



Bibliometric Exploration of Bullying, Workplace Bullying, and Cyberbullying based on the Scientific Scopus Quantum

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HIGHLIGHTS

- The workplace bullying studies plateau; cyberbullying rises, indicating the digital growth between 1999 and 2024.
- Espelage and Einarsen have made significant contributions with solid international partnerships, especially in the US, the UK, and Scandinavia.
- Key topics, including workplace dynamics, teenage victimization, and digital harassment, were found through keyword co-occurrence.
- Co-authorship analysis emphasizes strong worldwide cooperation, highlighting the necessity of inclusive, flexible, and multidisciplinary approaches, particularly in under-represented areas

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the landscape of bullying research, with a focus on workplace bullying and cyberbullying, utilizing Scopus-indexed publications from 1999 to 2024. A total of 20,406 publications were analyzed, including 14,051 on bullying, 1,583 on workplace bullying, and 4,772 on cyberbullying. A bibliometric analysis was conducted using descriptive and network techniques to evaluate research productivity, trends, and collaborations. Key findings reveal that citations for bullying peaked in 2015, with workplace bullying research stabilizing, while cyberbullying research has shown sustained growth, reflecting the rise of digital platforms. Co-authorship analysis highlights strong international collaborations, with significant contributions from scholars like Espelage, D.L., and Einarsen, S., and leading research hubs in the U.S., U.K., and Scandinavia. Keyword co-occurrence identified critical themes such as workplace dynamics, adolescent victimization, and digital harassment. Emerging clusters in healthcare and family dynamics highlight underexplored domains that require further investigation. Future research should address bullying's socio-psychological impacts and develop innovative methodologies to mitigate its evolving challenges in diverse settings.

INTRODUCTION

Bullying, a behaviour linked to negative ego optimization, has evolved, with workplace bullying and cyberbullying gaining significant research attention over the past 25 years, with 45000 documents due to their profound effects on individual well-being,

organizational health, and social dynamics. Most studies, approximately 75 per cent studies, focus on Western cultures, which limits understanding of global bullying dynamics and cultural variations (Giorgi et al., 2015; Escobar et al., 2023). Only 11-14 per cent non-Western countries are underrepresented in bibliometric analyses, highlighting the need for research in diverse socio-economic

contexts to uncover unique influences on workplace bullying and victimization (Einarsen et al., 2020; Samnani, 2024; Escobar et al., 2023). Longitudinal studies examining the long-term psychological, social, and economic impacts of bullying are scarce (Olweus, 1993; Hymel & Swearer, 2015). Additionally, the intergenerational transmission of bullying behaviours and their implications across families and workplaces remain underexplored (Kowalski et al., 2014). Limited research also examines how intersectional factors like race, gender, socioeconomic status, and disability shape bullying experiences (Hoel et al., 2021).

As digital platforms and ICT evolve, cyberbullying research lags, often focusing on mainstream platforms while neglecting newer spaces like TikTok, Discord, and the metaverse (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Mukherjee & Jha, 2024). Real-time monitoring and AI-based interventions are emerging but remain underexplored regarding ethics, accuracy, and efficacy (Huang et al., 2021). Following 2010, research on cyberbullying surged due to rising public awareness and the proliferation of social media, necessitating studies on privacy-conscious AI systems to combat bullying across diverse digital environments (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Huang et al., 2021). The rise of remote work and gig economy models has introduced challenges like virtual harassment, which are underrepresented in bullying literature (Giorgi et al., 2015). Research must address how remote and hybrid dynamics influence bullying and evaluate anti-bullying programs in diverse contexts (Samnani & Singh, 2012). Enhanced methodologies can illuminate trends like leadership training and policy interventions (Hoel et al., 2021).

The geographic distribution of research highlights the dominance of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia in bullying research (Einarsen et al., 2003). Scandinavian countries, notably Norway, have made significant contributions to the literature on workplace bullying, with institutions such as the University of Bergen leading the field (Giorgi et al., 2015). Cyberbullying research shows growing contributions from Spain and China, emphasizing its global reach (Wright, 2017). Collaborative networks have been instrumental in advancing research, with international partnerships fostering the exchange of diverse cultural and methodological perspectives (Hong et al., 2019).

Despite substantial progress, significant gaps remain in understanding bullying's cultural nuances and its manifestation in underrepresented regions. The dominance of studies from English-speaking and developed countries underscores the need for equitable representation (Espelage & Hong, 2017). Cyberbullying research must focus on longitudinal studies to capture the evolving nature of online harassment in response to technological advancements (Kowalski et al., 2014). Additionally, exploring the intersection of bullying with mental health, family dynamics, and healthcare systems can offer insights into sustainable intervention strategies (Hymel & Swearer, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

The bibliometric method is divided into three steps: the first one is database selection, identification, and acquisition. Based on past literature and the results, it was decided to choose Scopus (Elsevier's database) since it is a major and vast database focused on various domains, providing the necessary information for both

qualitative and quantitative analysis (Jenkins, 2017). The search string finalized for "Articles, abstract, and keywords" was used, so that if the keywords were present in the document, related documents would be shown in the output. The output from the database was retrieved using a set of search terms that focused on "bullying," "workplace bullying," and "cyberbullying" concepts. The synonyms for these search items were explained clearly and connected using the "OR" operator. Concepts associated with the "AND" and "AND NOT" operators were used to exclude records related to other terms (Suman et al., 2025).

The second one is the clarification and formatting of highly cited documents by using different filtration techniques in MS Excel. Results were limited to journal articles for the years 1999-2024. In addition, the language of the articles and the publication stage was limited to English due to feasibility and visibility, and the final publication. Boolean "AND" was utilised to restrict the study findings to mental health concerns, and "AND NOT" was employed to omit additional research articles; Boolean "OR" was utilised to optimise the results. The dataset was consequently further condensed to 14051 articles for bullying, 1583 articles for workplace bullying, and 4772 articles for cyberbullying.

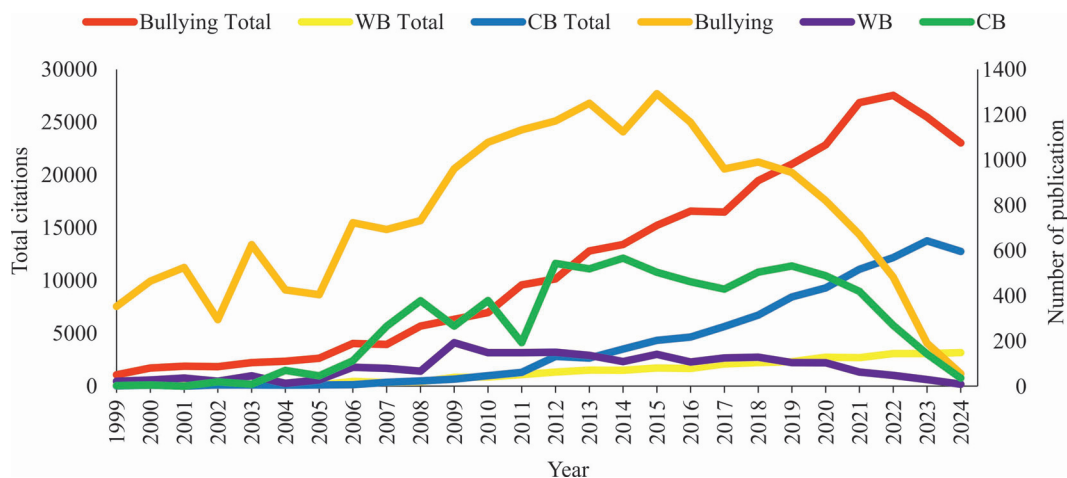
The third and last one is the analysis and visualization of highly cited documents. To investigate patterns in the dataset, the basic descriptive analysis creates several tables and charts. Trends in the concept area were identified using these preliminary charts and tables that were added to the study of the year-wise number of publications, citations, top five countries, journals, authors, and keyword evolution analysis (Agarwal et al., 2022). Following that, keyword analysis and evolution were carried out using VOS viewer, which was utilised to actively analyse the most influential papers, journals, authors, and nations based on their publications and citations (Roy et al., 2024).

RESULTS

As shown in Figure 1, the fifty articles published on the bullying concept date from 1999, and two articles were published on workplace bullying, while only one article was published on the cyberbullying concept. The maximum number of annual publications appeared in 2022, with a total of 1285 on the bullying concept, and 148 publications appeared in 2024 for workplace bullying, while 642 publications appeared in 2023 for cyberbullying. From 1999 onwards, the number of publications rises exponentially for bullying, workplace bullying, and cyberbullying, with a little bit of fluctuation. The trend, however, was interrupted for three years (2017, 2023, and 2024), in which the number of publications was lower than expected for the bullying concept. The trend of workplace bullying concept was interrupted every two or three years between 1999 and 2024, in which the number of publications increased and decreased. The trend of the cyberbullying concept was also interrupted from 1999 to 2003 regularly, even, though the publication was found null in 2001. After 2013 publication rises exponentially every year for cyberbullying.

In addition, a total of 7545 citations were in 1999 and the trend in the number of annual citations increased with interruption for the bullying concept. The highest number of citations was recorded in 2015 with 27694 and the lowest number of citations

Figure 1. Trends in publications and citations in concepts with the year-wise production rates
Note: CB = Cyberbullying; WB= Workplace bullying. Publication- Bullying Total, WB Total, and CB Total, Citations- Bullying, WB, and CB



was recorded in 2024 for the bullying concept. A total of 458 citations were in 1999 with a considerable rise in the number of citations each year, reaching a peak in 2009 with 4112 citations and reaching a low level in 2024 with 179 citations for the workplace bullying concept. The cyberbullying concept found 43 citations in 1999 and null citations in 2001 due to zero publications. The highest publication was found in 2014 with 12119 citations while the lowest publication was found in 1999 with 43 citations except in 2001.

Then, Table 1 shows the top five authors with the most published articles in twenty-five years. The top five authors have published (n=502; 3.58%) articles out of a total of (n=14051; 100%) bullying articles of which Espelage, D.L. published (n=133; 0.95%), the Hong, J.S. published (n=110; 0.78%), Salmivalli, C published (n=104; 0.74%), Thornberg, R. published (n=78; 0.56%), and Veenstra, R. published (n=77; 0.55%) articles respectively. The top five authors have published (n=197; 12.44%) articles out of a total of (n=1583; 100%) workplace bullying articles of which Einarsen, S. published (n=54; 3.41%), Nielsen, M.B. published (n=47; 2.97%), Einarsen, S.V. published (n=34; 2.15%), Notelaers, G. published (n=32; 2.02%), and Baillien, E. published (n=30; 1.90%) articles respectively. The top five authors have published (n=199; 4.17%) articles out of a total of (n=4772; 100%) cyberbullying articles of which Wright, M.F. published (n=49; 1.03%), Vandebosch, H. published (n=48; 1.01%), Ortega-Ruiz, R. published (n=38; 0.80%), Wachs, S. published (n=34; 0.71%), and Smith, P.K. published (n=30; 0.63%) respectively.

Then, Table 2 shows the top five journals with the most published articles in twenty-five years. The top five journals have published (n=1343; 9.56%) articles out of a total of (n=14051; 100%) bullying articles of which the Journal of Interpersonal

Violence published (n=441; 3.14%), the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health published (n=245; 1.74%), Journal of School Violence published (n=230; 1.64%), Journal of Youth and Adolescence published (n=229; 1.63%), and Child Abuse and Neglect published (n=198; 1.41%) articles respectively. The top five journals have published (n=179; 11.3%) articles out of a total of (n=1583; 100%) workplace bullying articles of which the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health published (n=50; 3.16%), Frontiers in Psychology published (n=36; 2.27%), the Journal of Nursing Management published (n=36; 2.27%), Work and Stress published (n=28; 1.83%), and International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health published (n=28; 1.77%) articles respectively. The top five journals have published (n=673; 14.09%) articles out of a total of (n=4772; 100%) cyberbullying articles of which Computers in Human Behavior published (n=202; 4.23%), International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health published (n=188; 3.94%), Journal of Interpersonal Violence published (n=103; 2.16%), the Frontiers in Psychology published (n=95; 1.99%), and Children and Youth Services Review published (n=85; 1.78%) respectively.

Then, Table 3 shows the top five countries with the most published articles in twenty-five years. The top five countries have published (n=9922; 70.65%) articles out of a total of (n=14051; 100%) bullying articles of which the United States published (n=5309; 37.7%), the United Kingdom (UK) published (n=1883; 13.4%), Australia published (n=1042; 7.42%), Canada published (n=992; 7.1%), and China published (n=696; 4.95%) articles respectively. The top five countries have published (n=892; 56.35%) articles out of a total of (n=1583; 100%) workplace

Table 1. Top five authors based on the number of publications, with their percentage

Bullying			Workplace bullying			Cyberbullying		
Authors	Pub.	%	Authors	Pub.	%	Authors	Pub.	%
Espelage, D.L.	133	0.95	Einarsen, S.	54	3.41%	Wright, M.F.	49	1.03%
Hong, J.S.	110	0.78	Nielsen, M.B.	47	2.97%	Vandebosch, H.	48	1.01%
Salmivalli, C.	104	0.74	Einarsen, S.V.	34	2.15%	Ortega-Ruiz, R.	38	0.80%
Thornberg, R.	78	0.56	Notelaers, G.	32	2.02%	Wachs, S.	34	0.71%
Veenstra, R.	77	0.55	Baillien, E.	30	1.90%	Smith, P.K.	30	0.63%
Total	502	3.58	Total	197	12.44	Total	199	4.17

Table 2. Top five journals based on the number of publications with their percentage

Bullying			Workplace bullying			Cyberbullying		
Journals	Pub.	%	Journals	Pub.	%	Journals	Pub.	%
Journal of Interpersonal Violence	441	3.14	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	50	3.16	Computers in Human Behavior	202	4.23
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	245	1.74	Frontiers in Psychology	36	2.27	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	188	3.94
Journal of School Violence	230	1.64	Journal of Nursing Management	36	2.27	Journal of Interpersonal Violence	103	2.16
Journal of Youth and Adolescence	229	1.63	Work and Stress	29	1.83	Frontiers in Psychology	95	1.99
Child Abuse and Neglect	198	1.41	International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health	28	1.77	Children and Youth Services Review	85	1.78
Total	1343	9.56	Total	179	11.3	Total	673	14.09

Table 3. Top five countries based on the number of publications and their percentage

Bullying			Workplace bullying			Cyberbullying		
Countries	Pub.	%	Countries	Pub.	%	Countries	Pub.	%
United States	5309	37.78	United States	323	20.40	United States	1301	27.26
United Kingdom	1883	13.4	Australia	204	12.89	Spain	470	9.85
Australia	1042	7.42	United Kingdom	144	9.10	China	417	8.74
Canada	992	7.1	Norway	141	8.91	United Kingdom	393	8.24
China	696	4.95	Canada	80	5.05	Australia	288	6.04
Total	9922	70.65	Total	892	56.35	Total	2869	60.12

bullying articles of which the United States published (n=323; 20.4%), Australia published (n=204; 12.89%), the United Kingdom (UK) published (n=141; 9.10%), Norway published (n=141; 8.91%), and Canada published (n=80; 5.05%) articles respectively. The top five countries have published (n=2869; 60.12%) articles out of a total of (n=4772; 100%) cyberbullying articles of which the United States published (n=1301; 27.26%), Spain published (n=470; 9.85%), China published (n=417; 8.74%), the United Kingdom (UK) published (n=393; 8.24%), and Australia published (n=288; 6.04%) respectively.

Network analysis

The network displays keywords that form clusters (Figure 2), where nodes and linkages connect graphs that depict the associations between words. The size of the nodes, which stand in for the keywords, is correlated with how frequently the keyword occurs in the documents; the larger the node, the more frequently it appears (and vice versa). The connections between two nodes are shown by the linkages, or edges. The link's breadth indicates the strength of this association; a wider link indicates a stronger relationship (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The minimum number of repetitions of the keyword was fixed at 5. Only 2246 out of the 24055 author keywords reached the cutoff and were plotted. The co-occurrence with author keywords produces a total of 12 clusters, 32642 links, and 79099 total link strengths. Every cluster color represents a different cluster in which cluster 1 consists of 170 items, followed by cluster 2 (154 items), cluster 3 (118 items), cluster 4 (109 items),

cluster 5 (102 items), cluster 6 (90 items), cluster 7 (84 items), cluster 8 (42 items), cluster 9 (39 items), cluster 10 (37 items), cluster 11 (36 items), and cluster 12 (19 items). The keywords based on occurrences only top five keywords selected in which first keyword is "bullying" consisting of 5876 occurrences, 15858 total link strength, and 971 links, followed by the second keyword "cyberbullying" consisting of 2333 occurrences, 6202 total link strength, and 757 links, third keywords is "adolescents" consisting of 1480 occurrences, 4475 total links strength, and 678 links, fourth keywords is "victimization" consisting of 1274 occurrences, 3906 total link strength, and 667 links, the fifth keywords is "adolescence" consisting 865 occurrences, 2622 total link strength, and 551 links.

The minimum number of occurrences of the author's documents was fixed at 5. Of the total author co-authorship of 44239, only 2183 met the threshold and were plotted. The author's co-authorship based on documents produces 911 items, 35 clusters, 6545 links, and 18094 link strengths. Every cluster color represents a different cluster, and a total of the top ten are considered in this study. The cluster 1 consists of 221 items, followed by cluster 2 (67 items), cluster 3 (56 items), cluster 4 (42 items), cluster 5 (41 items), cluster 6 (40 items), cluster 7 (39 items), cluster 8 (29 items), cluster 9 (28 items), and cluster 10 (28 items). The based on total link strength, the top five authors selected which first author (wang x.) consisting of 298 total link strength, followed by the second author is (Hong J. S.) consisting of 270 total link strength, the third author is (Espelage D. I.) consisting of 235 total links strength, fourth author is (Salmivalli C.) consisting of 234 total link strength,

Figure 2: Co-occurrences network of keywords visualization

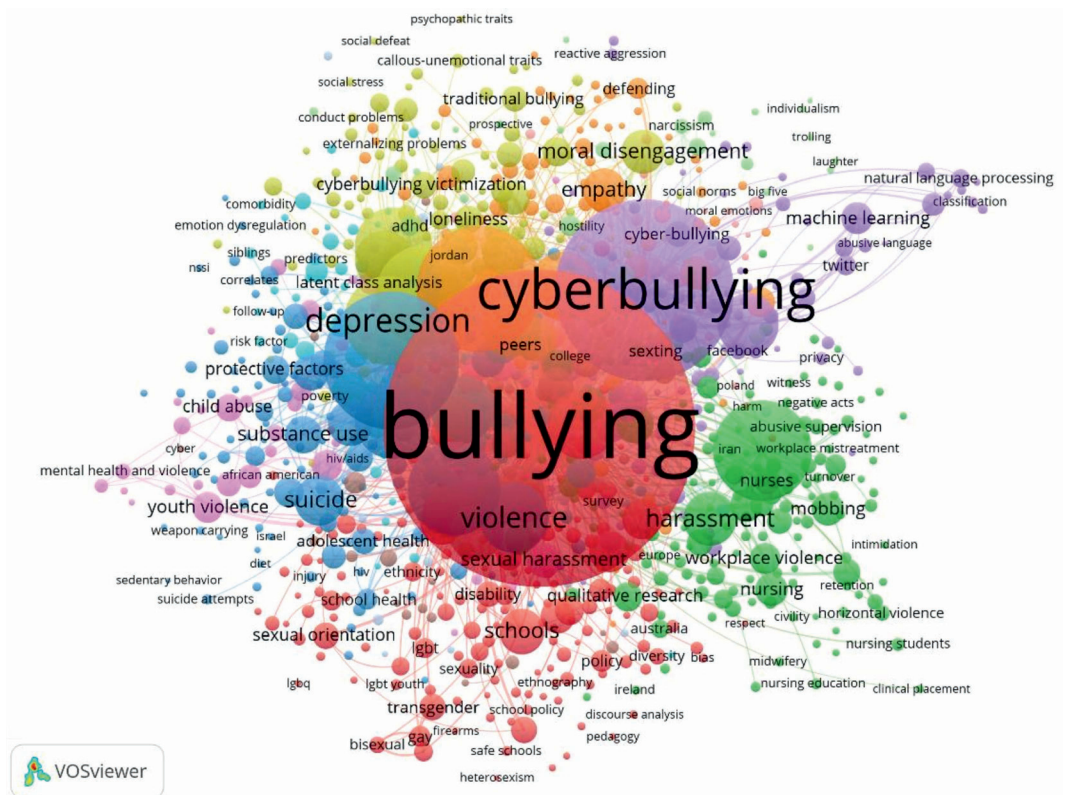
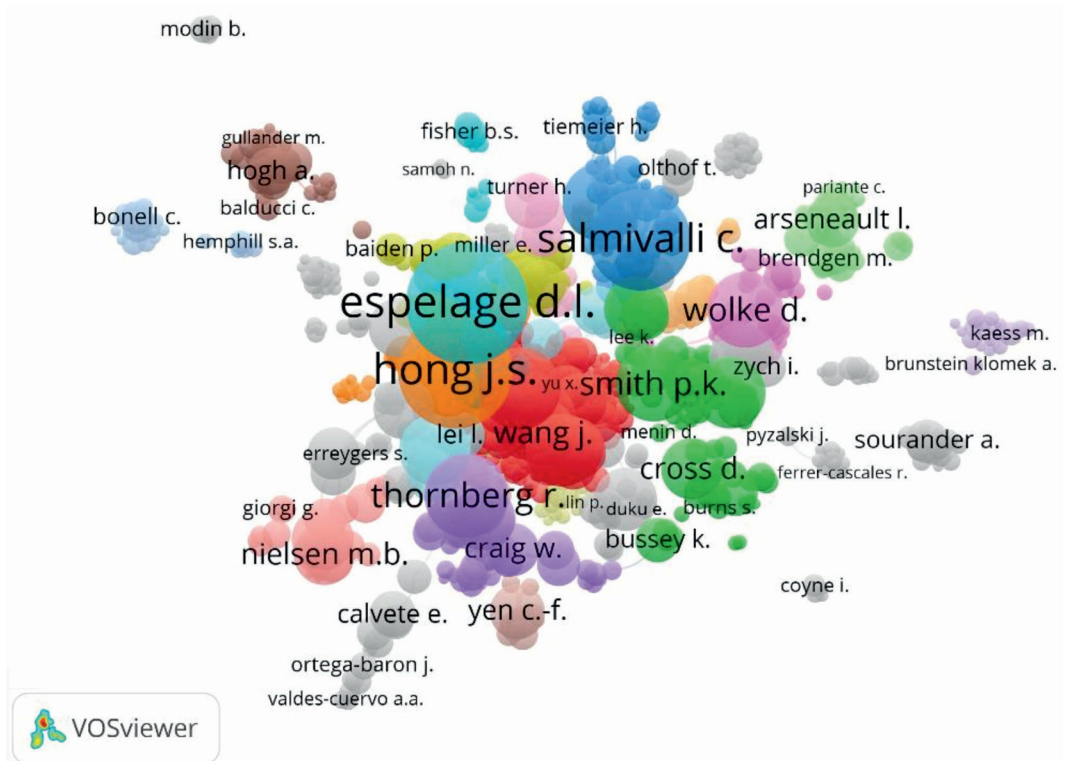


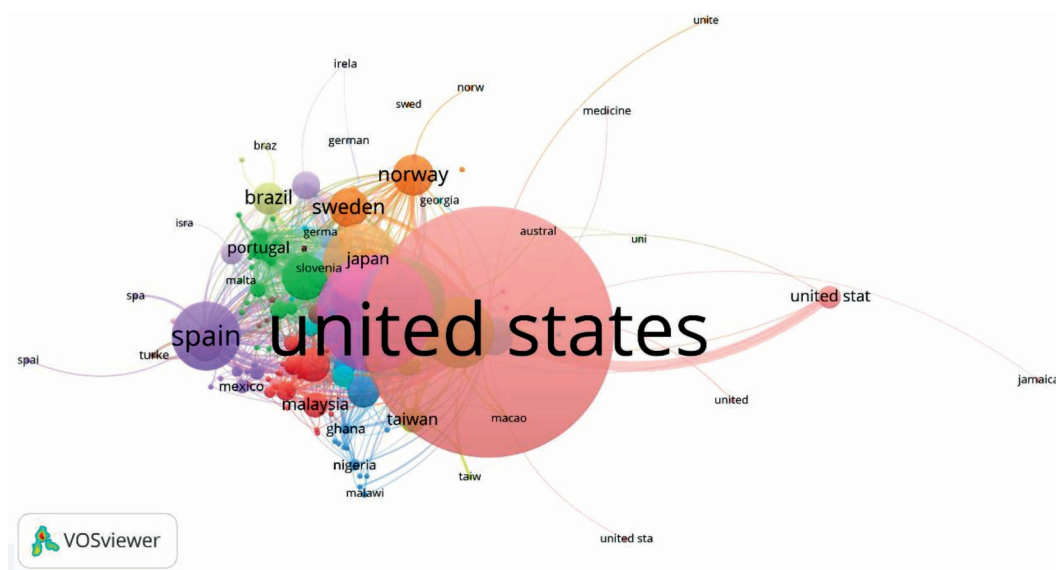
Figure 3. Author and co-authorship network



The fifth author is (Wang Y.) consisting of 211 total link strength. The based on the citations, the top five authors were selected in which first author is (Smith P. K.) consisting of 11143 total citations, followed by the second author is (Espelage D. I.) consisting of 9764 total link citations, third author (Salmivalli C.) consisting of 9724 total citations, fourth author is (Einarsen S.) consisting of 7813 total citations, and the fifth author is (Wolke

D.) consisting of 7786 total citations. The based on the documents, the top five authors were selected which first author is (Espelage D. I.) consisting of 142 total documents, followed by the second author is (Hong J. S.) consisting of 129 documents, the third author is (Salmivalli C.) consisting of 109 total documents, the fourth author is (Thornberg R.) consisting of 83 total documents, and the fifth author is (Wang X.) consisting of 80 total documents published.

Figure 4. Co-authorship and countries network



To describe the collaboration connection of publications in different countries and regions from 1999 to 2024, we make a co-authorship analysis at the level of country/region and author. The minimum number of occurrences of the author's documents was fixed at 5. Of the total author countries, 1026, only 150 met the threshold and were plotted. The author's countries, based on documents, produce 150 items, 17 clusters, 1946 links, and 11183 link strengths. Every cluster colour represents a different cluster, and a total of the top ten are considered in this study. The cluster 1 consists of 23 items, followed by cluster 2 (23 items), cluster 3 (14 items), cluster 4 (12 items), cluster 5 (11 items), cluster 6 (11 items), cluster 7 (9 items), cluster 8 (7 items), cluster 9 (7 items), and cluster 10 (6 items). The based on documents, citations and total link strength, the top five countries selected first country is (the United States) consisting of 6931 documents, 259405 citations, and 2985 total link strength, followed by the second country is (the United Kingdom) consisting of 2337 documents, 100544 citations, and 1806 total link strength, the third country is (Australia) consisting of 1505 documents, 47347 citations, and 1047 total links strength, the fourth country is (Canada) consisting of 1300 documents, 52712 citations, and 871 total link strength. The fifth country is Spain, composed of 1091 documents, 26615 citations, and 792 total link strength.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of bullying, workplace bullying, and cyberbullying research trends reveals important insights into the dynamic and evolving nature of these topics. The concept of bullying experienced a steady rise in citations, peaking in 2015, a surge reflecting the increasing scholarly attention at that time (Einarsen et al., 2003). Workplace bullying followed a similar pattern. It began with 458 citations in 1999 and rose steadily, reaching a peak of citations in 2009. Since then, the citation count has gradually decreased, reaching a low in 2024, suggesting a stabilization of interest in the topic (Giorgi et al., 2015). Cyberbullying exhibited a distinct trajectory, with slow initial growth in citations, starting in 1999, followed by a significant rise in 2014.

The earliest publications on bullying date back to 1999, with just two articles on workplace bullying and one on cyberbullying. Since then, the number of publications has increased dramatically, peaking in 2022, when 1,285 articles on bullying were published. Workplace bullying saw 148 publications in 2024, while cyberbullying had 642 publications in 2023, marking exponential growth over time (Hymel & Swearer, 2015). For bullying, publication numbers fell below expectations in 2017, 2023, and 2024, while workplace bullying showed similar interruptions between 1999 and 2024, with periodic increases and decreases in publication activity. Cyberbullying's publications exhibited consistent growth after 2013, aligning with the increasing prominence of digital platforms and online harassment (Kowalski et al., 2014).

The geographic distribution of the bullying concept, the top five countries—the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and China confirms long-standing concern. The United States led with 5,309 articles (Einarsen et al., 2003). This dominance underscores the major role these countries play in bullying research. In workplace bullying, the top five countries—the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Norway, and Canada highlights expertise and epicentres of particular specializations. The United States contributed 323 articles, while Australia, Norway, and Canada made significant contributions, highlighting the strong focus on workplace bullying in Scandinavian countries (Giorgi et al., 2015).

The top five journals for bullying-related research published 1,343 articles, representing 9.56 per cent of the total 14,051 articles. The *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* led with 441 articles. These journals are central to bullying research, covering various aspects like violence, public health, and education (Einarsen et al., 2003). For workplace bullying, the top five journals published 179 articles, accounting for 11.3 per cent of the total 1,583 articles. The *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* is in the top. These journals reflect the interdisciplinary nature of workplace bullying research, encompassing public health, psychology, and occupational health (Giorgi et al., 2015). In the area of cyberbullying, *Computers in Human Behavior* led with 202 articles. These journals address the intersection of technology, behavior, and mental health (Kowalski et al., 2014).

Regarding authors, the top contributors in bullying research include Espelage, D.L., Hong, J.S., and Salmivalli, C., for general bullying research, with Espelage leading with 133 articles. In workplace bullying, Einarsen, S., Nielsen, M.B., and Einarsen, S.V. made significant contributions, with Einarsen leading with 54 articles. For cyberbullying, Wright, M.F., Vandebosch, H., and Ortega-Ruiz, R. were key contributors, with Wright leading with 49 articles (Wright, 2017; Vandebosch & Pabian, 2013).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this bibliometric analysis highlights key trends in the intellectual development and research landscape of bullying, workplace bullying, and cyberbullying, offering important implications for future international studies. The sustained growth of cyberbullying research, largely fuelled by the rise of digital platforms, underscores the need for research to focus on developing effective digital tools and frameworks to combat online harassment. Additionally, the strong international collaboration identified through co-authorship networks highlights the importance of global cooperation, particularly in integrating underrepresented regions to ensure a comprehensive understanding of bullying behaviors across diverse cultural contexts. The interdisciplinary nature of bullying research, encompassing workplace dynamics, healthcare, and family systems, further supports the need for integrated research methodologies across fields like psychology, sociology, public health, and technology. By strengthening global partnerships, ensuring equitable representation, and focusing on sustainable interventions, the international research community can enhance the effectiveness of bullying prevention and mitigation strategies.

DECLARATIONS

Ethics approval and informed consent: As the research was carried out with bibliometric analysis, the Scopus database from BHU Varanasi was used for the study with inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

The author declares that they have thoroughly reviewed, revised, and edited the content as needed. The authors take full responsibility for the final content of this publication.

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