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Bridging the Digital Divide: A Grounded Theory Exploration of Network Violence Victims' Disengagement from Judicial Pathways

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Abstract:
The recurring suicides linked to network violence highlight gaps between idealized governance frameworks and practical implementation. It may be useful to elaborate on how individuals perceive their circumstances and the barriers preventing them from seeking legal help, thereby enriching the discussion on network violence.The tendency of victims to self-blame plays a crucial role in shaping their decision-making pathways, serving as a significant mediator that correlates positively with suicidal thoughts. Current governance frameworks still encounter challenges related to underutilization.These suggestions encompass the need for platforms to create responsive systems, innovate algorithms for fair content moderation, and foster judicial awareness concerning the nuanced narratives of victims, thus promoting more effective legal outcomes.

Keywords: Social Science of Law, Network Violence, Victim Decision-making Mechanism, Grounded Theory, Self-blame, Algorithmic Intervention Grounded Theory, Self-blame, Algorithmic Intervention

At 18 years old, Yina, with her pink-dyed hair, leaped into the abyss in front of the live-streaming camera. Beyond the shattered screen, the frenzy of online violence continues to escalate. [①] ..... When faced with the choice between “legal recourse” and “self-destruction,” why do many individuals who have experienced cyberbullying internalize external hostility as self-blame before even considering legal action? Why does the legal system aimed at curbing cyberbullying struggle to truly take effect among victims?

Regarding the definition of cyberbullying, Article 32 of the “Regulations on the Governance of Cyberbullying Information,” jointly issued by the Cyberspace Administration of China and other agencies, states: "Cyberbullying information refers to content disseminated online in the form of text,

[①] Wang Yucheng, Du Yuquan: “The ‘Second Dimension’ Girl in the Abyss of Online Violence: She Streamed Live as She Fell from a High-Rise Building” [J], published in Hongxing News, August 11, 2022, 13:55 https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_2398315.

images, audio, or video that targets an individual, containing insults, abuse, rumors, defamation, inciting hatred, coercion, invasion of privacy, and accusations, mockery, degradation, or discrimination that harm mental and physical health."[①].

Cyberbullying has long been a hot topic of academic discussion, but why do victims perceive that the institutional measures intended to address the issue are less effective than self-harm? Cyberbullying, this social scourge, is by no means lacking academic attention. The focus of China's academic community on this issue has shifted from initially emphasizing visual and textual violent elements and focusing on netizens' behavior [②], advocating for the improvement of netizen literacy [③], to a balanced approach of morality and legislation [④], and later proposing specialized legislation against online violence [⑤] and multi-dimensional governance[⑥] . The evolution of suggestions for cyberbullying governance indicates that this issue has been recognized as a moral deviation problem that cannot be ignored in the process of social modernization, and that the importance of public moral construction and legislative-driven thinking has been acknowledged. Existing academic achievements have systematically reviewed and deeply explored cyberbullying-related issues from four main dimensions: first, the interpretation and definition of the concept of cyberbullying; second, the exploration and analysis of the complex causes behind cyberbullying phenomena; Third, a critical examination of the practical challenges faced in addressing cyberbullying under the current governance framework of cyberspace; Fourth, a forward-looking exploration of strategies, measures, and practical pathways to eliminate cyberbullying and build a harmonious cyberspace ecosystem, based on both theoretical and practical considerations. [⑦] However, whether it is the “two-pronged approach” or the “multi-governance” mindset, both belong to top-down remedial solutions. From the perspective of victims, there remains a gap between the occurrence of online disputes and seeking judicial recourse. It cannot be denied that if the victim does not actively seek judicial remedies, the relevant judicial resources cannot effectively function. These victims are not necessarily in need of legal remedies; in many cases similar to the Deyang female doctor suicide case [⑧], and the Liu Xuezhou suicide case[⑨] , the victims chose to end their lives through suicide

[①] State Internet Information Office, et al. Regulations on the Governance of Cyberbullying Information , effective August 1, 2024

[②] Representative papers include: Huang Guiping, Tan Xiaobing. Analysis of Netizen Violence in the Context of Online Media [J]. Journal of Journalism, 2007(05):138-139.

[③] Wang Jing: Digital Citizenship Ethics: A New Pathway for Cyberbullying Governance [J]. Journal of East China University of Political Science and Law, 2022(04): 28-40.

[④] Mei Chuanqiang, Li Xuegang: The Impact of the Internet on the Formation of Criminal Psychology Among Adolescents and Preventive Measures [J]. Youth Crime Issues, 2005(05): 23-27+16

[⑤] Liu Yanhong: Concepts, Logic, and Pathways: Research on the Legal Governance of Online Violence [J]. Jianghuai Forum. 2022(06):21-30+2.

[⑥] Xu Donghua: Reflections and Countermeasures on Cybersecurity Issues in the Context of the Pandemic [J]. Cyberspace Security 2020(11):29-34.

[⑦] Li Ying, Liu Bai: Combining Virtual and Real Elements with Collaborative Governance: Pathways for Government Governance of Cyberbullying [J]. Journal of Sichuan University osf Science and Engineering (Social Sciences Edition), 2016(01):63-74.

[⑧] Ming Que, Yang Yuqing, Lu Shuman: Interview with the Husband of the Deyang Female Doctor Who Committed Suicide: Suddenly Struck by Online Violence [J], published on The Paper News Network, August 31, 2018, 23:25, https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_2398315, accessed on March 7, 2025

[⑨] Chen Weijing: Liu Xuezhou's Online Violence Case Goes to Trial Today; Two Online Influencers Deny Infringement [J], China News

at a time when judicial intervention was urgently needed. In fact, numerous empirical studies have shown a strong correlation between cyberbullying and self-harm behaviors[①] , the issue lies in what is blocking these victims from accessing the courts, despite society's strong push to combat cyberbullying and the government's provision of diverse judicial resources?

Figure 1 Cloud graph of current research results

Using the word frequency analysis function of NVivo 20, the author analyzed the top 30 most cited papers in this field (Figure 1). It can be seen that most current research focuses on legislative theory[②] , platform responsibility[③] , and information dissemination[④] , among other governance perspectives. However, there is a lack of discussion on the pre-litigation stage where online violence disputes escalate into legal cases. Research on the complex pre-litigation stage of whether issues of litigability (such as traditional domestic violence cases) can be transformed into legal cases is more commonly categorized under the field of socio-legal studies. This has not received significant attention domestically, but it still holds research significance in contemporary Chinese society in terms of "bringing the law to the countryside." The author believes that only by clarifying the decision-making mechanisms through which cyberbullying victims choose not to pursue litigable issues through the judicial system can legislation in this field be effectively implemented and maximize its impact. Therefore, this paper aims to conduct a literature review on the preliminary dispute stage, followed by a grounded theory qualitative analysis of 33 typical online violence news reports to establish a pre-set relevance decision-making model. Finally, SPSS will be used to validate the influence of key factors, providing recommendations for online violence governance from the perspective of victims' judicial

Weekly, September 25, 2023, 20:26

① KESSEL SCHNEIDER S, O'DONNELL L, STUEVE A, et al. . Cyberbullying, school bullying, and psychological distress: A regional census of high school students. American Journal of Public Health 102:171-177.

② Liu Yixiao: Soft Law Governance of Online Moral Deviance Issues [J], Research on Cyberspace Governance, 2022(4):56-63

③ Shi Jiayou: Platform Responsibility in the Governance of Online Violence [J], Law Forum, 2023(2):45-52

④ Liu Wei: The Internal Logic and Regulation of Online Rumors in Hot-Button Events [J], Journal of Journalism and Communication Studies, 2022(3):28-35

decision-making.

1. Explanation of Methods and Models

Explanation of Research Methods

The reason for seeking analytical tools beyond traditional legal analysis methods is to provide a multi-perspective interpretation of the existing legislative system. Social science research is generally divided into qualitative research and quantitative research, both of which hold irreplaceable value in the study of cyberbullying law. Existing legal studies primarily employ legal dogmatics analysis and literature analysis. In legal research, traditional legal dogmatics is based on the assumption of "general reasonableness," providing a "value-neutral" interpretation of positive law[①] . However, this approach has limitations when considering the complexities of social practices such as cyber violence. By drawing on qualitative research methods from the social sciences, one can employ inductive reasoning to develop theories, engage in interactive research with the subject to achieve explanatory understanding, and conduct qualitative, explanatory interpretations of behavior and meaning. This approach emphasizes post-empirical, empiricist examinations of the research subject [②], which can be used to analyze the social relationships and cultural logic of cyberbullying. Quantitative research, on the other hand, focuses on data collection and statistical analysis, can handle large-scale samples, and objectively presents the influencing factors at each stage of cyberbullying. The three fundamental principles of social science research—the Variability Principle, the Social Grouping Principle, and the Social Context Principle[③] , are highly relevant to the subject of this study—the pre-judicial stage of cyberbullying: Unlike traditional violent behavior, the emergence of cyberspace is undoubtedly a product of social environmental changes, and the victim groups exhibit significant differences due to economic, educational, and other factors (which may further influence their judicial choices). Additionally, the unique environment of the internet must be considered in this study. Legal dogmatic analysis methods and socio-legal analysis methods are not mutually exclusive, but given the nature of the research subject, quantitative and qualitative research within socio-legal studies is more appropriate.

The "grounded theory" research method (GT) adopted in this paper is a qualitative research approach that emphasizes analysis based on texts such as interviews, followed by the abstraction of theory [④], aiming to transcend the simple description of phenomena in the social sciences. The reason for choosing this research method is that it has the following advantages in studying online deviance issues: First, this research method uses real materials as its research objects, such as interviews and texts. In online violence research, online text data (such as social media comments and official media reports) are important sources of evidence, providing rich empirical materials for research. Second, compared to traditional social deviance issues, cyberbullying cases exhibit new characteristics such as sustained harm

① Xie Shu: Beyond Theoretical Fog: Social Science Research on Criminal Justice [M], China Law Press, September 2024 Edition
② Chen Xiangming: New Developments in Qualitative Research and Their Significance for Social Science Research [J], Education Research and Experiment, 2008 (2): 14–18
③ Xie Yu: Sociological Methods and Quantitative Research [M], Social Sciences Literature Press, 2012: 40–43
④ Fei Xiaodong: Grounded Theory Research Methodology: Elements, Research Procedures, and Evaluation Criteria [J], Public Administration Review 2008 (3): 23–43

and uncontrollable scope of influence. These unique and novel features require researchers to analyze empirical materials and establish new theories tailored to the specific context, rather than directly applying analytical models from other traditional case types, thereby enabling the application of analytical results to practice. Finally, grounded theory research methods have developed relatively standardized operational procedures (such as continuous comparison and theoretical sampling), and these established scientific norms can enhance the rigor of research [①].

Utilizing NVivo 21 qualitative analysis software in conjunction with grounded theory methodology, this study attempts to construct a systematic analytical framework for cyberbullying research. NVivo is a professional software developed for qualitative research (by Qualitative Solutions and Research International), and its capabilities can meet the need to examine cyberbullying from multiple angles: the "nodes" function is used for three-level coding of collected text, the 'query' function can use Boolean logic to query associations, and the "model" function can be used to generate topological diagrams of participants, event elements, and the relationships between them in cyberbullying incidents. Specifically, the following features of NVivo are particularly suited to cyberbullying research: NVivo's "Case Classification" feature enables the labeling of cyberbullying incidents (e.g., who are the victims of cyberbullying? Where do the abusive comments originate? What is the extent of harm caused by the cyberbullying incident?); " Matrix Coding" can uncover interdependent relationships and causal relationships among variables in the labels of cyberbullying cases; "Word Frequency Statistics" and "Semantic Networks" can quantify aggressive language in cyberbullying, identifying insults and metaphors in cyberbullying incidents; 'Timeline' can trace the progression of cyberbullying incidents, and when combined with "Scenario Memo," can reconstruct the "plot summary" of cyberbullying incidents. At this stage, the "nodes" feature of NVivo is primarily used to repeatedly compare materials with the model, thereby refining the theoretical model for litigation decision-making.[②]

[①] Jia Zhemin: The Application of Grounded Theory in Public Administration Research: Methods and Practices [J], Chinese Administrative Management, 2015(03):90-95.

[②] An Yanfang: An Analysis of the Application of NVivo, a Computer Software for Qualitative Data Analysis [J], Chinese Science and Technology Information. 2012(05):66-67.

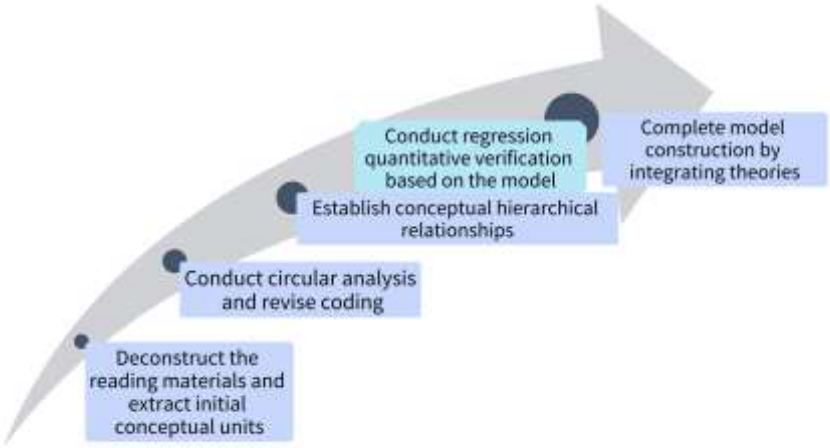

Figure 2 Illustrates the research process

The GT research method typically includes five operational modules (Figure 2). In this study, the first step involves initially extracting concepts from carefully selected cyberbullying materials ("coding") through manual sentence-by-sentence analysis of the text using NVivo software. This step requires temporarily setting aside existing theories. Next, the initial coding is repeatedly reviewed and refined to gradually clarify the relationship between the primary coding and the original narratives of the individuals involved in the cases. Next, the primary concepts are organized into a hierarchical structure to form a preliminary model; subsequently, statistical data on key concepts are input into SPSS for correlation analysis, and further regression analysis is conducted on statistically significant nodes to provide quantitative support for the model; finally, the model is refined and validated based on existing literature research findings to create a model specifically tailored to cyberbullying cases. The "coding" process is primarily divided into three levels: initially, read through typical cyberbullying case reports line by line to analyze until no new concepts are identified; at the intermediate stage, focus on analyzing the relationships between the concepts formed in the initial stage to construct a second-level conceptual framework. In this stage, combine existing pre-conflict analysis models, cyberbullying, and suicide effect models to construct potential related factor nodes from the onset of online conflicts to the conclusion of the event; The advanced stage requires the extraction of central concepts, integrating scattered factors mentioned by relevant individuals across different cases to form a comprehensive theory. [①] This research process follows the research principles established by the founders of GT research, Glaser and Strauss [②], through continuous comparison, supplementation of data, and validation of theory, to ensure that the final theory is fully grounded in observed phenomena, avoiding preconceptions, and providing a pre-judicial case development model for online governance.

[①] Chen Xiangming: The Approach and Methods of Grounded Theory [J], Educational Research and Experiment, 1999 (4): 58–60
[②] Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Aldine Publishing. 1967.

Dispute Resolution and Judicial Interface Model

The causes and subsequent impacts of legal issues are closely intertwined with various social factors. As Barton and Mendlovitz described in their concept of the "iceberg problem" in judicial administration[①], failure to properly address legal issues may result in multiple consequences for individuals in terms of social, health, and economic aspects. In fact, the transformation of behaviors that could undoubtedly be heard in court ("potential legal issues") into legal cases is the exception rather than the norm.[②] For the pre-legal phase of traditional disputes, foreign scholars such as Felstiner proposed the "linear framework of naming, blaming, and claiming"[③] (hereinafter referred to as NBC) analytical model, which initiated research in this field. This model posits that victims must first undergo an identification phase (naming) to symbolically transform their perception of harm, meaning that individuals must first construct their harmful experiences (such as physical altercations) as "actionable issues" in their consciousness. Felstiner argues that this process is shaped by both social status (education level, legal awareness, social networks) and cultural schemas (such as gender role perceptions); Second, during the blame phase, victims must identify the responsible party and require them to transform their personal experiences into accountable misconduct through discursive practices (e.g., framing workplace inappropriate contact as "sexual harassment"). The effectiveness of this phase is constrained by power structures (e.g., hierarchical suppression in bureaucratic systems); Finally, through the rights assertion stage (claiming), victims initiate institutionalized remedial procedures provided by society, manifested as formal claims against the responsible party. However, the claimant may perceive the respondent's response (denial/partial acknowledgment) as potentially shifting the dispute toward non-legal resolution pathways. [④] However, this classic behavioral classification model is largely based on traditional behavioral patterns. One of the objectives of this study is to explore whether it can transcend the limitations of its original research context and provide analytical tools for the pre-dispute stage of new forms of deviant behavior in the digital context—cyberbullying.

Based on this, regarding the relationship between cyberbullying and suicidal tendencies, Kim Van Orden's research found that there is a significant positive correlation between the intensity of cyberbullying and victims' suicidal ideation, and this association is mediated by depressive symptoms and perceived burdensomeness, rather than the commonly assumed "social isolation (thwarted belongingness)" [⑤]. Perceived burdensomeness[⑥] refers to an individual's belief that their existence is a

[①] BARTON A, MENDLOVITZ S. The Experience of Injustice as a Research Problem[J]. Journal of Legal Education, 1960(13): 24-30.
[②] OLESEN A, HAMMERSLEV O. The dynamic and iterative pre-dispute phase: the transformation from a justiciable problem into a legal dispute[J]. Journal of Law and Society, 2023, 50.
[③] W. L. F. Felstiner et al., 'The Emergence and Transformation of Disputes: Naming, blaming, Claiming ...' Law & Society 1980–1981(15)
[④] FELSTINER W L F, et al. The Emergence and Transformation of Disputes: Naming, blaming, Claiming…[J]. Law & Society Review, 1980-1981(15): 631-654.
[⑤] MITCHELL S M, et al. Retrospective Cyberbullying and Suicide Ideation: The Mediating Roles of Depressive Symptoms, Perceived Burdensomeness, and Thwarted Belongingness[J]. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 2018(16): 2602-2620.
[⑥] SABBATH J C. The suicidal adolescent: The expendable child[J]. Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, 1969(08): 272-285

burden to others or society, or even that their death would improve others' lives. In the context of cyberbullying, this may manifest as “self-blame”; while thwarted belongingness [①] is defined as an individual feeling emotionally detached from others, lacking meaningful social connections, and unable to establish or maintain mutually caring interpersonal relationships. In this study, it specifically manifests as the “lack of third-party support” node. Specifically, experiences of cyberbullying first significantly exacerbate an individual's depressive symptoms, which in turn significantly increase perceived burden, ultimately leading to perceived burden directly and positively predicting suicidal ideation. However, blocked belonging did not exhibit a significant mediating effect in the model. This study incorporates the empirical findings into the model-building nodes to explore the extent to which “blaming,” “claiming rights,” and ‘suicide’ are influenced by “self-blaming” and “physical and mental condition,” and tests these through quantitative research.

This paper ensures no preconceived biases during the initial coding phase. By leveraging the two existing models, it systematically analyzes and integrates the results of the initial coding phase during the intermediate and advanced coding stages. Adhering to the principles of grounded theory research, it employs a progressive coding process to validate the theoretical fit and explanatory power of the NBC model in the context of cyberbullying.

2. The Process of Establishing the Grounded Theory Model and Quantitative Validation

Sources of Research Materials

After determining the research method, reliable sources of research materials are a prerequisite for the accurate application of grounded theory. This study collected 33 representative real-life cases of cyberbullying through high-credibility reporting channels. During the case collection process, the authority of the material sources was ensured. All materials were sourced from official media outlets with high credibility, such as People's Daily Online, Guangming Online, official websites of courts at all levels, and China Daily. During the coding process, direct statements from the parties involved were carefully selected. To align with the research objectives, the 33 collected cases can be categorized into three major types based on outcomes: Type A (victims did not seek legal recourse between experiencing cyberbullying and suicide), Type B (judicial involvement occurred during the process, but victims still chose suicide), and Type C (cyberbullying victims resolved online disputes through legal channels). Among these cases, 27 involved Chinese nationals, with geographical distributions including Nanjing, Hong Kong, Fujian, etc., such as the case of a delivery person being falsely accused, the Hong Kong Yina suicide case, the Deyang female doctor suicide case, and the Liu Xuezhou suicide case, which are representative. Six cases are well-known representative cases in foreign cyberbullying governance, such as the Go Hara suicide case and the Japanese Kimura Hana suicide case. After initially identifying representative cases, the study continued to supplement relevant content during the intermediate coding

[①] ORDEN K A V, et al. The Interpersonal Theory of Suicide[J]. Psychological Review, 2010, 117(02): 575-600.

stage based on the completeness requirements of coding nodes, aiming to establish a relatively comprehensive information database for each research case.

Inductive Coding and Model Construction

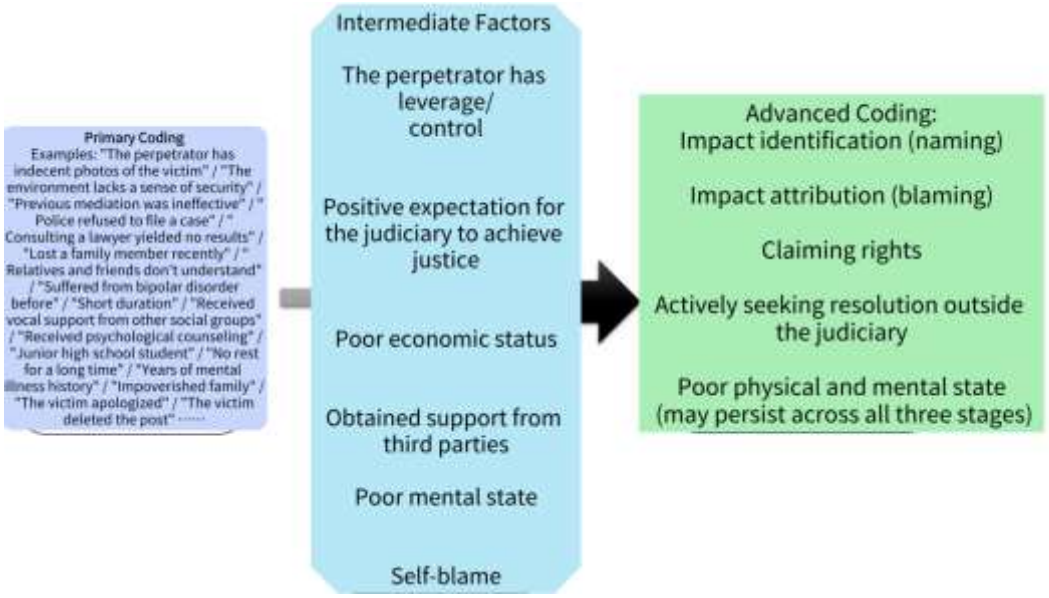

Figure 3 shows some actual coding examples

Due to the high similarity in the development of the cases, some of the research texts extracted from the reports also overlap. Figure 3 clearly illustrates part of the coding process. The chart corresponds from left to right to the original text, primary coding, intermediate coding, and advanced coding, reflecting the process of gradually analyzing, summarizing, and constructing a model based on the research materials. Initially, 119 open-ended primary codes were identified, such as “the perpetrator possesses inappropriate photos of the victim,” “the environment lacks a sense of security,” “previous mediation efforts were ineffective,” “the police refused to file a case,” “consulting a lawyer yielded no results,” “recently lost a family member,” “family and friends lack understanding,” “previously diagnosed with bipolar disorder,” “short timeframe,” “received support from other social groups,” “underwent psychological counseling,” “middle school student,” “long-term lack of rest,” a history of mental illness,“ ”impoverished family background,“ ”the victim apologized,“ and ”the victim deleted the post.“ After further analyzing these interview materials, guided by the NBC model and through the writing of ”primary memos," we attempted to connect these categories, ultimately identifying the following 14 intermediate axial codes: Judicial intervention, self-harm/suicide, difficulty identifying the perpetrator, the other party holding leverage, low expectations of justice, positive expectations of social justice, short duration, rapid harm, third-party support, lack of third-party support, significantly poor economic status, good economic status, significantly low educational level, self-blame, poor physical and mental health. Further analysis and comparison of the above axial codes, followed by selective coding, yielded five core concepts: influencing identification (“significantly lower educational level,” “self-blame”), influencing blame

("difficulty in identifying the perpetrator"), influencing assertion of rights ("the other party has leverage," "low expectations of justice," "positive expectations of social justice," "short time frame, rapid harm"), third-party support," "lack of third-party support," "significantly poor economic status," "good economic status"), resorting to outcomes outside the judicial system ("judicial intervention," "self-harm or suicide"), and poor physical and mental health (which may span all three stages of influence).

After completing the three-level coding analysis, "theoretical sampling" must be conducted before formally constructing the theory, which is a key safeguard of the rigor of grounded theory research. This study has already strived to ensure representativeness in the material selection phase, while theoretical sampling aims to ensure that all categories have been thoroughly and comprehensively organized. In practice, one must continuously seek propositions, events, or cases that can explain the categories. When no new categories emerge in the reported text cases, theoretical saturation is achieved, and theoretical construction can begin; if new categories continue to appear, the data analysis and three-level coding process must be repeated until theoretical saturation is achieved.[①] Theoretical saturation refers to the point where newly collected data can be summarized by existing categories without generating new categories. [②] This study conducted theoretical validation on the final five cases, during which no new coding nodes or analytical patterns were identified. Based on this, the study developed an analytical model incorporating the aforementioned axial coding nodes. After verifying theoretical saturation, this model was used to explain the decision-making process of victims during the pre-judicial stage. However, new questions arise: Can the relationship between intermediate coding nodes and advanced axial coding nodes be further clarified through quantitative data? Do the three axial nodes—identification, attribution, and assertion of rights—remain relevant in cyberbullying scenarios, i.e., can the NBC model be directly applied to cyberbullying cases? If so, which circumstances most significantly influence victims' decisions to pursue legal action?

3. Quantitative Validation of the Model

Quantitative Validation of Intermediate and Advanced Correlations in the Model

Although the results of the NVivo coding analysis can roughly determine the framework of the analytical model, the correlations between nodes require further validation through quantitative analysis. This study further conducted Excel statistics on the number of intermediate and advanced core nodes obtained from the GT analysis and entered the data into SPSS 27.0 for correlation and regression analysis.

First, after importing the statistical values into SPSS, the author converted the variables involved in the analysis into corresponding "dummy variables" to facilitate subsequent analysis of binary variables. Next, a bivariate Pearson correlation analysis was conducted on all variables to explore the relationships

[①] Kathy Charmaz: The Discovery of Grounded Theory: A Guide for Qualitative Research Practice [M]. Translated by Bian Guoying. Edited by Chen Xiangming. Chongqing: Chongqing University Press, 2009.

[②] Glaser, B G, and Strauss, A L. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research [M]. New York: Aldine, 1967.

between various influencing factors, with the results presented in Table 1:

Chart 1 Summary Table of Distance Relevance

Relevance											
		Poor physical and mental state=Y	naming =Y	blaming =Y	claiming =Y	self-harm and suicide =Y	Presence of self-blame=Y	Female =Y	Third-party support =Y	Economic level low=Y	Education level low=Y
Poor physical and mental state=Y	P Significance	1	.226 .221	.224 .226	.116 .535	.354 .051	.163 .382	.249 .177	.292 .111	-.189 .310	-.019 .919
Naming =Y	P Significance	.226 .221	1	.873 .000	.512 .003	.361* .046	-.226 .221	.244 .185	.178 .337	.135 .468	-.179 .335
blaming =Y	P Significance	.224 .226	.873 .000	1	.586 .001	.224 .226	-.354 .050	.166 .371	.169 .364	.155 .405	-.246 .183

.Significant at 0.01 level (two-tailed correlation)

*.Significant at 0.05 level (two-tailed correlation)

In this table, "Pearson Correlation" is abbreviated as P

Based on the results of the similarity matrix: The Pearson correlation coefficient between “naming=Y” and “blaming=Y” is 0.873, which is significant at the 0.01 level (p-value = 0.000), indicating a high positive correlation between the two variables; The correlation coefficient between “blaming=Y” and “claiming=Y” is 0.586, which is significant at the 0.01 level (significance value 0.001), indicating a significant correlation. Therefore, the interconnections among the three core nodes of the NBC model have been validated and can be applied to the analysis of cyberbullying cases. Additionally, the correlation coefficient between “poor mental and physical state = Y” and “self-harm/suicide = Y” is 0.354, which is significant at the 0.05 level (p-value = 0.051), explaining the phenomenon that individuals are more likely to exhibit self-harm/suicide behavior when their mental and physical state is poor.

While some variables exhibit numerical correlations, they do not reach statistical significance. For example, the correlation coefficient between “claiming = Y” and “self-harm/suicide = Y” is -0.298, but the significance value is 0.103, failing to meet the statistical significance criterion; The correlation between “economic level = poor” and most variables is weak. For example, the correlation coefficient between “poor physical and mental state = Y” is -0.189, with a significance value of 0.310, indicating no significant association. Therefore, the association between physical and mental state and the judicial aspects of this study is not significant. The remaining nodes do not show significant correlations with the pre-judicial decision-making process within the sample size of this study.

Quantitative testing of key influencing factors

After determining the transferability of the NBC model in cyberbullying cases, this study further conducted quantitative tests on variables that may mediate between “blaming” and “claiming rights” or ‘suicide’—namely, “self-blaming,” " poor physical and mental condition," to further clarify the key factors leading victims to refrain from seeking judicial recourse, thereby providing more targeted recommendations for cyberbullying governance.

This study then imported the data from the aforementioned key nodes into SPSS to conduct a more precise partial correlation analysis (compared to the correlation analysis in the previous step), i.e., to observe whether there is still a significant correlation between another variable and the outcome variable after controlling for the variables, in order to determine whether the uncontrolled variables are correlated with the outcome variable through the controlled variables. The results are as follows:

First, by controlling for the variables “blaming” and “self-blaming,” the relationships between another variable and the two outcome variables (‘suicide’ and “claiming rights”) were analyzed sequentially (Chart 2): When controlling for “blaming=Y,” the partial correlation coefficient between “whether self-blame exists = yes” and “claiming=Y” was -0.243, with a two-tailed significance level of 0.196, which did not reach statistical significance. This indicates that after controlling for “blaming=Y,” the association between the two is not prominent. When controlling for “whether self-blame exists = yes,” the partial correlation coefficient between “claiming=Y” and “blaming=Y” is 0.520, with a two-tailed significance level of 0.003, indicating a significant positive correlation. This suggests that after controlling for the influence of “self-blame,” the two variables remain closely linked. When controlling for “whether self-blame exists = yes,” the partial correlation coefficient between “self-harm/suicide = Y” and “blaming=Y” is 0.366, with a two-tailed significance level of 0.047, indicating a significant association. When controlling for “blaming=Y,” the partial correlation coefficient between “whether self-blame exists = yes” and “self-harm/suicide = Y” was 0.407, with a two-tailed significance level of 0.026, also showing a significant correlation.

Based on the above analysis, “self-blame” does not significantly influence the decision-making process from identifying the perpetrator to deciding to pursue legal action. However, identifying the perpetrator and self-blame are both significantly correlated with the decision-making process regarding suicide.

Chart 2 shows the partial correlation among attribution, self-attribution, rights protection and suicide

Relevance

Control variables			Presence of self-blame=Y	claiming=Y
blaming=Y	Presence self-blame=Y	Relevance	1.000	-.243
		Significance(two-tailed)	.	.196
		Degrees of freedom (df)	0	28
	claiming=Y	Relevance	-.243	1.000
		Significance(two-tailed)	.196	.
		Degrees of freedom (df)	28	0

Relevance

Control variables			claiming=Y	blaming=Y
Presence self-blame=Y	claiming=Y	Relevance	1.000	.520
		Significance(two-tailed)	.	.003
		Degrees of freedom (df)	0	28
	blaming=Y	Relevance	.520	1.000
		Significance(two-tailed)	.003	.
		Degrees of freedom (df)	28	0

Control variables			self-harm and suicide=Y	blaming=Y
Presence self-blame=Y	self-harm and suicide=Y	Relevance	1.000	.366
		Significance(two-tailed)	.	.047

		Degrees of freedom (df)	0	28
	blaming=Y	Relevance	.366	1.000
		Significance(two-tailed)	.047	.
		Degrees of freedom (df)	28	0

Control variables			Presence of self-blame=Y	self-harm and suicide=Y
blaming=Y	Presence of self-blame=Y	Relevance	1.000	.407
		Significance(two-tailed)	.	.026
		Degrees of freedom (df)	0	28
	self-harm and suicide=Y	Relevance	.407	1.000
		Significance(two-tailed)	.026	.
		Degrees of freedom (df)	28	0

Further linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between "attribution" and "self-attribution" and their impact on "suicide," aiming to provide a more precise description of the relationship between the two variables and the outcome variable. The results are presented in Figure 3. The results show that the Durbin-Watson coefficient is 1.323 (between 0 and 4), indicating that the two independent variables can be considered to have data independence. The significance level is 0.039 (less than 0.05), indicating that the model has statistical significance and is successful.

Chart 3 Linear Analysis of the consequences of suicide by attribution and self-attribution

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R-squared (R^2)	Adjusted R-squared ($ĊR^2$)	Standard Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.455[a]	.207	.151	.468	1.323

a. Predictor Variable(s): (Constant), blaming=Y, Presence of self-blame=Y;

ANOVA[a]

model		Sum of Squares	Degrees of freedom (df)	Mean Square	F	Significance
1	归	1.606	2	.803	3.663	.039[b]
	差	6.136	28	.219		
ANOVA[a]						
	计	7.742	30			

a. Dependent Variable: self-harm and suicide=Y;

b. Predictor Variable(s): (Constant), blaming=Y, Presence of self-blame=Y

Next, using the same analytical method, the "self-blaming" variable from the previous step was replaced with "poor physical and mental condition," and a partial correlation analysis was conducted to examine the degree of association between this variable and decision-making in the pre-judicial stage prior to the 'blaming' intervention. The results are shown in Figure 3. When controlling for "poor physical and mental condition = Y," the partial correlation coefficients between "blaming = Y" and "claiming = Y" were 0.579, with a two-tailed significance level of 0.001, indicating a significant positive correlation. This suggests that after controlling for the interference of poor physical and mental condition, these two variables are closely related (i.e., the applicability of the NBC model, which has already been validated in the preceding discussion). However, in the results of permutations and combinations controlling for other variables, none reached the significance threshold, and thus lack statistical explanatory power:

Chart 4 shows the partial correlations among attribution, physical and mental conditions, rights protection and suicide

Relevance

Control variables			blaming=Y	self-harm and suicide=Y
Poor physical and mental state=Y	blaming=Y	Relevance	1.000	.158
		Significance(two-tailed)	.	.403
		Degrees of freedom (df)	0	28

	self-harm and suicide=Y	Relevance	.158	1.000
		Significance(two-tailed)	.403	.
		Degrees of freedom (df)	28	0

Control variables			blaming=Y	claiming=Y
Poor physical and mental state=Y	blaming=Y	Relevance	1.000	.579
		Significance(two-tailed)	.	.001
		Degrees of freedom (df)	0	28
	claiming=Y	Relevance	.579	1.000
		Significance(two-tailed)	.001	.
		Degrees of freedom (df)	28	0

Control variables			claiming=Y	Poor physical and mental state=Y
blaming=Y	claiming=Y	Relevance	1.000	-.019
		Significance(two-tailed)	.	.919
		Degrees of freedom (df)	0	28
	Poor physical and mental state=Y	Relevance	-.019	1.000
		Significance(two-tailed)	.919	.
		Degrees of freedom (df)	28	0

Control variables			Poor physical and mental state=Y	self-harm and suicide=Y
blaming=Y	Poor physical and mental state=Y	Relevance	1.000	.320
		Significance(two-tailed)	.	.085

		Degrees of freedom (df)	0	28
	self-harm and suicide=Y	Relevance	.320	1.000
		Significance(two-tailed)	.085	.

4. An interpretation of the decision-making model in the pre-judicial stage

After obtaining the results of grounded theory and quantitative tests of relevance, and combining them with research on existing literature, an explanatory model for the pre-judicial stage of cyberbullying cases can be constructed, as shown in Figure 4. The solid parts are determined through quantitative tests, while other elements and relationships are based on literature research and GT qualitative research results. Surrounding the black portion of the figure, which represents the NBC model, the hollow nodes indicate the influencing factors of each stage as suggested by relevant literature[①]: .

The NBC model is transferable in the analysis of online violence cases

Using the "grounded theory" analytical method and quantitative testing, it can be concluded that the NBC model, constructed based on traditional deviant behavior, remains applicable in the pre-judicial stage of cyberbullying. According to this model, after experiencing cyberbullying, victims first identify the bullying behavior, i.e., classify certain behaviors as potential litigable disputes; then, victims identify the perpetrators to attribute the harm suffered to specific individuals; Finally, victims may choose to resolve the dispute through legal channels or opt for suicide. This model can be used to study legislative measures that encourage cyberbullying victims to seek legal recourse to protect their rights, enhance the effectiveness of cyber governance laws, regulations, and systems in society, and reduce tragic outcomes such as suicide among cyberbullying victims.

In the literature review phase, some scholars argue that in the internet environment, netizens' ability to perceive risks has diminished [②], which may affect victims' ability to "identify" cases that are actionable in court; other scholars have proposed that internet users have inherently low expectations for civility and justice in the internet environment[③] , which may lead victims to unconsciously justify violent behavior from the internet, thereby failing to classify it as a litigable event. It is worth noting that these two hypotheses were only confirmed through qualitative research within the scope of this study's materials, and no significant correlation with the NBC model was found in the quantitative testing phase, requiring further research.

[①] Wang Zhiyong: The Endogenous Logic and Regulation of Online Rumors in Hot Events [J], Law Journal 2023(3):25-33; Wang Zhiyong: A Legal Perspective on Online Violence [J], Jurist 2022(2):120-130; Shi Jiayou: Platform Responsibility in the Governance of Online Violence [J], Law Review 2023(01):150-160

[②] Jiang Fangbing. " Cyberbullying: Concept, Roots, and Responses—An Analysis from the Perspective of Risk Society [J]. Zhejiang Academic Journal, 2011(06):181-187.

[③] Wang Zhiyong. A Legal Perspective on Cyberbullying [J]. People's Forum, 2016(17)

"Self-blame" and "blaming others" jointly influence the "suicide" outcome

Quantitative testing results indicate that cyberbullying victims with self-blame tendencies are more likely to choose suicide rather than seek judicial resolution, even if they can identify the cyberbullying behavior and determine the responsible individual, compared to victims without such tendencies. However, whether or not self-blame is present does not directly influence whether victims seek judicial resolution after identifying the responsible party. In other words, seeking judicial resolution and choosing suicide are not mutually exclusive; victims may still choose suicide even after seeking judicial assistance. For example, in the "Deyang Female Doctor Suicide Case," although the judiciary had intervened in the dispute, it failed to effectively eliminate the harm caused by the violence to the victim. This conclusion highlights that "self-blame" can serve as a key breakthrough in the governance of cyber violence, and also indicates that judicial governance in such cases should aim for more thorough effectiveness. Given the strong diffusive nature of cyber violence harm, the information about justice obtained by victims through the judicial system should also be disseminated.

The influence of other factors on the research model

During the literature review and qualitative research phases of this study, various factors, as shown in Figure 4, were considered relevant to the victims' decision-making process. However, the data did not confirm the relevance of factors beyond "self-blame." It should be noted that this does not negate the influence of these factors in cyberbullying. These factors may indirectly influence decision-making processes through other mediating factors or may exhibit influence patterns not yet identified through statistical analysis, warranting further research.

5. Recommendations for the Governance of Online Violence Based on Research Findings

The ultimate purpose and value of this empirical study still need to be translated into corresponding judicial recommendations. Currently, China has enacted relevant laws and regulations for the governance of cyberbullying cases, including but not limited to the "Provisions on the Governance of Cyberbullying Information," the "Measures for the Administration of Internet Information Services," and the "Provisions on the Governance of the Ecological Environment of Online Information Content." However, many of the provisions in these regulations use overly broad language, and the obligations imposed on relevant parties are not clearly defined, which may hinder the implementation of responsibilities and be detrimental to the governance of cyberbullying. One of the roles of socio-legal studies is to focus on efficiency, assisting in the interpretation and clarification of legal provisions through legal doctrine [①]. The following sections will propose three directions for legislative and interpretative recommendations based on the conclusions of the preceding research, with a focus on "self-accountability."

[①] Wang Pengxiang, Zhang Yongjian: Economic Analysis and Legal Methods [J], Taiwan University Law Review 2019(03)

Issuing official statements on hot-button issues

Article 13 of the Regulations on the Governance of Online Violence Information imposes an obligation on online information service providers to "timely address public concerns," but the specific meaning of this obligation is unclear. Furthermore, while this provision requires platforms to actively respond, Article 15 of the Regulations on the Transmission of Information Over Computer Networks explicitly outlines the obligations of online service providers regarding notice-and-takedown procedures, link disconnection, and the forwarding of notices, and the relationship between the two provisions is also unclear.

The motivation to satisfy public curiosity about hot topics is based on the "cognitive dissonance theory" in psychology. This theory states that human cognition tends to seek consistency. When an individual is in a state of cognitive dissonance, it leads to negative psychological feelings, creating pressure that prompts the individual to attempt to reduce or eliminate this dissonance, restoring cognitive consistency and thereby altering attitudes. The higher the degree of dissonance, the stronger the motivation to eliminate it, and the greater the likelihood of attitude change[①] . In the context of online violence, when the exposure of online violence incidents reaches a sufficient level to generate public opinion influence, the online community outside the victims will develop a desire to learn more about the issue. At this point, if the platform disconnects the hot topic links solely based on user notifications, it will instantly deprive this group of their "online space" for gathering, discussing, and exchanging information, akin to suddenly having their "pacifier" taken away, thereby prompting the group to form cognitive dissonance. Since the group has not completely lost its voice, the desire for cognitive closure often makes it difficult to suppress related issues, and subsequent actions such as deleting posts or banning accounts may trigger a rebellious mindset.

Therefore, platforms need to mitigate the harm caused to rights holders by this online memory through public opinion guidance, which means transforming the previously generated inconsistent cognition into consistent cognition as much as possible, thereby reducing the group's inconsistent psychological state and undermining their value recognition. This requires official authorities to respond positively to online violence incidents rather than simply disconnecting links. Some scholars have proposed establishing a legalized reporting system for the occurrence, progression, and handling of online hot topics, with relevant government agencies' press release or police bulletin departments promptly releasing information, and inviting or collaborating with official authoritative media when necessary.[②] In summary, platform operators should monitor content exposure rates through algorithms and other technologies, and fulfill their duty to respond to content that reaches a certain exposure rate. Simply disconnecting links does not fulfill this duty, and only by doing so can the ongoing impact of cyberbullying be effectively controlled.

[①] Ding Zhaochun: Cognitive Dissonance Theory and Attitude Change [J]. Journal of Huazhong University of Science and Technology (Social Sciences Edition). 1996(03):79-81

[②] Wang Zhiyong: The Internal Logic and Regulation of Online Rumors in Hot Events [J], Journal of Law, 2023(03):25-33

Using algorithms to dilute attributable speech

Article 13 of the Regulations on the Governance of Online Violence Information explicitly requires online information service providers to "guide users to interact civilly and express themselves rationally, and promptly take measures such as dynamic verification of real identity information, pop-up prompts, violation warnings, and traffic restrictions for abnormal accounts." However, in practice, most platforms implement the requirement to "guide users toward civilized interaction" solely through textual advocacy in the form of prompts in the corners of web pages. This single and inconspicuous method not only fails to facilitate diverse user interaction or provide sustained warning effects but also struggles to genuinely reach user behavior. Additionally, since platforms do not provide specific behavioral guidelines, the obligation to guide civilized interaction remains merely formalistic, with platforms merely fulfilling their obligations in a "check-box" manner. Therefore, from the perspective of communication effectiveness, the low information reach rate and insufficient user prompting lead to unsatisfactory actual results. There is a significant gap between governance expectations and actual implementation, making it difficult to effectively achieve the legislative objectives.

Furthermore, this provision also requires platforms to "restrict traffic" for specific content. However, can traffic control truly block the spread of harmful information? In fact, the opposite is true: such measures are likely to provoke a rebellious mindset among the targeted groups. According to the "rebellious effect" in communication psychology[①] , when a group feels that their right to express themselves is being overly suppressed, their psychological desire to protect that right is actually strengthened, prompting them to spread content through more covert and intense methods—this creates an endless cycle of "governance —backlash—re-governance" endless cycle, not only increasing judicial governance costs but also potentially exacerbating opposing sentiments, leading to the complexification and concealment of issues related to cyberbullying, and ultimately resulting in tragic outcomes.

Although technology is often viewed as a "complicit tool" for platforms to attract traffic, in fact, algorithms and artificial intelligence can assist platforms in fulfilling the above two obligations. Customized algorithms are used by some online information service providers to push traffic-driving information, leading to the formation of information silos for users. In a closed information environment, group emotions and opinions, lacking exposure to diverse perspectives, are prone to polarization, which has become one of the triggers for online public opinion violence[②] . However, technology itself is neutral. The underlying principle of this mechanism is user profiling and algorithmic recommendations. Platform operators can optimize their technology to reasonably interweave diverse viewpoints into users' information streams, breaking the reinforcing cycle of single-minded emotions. For example, when algorithms detect the aggregation of homogeneous negative information, they can proactively push neutral or positive content to dilute the concentration of polarized emotions, thereby reducing the risk of

[①] Wang Jian: A Brief Discussion on Audience Psychology in Mass Communication [J]. Journal of Liaoning Institute of Technology (Social Sciences Edition), 2003, (03): 50-52.

[②] Luo Xin, Chen Jingshu: Governance of Online Public Opinion Violence in the AI Era [J]. Youth Journalist, 2023(13)

polarization from a technical perspective. Regarding the mechanism of cyberbullying, the exposure effect of "a lie repeated a thousand times becomes the truth" is a key factor leading victims to blame themselves. Psychological research shows that acceptance of a certain viewpoint increases with repeated exposure. In cyberbullying, victims are constantly exposed to homogeneous negative information, which reinforces their "misattribution" mentality. Just as "no snowflake is innocent in an avalanche," victims are not overwhelmed by isolated remarks but are instead constantly exposed to a storm of negative information. At this point, algorithmic dilution can reduce the repetition of negative information, breaking the reinforcement chain of the exposure effect. This is akin to "snow clearing," removing the accumulated pressure of negative information to create a healthier information environment for victims, reducing self-blame, and achieving cyberbullying governance.

Measures based on this principle have already been implemented in Singapore and demonstrate operational feasibility. Since 2017, Singapore has launched the "Improving the Internet Campaign" to oppose the "culture of silence" in the face of cyberbullying, encouraging victims to share their online experiences, social media users to actively intervene and report incidents, and parents and peers to provide guidance and support in an empathetic manner. The aim is to cultivate Singapore into a civilized society where people actively "speak out" against cyberbullying, rather than remaining silent bystanders.[①] Encouraging the expression of diverse opinions helps dilute single-minded public opinion. Algorithm-driven mechanisms that deliver diverse information to online users not only reduce victims' self-blame but also contribute to the formation of a morally neutral internet environment.

Enhancing the risk perception capabilities of potential victims

Article 24 of the Regulations on the Governance of Cyberbullying Information stipulates: "When a network information service provider discovers that a user is at risk of cyberbullying information, it shall promptly notify the user through prominent means and inform the user of the protective measures that can be taken." The purpose of this provision is precisely to enhance netizens' risk perception capabilities. Beck argues that "the concept of risk refers to an intermediate state between safety and destruction. In this stage, the 'perception' of the risk of danger determines human thought and action." Enhancing netizens' risk perception capabilities can help them discern potential violent risks in the online world or promptly identify such incidents as actionable facts after suffering violence, thereby taking legal action.

However, enhancing risk perception capabilities is not a panacea for eradicating cyber violence. The role of risk warnings primarily lies in the "cognitive" phase of the dispute, i.e., making users aware of the risks they face. However, in reality, many victims of cyberbullying may be aware of the risks but may not necessarily seek protection through legal means. In cases such as the "Hong Kong Yina Suicide Case" and the "Deyang Female Doctor Suicide Case," the victims were already aware of the cyberbullying they had suffered, but due to their own mistakes in the conflict, they fell into self-blame, leading to the

[①] Wang Caiyu, Zeng Xuan: A Legislative Review and Practical Examination of Cyberbullying Prevention in Singapore [J]. Modern World Police. 2023(07):74-81.

tragedy. Such situations are similar to the sexual assault cases we are familiar with. Victims of sexual assault are not "perfect," but when their minor mistakes are amplified in the internet's moralization, it can cause significant psychological trauma, leading them to attribute the blame to themselves.

Therefore, in addition to providing risk warnings, online information service providers should further strengthen education and guidance for online users. This includes not only enhancing users' awareness and ability to defend against cyberbullying but also educating them to promptly seek legal remedies when subjected to such behavior. During legal education campaigns, the concept of "imperfect victims" should be emphasized to prevent victims from abandoning legal assistance due to perceived fault, thereby preemptively forfeiting judicial remedies. On the other hand, online information service providers should strengthen education and publicity guidance for online users, not only guiding them to enhance their awareness and defensive capabilities against online violence but also reinforcing their awareness of promptly seeking legal remedies when subjected to online violence[①] .

6. Conclusion

"Law alone is insufficient to govern," and the governance of cyberbullying is not only a legal issue but also a convergence point of social psychology and algorithmic ethics. While prevention and governance of cyberbullying have received some attention, most cyberbullying cases are private prosecutions. How can these systems be actively chosen by victims? In light of the recent surge in cyber violence-related suicide cases, beyond evaluating the effectiveness of legislative systems themselves, how to bridge the gap between top-down legal frameworks and online communities also requires answers. This study employs grounded theory and quantitative validation to reveal the core mechanisms underlying judicial decision-making regarding the litigability of cyberbullying cases: the interplay between self-blame and the "identification-blame-assertion of rights" model, and validates the transferability of the traditional NBC model in cyberbullying analysis.

Based on empirical analysis, this study suggests that the practical effectiveness of cyberbullying governance can be strengthened in three ways: First, strengthen the official response mechanism for high-profile cyberbullying incidents. For cyberbullying incidents of widespread public concern, proactively respond and clarify the facts to promptly halt the "rumor chain" of cyberbullying, rather than merely cutting off links to the "original text." Second, online platform operators can use technical algorithms to "dilute" extremely polarized public opinion, sever the "self-blame" mentality of victims shaped by "exposure-based harm," and block the evolutionary path of "victimization" at the preventive stage; Third, in legal education campaigns, the prevalence of the "imperfect victim" narrative should be increased to dismantle the psychological barriers of victims' "moral self-assessment" and their belief in judicial remedies. The research still has limitations, and future studies could expand the scope of

[①] Shi Jiayou: Platform Responsibility in the Governance of Online Violence [J]. Legal Science (Journal of Northwest University of Political Science and Law). 2023(06):14-23.

research subjects, further categorize group types, or test and refute the impact functions of other analytical models to optimize strategies for addressing cyberbullying. Only through the collaborative efforts of law, technology, and society can we prevent the tragedy of cyberbullying.