Mapping Digital Resilience in Cyberbullying and Online Harm Research: A Bibliometric Analysis of Scopus-Indexed Publications From 2002 To January 2026

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ABSTRACT

This study maps the accessible knowledge structure of digital resilience scholarship within cyberbullying and adjacent online harm research using bibliometric techniques applied to Scopus-indexed publications. The dataset was compiled on 28 January 2026 and documented using a modified PRISMA-style screening log. A total of 5,266 Scopus records and 303 supplementary screening records were initially identified. After applying predefined subject-scope, document-type, language, publication-stage, accessibility, and conceptual-relevance criteria, 928 publications published between 2002 and January 2026 were retained for analysis. Because 1,335 potentially relevant reports were not retrievable due to non-open-access or other access limitations, the findings are interpreted as representing the accessible Scopus-indexed corpus rather than the complete global literature. Performance analysis examined annual publication growth, authorship expansion, citation impact, source influence, and citation concentration, while interpretive synthesis examined how influential studies positioned resilience through explicit and proxy constructs. Results indicate a marked increase in publication output after 2018, peaking at 201 publications in 2025. The corpus also shows substantial cumulative influence, with 19,990 citations, an h-index of 66, and a g-index of 116. Frontiers in Psychology was the most productive source, whereas Computers in Human Behavior showed the strongest citation influence. The highly cited literature suggests that the field has moved from foundational work on cyberbullying prevalence and harm toward prevention, bystander behaviour, social support, parenting, wellbeing, and coping-related mechanisms. The study contributes by clarifying the accessible bibliometric structure of digital resilience-oriented cyberbullying and online harm research, explaining the use of proxy resilience terms, and outlining cautious future directions without overextending bibliometric evidence into intervention-effectiveness claims.

Keywords: digital resilience, cyberbullying, online harm, bibliometric analysis, Scopus

INTRODUCTION

Digital communication has reshaped how young people interact, learn, socialise, and construct identity, but it has also increased exposure to technology-mediated harm. Cyberbullying remains a serious psychosocial and educational risk, particularly in school-age and adolescent populations, because online aggression can occur across platforms, extend beyond school boundaries, and affect wellbeing, peer relationships, and help-seeking behaviours (Smith et al., 2008; Li, 2010; Slonje et al., 2013). At the same time, the vocabulary used in this literature increasingly overlaps with adjacent online harm terms such as online harassment, online aggression, hate speech, trolling, doxxing, and technology-facilitated abuse. These terms are not identical to cyberbullying; however, they are relevant when they describe repeated or relationally harmful digital interactions and when they are linked to coping, protection, bystander action, or digital safety. As social media, mobile technologies, and platform-based interaction became embedded in daily life, research expanded from documenting prevalence and harm toward identifying prevention strategies, bystander responses, wellbeing pathways, and protective factors (Best et al., 2014; George & Odgers, 2015; Viner et al., 2019).

Within this shift, digital resilience has emerged as an important organising construct. In this study, digital resilience refers to the capacity of individuals to recognise, manage, adapt to, and recover from online risks while maintaining psychosocial functioning and making constructive use of digital environments. Operationally, the construct was represented through explicit digital resilience terminology and through closely aligned proxy domains: risk recognition, coping, emotional regulation, self-efficacy, help-seeking, social support, parental mediation, bystander defence, digital/media literacy, online safety, wellbeing, and recovery. These domains were included because each reflects a protective or adaptive process rather than a general description of cyberbullying prevalence, harm, or perpetration alone.

Although this study does not impose an adolescent-only search filter, adolescents remain analytically important because much of the cyberbullying knowledge base is school-based and youth-focused. Adolescence is also a developmental period in which peer approval, identity exploration, emotional regulation, and digital participation become especially salient. Therefore, adolescent-related findings are discussed where they emerge from the corpus, but the study is framed as a bibliometric analysis of digital resilience in cyberbullying and related online harm contexts rather than a systematic review limited exclusively to adolescents.

Existing cyberbullying bibliometric studies have mapped publication growth, key journals, influential authors, and broad thematic directions (Achuthan et al., 2023; Hueso-Romero et al., 2025). However, most prior mapping work remains cyberbullying-centred rather than resilience-centred. As a result, resilience-related scholarship may be dispersed across terms such as coping, protective factors, self-regulation, social support, bystander defence, digital wellbeing, and online safety. This fragmentation makes it difficult to determine how digital resilience has been represented within cyberbullying and adjacent online harm scholarship and whether the field is moving toward a coherent construct or remains dependent on proxy concepts.

This study addresses that gap by mapping the accessible Scopus-indexed literature on digital resilience in cyberbullying and online harm research from 2002 to January 2026. Its contribution is threefold. First, it provides a transparent bibliometric account of publication growth, citation patterns, source influence, citation concentration, and influential studies within the retained corpus. Second, it explains how proxy resilience constructs were used to capture adaptive and protective processes that are not always labelled as digital resilience. Third, it clarifies the methodological boundary created by the exclusion of non-retrievable full texts, thereby presenting the findings as evidence from an accessible corpus rather than overgeneralising to the entire global literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Resilience in Cyberbullying Research

Cyberbullying research has developed from early efforts to define the phenomenon and document its school-based consequences to wider studies examining digital communication, social media, peer ecology, and adolescent wellbeing (Smith et al., 2008; Best et al., 2014). As the field matured, scholars began to differentiate cyberbullying from offline peer aggression and to examine how platform affordances, online routines, anonymity, audience visibility, and networked harassment influence victimisation and response patterns (Li, 2010; Yang et al., 2013; Marwick, 2021). In the present review, broader online harm terms were treated as conceptually relevant only when they intersected with cyberbullying-related victimisation, peer aggression, digital safety, coping, or protective adaptation.

A resilience-oriented perspective extends this literature by asking not only who is at risk, but also how individuals and social systems reduce harm, support recovery, and promote adaptive digital participation. Protective processes in the cyberbullying literature include bystander defending, social support, parenting practices, personal strengths, emotion regulation, coping skills, and digital/media literacy (Bastiaensens et al., 2014; DeSmet et al., 2014; Cole et al., 2017; Martínez et al., 2019). More recent work has moved toward explicit digital resilience frameworks, educational interventions, and measurement efforts (Calvete Zumalde et al., 2022; Lee & Hancock, 2023; Freed et al., 2025; Pan et al., 2025). Nevertheless, digital resilience remains conceptually dispersed across multiple terms and disciplines; therefore, this study treats resilience as the focal lens while

requiring each proxy term to represent a protective, adaptive, or recovery-oriented mechanism rather than a general cyberbullying outcome.

Table 1: Operationalisation of digital resilience and proxy resilience domains used in the bibliometric screening

Domain	Operational meaning in this study	Reason for inclusion
Explicit digital resilience	Studies that directly used digital resilience or equivalent resilience terminology in relation to online risk.	Captures the core construct when explicitly labelled.
Coping and emotional regulation	Studies addressing coping strategies, emotion regulation, stress appraisal, or recovery after online victimisation.	Represents adaptive response and recovery processes.
Self-efficacy and agency	Studies on perceived control, confidence, self-efficacy, or capacity to manage online harm.	Represents individual protective capacity.
Help-seeking and social support	Studies on peer, family, school, or professional support after cyberbullying or online aggression.	Represents social resources that support resilience.
Parental mediation and school support	Studies on parental guidance, school reporting systems, prevention education, or institutional guardianship.	Represents ecological protection beyond the individual.
Bystander defence	Studies on defending victims, reporting, counter-speech, peer intervention, or refusal to reinforce perpetrators.	Represents constructive peer-level resilience.
Digital/media literacy and online safety	Studies on online safety knowledge, privacy, media literacy, risk recognition, and safer platform use.	Represents preventive and adaptive digital competence.
Wellbeing and recovery	Studies linking cyberbullying or online harm with wellbeing, adjustment, recovery, or protective psychological functioning.	Represents the outcome side of resilience.

Theoretical Positioning

Digital resilience in cyberbullying and online harm contexts can be understood through a focused combination of individual, behavioural, and ecological theories. Social Cognitive Theory explains why self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and observational learning are relevant proxy terms: individuals are more likely to seek help, defend peers, or use safety strategies when they believe they can act effectively and when prosocial responses are modelled by others (Bandura, 1986). The Theory of Planned Behavior and the Theory of Reasoned Action further explain how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control shape intentions to intervene, report harmful content, support victims, or remain passive (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1991).

Opportunity- and strain-based perspectives clarify why digital resilience should not be treated as a purely individual trait. Routine Activity Theory helps interpret online exposure, target suitability, and digital guardianship as ecological conditions that influence cyberbullying risk, while General Strain Theory explains why negative online experiences may lead to maladaptive responses when protective resources are weak (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Agnew, 1992). Stress and coping theory provides the most direct link to resilience by positioning adaptation as a process of appraisal, regulation, coping selection, and recovery (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

These theories informed the selection of proxy domains in Table 2 and guided the interpretation of influential publications as evidence of individual, peer, family, school, and platform-level resilience pathways.

Prior Bibliometric Research and Research Gap

Prior bibliometric studies have made important contributions by mapping cyberbullying scholarship at the macro level. Achuthan et al. (2023), for example, used a large Scopus corpus to examine cyberbullying research trends, productivity patterns, and links to sustainability-related agendas. Hueso-Romero et al. (2025) analysed adolescent bullying and cyberbullying literature using Web of Science data and network visualisation, while Aswat et al. (2025) focused on cyberbullying and metaverse-related scholarship using a smaller Scopus dataset. These studies show that bibliometric methods are useful for identifying publication growth, influential works, collaboration structures, and emerging research topics.

However, these studies are mainly cyberbullying-centred. They do not systematically foreground digital resilience as the organising construct, nor do they clarify how resilience is operationalised through explicit constructs or proxies such as coping, self-regulation, online safety, social support, digital wellbeing, parental mediation, and bystander behaviour. This creates a specific gap: the field knows how cyberbullying research has expanded but less is known about how the resilience-oriented knowledge base within cyberbullying and adjacent online harm research is structured, where it is published, which works anchor it, and how cautiously its findings should be interpreted when the dataset is limited to accessible records.

Table 2: Recent bibliometric studies related to cyberbullying research

Authors	**Objective**	**Data Source & Year Coverage**	**Total Document Entries**	**Bibliometric Attributes Examined**
Achuthan et al. (2023)	To analyse overall cyberbullying research trends, topic shifts, SDG alignment, and the impact of COVID-19 on the literature.	Scopus (2010–2021)	7,045	Citation-based and productivity summaries, top authors, institutions, countries, sources, author keywords; Bibliometrix/Biblioshiny.
Hueso-Romero et al. (2025)	To analyse scientific production and evolution on bullying/cyberbullying in adolescence through bibliometric analysis and systematic review.	Web of Science Core Collection (2005–2023)	700	Publication and citation performance; VOSviewer networks including citation, bibliographic coupling, co-citation, co-authorship, and keyword co-occurrence.
Aswat et al. (2025)	To identify trends and topics on cyberbullying and the metaverse, including productivity by country, institution, author, and source.	Scopus (2022–2024)	9	Performance and science mapping, citation analysis, treemaps, thematic evolution, and keyword co-occurrence clusters.
Present study	To map digital resilience-oriented cyberbullying research using an accessible Scopus-indexed corpus and to interpret publication, source, citation, and influential-study patterns cautiously.	Scopus; accessible records retained after screening (2002–January 2026)	928	Performance indicators, source analysis, citation impact, influential-publication analysis, and interpretive synthesis of resilience-oriented pathways.

Research Questions

This study aims to map and interpret the accessible knowledge structure of digital resilience research within cyberbullying contexts. Accordingly, the study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What publication and citation trends are evident in accessible Scopus-indexed research related to digital resilience in cyberbullying contexts?

RQ2: Which academic journals and sources play central roles in advancing research on digital resilience and cyberbullying within the retained corpus?

RQ3: Which influential studies have shaped the narrative and progression of digital resilience-oriented research within cyberbullying scholarship?

METHODOLOGY

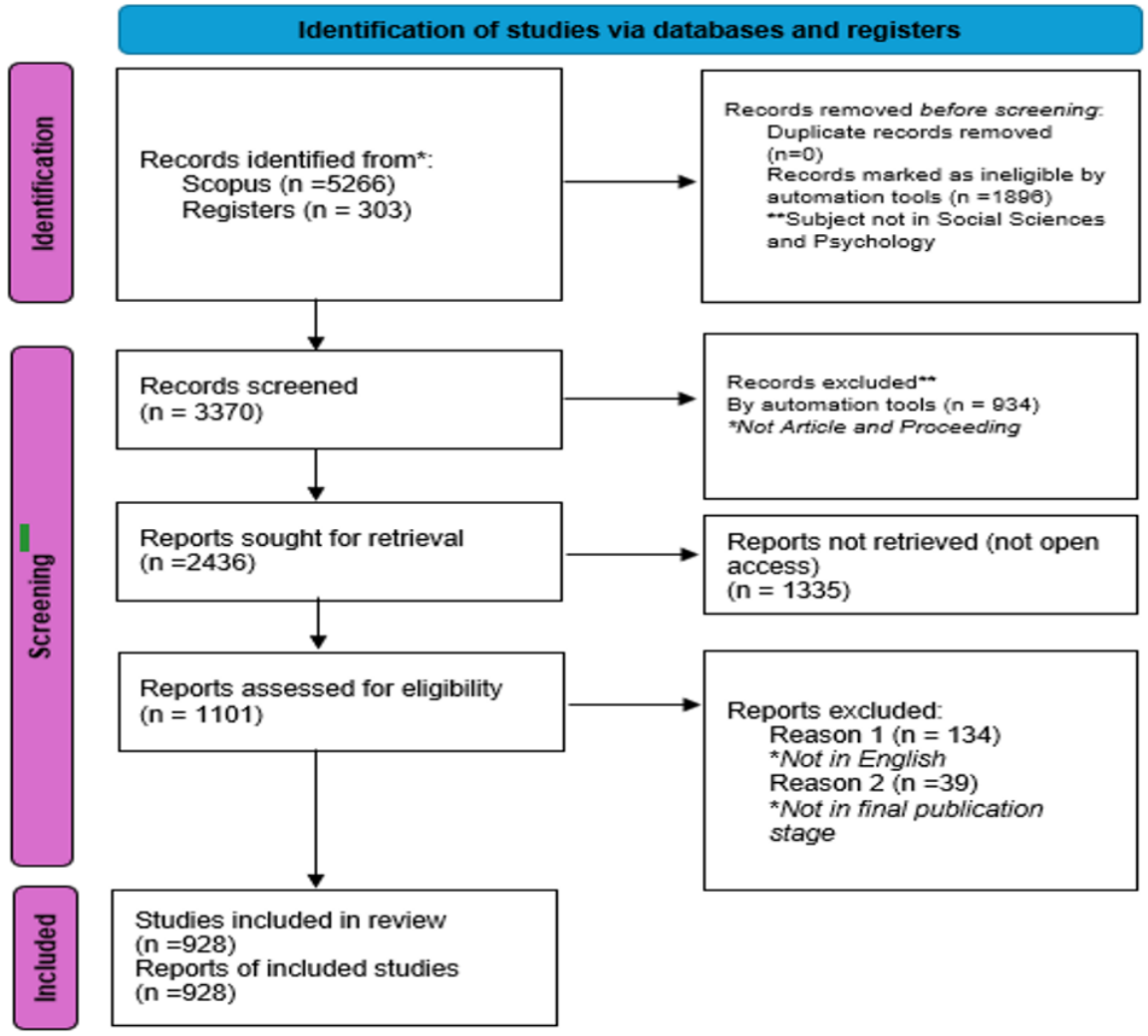
Research Design and Data Source

This study employed a bibliometric research design using Scopus as the primary database. Scopus was selected because it provides structured metadata for publication year, document type, source title, authorship, affiliation, citation counts, keywords, and subject areas, making it suitable for performance analysis and science mapping. The database search was conducted on 28 January 2026. The start year of 2002 was not chosen arbitrarily; it represents the earliest record retrieved by the search strategy and therefore provides a historical baseline for tracing the development of cyberbullying-related resilience scholarship within the accessible Scopus-indexed corpus.

The study does not claim exhaustive coverage of all global digital resilience and cyberbullying publications. Instead, it analyses records that met the predefined Scopus, language, publication-stage, document-type, and accessibility criteria. This framing is important because the final corpus was affected by full-text retrieval limitations, which are explicitly reported and treated as a limitation of inference.

Search Strategy and Eligibility Criteria

The review adopted a modified PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) approach to guide the identification, screening, and inclusion of studies on digital resilience in cyberbullying contexts. The Scopus search was executed using a title–abstract–keyword strategy that combined cyberbullying-related terms with resilience/coping/protective-factor terms: TITLE-ABS-KEY (cyberbullying variants such as cyberbully*, cyber victim*, online harassment/abuse/aggression, trolling, hate speech, doxx*, and technology-facilitated abuse) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (resilien*, coping strategies/mechanisms, protective factors, self-/emotion regulation, self-efficacy, help-seeking, social support, parental mediation, bystander/defending behaviours, digital well-being, online safety, and digital/media literacy). This query was intentionally broadened to capture resilience-oriented scholarship that may not explicitly label itself as “digital resilience” but remains conceptually aligned with protective processes and adaptation in cyberbullying experiences. Using this strategy, records were identified from Scopus (n = 5,266) and register sources (n = 303). Prior to screening, records were removed based on predefined criteria, including those marked ineligible by automation tools (n = 1,898) due to subject-scope restrictions (*Social Sciences and Psychology*), with no duplicates removed (n = 0). The remaining records screened (n = 3,370) underwent further filtering, excluding n = 934 items that did not meet the required document types (*not Article and Proceeding*), resulting in reports sought for retrieval (n = 2,436). Of these, reports not retrieved (not open access) totalled n = 1,335, leaving reports assessed for eligibility (n = 1,101). Full-text screening excluded studies not in English (n = 134) and not in final publication stage (n = 39), producing a final dataset of studies included in the review (n = 928) for subsequent bibliometric performance analysis and thematic evolution mapping.



Note. The exclusion of 1,335 records was based on accessibility, not topic irrelevance. Therefore, the analysed corpus represents accessible Scopus-indexed literature retained under the eligibility criteria.

Figure 1: Flow diagram of the search strategy

Data Cleaning and Harmonisation

Data cleaning and harmonisation are essential for ensuring accuracy and reliability in bibliometric analysis. This study employed a systematic cleaning procedure to strengthen the quality of the Scopus dataset for *Mapping Digital Resilience in Cyberbullying and Online Harm Research: A Bibliometric Analysis of Scopus-Indexed Publications from 2002 to January 2026*. The process began by refining the retrieved records to ensure relevance to both cyberbullying and resilience-related constructs, followed by standardising bibliographic fields to minimise inconsistencies that could distort performance indicators and network structures. In particular, author names, institutional affiliations, and country labels were checked and harmonised to reduce duplication caused by spelling variants, abbreviations, and formatting differences. Keyword cleaning was also prioritised due to the conceptual diversity of resilience-related terms; synonymous and closely related expressions (e.g., “digital well-being” vs “digital wellbeing,” “self regulation” vs “self-regulation,” and variations of cyberbullying and victimisation terms) were consolidated to improve the interpretability of co-occurrence networks and thematic evolution outputs.

Following field harmonisation, the dataset was further prepared for advanced bibliometric assessment and thematic mapping. Records were screened to retain consistent document types and ensure metadata completeness for robust network construction. Where necessary, duplicate or fragmented entries were merged, and non-

informative keywords were removed to prevent artificial inflation of thematic clusters. The cleaned dataset then enabled the computation of standard bibliometric indicators (e.g., total publications and citation-based impact measures) and supported the generation of reliable science mapping visualisations, including co-authorship, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, and keyword co-occurrence networks. By applying these cleaning steps prior to analysis, the study enhanced the validity of the resulting performance patterns and thematic evolution pathways, ensuring that identified trends in digital resilience research within cyberbullying contexts reflected substantive intellectual development rather than inconsistencies in bibliographic metadata.

Data Analysis Procedures and Bibliometric Tools

The data analysis was structured to address the three research questions. First, descriptive performance analysis examined annual publication output, number of contributing authors, number of cited publications, total citations, average citations per publication, average citations per cited publication, and h-, g-, and m-indices. Second, source analysis identified the most active journals and proceedings using publication volume and citation-based indicators. Third, highly cited publication analysis examined the most influential works and interpreted how they positioned resilience through cyberbullying harm, prevention, coping, bystander behaviour, parenting, social support, wellbeing, and digital safety pathways.

Citation indicators were interpreted cautiously because bibliometric impact is affected by publication age, database coverage, journal visibility, language, and citation lag. Citation counts were treated as frozen on the extraction date, 28 January 2026. Self-citations were not separately removed; therefore, citation metrics should be read as database-level Scopus citation indicators rather than author-disambiguated impact measures. The annual publication totals in Table 3 were checked against the final corpus and sum to 928 retained publications.

Tools

Scopus was used to retrieve and export bibliographic metadata. Microsoft Excel was used to maintain the screening log, verify duplicate checks, clean bibliographic fields, and tabulate publication and citation indicators. biblioMagika® was used to generate the descriptive bibliometric indicators reported in the tables, including TP, NCA, NCP, TC, C/P, C/CP, h-index, g-index, and m-index. The software role is reported here to improve reproducibility and to clarify how each indicator was produced.

No VOSviewer, CiteSpace, Biblioshiny network visualisation, co-citation clustering, bibliographic coupling, or thematic evolution map is reported in the present version of the article. Consequently, the results are intentionally limited to performance analysis, source influence, citation concentration, highly cited publications, and conceptual interpretation of resilience-related proxy domains. If future revisions include network maps, the methodology and results should be expanded with the corresponding thresholds, visualisations, and cluster interpretations.

RESULTS

The results are presented according to the three research questions. Rather than treating each bibliometric metric as an isolated statistic, the interpretation synthesises productivity, authorship expansion, citation impact, source influence, citation concentration, and proxy resilience domains to provide a more meaningful account of the accessible research landscape.

Publication and Citation Trends

The earliest record in the analysed corpus appeared in 2002 (TP = 1; TC = 134), followed by a highly visible early spike in 2008 (TP = 2; TC = 2,694). This indicates that several early cyberbullying publications became foundational reference points even before digital resilience became an explicit organising construct. From 2013 onward, output increased more steadily, moving from 8 publications in 2013 to 23 in 2017. The most substantial growth occurred after 2018, when annual output rose to 45 publications and continued increasing to 98 in 2022, 129 in 2023, 178 in 2024, and 201 in 2025. The 2026 figure is not comparable because it reflects records indexed only up to 28 January 2026.

The rise after 2018 is meaningful because it coincides with broader scholarly concern about adolescent digital wellbeing, platform-mediated peer aggression, bystander intervention, online safety, and coping-oriented responses. It also suggests a shift from cyberbullying as a harm-focused topic toward a more protective and adaptive research agenda. Citation indicators show that earlier publications continue to dominate total citation counts, whereas recent publications have lower C/P values due to citation lag. Therefore, the lower citation rates in 2025 and 2026 should not be interpreted as reduced relevance, but as a temporal effect of recency.

Authorship participation also expanded sharply. NCA rose from 153 in 2018 to 290 in 2021, 455 in 2023, 663 in 2024, and 749 in 2025. This pattern indicates that digital resilience-oriented cyberbullying and online harm research has become increasingly collaborative and interdisciplinary. The field draws on psychology, education, communication, digital/media studies, adolescent health, and human-computer interaction. The annual publication totals in Table 3 sum to 928, confirming consistency between the screening outcome and the year-by-year publication distribution.

Citation influence is also concentrated in a small number of foundational publications. Smith et al. (2008) alone accounts for 2,675 of the 19,990 citations in the corpus, or approximately 13.38% of total citations. The nine highly cited studies listed in Table 5 collectively account for 5,399 citations, approximately 27.01% of the corpus total. This concentration indicates that the field's apparent cumulative impact is strongly shaped by a limited set of foundational cyberbullying and adolescent wellbeing studies rather than being evenly distributed across the full 928-publication corpus.

Table 3: Publication by year

Year	TP	NCA	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	*h*	*g*	*m*
2002	1	1	1	134	134.00	134.00	1	1	0.040
2008	2	7	2	2694	1347.00	1347.00	2	2	0.105
2009	2	2	2	25	12.50	12.50	2	2	0.111
2010	2	3	2	175	87.50	87.50	2	2	0.118
2012	1	2	1	39	39.00	39.00	1	1	0.067
2013	8	26	8	1193	149.13	149.13	8	8	0.571
2014	15	48	15	1894	126.27	126.27	12	15	0.923
2015	15	62	15	810	54.00	54.00	14	15	1.167
2016	12	56	12	865	72.08	72.08	11	12	1.000
2017	23	69	23	1094	47.57	47.57	18	23	1.800
2018	45	153	45	2000	44.44	44.44	28	44	3.111
2019	47	153	47	1607	34.19	34.19	22	39	2.750
2020	55	155	55	1184	21.53	21.53	21	32	3.000
2021	78	290	78	2033	26.06	26.06	25	42	4.167
2022	98	336	98	1459	14.89	14.89	19	32	3.800
2023	129	455	129	1454	11.27	11.27	21	30	5.250
2024	178	663	178	1021	5.74	5.74	16	23	5.333
2025	201	749	201	303	1.51	1.51	8	11	4.000
2026	16	73	16	6	0.38	0.38	1	2	1.000

Notes: TP = total number of publications; NCA = number of contributing authors; NCP= number of cited publications; TC = total citations; C/P = average citations per publication; C/CP = average citations per cited publication; h = h-index; g = g-index; m = m-index.

* Publication data for the year 2026 is only up until 28 January 2026

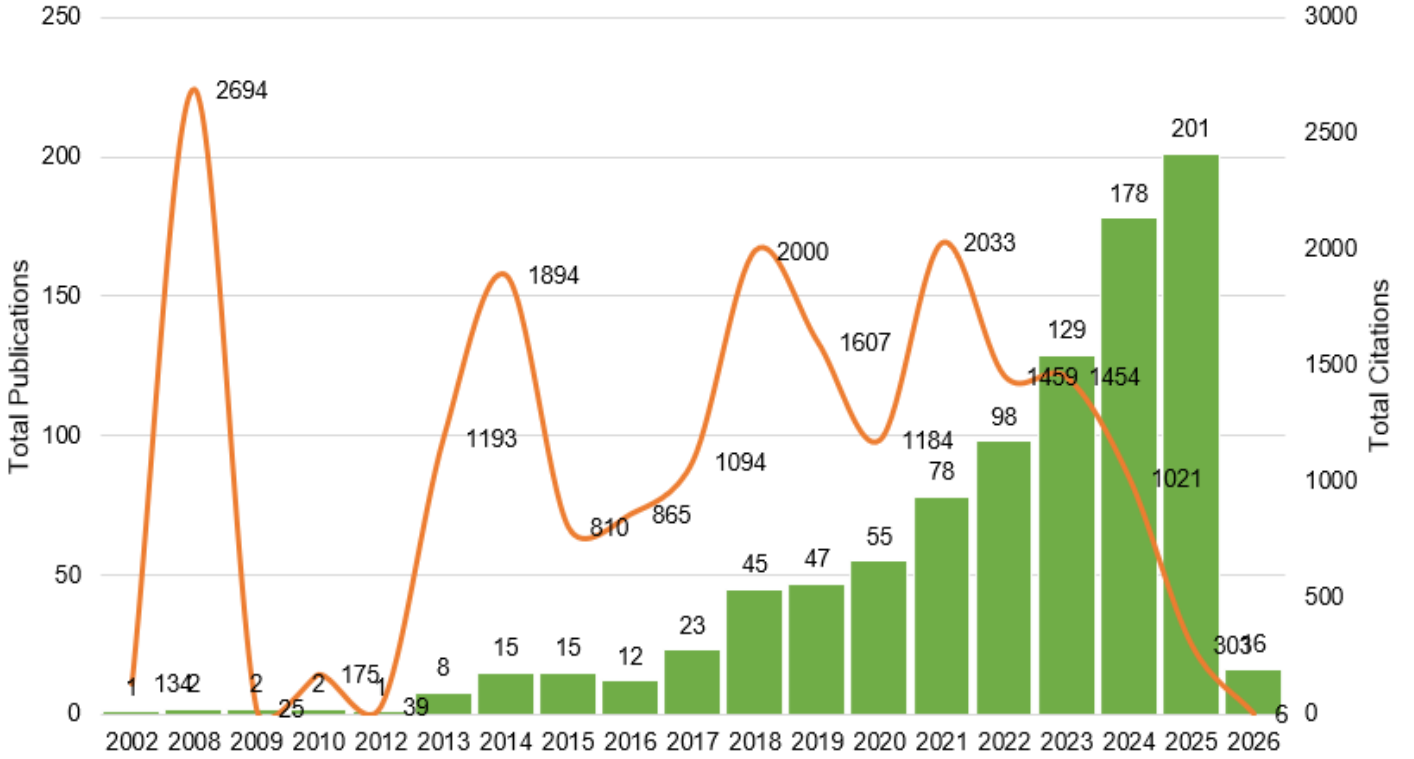


Figure 2: Total publications and citations by year

Core Journals and Sources

Table 4 identifies the leading source titles actively contributing to scholarship on digital resilience, cyberbullying, and related online harm, particularly those with 10 or more publications (TP) in the dataset. Overall, the top 10 sources listed in Table 4 represent the most prominent publication outlets in this domain and provide a focused snapshot of where the field is most actively disseminated. Frontiers in Psychology leads in overall productivity (TP = 50) and also demonstrates substantial scholarly influence (TC = 1,151), supported by strong source-level impact indicators (h = 19; g = 33; m = 1.727). In contrast, Computers in Human Behavior, while publishing fewer articles (TP = 29), records the highest total citations (TC = 2,616) and the strongest citation efficiency (C/P = 90.21), indicating that its contributions are highly visible and frequently referenced within the field. Cyberpsychology also emerges as a consistent outlet (TP = 28; TC = 645) with moderate-to-strong influence metrics (h = 14; g = 25; m = 1.000), reinforcing its relevance for digitally mediated psychosocial research.

Beyond these dominant sources, several journals show meaningful contributions through either steady output or higher citation returns relative to publication volume. For instance, Social Media and Society demonstrates notable citation impact (TC = 263) despite a smaller output (TP = 10), reflected in a relatively strong C/P of 26.30, suggesting concentrated influence. Societies also stands out with TP = 12 and TC = 188 (C/P = 15.67), indicating that its publications attract sustained attention. Meanwhile, outlets such as Current Psychology (TP = 11; TC = 100; h = 6; m = 1.200) and Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction (TP = 11; TC = 102) signal the field's interdisciplinary spread across psychology and human-computer interaction. Collectively, the variation in h-, g-, and m-index values across these sources suggests a landscape where both high-volume journals and high-impact specialist outlets play complementary roles in shaping and advancing research on digital resilience in cyberbullying and online harm contexts.

Table 4: Top 10 Most active source titles that published

Title	TP	NCA	NCP	TC	C/P	C/CP	*h*	*g*	*m*
Frontiers in Psychology	50	173	50	1151	23.02	23.02	19	33	1.727

Computers in Human Behavior	29	141	29	2616	90.21	90.21	22	29	1.571
Cyberpsychology	28	90	28	645	23.04	23.04	14	25	1.000
BMC Psychology	17	62	17	64	3.76	3.76	3	7	0.750
Social Sciences	16	56	16	95	5.94	5.94	4	9	0.444
Behavioral Sciences	13	61	13	56	4.31	4.31	5	6	1.000
Societies	12	43	12	188	15.67	15.67	7	12	0.538
Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction	11	55	11	102	9.27	9.27	4	10	0.667
Current Psychology	11	35	11	100	9.09	9.09	6	10	1.200
Social Media and Society	10	30	10	263	26.30	26.30	5	10	0.556

Note: TP=total number of publications; NCA=number of contributing authors; NCP=number of cited publications; TC=total citations; C/P=average citations per publication; C/CP=average citations per cited publication; h=h-index; g=g-index; m=m-index.

Influential Studies Shaping the Field

The nine highly cited studies in Table 5 clarify the intellectual foundation of the field. Smith et al. (2008) is the most cited publication, indicating that early work on the nature and impact of cyberbullying in secondary school pupils continues to anchor later research. Best et al. (2014) extends the field by connecting online communication and social media to adolescent wellbeing, while Slonje et al. (2013) foregrounds prevention strategies. These publications are significant because they provide the conceptual bridge from cyberbullying harm to prevention and wellbeing-oriented responses.

Later highly cited studies broaden the resilience pathway. Bastiaensens et al. (2014), van Cleemput et al. (2014), and DeSmet et al. (2014) emphasise bystander responses and peer ecology, suggesting that resilience is not only an individual coping outcome but also a social process. Viner et al. (2019) links cyberbullying to sleep, physical activity, mental health, and wellbeing, thereby connecting digital resilience to broader health pathways. Martínez et al. (2019) further highlights parenting as a protective resource. Collectively, the influential literature shows that digital resilience in cyberbullying and online harm contexts is largely carried by adjacent constructs rather than by a single mature conceptual framework.

Table 5: Top nine (9) highly cited articles

No.	Author(s)	Title	TC	C/Y
1	Smith, P.K.; Mahdavi, J.; Carvalho, M.; Fisher, S.; Russell, S.; Tippett, N. (2008)	Cyberbullying: Its nature and impact in secondary school pupils	2675	140.79
2	Best, P.; Manktelow, R.; Taylor, B. (2014)	Online communication, social media and adolescent wellbeing: A systematic narrative review	766	58.92
3	Slonje, R.; Smith, P.K.; Frisén, A. (2013)	The nature of cyberbullying, and strategies for prevention	693	49.50
4	Bastiaensens, S.; Vandebosch, H.; Poels, K.; van Cleemput, K.; DeSmet, A.; De Bourdeaudhuij, I. (2014)	Cyberbullying on social network sites. An experimental study into bystanders' behavioural intentions to help the victim or reinforce the bully	292	22.46

5	Viner, R.M.; Aswathikutty-Gireesh, A.; Štiglic, N.; Hudson, L.D.; Goddings, A.-L.; Ward, J.L.; Nicholls, D.E. (2019)	Roles of cyberbullying, sleep, and physical activity in mediating the effects of social media use on mental health and wellbeing among young people in England: a secondary analysis of longitudinal data	233	29.13
6	van Cleemput, K.; Vandebosch, H.; Pabian, S. (2014)	Personal characteristics and contextual factors that determine "helping," "joining in," and "doing nothing" when witnessing cyberbullying	210	16.15
7	George, M.J.; Odgers, C.L. (2015)	Seven Fears and the Science of How Mobile Technologies May Be Influencing Adolescents in the Digital Age	198	16.50
8	Martínez, I.; Murgui, S.; García, O.F.; Garcia, F. (2019)	Parenting in the digital era: Protective and risk parenting styles for traditional bullying and cyberbullying victimization	171	21.38
9	DeSmet, A.; Veldeman, C.; Poels, K.; Bastiaensens, S.; van Cleemput, K.; Vandebosch, H.; De Bourdeaudhuij, I. (2014)	Determinants of self-reported bystander behavior in cyberbullying incidents amongst adolescents	161	12.38

Notes. TC = total citations; C/Y = average citations per year.

DISCUSSION

This study mapped the accessible Scopus-indexed corpus of digital resilience-oriented research in cyberbullying and adjacent online harm contexts. The results indicate three major patterns. First, the field shows clear growth after 2018, with publication output accelerating sharply from 45 publications in 2018 to 201 in 2025. This growth should be understood in relation to increasing scholarly attention to adolescent digital wellbeing, social media risks, online safety education, and the need to move beyond harm documentation toward protective and adaptive processes. The growth pattern therefore does not simply indicate more publications; it signals a widening research agenda around how young people and their support systems respond to digital harm.

Second, the citation pattern suggests that the field is expanding faster than it is consolidating. Highly cited early works continue to anchor the intellectual base, while recent publications show lower citation averages because of citation lag. Citation influence is also concentrated: Smith et al. (2008) alone contributes more than one-tenth of all citations in the retained corpus, and the nine highly cited studies in Table 5 contribute more than one-quarter of total citations. This means that the corpus has substantial cumulative impact, but that impact is not evenly distributed. Recent output should therefore not be judged solely by current citation counts, and the apparent maturity of the field should be interpreted alongside citation concentration and conceptual fragmentation.

Third, the source analysis shows that the field is anchored mainly in psychology and digital behaviour outlets. This is theoretically important because digital resilience has often been framed through individual-level mechanisms such as cognition, emotion, coping, self-efficacy, behaviour, and wellbeing. While these mechanisms are essential, the dominance of psychology and technology-behaviour sources may underrepresent system-level resilience pathways involving schools, families, platform governance, digital citizenship policy, and multi-stakeholder prevention systems. Future research should therefore examine how individual digital resilience interacts with institutional and platform-level protection.

The influential-publication analysis further shows that digital resilience is frequently present through proxy constructs rather than explicit digital resilience terminology. Bystander behaviour, social support, parenting, wellbeing, prevention, coping, digital literacy, and online safety studies are central to the field even when they do not use the term digital resilience directly. This finding explains why resilience-centred bibliometric work requires broader retrieval terms, but it also confirms the reviewer-identified risk of conceptual dilution. The contribution of this study is therefore not merely to expand the search field, but to define clear inclusion logic for when proxy terms represent resilience-oriented mechanisms rather than general cyberbullying prevention or psychosocial adjustment.

The exclusion of 1,335 non-retrievable reports is methodologically important. Bibliometric analysis can often be conducted using metadata alone; therefore, excluding non-open-access records may introduce accessibility bias. In this study, full-text access was required because the broad search strategy included proxy resilience terms and adjacent online harm labels that needed conceptual verification. This decision strengthens relevance checking but narrows representativeness. The findings should therefore be interpreted as evidence from the accessible Scopus-indexed literature retained under the study criteria rather than as absolute indicators of the entire field.

Implications

The findings have several implications for future research. First, digital resilience should be conceptualised more precisely in cyberbullying and online harm studies by specifying whether researchers are examining risk recognition, coping, emotional regulation, help-seeking, bystander action, digital literacy, social support, parental mediation, school support, or recovery after harm. Second, bibliometric studies should avoid interpreting productivity metrics alone as evidence of conceptual maturity. The present findings show rapid growth, but also conceptual fragmentation and citation concentration around a small number of foundational works. Third, intervention-oriented claims should be made cautiously. Bibliometric evidence can identify influential mechanisms and research gaps, but it cannot by itself demonstrate intervention effectiveness. For educational practice, the results suggest that future programmes should integrate individual coping skills with peer support, bystander empowerment, family mediation, school-based reporting systems, and digital safety education.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. The most important limitation concerns the exclusion of 1,335 reports whose full texts were not retrievable because they were non-open-access or otherwise inaccessible at the time of extraction. Although this exclusion enabled conceptual verification of broad proxy terms, it may have introduced accessibility bias and limited representativeness. The findings therefore reflect accessible Scopus-indexed publications rather than the complete global literature on digital resilience, cyberbullying, and online harm. A second limitation is the use of Scopus as the sole primary database. Relevant studies indexed only in Web of Science, ERIC, PsycINFO, PubMed, or Google Scholar may not be represented. Third, citation-based indicators are affected by time, language, journal visibility, database coverage, and citation concentration. Recent publications, especially those from 2025 and January 2026, have had limited time to accumulate citations. Finally, because digital resilience is expressed through multiple proxy terms, some relevant studies may have been missed if they did not use cyberbullying or resilience-related terminology in searchable metadata.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Future studies should expand database coverage by comparing Scopus with Web of Science, ERIC, PsycINFO, and other relevant databases. Researchers should also conduct sensitivity analyses comparing all eligible Scopus metadata with accessible full-text subsets to assess whether accessibility affects source dominance, citation patterns, and thematic conclusions. Conceptually, future bibliometric work should include an explicit digital resilience framework that distinguishes between individual capacities, social support systems, educational interventions, platform-level protections, and policy responses. Empirically, more studies are needed to examine how resilience mechanisms identified in bibliometric mapping are translated into measurable intervention components and tested in real-world school and youth settings. If network analyses are added in future work, the

article should report map thresholds, node selection criteria, cluster labels, and interpretation for co-authorship, co-citation, bibliographic coupling, keyword co-occurrence, and thematic evolution outputs.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a bibliometric analysis of digital resilience-oriented cyberbullying and online harm research based on 928 accessible Scopus-indexed publications from 2002 to January 2026. The findings indicate substantial growth after 2018, strong cumulative citation influence, citation concentration around foundational studies, and a source landscape dominated by psychology and digital behaviour journals. Highly cited works show that the field has developed from foundational studies on cyberbullying harm toward prevention, bystander behaviour, social support, parenting, wellbeing, and coping-related pathways. However, because 1,335 potentially relevant reports were not retrievable due to access limitations, the conclusions must be interpreted within the boundaries of the accessible corpus. The study contributes by clarifying the bibliometric structure of the accessible literature, operationalising proxy resilience domains, identifying conceptual fragmentation around digital resilience, and outlining cautious directions for future research that are directly grounded in the findings.

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