

Risk and Protecting Factors of Cyberbullying in Malaysia: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

Technology communication allowed the increased number of users over the internet. Each user is able to communicate with each other's via mobile phone, notebook and any platform as long as connected with the internet. Therefore, they do not have to use a physical interaction while communicating. However, the development of application such as Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp etc. resulted in positive and negative effects for victims, Perpetrators, Parents and Stakeholders. This leaves a gap that needs to be addressed since there is a limited model that explains how to prevent cyberbullying. This study aims to identify the risk factor and protecting factor used in cyberbullying. Methodology: This study was conducted using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Thus, this study provides a gap of study for existing work of cyberbullying for risk factors that contribute to cyberbullying and analyse the protection factor of cyberbullying. Based on this study, we found that communication skills, parental involvement and law enforcement are a necessity to reduce the number of cyberbullying in Malaysia.

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1.0 Introduction

An advance of communication network allowed the increased number of users over the internet. Each user communicates with the other that does not use a physical interaction. Therefore, there are many application platform technologies developed including Facebook and other social media application that connect the user with virtual communication. However, the development of application is may consist of two usages, positive and negative usage by user. This has resulted in the behaviour of cyberbullying increasing rapidly due to the population of people and usage of application platforms (Mustafa & Hamzah, 2010).

According to Tan, et. al., (2020), the report by MCMC, 10,406 complaints are received from the year 2016 to September 2020. The complaints include cyberbullying, sexual harassment, threats and the abuse of personal details to defame an individual. Cyberbullying is defined as perpetrators will looking to the predators with or without an intention or as a fun game as well as making sure themselves is happy. They ignored future effects for themselves, predators and family. Therefore, analysed of cyberbullying is an essential process in identifying the risk and factors of cyberbullying.

This paper identifies two findings for cyberbullying. The first findings reveal risk factors of cyberbullying. The second's findings focus on the protection factor of cyberbullying. Therefore, a gap of study for existing work of cyberbullying for risk factors that contribute to cyberbullying and the protecting factor of cyberbullying is presented. The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 describes the background of the study. This is followed by Section 3, problem statements. Next, Section 4 describes survey literature. Then, Section 5 presents the methodology used in this study. Section 6 presents the results of the study. Next, Section 7 depicted the discussion of the overall finding that presents a description of appropriate works of cyberbullying together with its comparative analysis. Lastly, Section 8 is of this paper ends with a conclusion and future work.

2.0 Background

Cyberbullying can be defined as intentionally aggressive behaviour that is repeatedly carried out in an online context against a person who cannot easily defend him or herself (Kowalski et al., 2012) (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012). According to Smith et al. (2008), cyberbullying is an aggressive intentional act carried out via the Internet to bring discomfort to someone that caused hurt and embarrass someone inappropriately on the Internet (Kowlaski et al., 2008).

Cyberbullying is a contemporary pandemic, a crime known to be associated with the use of technology. It is resulted in a negative psychological effect for both the victim and perpetrator long into adulthood including their behaviour, attitudes and contributes to suicide. Hence, the country must reduce the significant number of cyberbullying that can affect the criminal factor.

Furthermore, cyberbullying has vast experience to the predators of cyberbullying as they have affected and risk of cyberbullying; hence, they have the potential to negatively impact cyberbullying. In this respect, we feel that there is a need for empowerment initiatives to prevent cyberbullying. Many research studies focus on issues related to the efficacy of cyberbullying. However, developing the model to prevent cyberbullying is limited.

3.0 Problem Statement

According to the Malaysian Multimedia Communication Commission (MCMC) from 2016 till 2020, many complaints were received involving cyberbullying cases. Mass media has been misused as it has many negative effects on consumers. For this case, it encourages Cyberbullying, particularly in school children, adolescents, and youths. Cyberbullying has been labelled as “a new violence type of the era” (Turan et al., 2011). Juvonen and Gross (2008) defined cyberbullying as using digital communication tools to insult or threaten someone. The perpetrators can contact the victim via the internet 24 hours a day and send unpleasant emails, texts, or disseminate falsehoods online, which can reach a bigger audience than conventional bullying. Therefore, there is a need for victims to keep consistency avoid cyberbullying victims. In this case, consistency from cyberbullying victims depends on the person to realize the kinds of cyberbullying. Hence, the country must find a way to reduce the significant number of cyberbullying victims. Although it is crucial to reduce the number of cyberbullying victims, factors contributing to reducing cyberbullying are still lacking. As such, there is a need to explore the factors that contribute to protecting against cyberbullying, especially in the Malaysian context.

Cyberbullying victims who are mainly victims of the internet have experience as they lack communications skills in internet usage such as email, social media platform etc. In this respect, there is a need for empowerment to protect the victims of cyberbullying occupied their effective communication skills so that the victims is not being simply cyberbullied by perpetrators. Failure to provide communication skills lead to issues related to depression (Mawardah et al., 2018)(Al-Rahmi et al.,2020)(Simon,2019) (Marrett and Choo, 2017)(Ghazali et al., 2020) and hard to trust(Mawardah et. al, 2018) (Marrett and Choo, 2017)(Ghazali et al., 2020).

Furthermore, parents play a key role in ensuring that their children utilise online services responsibly and safely, as part of a whole-of-community response to cyberbullying. In a study by Patchin (2018), a victim of cyberbullying reported cyberbullying to a parent telling a parent about an online bullying incident with approximately 52% of young people. In this case, protecting cyberbullying require family intervention with start from children development is still lacking. For instance, during the development of children, children are exposed to things that they are unaware when communicating with the internet. Without proper guidance may lead children doing incorrect activities. Therefore, parents' involvement in the safe use of technology starts from a child's first use are crucial. They are a critical part of ensuring their teenage children's responsible and safe use of online services.

Most of the number of cyberbullying is increased from time to time due to the increase of internet users. Therefore, the perpetrators believe the law against cyberbullying is not being

enforced seriously. In this case, perpetrators will actively attack the victims with the skills and knowledge they have. According to several media reports in Malaysia, cyberbullying is common among children and young people, although most of it may go unreported because most people are unaware that it has become a severe issue (Eek, 2009).

4.0 Related Work

There have been several works on the factor effect of cyberbullying. In this section, the existing factors that describe the meta-analysis for affect and protecting cyberbullying are presented.

4.1 The risk factor of effects of cyberbullying

There are many studies conducted on factors of the effect of cyberbullying. Mawardah et al., (2018), studied the factor of cyberbullying in local university students. This study aimed to analyse the kinds of cyberbullying that happens and factors that contributed to cyberbullying. They found that factors of cyberbullying consist of anger, frustration, depression, disturbance, ashamed, retaliation, hard to trust others and low confidence by the predators. They concluded that cyberbullying crimes are rising among students, but the victims usually do not care much, and they chose not to take any action. Based on their study, the highest of feelings after being bullied are retaliation, anger and disturbed still contribute to the factor of cyberbullying. However, it also found that there is no effects factor of cyberbullying but cyberbullying could be considered as a serious factor.

Al-Rahmi et al., (2019) constructed a model that effecting to cyberbullying behaviour among University students. The constructed model executes the use of social media use, cyber engagement, cyber harassment, cyberstalking and cyberbullying. They concluded that social media use and cyber engagement amplify cyberbullying. Social media and cyber engagement play in everyday life to mitigate the negative effects associated with cyberbullying, cyber harassment, and cyberstalking. On the other hand, they found roughly more than half of students indicated they had been bullied, harassed, and stalked online. Therefore, the predators or victims of cyberbullying are lead contribute to anger, ashamed and retaliation risks factor.

(Simon, 2017) studied the cyber victimization school experience in Malaysia. Most of the findings issues of this study of predators are coming from family issues, tolerance, gang up, physical appearance and jealousy. The reactive behaviour of school encourages also the uncooperative, passive, inappropriate and ineffective of students or children in a school. These issues are led to depression and anxiety in children in a school that contributes to the risk factors of cyberbullying.

(Marrett & Choo, 2017) conducted the study of factors associated with online victimization among Malaysian adolescents. They concluded that boys experienced more frequent online harassment compared with girls but there is no significant data found gender for unwanted sexual solicitation. Besides, these findings also found that online perpetration encourages risk behaviour for the prevalent in boys with higher odds of frequent online victimization.

(Hayati et al., 2020) presented a study to determine the predictors of cyberbullying among youths in Malaysia. They managed to identify the gap that influences several predictors of cyberbullying among youth. The finding of this study found that ECB (Encourage Cyberbullying), loneliness, self-esteem, and empathy have influenced cyberbullying. In addition, they also found that male is more prominent than female in cyberbullying.

(Wan et al., 2018) studied for the student who has social media account and stayed in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The study found that issues of experienced flaming and stalking type of cyberbullying with resulted in the number of experienced. Thus, the risk factor of cyberbullying contributes are included emotional and psychological distress.

4.2 The protection factor of cyberbullying

A study by (Saharrudin et al., 2019), to identify the engagement of the youth involved in cyberbullying. The research finds that youth prevent cyberbullying in form of the block user in social media. They suggest that all the parties including parents, teachers, educators and communities create a positive social environment to prevent cyberbullying.

Next, (Sivabalan et al., 2020) studied work to determine the prevalence of cyberbullying among Malaysian adolescents and its association to gender, internet use pattern and offline bullying. He found that behavioural intervention and communication skills must integrate with online social media experiences and are primarily adopted in cyberbullying prevention. However, he reported that social status and support, parental involvement, mental health and substance abuse are excluded but exist in others studies.

Further, another work by (Simon, 2017), investigated issues among school children and teenagers and addresses the motives and causes of cyberbullying. This study provided a guide to prevent cyberbullying. Based on findings related to the issues, they come out this study with several recommendations such as school teachers, parents and teenagers preparing to tackle cyberbullying together with communication skills, counselling session treatment and law enforcement and other regulatory agencies to overcome cyberbullying.

The study by (Marret & Choo, 2017) summarizes the factors associated with online victimisation among Malaysian adolescents. The result of this study online and offline perpetrations was associated with an increase in the risk of victimisation. Both of them suggest that interventions to prevent online electronic should conduct by skills in communication and decision-making. They also added that healthcare professionals are aware of the victims in adolescents. Based on these findings, the prevention of cyberbullying on communication skills is a necessity to reduce the number of cyberbullying whether it can be conducted offline or online.

Another work by (Ghazali et al., 2017) studied the qualitative perspective among Malaysian Youth Perception on Cyberbullying. The perception of cyberbullying studied such as comprehension of it, sources of their knowledge, examples that they know, the reasons for youth involvement in cyberbullying and their suggestions on how to prevent cyberbullies. Based on

this finding, they recommended that cyberbully to have police reports and block who cyberbullies them or confront their cyber bullies through face-to-face interaction. Thus, it led to enhancing and reducing cyberbullying cases.

As work by (Adebayo, 2020), they studied the relationship between the demographic factor and cyberbullying experience. According to their findings, gender and programme of study is a positive perception of cyberbullying experience. They recommend effective counselling be introduced to assist victims of cyber assaults to overcome the trauma suffered, and also stem the wave of cyberbullying among undergraduates.

5.0 Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research methodology. We have conducted the SLR based on the original guidelines as proposed by (Barbara Kitchenham, 2007). The SLR consists of three phases, which are (1) Planning the SLR, (2) Conducting review and (3) Reporting the review. For planning, we initialise the terms and functional of cyberbullying for its factor, issues and protection factors. Here, Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcomes and Context criteria (PICOC) to structure the research questions from (Barbara Kitchenham, 2007). The data was gathered using the document search technique from IEEE Xplore, ScienceDirect, Springer, Scopus, Google Scholar, and the ACM Digital Library. Then, data extraction and quality assessments are constructed to elicit data from the primary studies. Finally, we report the extraction data of seven papers that were taken into account to construct the answers to the two RQs. Kitchenham guidelines are widely followed while prepare this Systematic literature review report.

6.0 Result

The results of related work, we comprise in two parts as described as below.

6.1 Analyses of the risk factor of cyberbullying and its issues

We compare the six existing works related to the risk factor of cyberbullying and issues. Six existing works reported from the result of SLR that focus on the risk factor of cyberbullying. The comparison features are based on the attributes of risk factors related to the issues caused the cyberbullying in Malaysia and purposes in the risk factor of cyberbullying as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The analysis of the risk factors of cyberbullying and its issues

Year / Author	Risks factors											Issues							
	Angry	Frustrated	Harassment	Sexual	Depressed	Stressed	Disturbed	Ashamed	Anxious	Retaliation	Hard to trust	Less Confident	Emotional	Family	Tolerance	Ganging up	Physical	Loneliness	ECB

Mawardah et. al (2018)	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓								
Al-Rahmi et al. (2019)	✓						✓		✓											
Simon (2019)					✓			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Marrett and Choo (2017)					✓				✓			✓								
Ghazali et al.(2020)									✓							✓	✓	✓		
Wan et al.(2018)						✓					✓						✓			
Total	2	1	0	0	3	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1

Table 1 analyses the factor related to the risks and issues of cyberbullying in Malaysia. Based on the analysis, we found that depression and hard to trust others are most of the factors that contribute to the risk of cyberbullying. It is followed by anger, disturbed, anxiety and retaliation with two studies. In addition, this study finds these risks are existed due to issues of family problems, loneliness and ECB (Encourage Cyberbullying). It is also occurred of the tolerances, ganging up, physical appearances that took minimum that researcher study.

6.2 Analyses the protection factor of cyberbullying

We compare the seven existing works related to protecting factor of cyberbullying from the result of SLR for our second analysis of this study. The comparison features are based on the purposes attributes of the prevention factor of cyberbullying of Malaysia as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The analysis of protecting factors of cyberbullying

Author(Year)	Protection factors									
	Behavioural	Parental Involvement	Communication skills	Professional counselling session	Mental health expert	Decision making	Police report	Block	Policy/Legislation /Law	Exhibition and Talks
Saharrudin et al (2019).	✓	✓	✓					✓		
Sivabalan et al.(2020)	✓		✓							
Simon (2019)			✓	✓					✓	
Marrett and Choo (2017)			✓			✓				
Ghazali et al.(2017)							✓	✓		
Adebayo (2020)			✓			✓				

Rose (2019)										✓
Total	2	0	5	1	2	1	1	2	1	1

Table 2 analyses the factor related to preventing cyberbullying. As illustrated in Table 2, the finding of this study, communication skill is found as the most used to prevent the cyberbullying with took five research and followed by behavioural, mental health expert and blocking involves two research. The rest of this study, professional counselling session treatment, decision making, policy/legislation /law, and exhibition and talk takes one study by the researcher. Based on these analyses, there are limited studies about parental involvement in Malaysia but it was found by other studies.

In summary, there are several works done to prevent cyberbullying using a various number of factors and also the method/techniques. However, most of the work is still immature and the number of cyberbullying still increase risks of cyberbullying such as depression and hard to trust others.

For protecting cyberbullying, parental involvement is limited and the most concern to prevent and invent cyberbullying. To overcome the problems defined above, many factors are identified and developed to enhance cyberbullying. However, according to the existing study, there is a necessity for enhancements on the model that helps in the prevention of cyberbullying specifically in the Malaysian context.

7.0 Discussion

These analyses are discussed with the risk and protecting factor of cyberbullying as described in this sub-section below.

7.1 Analyses of the risk factor of cyberbullying and its issues

Depression

Depression is a risk factor that can contribute to cyberbullying. For this reason, being bullied during childhood can lead to emotional depression as an adult (Olweus, 1993)(Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Hawker et al. (2000) discussed how depression resulted when activities related to peer harassment. In this case, it would involve the victim of cyberbullying as a target, but also from the perpetrator. Studies show the possibility of a victim developing and encouraging depressive symptoms is particularly higher when the cyberbully is unknown, due to the lack of control (Huang and Chou, 2010).

Hard to trust

Hard to trust another factor that can contribute to cyberbullying. Dehue et al. (2008) examined that cyberbullying allowed distrust of people. For this case, they mention categories of reaction to cyberbullying such as “*I don’t trust other boys and girls anymore.*”. It also supported by Li (2010) that many students have expressed their distrust of others, particularly adults in schools such as “I do not trust other people” that require trustworthy relationships among students and

adults in schools and beyond. As claimed by Choo (2016), who identified with increasing hard to trust with peers resulted in socially anxious due to lost source of social support.

7.2 Analyses the protecting factor of cyberbullying

Communication skills

Communication skills are a necessity and crucial for protecting children and adults from cyberbullying. For this, communication skills can be adopted through cyberbullying protection with social media experience (Sivabalan, 2020). Without providing proper communication skills, there is an analysis communication over social media would indicate youth who are or have been part of a gang as studied by Patton et al. (2019). For example, communication skills on the internet make use of e-mail, mobile 'phone and text messaging, digital photography, instant messaging, personal websites, chat rooms, blogs and social networking sites resulted cyberbullying as claimed by (Epsom college in Malaysia, 2018). Thus, lack of good communication skills allowed the misuse of it and confidence to victimise others. Zhong et. al (2021) studied college students with digital communication and collaboration capabilities by providing supervising and controlling the time and space of communication to strictly manage their social networks and collaborations to protect cyberbullying incidents. Facilitate the youth with skills in communication able to protect from victimisation and evolve with the development of new technologies (Mitchell, 2013).

Parental involvement

Parents play a vital role in preventing cyberbullying activities (Saharrudin, 2019) due to current technologies it is hard to control users over the internet. For this case, parent involvement is crucial that should monitor and supervise their children during conducting internet usage. To protect children from cyberbullying must be identified quickly so they could receive support services and the culprit must be immediately caught. In another work by Bauman (2011), he claimed that parents should know the usage of modern internet technology so that they know their children communicate the internet and indicated cyberbullying at early. Therefore, parent involvement is a mandatory and crucial factor to ensure their children do not participate whether in perpetrators or predators.

Law

Law enforcement must take a proactive approach to cyberbully. The rules are designed to protect the victim and keep the case information private. For example, Malaysia already had several regulations in place to protect children from abuse and exploitation, as all kinds of pornography not particularly child pornography are illegal in the country. Thus, laws prohibiting obscenity, pornography, or immorality, in general, have been utilised to apprehend child pornographers (Jalil, 2019). According to New Straits Times (2016), due to deficiencies in Malaysian legislation for child protection laws and enforcement, just approximately 6% of child sex offenders were convicted for their crimes and enforcement in Malaysia.

8.0 Conclusion

An advance of communication network allowed the increased number of users over the internet that communicates with each other can be made without requiring a physical interaction. Therefore, there are many application platform technologies developed such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, and social media application that connect to the user with virtual communication. This is communication may result in positive and negative effects for victims, Perpetrators, Parents and Stakeholders. The methodology of this study was conducted using Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Therefore, this paper provides a gap of study for existing work of cyberbullying for risk factors that contribute to cyberbullying and also to analyse the protection factor of cyberbullying that exist in current studies and for research purposes. We report our findings from the review and analysis of different studies. The strengths and weaknesses provide an understanding of the limitations of the existing studies. We can summarise that the current existing work still lacking and need further enhancements.

In future works, we plan to develop a model based on these findings and results followed an approach to enhance and minimise the number of cyberbullying in Malaysia. This model and an approach would assist victims, Predators, Parents and Stakeholders to enhance cyberbullying.

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