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# *Analysis of Regulatory Paths for Online Language Violence Against Minors in School Environments*

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***Abstract.*** In the information age, the problem of online verbal violence among minors in schools is severe so that the need for effective governance solutions is urgent. Following the logical sequence of "problem identification – cause analysis – path construction", this paper adopts methods such as literature review, comparative analysis, and interdisciplinary integration to explore the issue. Considering the single-path governance approach and drawing on the collaborative governance ideas of relevant countries in recent years, a regulated strategy is proposed. Firstly, by clearly defining the requirements in systematic legislation, it can facilitate judicial practice. Then, relying on the coercive power of the law, on the one hand, it promotes the comprehensive implementation of digital literacy education, guiding minors to form healthy online ethical concepts,on the other hand, it provides institutional space for technological governance measures, defining their usage boundaries to prevent abuse. By using the gentle influence of education and the efficiency of technology to make up for the mechanical and detached nature of laws when dealing with such issues. This closed-loop framework aims to systematically address the issue of online verbal violence against minors through diversified cooperation, providing a feasible approach for its long-term prevention and control.

***Keywords:*** Juvenile online crimes, verbal cyberbullying, legal regulation, collaborative governance

## 1. Introduction

With the development of information technology, cyberspace has become a significant domain in the lives of school-aged teenagers. However, in this broader context, the increasingly prominent issue of verbal cyberbullying targeting minors in school settings poses a serious threat to the rights of minors' growth and the healthy development of the digital space. The World Health Organization's 2024 report indicated that approximately 1/6 of school-aged children were experiencing cyberbullying in schools, with both perpetrators and victims increasing in recent years [1]. Besides, the report from the Cyberbullying Research Center indicated that over 1/2 surveyed students reported they had experienced cyberbullying within school environments with verbal violence accounting for about half of all types of violence-a trend also reflected in Chinese studies [2,3]. These statistics underscore the severity of online verbal violence among minors in schools.

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Against this background, the 2025 Netflix series "Adolescence", which took a case of underage individuals suspected of murder due to verbal cyberbullying in school as its narrative thread, drew widespread international attention and reflection on the issue of online verbal violence among minors in schools. Even the British Prime Minister specially convened a meeting to discuss the issue of online security for teenagers due to the teleplay. Such juvenile online crimes pose a systemic threat to the rights of minors, the foundation of campus education ecology, and the order of digital social governance. Thus, studying effective methods for it is an essential part of protecting the growth of minors and building a clean online environment.

In view of this, this paper, based on the actual problem of cyberbullying among minors in schools, conducts a systematic and standardized study. Aiming to construct a comprehensive governance system integrating the efficacy of the three disciplines of law, technology and education through exploring the causes of such incidents and conducting a critical examination of the current governance situation, expecting to provide theoretical references and practical guidance for the governance practice of such incidents.

## 2. Cause analysis

Online verbal violence targeting minors in schools is the result of the interplay of multiple factors such as network characteristics, educational shortcomings and legal lag. Thoroughly analyzing the root causes of its emergence and spread is the prerequisite and guidance for establishing a scientific and effective governance system,so this paper will systematically explain the causes of this issue from three aspects: the network environment, online education, and network regulations.

### 2.1. Network environment: anonymous indulgence and algorithm-driven promotion

The inherent characteristics of the online space, combined with the algorithmic mechanisms of the platforms, have jointly created a technological breeding ground for the proliferation of cyberbullying, providing conditions for the growth of verbal violence. On the one hand, the core characteristics of the internet, such as anonymity and asynchrony, are highly likely to trigger the "online disinhibition effect" [4]. In the virtual network, the real social identities of the actors are concealed, and the sense of moral restraint and the ability to perceive responsibility during communication are significantly weakened. This makes some minors more likely to cross ethical boundaries, indulge in their words and deeds, and transform various negative emotions in their daily lives into violent online language, which carries out bullying behavior against the targets of their venting.

On the other hand, the internet also plays a role in facilitating the spread of such violent language and the expansion of bullying scale. The "traffic first" algorithmic recommendation mechanism commonly adopted by online platforms objectively creates a distorted incentive and amplification effect for violent content [5]. This algorithm uses data such as user clicks and dwell time as core indicators for content distribution. And content that is confrontational and stimulating tends to capture users' attention more effectively, thereby generating higher traffic. The mechanism not only enables bullying information to spread rapidly in a short period of time, but also indirectly encourages some users to actively create and disseminate bullying content in an attempt to gain attention, thus creating a vicious cycle.

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### 2.2. Online education: the absence of ethics and the lack of guidance and education

Adolescent psychological traits, coupled with insufficient online education, form a dangerous combination that is an important individual and social root cause for online verbal violence in schools. Teenagers are in a special psychological development stage characterized by intense emotional fluctuations, a strong desire for peer recognition, and an incomplete development of empathy skills. In the school environment, these psychological traits lead to minors not only being prone to attracting the revolts of their classmates due to certain behaviors and words, becoming victims of online verbal violence, but also being likely to become perpetrators of violence due to factors such as impulsiveness and blind following [6].

More critically, current educational systems often emphasize there is an imbalance where "skills are emphasized over morality", reflecting the fact that there is a significant lack of online education in the field of ethical literacy for teenagers [7]. In terms of the cultivation of digital ethics literacy, the absence of systematic courses and practical guidance has prevented teenagers from clearly establishing a clear sense of network behavior boundaries and moral principles. In terms of psychological ability cultivation, schools have insufficient attention to the development of critical thinking and psychological resilience, which leads to teenagers being unable to handle malicious online remarks calmly. These problems further increase the risk of adverse consequences (such as academic decline, depression, and even self-harm and other behaviors).

### 2.3. Network regulations: blurred boundaries and end-point punishment

First, assess the completeness of the content of the laws and policies. At present in China, there are multiple layers of judicial practice challenges, including the "difficulty in determination" due to ambiguous legal definitions and inconsistent standards for serious cases; the "difficulty in obtaining evidence" caused by the perishability of electronic evidence and the low cooperation of platforms; and the "difficulty in holding accountable" resulting from insufficient cross-departmental collaboration [8]. Furthermore, relevant studies have shown that countries such as Brazil, India, and South Africa are also facing such challenges. This indicates that these governance dilemmas are not isolated cases, but rather common challenges faced by multiple countries and regions around the world, highlighting the slow response and insufficient supply of legal policies to address this issue on a global scale [9].

Additionally, legal tools itself has inherent limitations due to its nature. For countries such as America and Singapore that already have relatively complete and strict specialized legislation, relevant statistical reports and recent serious cases (such as the Sengkang Green Primary School Cyberbullying Case) indicate that the post-event punitive measures often fail to reach the complex psychological and social roots behind online verbal violence, cannot eliminate the motivation for minors to commit violence.

## 3. Experience reference

### 3.1. Unidirectional regulatory path

Regarding the issue of online language violence among minors in schools, there are three single-path focused governance models currently available: technological governance, educational integration, and legal leadership.

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Among them, the technological governance model is represented by Germany. It mainly relies on network technology for intelligent content identification and behavior monitoring, and intercepts a certain degree of malicious speech, thereby reducing the probability of harm occurrence. The advantage of this model lies in its high intervention efficiency, but it also has two unavoidable paradoxes: one is the problem of technological alienation, as excessive monitoring can erode students' privacy rights; the other is that it cannot originally eliminate the perpetrators' opportunistic mentality,and there is a risk of technical loopholes, leading to the governance falling into a "cat-and-mouse game" cycle of deadlock [10].

The educational integration model mainly consists of two aspects: psychological counseling for teenagers and cultivation of online literacy. Japan, as a representative country of the psychotherapy approach, focuses on achieving moral internalization and conflict resolution through a three-pronged education approach involving ethical education, peer mediation, and psychological support. And as a representative country for promoting online literacy, Australia has specifically incorporated a section on online moral literacy into its regular curriculum. This model can cultivate healthy online culture at root. However, the lag in education and its inherent conservatism have led to slow results, and it lacks the ability for immediate and effective mandatory intervention and deterrence against serious violent behaviors that have already occurred.

The legal dominance model is divided into two forms: traditional crime integration governance and separate legislation specialized governance. Embedded governance, exemplified by China, advocates classifying online verbal violence based on the content of the offensive remarks as traditional crimes such as insult and defamation for consideration and regulation. Specialized governance is manifested through the introduction of specific legislation for such incidents, such as the "The End to Cyberbullying Act" in the state of Georgia, USA. The advantage of the legal dominance model lies in the coercive power, authority and deterrent effect of legal regulation. However, as mentioned earlier, some countries are currently facing judicial practice problems, and the law itself is also stuck at the end-stage of punishment.

### 3.2. Collaborative regulatory approach

In addition, some countries have begun implementing multi-party collaborative governance solutions in recent years, which are representative. South Korea has adopted a governance model that incorporates cyberbullying on campus into the scope of the country's "Law on the Prevention and Countermeasures of School Violence", integrates media literacy and ethics education into primary and secondary schools, and relies on intelligent monitoring systems to achieve early warning and rapid response to such behaviors. France, on the other hand, centers its efforts around the domestic organization, the Internet Child Protection Association. Through legislative empowerment, it enables this organization to operate professional online reporting and detection platforms and mobilizes community forces to jointly create an educational and cultural atmosphere against cyberbullying. This multi-party collaborative governance model provides important inspiration for the path construction in this research.

## 4. Solutions

Building on above findings, this paper proposes the path construction idea of "drawing on existing collaborative governance solutions and exploring multi-disciplinary approaches in technology and education based on the foundation of law", then argues for its feasibility.

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### 4.1. Breaking through legal dilemmas via legislative refinement and enforcement systematization

Law is the bottom line of order, and its own ambiguity and lag are the primary bottlenecks of governance failure. Therefore, the "internal upgrade" of legal regulation has become the core of optimizing problem governance.

Firstly, from a legislative perspective, this paper advocates adapting to the requirements of the digital age and conducting a separate and systematic legislative framework for cybercrime issues. The necessity of legislation for the issues discussed in this paper can be explored from the following aspects.

From the perspective of legal protection, online language violence targeting minors in schools is deeply rooted in the relatively isolated online environment of schools and occurs within the peer social circle of minors. It is characterized by its concealment and persistent harmfulness, which can easily cause severe psychological trauma to minors and even lead to "extrinsic damages" such as academic collapse, social phobia, and self-harm, seriously infringing upon the development rights of minors [11]. From the perspective of rule supply, integrating such incidents into traditional crimes of verbal violence has multiple limitations. Firstly, the composition and handling of traditional crimes cannot match the characteristics of network violence, such as its multi-point occurrence and strong anonymity. Moreover, traditional crimes lack regulation for the underage population, which may trigger the flawed mind of underage perpetrators [3].

Therefore, exploring legislative responses specifically targeted at this phenomenon is not about broadly expanding the scope of crimes, but rather is based on the actual development of the digital age and the urgent practical needs for protecting the legal rights of underage victims and regulating the online criminal activities of underage perpetrators.

In addressing the issue of "difficulty in determination" as mentioned in the text, it means that people need to accurately depict the legal profile of "cyberbullying on campus networks". On the basis of targeting minors as the regulatory object, people must grasp the complex criminal characteristics of "cyber violence" in the "online domain". From an objective perspective, based on the fact that cyber space serves as the field for violence, it is defined as "soft violence" to clearly identify its characteristics such as instigation and bullying [12]. For instance, the harmfulness of the language content it releases, the frequency and quantity of its releases, which demonstrate the severity of oppression. In terms of the subjective aspect, the principle of fault liability applies. The entity that publishes or disseminates harmful remarks must "knowingly" and have the intention to cause or allow harmful consequences. The presumption of their "subjective malice" can be based on objective facts or rules of thumb, such as knowingly spreading falsehoods, repeatedly failing to correct mistakes, organizing and so on,situations where the entity shows a more obvious attitude of allowing or even pursuing the harmful consequences subjectively. For first-time offenders or occasional offenders who have such simple motives as imitation or seeking attention, emphasis should be placed on education and enlightenment. In terms of sentencing, a multi-dimensional perspective of "correspondence between guilt and punishment" is adopted. Since it cannot be ruled out that the perpetrators deliberately employ criminal methods such as "disseminating malicious remarks within a small circle of acquaintances to cause a high concentration of harm", which cause the mismatch between the volume of data dissemination and the consequences of the harm, it is argued that the "spillover damages" involving other interests such as property and personal safety, as well as the personal danger of the perpetrator (reflected by high organizational level and long duration of the behavior) should be comprehensively taken into consideration [13]. This helps to

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avoid falling into the trap of "data-oriented thinking" (merely focusing on the scope and timing of information dissemination) and reflects the requirements of the proportionality principle.

Regarding the issue of "difficulty in obtaining evidence", this paper agrees with the proposal put forward by Chinese scholars that mandatory requirements for online platforms to fulfill the "obligation of evidence retention" should be established: emphasizing the auxiliary role of electronic evidence collection and blockchain verification technology, and fixing and preserving the suspected online abuse information (such as abusive remarks, person-search content) for 6 months without the possibility of alteration, and assisting in the retrieval [14]. This model is highly efficient in terms of evidence preservation and traceability and can provide guidance for subsequent identification and accountability.

In response to the issue of "difficulty in holding accountable", relevant documents in China in recent years have emphasized the practical approach of multi-departmental collaboration in handling cases of online violence. In this general direction, this paper believes that people can further draw on the viewpoints of Korean scholars and establish a joint accountability system involving judicial departments, educational departments, online management departments, and schools themselves for the criminal acts of minors on the internet, to achieve seamless connection from case discovery, investigation to disposal [15].

### 4.2. Remedying legal deficiencies through education and technology aided by legal support

The inherent limitations of legal regulation in addressing online verbal violence among minors manifest as mechanistic control and detachment from the campus environment. On the one hand, the law cannot proactively identify and solve problems but only implements compensatory regulations after an incident occurs. Nevertheless, the final judgments often have a more superficial punitive and deterrent effect, with little impact on the deep formation of personality. On the other hand, students in the "small society" of the campus mostly follow public order and good morals as well as school rules and regulations. They rarely come into contact with the concept of "law", the grand overarching structure, which results in the weak deterrent power of law against students' misdeeds on campus. Thus, based on the causes of online verbal bullying among minors in schools, drawing on existing governance models, this paper will seek educational and technological remedies for the aforementioned legal limitations in the following text.

The previous text mentioned that the reason why the strict special legislation adopted by countries like the United States and Singapore to regulate this issue has not been effective is that the law cannot reach the psychological and social roots that cause this problem, while the flexibility and penetration of education can make up for this disadvantage. This paper advocates learning from the Japanese model and delving deeper into the complex psychological activities and emotional issues of teenagers at specific growth stages; on this basis, it also draws on the experience of Australia. For instance, integrating the cultivation of network ethics into the compulsory curriculum for primary and secondary schools, and incorporating relevant knowledge into subjects such as politics and law, and computer science, which can, without causing additional teaching burdens, subtly instill in students the awareness of the boundaries of their online behavior, cultivate their empathy skills and psychological resilience, and help them grow into qualified "digital citizens". Simultaneously, the inherent coercive power of the law can also contribute to the development of the education system. For example, it is stipulated that schools must provide education on digital literacy; it is also required that schools bear certain responsibilities for the losses caused by such incidents, thereby urging the resolution of the issue of the lack of online education.

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Furthermore, the terminal compensatory and the campus alienation of law also determine its dependence on the mid-level medium of network technology in such incidents. Take the German-style campus technology governance as an example, its intelligent monitoring technology can be utilized to intercept violent content by identifying keywords and conducting nature analysis. Although there is a risk of vulnerability breaches, it can still reduce the probability of harm occurrence to a certain extent; at the same time, by continuously optimizing algorithms through technological upgrades, the weight of violent content recommendations can be significantly reduced. This can greatly curb the spread of violent language from a technical perspective, narrow the scope of harm, and achieve the goal of providing "preemptive protection" before law. And the "privacy paradox" and the governance predicament of "cat-and-mouse game" in network technology can be addressed by legally establishing strict data compliance and personal information protection rules to impose constraints. At the same time, through the legislation of incentive policies, a friendly environment can be created for technological upgrading and development, avoiding problems such as "anonymity tolerance" and "algorithm promotion", and achieving a balance between effective technological governance and rights protection, and rectifying the serious online environment.

Based on the above governance logic, the mandatory binding force of law provides a fundamental institutional guarantee for the implementation of education and technology; the value of personality formation in education and the efficient intervention capabilities of technology respectively address the root causes and the middle stage of online language violence, reducing the probability of harm occurrence and alleviating the practical pressure of legal punishment. The three elements form a closed-loop governance system of "prevention - intervention - punishment", enabling the governance of online language violence among minors in schools to shift from a single-dimensional approach to a multi-dimensional and comprehensive systematic solution. This provides a feasible path for the continuous improvement of governance efficiency.

## 5. Conclusion

The complexity of the causes of verbal cyberbullying among minors in schools makes it difficult to be effectively regulated by a single governance model. Based on an analysis of the causes and the limitations of existing governance, this paper proposes the establishment of a "law-based leadership, technology empowerment, and education as the foundation" collaborative governance system. This is not only a response to the essence of the problem,but also has been supported by both positive and negative examples from various countries' practices.

Law serves as the cornerstone of governance. Through precise legislation, it clearly defines the constituent elements of problems and the standards for sentencing and uses intelligent law enforcement that combines technological empowerment and departmental collaboration to solve the "three difficulties" predicaments, providing rigid guarantees for governance. Education shapes the healthy online personality of teenagers at their roots, compensating for the mechanical and detached nature of legal punishment while also relying on the law to help improve its system. Technology plays an efficient role in evidence fixation, risk warning and avoidance, and at the same time, it avoids potential hazards such as privacy infringement by setting legal boundaries. When all three are combined, they can help address the three underlying causes of the problem, promote the creation of a clean online environment and a healthy campus ecosystem, and regulate the issue of online language violence among minors on campus.

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