

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

Online multiplayer gaming's rise has drastically changed the digital entertainment scene by giving gamers chances for rivalry, cooperation, and real-time engagement. These online communities have developed into social gathering places that cut beyond national and cultural borders. These dynamics have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as seen by the claimed 40% increase in cyberbullying instances due to increasing gaming platform usage (Sorrentino et al., 2023). Gaming emerged as the main means of social connection and stress reduction during the epidemic, but the increased reliance on virtual environments also made toxic conduct more common. Because they are competitive and participatory, several game genres like action, role-playing, and sports games are especially vulnerable to cyberbullying (Kwak et al., 2015).

The context and manner of delivery of cyberbullying in gaming are different from those of traditional kinds of bullying. More than half of young adults who play online games have been victims or perpetrators of cyberbullying, according to research (Justin W. Patchin, 2018). Additionally, nearly 70% of gamers say they have witnessed bullying situations while playing, highlighting how commonplace this behavior is in gaming culture (news.sky.com, 2017). Players' enjoyment and mental health may be negatively impacted by this phenomenon, which includes verbal abuse, harassment, exclusionary techniques, and even coordinated targeting (Fryling & Cotler, 2015) The lack of

accountability further exacerbates the issue, as players feel detached from the repercussions of their actions.

Games like Valorant, which are designed around high-stakes competition, create an environment where stress and frustration frequently boil over into toxic communication. Players often scapegoat teammates for perceived underperformance, leading to verbal abuse, exclusion, and harassment. Gender-based biases also play a significant role, with female gamers often targeted disproportionately, experiencing specific forms of harassment such as gendered insults and sexual aggression (adl.org, 2021). These interactions not only harm individual players but also perpetuate a culture of exclusion and hostility within the gaming community.

This dual aspect of online gaming is best illustrated by Riot Games' team-based tactical shooter Valorant. Since its 2020 launch, Valorant has grown to become a worldwide sensation, with millions of players of all skill levels. With 19 million active gamers globally as of April 2024, Valorant has reached a noteworthy milestone. This figure has stayed largely consistent; according to sources, there were 18 million players in the first quarter of this year. Valorant had 12 million players as of May 9, 2024, and growth is expected to continue, potentially reaching 30 million by the middle of 2024 (Dom Sacco, 2024). As *Valorant* launched in 2020, *Valorant* has emerged as one of the leading first-person shooter (FPS) games globally, experiencing rapid growth and gaining a loyal following. A key factor behind *Valorant's* success is its widespread popularity among Generation Z (Maxwell Nelson, 2023). Gen Z who account for approximately 70% of the player base, as reported by (Maxwell Nelson, 2023)

Riot Games has strategically tailored the game's design and marketing efforts to appeal to this young demographic, emphasizing fast-paced, interactive gameplay that resonates with younger players. Gen Z gamers have found the mechanics of *Valorant* accessible and engaging, contributing to its continued success in this age group. The game's rapid rise has also been supported by high-profile endorsements from influencers and celebrities. Figures such as Elon Musk and actor Ben Affleck have publicly expressed their enjoyment of the game, further broadening its appeal beyond the core demographic (adl.org, 2021). As Riot Games continues to focus on targeted promotional campaigns, *Valorant* is poised to solidify its position as one of the most popular FPS games worldwide in the coming years.

Valorant's gameplay mechanics, which emphasize coordination, communication, and strategy, necessitate frequent player interaction. While these interactions can strengthen team dynamics, they also create opportunities for toxic behaviors to emerge, particularly in high-pressure scenarios (Vuong et al., 2021). The intensity of its gameplay, coupled with the anonymity of players, creates a volatile environment where verbal aggression can thrive unchecked. The competitive nature of *Valorant* gaming, coupled with its reliance on team coordination and communication, makes it a fertile ground for verbal aggression and harassment. These toxic interactions, often occurring in in-game chat, highlight the darker aspects of gaming communities and the urgent need for intervention (adl.org, 2021). The intense nature of gameplay can amplify tensions among players, particularly when perceived underperformance, miscommunication, or failure occurs. Players who are targeted may experience

verbal abuse, scapegoating, or being ostracized within the game (adl.org, 2021). Such behaviors not only undermine the team dynamic but can also create a hostile environment that diminishes the overall gaming experience.

The consequences of cyberbullying in gaming are far-reaching and multifaceted. Psychologically, victims often report heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and reduced self-esteem, all of which can significantly impact their mental well-being (Cowie, 2013). Behavioral impacts include withdrawal from gaming communities, social isolation, and diminished participation in digital and real-world networks. These outcomes not only harm individual players but also weaken the inclusivity and sustainability of gaming communities as a whole (Cowie, 2013). Despite these severe implications, the efforts to address cyberbullying in gaming remain insufficient. The continuation of bullying in games like Valorant indicates a disconnect between the efficiency of these interventions and the toxic behavior that is intended to be curbed by tools like Riot Games' moderation policies and reporting systems. Although these are encouraging developments, emerging technological solutions like Tempr, which deters verbal violence and encourages constructive relationships, have not yet completely addressed the problem. (Stepanova et al., 2021).

Understanding the different types of cyberbullying that take place during encounters is made easier by the particular context that the gaming world offers. Characterizing the many forms of cyberbullying that appear in online games is essential, according to theoretical frameworks such as Willard's (2007) Taxonomy of Cyberbullying. These behaviors, which contribute to the antagonistic dynamics frequently seen in competitive gaming, include flaming, harassment, denigration,

impersonation, outing and trickery, cyberstalking, cyberthreats, and exclusion. Through the use of these frameworks, researchers may better grasp the unique patterns and behaviors of cyberbullying in Valorant games, leading to a more thorough comprehension of its presence and effects within the gaming community.

Given these considerations, it is imperative to conduct detailed investigations into the nature and prevalence of cyberbullying in gaming. Descriptive quantitative of in-game interactions, particularly in popular games like Valorant, offers a valuable approach to addressing this gap. By examining the specific contexts and forms of bullying in in-game chats, this study aims to provide actionable insights for developers, community moderators, and policymakers. Understanding how cyberbullying manifests within a game like Valorant can inform more effective interventions, ultimately fostering healthier, more inclusive digital communities. This research not only contributes to academic discourse on cyberbullying but also aligns with broader efforts to ensure that online gaming remains a space for positive social interaction and shared enjoyment.

1.2. Research Problem

Millions of players worldwide are impacted by the severe issue of cyberbullying in online gaming, particularly in highly competitive and socially interactive games like Valorant (adl.org, 2021). Because toxic conduct is widespread, diverse, and has substantial repercussions, empirical research is required to have a thorough and nuanced understanding of it. This study aims to fill in the gaps in the literature

by conducting a comprehensive descriptive quantitative of bullying behaviors in Valorant's in-game chat. This will help create more effective mitigation strategies and support inclusive, healthy gaming communities. Valorant is a unique and understudied illustration of how cyberbullying manifests in real-time, cooperative gaming settings due to its dynamic and situational gameplay (Cooney, 2020).

Thus, this research aims to address the content of *Valorant's* in-game chat. Through descriptive quantitative, this study makes two research questions: **What types of bullying types are most common in Valorant chat and how frequently does bullying occur during typical gameplay sessions?**

1.3. Research Objectives

This study aims to describe the types and the prevalence of bullying behaviours among players occur during Valorant gaming sessions.

1.4. Significances of the Study

1.4.1. Practical Significances

By identifying and classifying the several forms of cyberbullying that take place in Valorant, the study advances our understanding of cyberbullying in online gaming. This study offers developers, community moderators, and gamers useful insights by methodically examining in-game chat interactions using the prism of Willard's Taxonomy. By improving their capacity to identify the many forms of toxic behavior and carry out focused interventions, these insights hope to promote a more inclusive and healthy gaming environment.

1.4.2. Social Significances

This study adds to the body of knowledge on digital communication, online gaming culture, and cyberbullying. By placing them in the particular setting of multiplayer gaming, where anonymity, competition, and teamwork converge to form a unique social environment, it expands on current theories on cyberbullying. In addition to more general studies on cyberbullying, this focus on Valorant presents a case-specific investigation that offers complex insights into the different forms of cyberbullying that occur there.

1.4.3. Academic Significance

By using Willard's Taxonomy of Cyberbullying (2007) to methodically examine toxic behaviors in the competitive gaming environment of Valorant, this study adds to the body of knowledge on cyberbullying. Although cyberbullying has been well examined in the context of social media and educational environments, less is known about how it manifests itself in online gaming, especially when it comes to the dynamic interaction of behaviors like denigration, harassment, flaming, and cyberthreats. This study contributes to the current body of knowledge by identifying and classifying particular types of cyberbullying that are exclusive to gaming contexts by concentrating on textual exchanges inside Valorant gameplay.

1.5. Literature Review

1.5.1. Research Paradigm

This study adopts a positivistic research paradigm for its descriptive quantitative, emphasizing objectivity, systematic observation, and empirical evidence.

Positivism, rooted in the natural sciences, asserts that knowledge is derived from observable phenomena and can be measured and analyzed using rigorous methods. Within the context of this study, the positivistic paradigm is well-suited for analyzing the nature, frequency, and context of bullying behavior in *Valorant's* in-game chat interactions.

1.5.2. State of the Arts

There are several studies informing this research and the first one comes from Charles E. Notar's study "Cyberbullying: A Review of the Literature" offers a thorough analysis of cyberbullying, examining its different manifestations, origins, and effects. By emphasizing elements like anonymity, technology platforms, and the psychological distance that online environments generate, it distinguishes cyberbullying from traditional bullying. According to the study, there are various forms of cyberbullying, each with its own attack strategies and effects on victims, such as impersonation, outing, denigration, flaming and cyberharassment. The study also looks at the underlying causes of cyberbullying, including retaliation, jealousy, and the anonymity that the internet provides. Additionally, it highlights the various roles that people play in cyberbullying scenarios, such as perpetrators, victims, and bystanders, and it talks about how gender inequalities in these roles affect women, who are frequently singled out as victims and bullying is more likely to occur among men. In order to lessen the growing issue of cyberbullying, the review concludes by highlighting the necessity of efficient interventions and preventative measures. (Notar et al., 2013).

Caleb Ziems, Ymir Vigfusson, and Fred Morstatter wrote the study, "Aggressive, Repetitive, Intentional, Visible, and Imbalanced: Refining

Representations for Cyberbullying Classification", which was presented at the Fourteenth International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media (Ziems et al., 2020). By addressing the shortcomings in identifying subtle kinds of cyberbullying, it focuses on enhancing the classification of cyberbullying using a machine learning approach. The authors point out that current machine learning algorithms don't take into consideration the social context of cyberbullying, don't have enough data, and don't properly define ground truth. Five important factors aggression, repetition, harmful purpose, visibility among peers, and power imbalance are incorporated into their unique annotation framework. These elements are intended to more accurately depict the language and social components of cyberbullying. The study highlights important characteristics that are consistent with various forms of cyberbullying, especially harassment, denigration, and flaming, including the detrimental effects on victims, peer visibility, and the escalation of behaviors. Verbal abuse, offensive remarks, and deliberate provocation in online settings are frequently characteristics of these sorts.

Julia Riebel and Reinhold S. Jäger's 2009 study "Klassifikation von Cyberbullying: Eine empirische Untersuchung zu einem Kategoriensystem für die Spielarten virtueller Gewalt" offers an empirical assessment of Willard's (2006) taxonomy for categorizing cyberbullying behaviors. Using an online survey of 1,987 German students, whose average age was 13, the study looked at in-depth reports of incidents of cyberbullying in order to evaluate the taxonomy's efficacy using two standards: exhaustiveness (the taxonomy's comprehensiveness) and disjointness (the clarity of distinctions between categories). Incidents were

categorized into Willard's six categories—Flaming, Harassment, Denigration, Impersonation, Outing & Trickery, and Exclusion—based on independent assessments of 470 situational descriptions. A residual category was created for cases that did not fit into any of the six categories. In 71.5% of cases, harassment was found to be the most common type of cyberbullying, followed by denigration (15.9%), with the least amount of reports coming from flaming and exclusion. The ability of the taxonomy to capture a broad range of cyberbullying behaviors was confirmed by the fact that 97.1% of the cases were successfully classified into the predefined categories, demonstrating its high exhaustiveness. The ability of the taxonomy to capture a broad range of cyberbullying behaviors was confirmed by the fact that 97.1% of the cases were successfully classified into the predefined categories, demonstrating its high exhaustiveness. The study did, however, also draw attention to issues with disjointness, pointing out that some incidents were classified ambiguously because of overlapping behaviors, which decreased the reliability of interraters. In order to take into consideration new behaviors in digital contexts, the researchers suggested creating a new category for virtual sexual harassment and suggested improving the definitions of existing categories. (Riebel & Jäger, 2009).

The frequency and forms of cyberbullying in massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs) are examined in the paper "Virtual Warfare: Cyberbullying and Cyber-Victimization in MMOG Play" by Mary Elizabeth Ballard and Kelly Marie Welch. According to the study, 35% of participants acknowledged participating in cyberbullying, while 52% of participants said they had been the victims of such behavior. Name-calling, exclusion, and sexual harassment were common forms of

cyberbullying, and bullying was largely motivated by game rank. Additionally, the study discovered that women, particularly those who identified as LGBT, had greater rates of sexually linked victimization, while men were more likely to engage in cyberbullying. These results demonstrate how status and gender play a part in online gaming environments and emphasize the importance of investigating various forms of cyberbullying, including flaming, denigration, and sexual harassment, within the context of MMOGs.

The prevalence and effects of toxic communication in team-based competitive gaming contexts are investigated in Chu's (2022) study, *An Inventory on the Experiences and Reactions of Child and Adolescent Video Gamers to Toxic Communications and Behaviors in Team-Based Competitive Online Video Games*. The study examines the detrimental effects that popular forms of toxicity, such as flaming, harassment, denigration, and cyberthreats, have on young gamers. Chu draws attention to the normalization of these harmful practices in gaming societies, pointing out how they develop into extreme types of cyberbullying that cause long-term mental damage and interfere with social interactions. The study also shows that players have few viable options for dealing with or lessening the impacts of toxicity. Chu offers important insights into the systemic nature of toxic communication and its substantial psychological toll on young gamers in competitive online settings by examining the triggers, psychological effects, and coping strategies connected to these behaviors.(Chu, 2022)

1.5.3. Cyberbullying in Video Games

According to (Murnion et al., 2018), cyberbullying is the intentional and persistent act of causing harm to others using digital platforms, including computers, smartphones, and other electronic devices. Unfortunately, as online gaming continues to gain popularity, anti-social behaviors—often referred to as "toxic" in the gaming environment—have increased along with the social interaction within gaming groups (Kwak et al., 2015). These disruptive behaviors can include bug exploitation, chat spamming, "griefing," and cyberbullying, which frequently takes the form of harassment based on race or minority status. Victims of this destructive conduct have been found to experience a number of detrimental consequences, such as anxiety, sadness, poorer performance at work and in school, and in extreme situations, suicide thoughts.

Online gaming is one domain particularly impacted by cyberbullying (Murnion et al., 2018). Studies show that about half of online gamers have experienced some form of cyberbullying during their gaming activities. Cyberbullying within online gaming environments is a pervasive issue, with substantial evidence highlighting its widespread nature. Research by Li and Pustaka (2017) indicates that over half of young adults involved in online gaming have experienced cyberbullying either as victims or as harassers. This high prevalence underscores the entrenched nature of toxic behavior in gaming communities. (Li & Pustaka, 2017)

Certain game genres are more susceptible to cyberbullying than others. Action, role-playing, and sports games are identified as the primary genres where such behavior is most prevalent (Justin W. Patchin, 2018). These genres typically

emphasize competition, real-time interaction, and team-based objectives, which can heighten tensions and facilitate hostile exchanges among players. In *Valorant*, a tactical shooter that demands strategic coordination and communication, the competitive pressure can often lead to heightened instances of verbal abuse and harassment within in-game chats.

The competitive nature of modern online games, particularly with the rise of esports, alongside features like in-game chat and persistent player identities, fosters an environment conducive to cyberbullying (Kwak et al., 2015). The prevalence of this issue has attracted widespread attention, even making headlines in the UK when a 2017 survey by Ditch The Label revealed that 50% of young gamers reported being victims of cyberbullying (BBC News, 2017). The impacts of cyberbullying extend beyond the personal, leading to poor academic performance (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008), emotional distress (Gualdo et al., 2015). The repercussions also affect the gaming industry, where players' dissatisfaction with toxic behavior can lead to financial losses, with 22% of players in the Ditch The Label survey quitting games due to (news.sky.com, 2017). Moreover, studies highlight that cyberbullying in gaming can foster aggressive real-world behavior, social isolation, and diminished self-esteem (Fryling & Cotler, 2015). This growing issue has prompted the gaming industry, valued at over one hundred billion dollars in 2016 (Sinclair, 2016), to seek solutions to mitigate the negative effects of toxic behavior (Balci & Salah, 2014).

1.5.4. Forms of Cyberbullying in Gaming

Although there is no widely agreed-upon definition for cyberbullying in specific, it is commonly believed to be the practice of engaging in cruel or socially confrontational behavior using digital platforms (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Although some definitions place emphasis on power disparities, repetition, and malicious intent, there is ongoing debate on how these components should be interpreted in relation to online gaming. Nancy Willard, the creator of Willard's Taxonomy of Cyberbullying, claims that there are eight different types of cyberbullying. The following are examples of cyberbullying: exclusion, outing and deceit, impersonation, cyberthreats, flaming, harassment, and denigration.

By classifying these behaviors into eight different categories flaming, harassment, denigration, cyberthreats, impersonation, outing & trickery, cyberstalking, and exclusion Nancy Willard, in her seminal work on cyberbullying, offers a thorough framework for comprehending these behaviors. From overt and hostile interactions like flaming to more subtle and manipulative behaviors like impersonation or trickery, these categories capture the variety of ways that cyberbullying takes shape. From overt and violent exchanges like flaming to more subtle and manipulative acts like impersonation or trickery, these categories represent the variety of ways that cyberbullying takes shape. While harassment refers to persistent attacks intended to intimidate or degrade a person, flaming consists of short but intense interactions intended to incite rage. Conversely, denigration aims to ruin a person's reputation by disseminating inaccurate or damaging information. More subtle types, such as outing and trickery, entail betraying someone's confidence by disclosing personal information

or intentionally misleading them. By purposefully excluding someone from group activities, exclusion leads to social isolation, but cyberstalking is intrusive, ongoing monitoring intended to engender fear or anxiety.

1.6. Conceptual Definitions

Cyberbullying through text chat can be categorized into a few things and according to Willads Taxonomy of Cyberbullying (2007) there are 8 types of cyberbullying that happens in an environment like online games.

1.6.1. Flaming

Flaming refers to online fights using hostile and offensive language, usually in public forums or chat rooms. The goal of this action is to humiliate the target in front of others and these exchanges can quickly escalate as emotions run high.

1.6.2. Impersonation

Impersonation is the practice of cyberbullies posing as their targets in order to post offensive material or sabotage their friendships, frequently by using strategies like password exchanges or betraying trust. Since exchanging account information is frequently seen as a sign of genuine friendship, this conduct is especially prevalent among young people, such as teens.

1.6.3. Harassment

Harassment refers to sending repeated, offensive and hurtful messages to a target over a period of time. This type of cyberbullying is sustained and ongoing, leading to significant emotional distress for a victim.

1.6.4. Outing and Trickery

Outing is the act of disclosing personal, delicate, or embarrassing information about another person without that person's permission, usually with the intention of degrading them. Trickery is the act of deceiving someone into disclosing personal information, which is later made public in an attempt to humiliate or hurt the victim.

1.6.5. Exclusion

Exclusion is a type of cyberbullying in which an individual is purposefully excluded from an online community, game, or event. Because it isolates the person and makes them feel unwelcome or unaccepted, it can be especially harmful.

1.6.6. Cyberstalking

Using online communication technologies to harass and threaten someone repeatedly while making them feel insecure is known as cyberstalking. Cyberbullying of this kind has the potential to turn into physical threats.

1.6.7. Denigration

Posting inaccurate or damaging information about someone with the intention of damaging their relationships or reputation is known as denigration.

1.6.8. Cyberthreats

Cyberthreats refers to any action or communication that uses threatening conduct with the intention of hurting or frightening another person. Threats of bodily

violence, psychological anguish, or harm to one's reputation online or personally could fall under this category.

1.7. Operational Definitions

The operational definitions for this research use will be as the following.

1.7.1. Flaming on Valorant

Flaming in valorant includes public arguments with offensive or hostile language targeting individual players.

1. Players engaging in heated arguments and exchanging profanity in all-chat during or after matches
2. Players engaging in heated arguments and exchanging profanity in team-chat during or after matches.

1.7.2. Harassment on Valorant

Harassment in Valorant is defined by persistent targeting of a player through repetitive negative messages in game or after the game.

1. A player continuously messaging another player with insults or threats, especially across multiple rounds in the matches
2. A player continually sending repeated text chat insults or spamming messages to another player to induce frustration.

1.7.3. Outing and Trickery in Valorant

Outing and trickery here includes deception to extract personal or sensitive information and sharing it consent.

1. Players luring others into sharing real-life details in chat, then exposing that information publicly through in-game text chat.
2. Revealing another player's personal poor stats, or losses to shame them during the match via in-game text chat.

1.7.4. Exclusion in Valorant

Exclusion in valorant can be defined when someone intentionally leaves someone out of the gameplay.

1. Excluding the player in the team from their strategy or gameplan.
2. Excluding players from participating in teamwork or communication.

1.7.5. Denigration

Denigration can be defined as spreading false and damaging information to harm a player's reputation.

1. Players spreading false rumors in chat about someone being toxic to encourage others to harass or avoid them.
2. Players spreading fake allegations in in-game text chats in valorant.

1.7.6. Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking is the practice of persistently and maliciously tracking or monitoring a person online.

1. Identified when a person repeatedly directs unwanted attention toward another player during several matches using chat.

1.7.7. Impersonation

Impersonation is recognized when a player impersonates someone else in a text message to trick other people. This could entail spreading fake information or manipulating game results by using similar identities or posing as someone else.

1. "I'm the team leader, follow my instructions!" is a common way for a player to deceive others by using a username that sounds like that of a well-known teammate.

1.7.8. Cyberthreats

visible in messages that threaten another player with bodily damage, violence, or extreme intimidation, either explicitly or implicitly.

1. Threatening to harm the enemy players in real life context
2. Intimidating enemy players by bringing their personal life.

1.8. Research Method

1.8.1. Types of Research

This study uses the quantitative descriptive technique to perform a thorough examination of cyberbullying activities in Valorant. This method involves gathering numerical data from a variety of sources, including media, texts, and images, in order to quantify particular elements such as sentiment, thematic prevalence, or frequency (Franzosi, 2008). The main objective is to give a well-organized summary of the material under analysis so that inferences can be made using statistical support.

Valorant is the subject of this study because of its quick expansion and widespread use in the international online gaming community, especially its competitive and dynamic atmosphere, which makes it an ideal place to study

cyberbullying practices. Purposive sampling is used to gather the data, with a focus on competitive match in-game chat logs to guarantee a wide variety of interactions are included. Specific examples of chat content displaying hazardous behaviors are isolated from the gathered dataset, with a focus on 100 gaming sessions for in-depth examination. In order to classify and comprehend the many forms of cyberbullying behaviors found in Valorant's in-game communications, these samples are further examined using Willard's Taxonomy of Cyberbullying.

1.8.2. Sources of Data

In this study, Valorant's in-game chat will be examined with an emphasis on classifying the many forms of cyberbullying that are discussed. This study extends its focus to identifying toxic behaviors, drawing inspiration from earlier research that categorized FPS (first-person shooter) discourse into categories like creative game talk, game conflict talk, insult/distancing speak, performance talk, and game technical/external discussion. A basis for comprehending in-game dynamics is provided by the two main categories in those studies: performance talk (such as talks about kills, scores, and strategies) and game conflict talk (such as claims of cheating, camping, or player banning) (Herring et al., 2009). However, by using Willard's Taxonomy of Cyberbullying to methodically classify and examine these actions, this study focuses exclusively on the ways that cyberbullying manifests itself in Valorant's competitive and socially involved environment.

1.8.2.1. Primary Data

This research will have primary data from the analysis of text chat in real game time that contains cyberbullying in the game using descriptive quantitative for the method.

1.8.2.2. Secondary Data

Secondary data for this research will use previous journals and research to back up the primary data.

1.8.3. Sampling and Sampling Procedures

The study employs purposive sampling to select chat logs that are most relevant for analyzing bullying behaviors in *Valorant*. This non-probabilistic sampling method is chosen for its ability to target specific interactions where cyber bullying are more likely to occur. While purposive sampling does not allow for statistical generalization, its focus on specific, high-relevance data enhances the quality of data. The data for this study is sourced from 103 gaming sessions of *Valorant* during the 6th of October 2024 to the 26th of October 2024, providing an adequate sample of in-game interactions.

1.8.4. Data Collection

The researcher will collect the data by participating in online gaming activities in *Valorant* and will analyze the chat logs in each match. Then Chat logs are collected from in-game interactions in *Valorant*, focusing on text-based communication. The data is sourced from player-provided chat transcripts, in compliance with privacy and consent. To ensure a representative sample, data is

collected across diverse player ranks and game modes, including competitive and casual matches.

1.8.5. Data Analysis

The frequency and prevalence of bullying behaviors are quantified, providing a numerical overview of the cases. Descriptive statistical method is applied to identify patterns of bullying in Valorant gaming.

A coding framework is developed to systematically classify chat interactions. Each chat entry is coded based on predefined bullying categories (Purdy et al., 2024). To enhance reliability, two coders are employed, and inter-coder reliability is assessed using statistical measures of Cohen's Kappa.

1.8.6. Goodness Criteria

Steps were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis. Validity is achieved by cross-referencing bullying definitions with established literature, while reliability is maintained through consistent coding protocols and inter-coder reliability. By establishing the findings' foundation in a methodical descriptive quantitative of in-game chat conversations, credibility is established. The dynamics inside the gaming environment are accurately reflected in the patterns of cyberbullying behaviors that have been uncovered thanks to this methodical methodology. The research ensures that its findings are solid and reliable by carefully gathering and examining chat logs, providing important information about the kinds and frequency of hazardous interactions that take place in Valorant. Goodness criteria offer an essential foundation to guarantee the

study's rigor and dependability in the context of this investigation into cyberbullying activities in Valorant (Marshall, 1989).

The utilization of many data sources and the cross-referencing of results with well-established theoretical frameworks, including Willard's (2007) Taxonomy of Cyberbullying, enhance the study's credibility. This method guarantees that the interpretations are solid and reliable in addition to improving the outcomes' dependability (Willard, 2007). The study's validity is reinforced and a thorough grasp of the frequency and varieties of cyberbullying behaviors in Valorant is provided by the meticulous alignment of empirical data from in-game chat analysis with Willard's framework.

Another important factor in this study is transferability. Although Valorant gaming is the study's specific focus, other online multiplayer games with comparable competitive and cooperative dynamics may exhibit similar patterns and forms of cyberbullying activities, such as denigration, harassment, and flaming. The findings are valuable beyond the immediate scope of this study because of their broad application, providing insights that may guide treatments and moderation tactics in a variety of international gaming situations.

A consistent methodological approach to the analysis of cyberbullying behaviors in Valorant ensures the reliability of this research. The study guarantees that comparable results would probably be reached if it were reproduced by using a methodical and well-defined descriptive quantitative approach. A solid foundation is created by using Willard's Taxonomy of Cyberbullying as a coding guide and a transparent, repeatable research process, which guarantees that the results will hold up over time.

Lastly, by reducing researcher bias through open and methodical data processing techniques, confirmability is preserved. The study guarantees that its conclusions are impartial and unaffected by other influences by firmly establishing them in the chat log data and following Willard's Taxonomy of Cyberbullying. The research is a trustworthy and impartial addition to the field of online gaming and digital communication because of this dedication to impartiality, which guarantees that the findings appropriately reflect the observed occurrences of cyberbullying behaviors.