling teachers can develop preventive and curative services focused on strengthening self-acceptance, improving social skills, digital literacy, and fostering positive communication among students. These efforts are expected to reduce the occurrence of negative social judgment and create a more supportive school climate, thereby minimizing the risk of cyberbullying.

This study has limitations because it involved respondents from only one research site and used a quantitative approach with a questionnaire as the instrument. Therefore, future research is recommended to include a broader range of respondents, consider other variables that may influence cyberbullying such as emotional regulation, empathy, social support, or the intensity of social media use and combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of cyberbullying behavior among adolescents.

Future research is recommended to involve students from multiple schools with more diverse demographic characteristics to improve the generalizability of the findings. Researchers may also consider examining other psychological and social factors that could contribute to cyberbullying behavior, such as emotional regulation, empathy, self-esteem, peer pressure, social support, and the intensity of social media use. Furthermore, future studies are encouraged to employ longitudinal or mixed-method research designs to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological processes underlying cyberbullying behavior. Such approaches may help identify how negative social judgment and body image develop over time and how these factors are associated with adolescents' involvement in cyberbullying, both as perpetrators and victims.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Eka Aryani: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Data Curation, Writing Original Draft, and Project Administration, **Sandra Eka Setyaningsih:** Validation, Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing, and Resources. Both authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Declaration of competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the research reported in this article.

Declaration of the use of AI

During the preparation of this work the authors used Grammarly for proof reading and spell checking. The authors reviewed and edited the content as necessary and took full responsibility for the content of the publication.content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication**.**

Ethical approval statement

This study was conducted in accordance with applicable ethical principles for research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, official research permission was obtained from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta, through an official letter (No. 790/B.01/N.5/XI/2025) dated November 24, 2025, addressed to the Principal of SMA Negeri 1 Seyegan, Sleman, Yogyakarta. Permission to conduct the research was subsequently granted by the school authorities. The research was carried out from December 4 to 15, 2025, as confirmed by an official statement issued by SMA Negeri 1 Seyegan (No. B/400.3.8.1/21/SME.12), dated January 8, 2026. The research participation process was coordinated through the school authorities. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality of the collected data and participants' responses was maintained throughout the research process..

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CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that negative social judgment has a positive and significant effect on cyberbullying behavior among students. These findings indicate that the higher the level of negative social judgment an individual receives, the greater their tendency to engage in cyberbullying behavior. In addition, body image also has a positive and significant effect on cyberbullying behavior. An individual's perception of their body is related to the tendency to engage in cyberbullying behavior therefore, body image is a factor that needs to be considered in efforts to prevent such behavior. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis show that negative social judgment and body image simultaneously have a significant effect on cyberbullying behavior. These two variables account for 64% of the variation in cyberbullying behavior, while the remaining 36% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. Among these two variables, negative social judgment contributes more significantly than body image; therefore, it can be considered a more dominant predictor of cyberbullying behavior among the study's participants. The findings of this study have practical implications for the implementation of guidance and counseling services in schools. Guidance and counseling teachers are expected to develop services focused on strengthening self-acceptance, improving social skills, fostering positive communication, and educating students on the responsible use of digital media as preventive measures to reduce cyberbullying behavior. Future research is recommended to involve a larger sample size, employ diverse research approaches, and consider other variables that may influence cyberbullying behavior such as emotional regulation, empathy, social support, and the intensity of social media use to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing cyberbullying behavior among adolescents.

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