

# Cybercrime: Investigating awareness among senior secondary level students

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## **Cybercrime: Investigating awareness among senior high secondary level students**

In today's digital age, where every click can lead to both discovery and danger, the alarming rise of cybercrime poses a significant threat to our youth. In my research on cybercrime awareness among senior secondary students, I wanted to know the current level of awareness these students possess and how factors like gender and the type of school management might influence it. I learned that there is a significant variance in cybercrime awareness levels based on gender and the school management type. For instance, it became evident that boys may have different online experiences and risks compared to girls, and that schools with proactive management practices tend to foster a greater awareness among their students.

### **Statement of Scope**

I began my research process by looking into academic journals that focused on cybercrime awareness, particularly journals that pertain to secondary-level students. Recognizing the increasing prevalence of technology in the lives of adolescents, I felt it was important to understand their awareness of cyber threats and safety measures. I started by reviewing existing literature on cybercrime awareness, mainly the studies focusing on students. To make sure I ensured the credibility of the information, I looked at the peer-reviewed articles and sources such as government publications and educational institutions. On top of that I also assessed the relevance by focusing on studies and data that specifically addressed cybercrime and adolescent awareness, making sure they were up-to-date and reflective of current technologies and trends.

Through my investigation, I also explored academic journals. Universities often have research centers or departments focused on cybersecurity. Their websites may provide access to studies, white papers, and educational resources aimed at increasing awareness among youths. I discovered a lot of literature highlighting the importance of educating young people about the

risks associated with digital environments, such as social media, online gaming, and internet browsing. This led me to examine different studies that assessed how well adolescents understood cyber threats and their ability to protect themselves against potential online dangers. It also dived more into the current level of awareness these students possess and how factors like gender and the type of school management might influence it.

The choice I wanted to focus on is secondary-level students and how technology influences them. To start with, this age group is typically more engaged with technology and social media, making them extremely vulnerable to cybercrime. Additionally, high school is a key time for educational interventions that could significantly impact students behavior and awareness regarding cyber safety.

As I continued my research, I identified gaps in existing studies, mainly concerning how effective current educational programs are in raising awareness among these students (Lapidot, 2014). This prompted me to further investigate not only the current knowledge levels of these students but also the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at improving their cyber awareness and the safety practices they implement.

Ultimately, my research on cybercrime awareness in secondary-level students aims to contribute to the development of targeted educational strategies and resources. It is imperative to equip this demographic with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the digital world safely. By addressing their specific needs and knowledge gaps, we can help foster a generation that is more informed and better prepared to handle cyber threats.

### **Research findings**

There was a survey which told students where they are cyber awareness landed. This utilized a five-point Likert-type rating scale known as the Cybercrime Awareness Scale

(Rajasekar, 2011). This scale was designed to assess students awareness of cybercrime across five categories: excellent, high, above average, average, and below average. It consisted of 36 statement items, with a mix of positive and negative statements, to evaluate the level of cybercrime awareness among the selected sample of 100 senior secondary students. Female students scaled higher on the Cybercrime Awareness Scale, with 50% falling in the excellent awareness category compared to 34% of male students. However, the difference in awareness levels between genders was not significant. As shown in figure 1, This trend may reflect differing online behaviors and experiences, suggesting the need for awareness programs that consider gender-specific risks and challenges (Brown, 2014).

### Figure 1

*Means and Standard deviations by gender CVS (Common Vulnerability Scoring System)*

<b>Female</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>16.56 (3.14)</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>18.51 (9.59)</b>

*Note.* This indicates that half of the female students pose excellent cybercrime awareness towards cybercrime (Lapidot, 2014).

Moving forward, this study also examines the emotional problems associated with both traditional and cyber victimization among students. Victims of cyberbullying experience significant emotional distress, which can lead to anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal (Kranenbarg, 2019). The research highlights that while both forms of victimization have harmful effects, cyber victimization may lead to unique emotional challenges due to its pervasive and often anonymous nature as shown in Figure 2.

## Figure 2

*Means and standard deviations of primary variables by total sample and by emotional distress*

<b>Anxiety</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>44.44 (9.62)</b>
<b>depression</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>43.91 (7.24)</b>
<b>Social stress</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>43.33 (9.61)</b>
<b>Self- esteem</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>55.68 (6.75)</b>

*Note. These analyses were conducted to better understand any gender and grade level differences in all of the study variables (Lapidot, 2014).*

This table can also explore the relationship between cybercrime and traditional offending, focusing on the overlap between offenders and victims. It identifies significant correlations between being a victim of traditional crime and experiencing cyber victimization, suggesting shared risk factors. The research emphasizes the complexity of cybercrime dynamics. This can indicate that individuals can simultaneously occupy roles as both victims and offenders. Another thing it can indicate is the need for a refined understanding of digital age criminal behavior and how it can affect people mentally (Lapidot, 2014).

## Discussion

The study investigates the differences in social skills among four groups of senior secondary level students such as cyberbullies, cybervictims, cyber bystanders, And individuals not involved in cyberbullying. Cyberbullies tend to exhibit lower social skills, while cyber victims often struggle with social interactions, leading to feelings of isolation and distress. The research highlights the need for targeted interventions to improve social skills among these groups. This could help mitigate the effects of cyberbullying and promote healthier online interactions as said by (Mindrilla, 2015). Understanding these social skills listed

by each group can help educators design targeted interventions that address the specific needs of cyberbullies and victims, promoting healthier social interactions and reducing cyberbullying incidents.

### **Proposal**

To help students create a safer environment online I would say to implement cyber safety programs. Schools should develop and integrate cyber safety curricula that educate students about online risks, responsible internet use, how to recognize, and report cyber threats. Another thing that should be added is to enhance parental involvement. This is to encourage parents to participate in workshops and training sessions that inform them about cyber safety, enabling them to guide their children effectively in navigating online spaces (Tosun, 2020). Lastly, establishing clear policies and reporting mechanisms. Schools should be able to create clear policies regarding cyberbullying and online misconduct, along with accessible reporting mechanisms for students to report incidents safely and anonymously.

### **The importance**

This topic is important because adolescents are at a stage in their development, where time is often spent exploring online environments without fully understanding the risks involved. This makes them particularly vulnerable to cyber threats such as bullying, identity theft, and exploitation (Mindrilla, 2015). Raising awareness can empower them to recognize and mitigate these risks. With this it can also give Insights into the social dynamics that can inform the development of peer support programs that encourage positive relationships among students, fostering an environment where bystanders are empowered to intervene and support victims. These recommendations can guide the creation of curricula that focus on enhancing social skills, empathy, and conflict resolution, equipping students with the tools to navigate online interactions

more safely and effectively. By addressing these aspects, schools can work towards creating a more supportive and safer online environment for all students. With the rise of technology and social media, cybercrime rates have escalated dramatically. Students are frequent users of online platforms, making it essential for them to be educated about potential dangers and the necessary precautions to take in order to protect themselves.

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