

DO STUDENTS FACED WITH CYBERBULLYING? A SURVEY AMONG UiTM STUDENTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that occurs through technological means, such as social networking, instant messaging, and emails. Cyberbullying has emerged of late as a severe issue, especially among the most active internet users in Malaysia, which is the students. Nowadays, people use the Internet and information technology tools in most of their daily lives. In a positive sense, it has become a popular tool for socialising as people, especially the young generation, can interact with their friends to share regular activities without any restrictions (Lenhart, 2015). The Internet and information technology tools, however, are often negatively used. Cyberbullying is one of the activities that harm social networks online. Many people are unaware of being abused and verbally attacked by social networks online. Most of them are unaware of what they are experiencing as a form of cyberbullying, especially young people and children who have access to the internet at an early age (Zainudin et al., 2016).

Cyberbullying is defined as an act of aggression committed intentionally and persistently using electronic means such as e-mails, text messages, and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn (Ndiege, 2020). Although bullying and cyberbullying are often comparable, they usually have several variations in type and technique. Cyberbullying, unlike conventional bullying, makes it possible for the perpetrator to hide his or her identity behind a screen. This secrecy makes it possible for the victim to strike blows against the victim without seeing the physical reaction of the victim (Aboujaoude & Starcevic, 2015). Cyberbullying can take on a variety of forms, including the use of written or verbal bullying; a visual form, which includes attacks made through the posting of compromising pictures and impersonation, which refers to the use of identity theft, such as revealing someone's personal information through their accounts and exclusion, which occurs when someone is purposefully excluded from a social group. (Brody & Vangelisti, 2017).

An article entitled *We Must Draw the Line with Cyberbullying* published by the News Straits Times in 2020 mentioned that the risks of cyberbullying lie in the inequalities that the internet offers the attacker, such as the control of privacy, limited opportunities for escape for victims, and the reality that cyberbullying is not limited to time and space. For example, there was a fatality in May when a cyber-bullying case resulted in the suicide of a 20-year-old girl in Penang who was alleged to have been mentally tormented on social media sites (Ameera, 2020). Furthermore, 266 cyber-bullying incidents were reported in 2018 compared to 292 in 2017, according to Cyber999 Help Centre, which Cybersecurity Malaysia manages (Bernama, 2019). Most of those cyber-bullying incidents reported to Cyber999 included people who kept false accounts, individuals who were bullied, harassed, and humiliated online by fellow social media users. Several cyberbullying studies have been conducted in Malaysia, but studies on

the link of factors influencing cyberbullying are limited. For instance, Abaido (2019) sought to explore the pervasiveness of cyberbullying among university students, and Khine (2020) studied the association between students' socio-demographic characteristics, adverse events following cyberbullying, and cyberbullying victimization. Despite this research, there is a relatively small amount of quantitative and qualitative scientific information on this issue in the literature. As many aspects of cyberbullying in Malaysia remain unknown, many questions arise. Therefore, a study is conducted at UiTM Seremban to narrow this gap by identifying whether students faced any cyberbullying or not. Moreover, the study aims to examine whether there is any relationship between the use of the internet and social media, relationship with family, attitude, and peers' influence towards cyberbullying behaviour. The findings of this study may be helpful for parents, university authorities, counseling, and internet service providers to prepare further actions in preventing cyberbullying from happening in the future.

2. METHODOLOGY

This cross-sectional study was conducted from September 2020 to August 2021 among students from 3 faculties: Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy, Faculty of Computer and Mathematical, and Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation. The total population of students in UiTM Seremban is 5573 students. 361 respondents were chosen from the entire population based on the sample size suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The study employed the Stratified Sampling technique whereby the students were divided into several strata and randomly selected using the formula. The questionnaire consists of 5 parts, namely the use of the internet and social media, attitude, relationship with family, peers' influence, and cyberbullying behaviour. The online survey was done to the targeted respondents due to the pandemic Covid-19. All the items in the questionnaire were checked for validity and reliability before data collection. The questionnaire consists of 7 sections with a total of 49 questions. The data were analysed using SPSS version 22. The study employed descriptive analysis to obtain frequency and percentage to answer the research objectives. Also, Pearson correlational analysis was used to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Experience of Cyberbullying

Table 1 presents an experience of cyberbullying among students. Findings revealed that most respondents, 298 (82.5 percent), did not face any cyberbullying. However, only a small percentage of them (7.2 percent, 63 respondents) were faced with cyberbullying. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the students in UiTM were not engaged with cyberbullying. It demonstrates that cyberbullying is not a big issue among university students at UiTM Seremban. As for those who experienced cyberbullying, the findings indicate that the respondents with a total of 44 (12.2 percent) were bullied once a month. 7 respondents (1.9 percent) stated that they were bullied once a week, whereas another 6 (1.7 percent) respondents were bullied twice a month. Only 1 (0.3 percent) of respondents were bullied daily. The findings conclude that most of the students were bullied at least once a month. Based on the results, only 7.2 percent of respondents admitted to being a victim of cyberbullying. The findings contradicted a study conducted by Lai et al. (2017). 66 percent of 712 students surveyed by academicians at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia reported being cyberbullied.

In another study conducted by Morin (2019), findings reported that 23 percent of adolescents report being bullied twice or more in a month. A survey by Peled (2019) discovered that more than half of the undergraduate students had experienced cyberbullying at least once during their time in college. Apart from that, they were faced with cyberbullied because of the positive attention from their peers, which makes the bullies jealous, hence bullying them. According to the study, students with high grades made the bully feel insecure and chose to force them. Another reason cyberbullying occurs was that the bully felt dissatisfied with them and wanted to seek revenge. This finding is consistent with Kalender et al. (2019). Studies indicated that more than half of the students thought that revenge, gaining attention, showing strength, for fun, and being jealous was the reason for people to commit cyberbullying. The findings support the study was done by Wang et al. (2019) that found some of the perpetrators were jealous of the victims' athletics or educational success. The findings indicated that most students were bullied because they were aware of their weaknesses and exploited them.

Table 1: Experience of Cyberbullying

| Question | Answer | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Do you face any cyberbullying? | Yes | 63 | 17.5 |
| | No | 298 | 82.5 |
| How often do you being bullied? | Daily | 1 | 0.3 |
| | More than twice a week | 5 | 1.4 |
| | Once a week | 7 | 1.9 |
| | Twice a month | 6 | 1.7 |
| | Once a month | 44 | 12.2 |
| If yes, why are you being bullied? | Because I get a lot of positive attention from my peers who make the bullies feel jealous | 14 | 3.9 |
| | Because the bully wants to be popular and hurting me to make them feel powerful | 6 | 1.7 |
| | Because the bully was dissatisfied with me, and they want to seek revenge | 11 | 3.0 |
| | Because the bully knows my weakness and use it to cyberbully me | 20 | 5.5 |
| | Because I got good grades which makes the bully feel insecure with me | 12 | 3.3 |

3.2 The Relationship between The Use of the Internet and Social Media, Attitude, Relationship with Family, and Peers' Influence towards Cyberbullying Behaviour

The findings of Pearson Correlation analysis revealed that the use of the internet and social media ($r = 0.438$), attitude ($r = 0.490$), relationship with family ($r = 0.421$), and peers' influence ($r = 0.415$) were found to be significantly associated with cyberbullying behaviour among students (Table 2).

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Analysis

| | | Cyberbullying Behaviour |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| The use of the internet and social media | Pearson Correlation | 0.438** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 |
| | N | 361 |
| Attitude | Pearson Correlation | 0.490** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 |
| | N | 361 |
| Relationship with family | Pearson Correlation | 0.421 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 |
| | N | 361 |
| Peers' influence | Pearson Correlation | 0.415 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 |
| | N | 361 |

Based on the findings, the study shows a significant and positive relationship between the use of the internet and social media, attitude, relationship with family, and peer's influence towards cyberbullying behaviour. Each variable has a relationship with cyberbullying behaviours, as found in this study. The internet and social media are integral parts of people's daily lives in the modern era. Apart from that, Handono et al. (2019) revealed that individuals who spend excessive time on the internet have a greater risk of engaging in cyberbullying conduct. Additionally, other research has established a link between the internet and social media use and the chance of engaging in cyberbullying behavior (Craig et al., 2020). As a result of the internet's broad reach, social media exposes young people to risks for involvement in cyber-bullying and more aggressive online behaviors. The victims were always available due to the convenience of cyberspace access at all hours of the day.

The study discovered a significant and positive correlation between attitudes toward cyberbullying behaviour. Positive attitudes toward cyberbullying have proved to be a strong predictor of cyberbullying behaviour. The result from this research also aligned with some previous studies that found attitude toward cyberbullying had a significant relationship with cyberbullying behavior (Barlett & Chamberlin, 2017). Additionally, the study confirmed and corroborated Auemanekul et al.'s (2019) finding that an optimistic attitude toward cyberbullying affected the intention to commit cyberbullying behaviours. Additionally, the study's findings indicated a significant and positive relationship between family relationships and cyberbullying behaviours. The result for family relationships was consistent with Marret and Choo's (2017) findings that students who have witnessed a high level of parental conflict are significantly more likely to be cyber victims. Other studies conducted by Martinez et al. (2018) showed that specific family variables are predictors of cyberbullying both regarding victims as well as bullies. The finding revealed that students perceived the existence of commitment and mutual support between family members and the perception regarding the degree to which family members freely express their feelings act as a protective factor against cyber victimization.

The result from the independent variable, peer influence, corroborates Piccoli et al. (2020) finding that revealed that support of the group peer norms influenced students' tendency to engage in cyberbullying. Moreover, the conclusions of this study supported previous research from Heirman & Walrave (2012), which indicated that when students faced negative

social pressure from significant others, they were less likely to engage in cyberbullying. Students who believed their friends support risky online behaviour were more likely to engage in risky online behaviour themselves, increasing their vulnerability to cybercrime.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, cyberbullying continues to be a significant issue among students in public universities. Students were involved in this unethical behaviour because they are engaging with social media. Fortunately, most of the students in UiTM Seremban did not face any severe forms of cyberbullying, whereas some experienced it. This study managed to contribute and narrow down the gap by demonstrating the influence of several factors on cyberbullying behaviour. The elements are known to be the Internet and social media, attitude, relationship with family, and peers' influence. The study further concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. This study has suggested several recommendations, including parental monitoring, cyber education, counseling, media awareness and campaigning, and, most importantly, internet service providers' critical role in responding to cyberbullying issues and preventing cyberbullying among the young generation.

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