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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNET USAGE AND CYBERBULLYING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

Malaysia is recorded as the 9th country in the world in terms of active users of social media. Almost 80% of the total population of this country spends about 8 hours a day browsing the internet. The enforcement of the Movement Control Order (PKP) in 2020 saw a drastic increase in the traffic flow of internet usage by 32% nationwide. However, there are a few parties who abuse digital platforms by getting involved in cyberbullying activities to attract public attention and have fun on social media. Thus, this study aims to analyze the relationship between the duration of internet use and signs of cyberbullying on social media. The study was conducted using a survey design by adopting the quantitative method. A set of online questionnaires (Google Form) was distributed to 436 respondents in Melaka, and the data obtained were analyzed through SPSS 23.0 software. The study findings concluded a significant difference in the mean score of cyberbullying behavior according to the duration of internet use ((f = 8.857); ($p < 0.05$). In addition to exercising self-control in social contacts, especially online, all parties must collaborate to build a secure and peaceful digital ecology.

Keywords: Communication, cyberbullying, digital, internet, social media

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1. Introduction

Information and communication technology has advanced thanks to the Industrial Revolution 4.0 quickly. (ICT). The development of several online programs and social media websites have improved human lives. The quality of human life has significantly improved due to the Internet. This service offers quick and straightforward access to a more excellent range of information. Each person can broaden their social network across borders while increasing their knowledge. Social media allows for accessible communication between all parties, creating more possibilities and potential to advance various areas, including work, business, and education. The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has given rise to numerous cutting-edge internet technological trends that affect people's daily routines. According to Singh and Prajina (2013), it is difficult to avoid using the internet in the present period since people are so dependent on it.

However, this development implicitly has detrimental effects on virtual residents, mainly when facilities are used for illegal actions against Islamic law, civil law, and commercial ethics. Cyberbullying, the spread of untrue information, libel and misinformation, and online transaction fraud are a few. In addition, there has been more online abuse due to people's greater reliance on the internet for communication and commercial transactions due to the government's Movement Control Order (MCO) enforcement during the COVID-19 epidemic. The MCO, which went into effect on March 18, 2020, has helped Malaysians adopt a new norm that includes using social media and online applications for various requirements and objectives. Since the MCO's introduction, the demand for broadband has dramatically increased, according to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (2020), as more and more work-related activities, education, conferences, and meetings are being held at home. Internet traffic flow increased due to compliance with the MCO adopted by 23.5 percent nationwide during the first week of MCO and then by 8.6 percent during the second week.

1.1. Internet Usage Among Youth in Malaysia

Based on the Youth Societies and Youth Development Act (Amendment) 2019 (Act 668), in Malaysia, youths are defined as aged between 15 and 30. According to the record published by the Department of Statistics Malaysia, the youth population in Malaysia was about 14.9 million in 2020, making up 46.5% of the country's total population. In addition, 76.9% of internet users in Malaysia, or about 24.5 million people, are 15 to 40 years old (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2020). The data concluded that the rate of individuals using the internet in Malaysia is indirectly proportional to age. This finding means the majority of internet users are from the younger population. It was found most of them spend an average of 5 and 8 hours on the internet, where 93.3% of them use the internet to surf social media such as Facebook (91.7%), Instagram (63.1%), Whatsapp (98.7%), and Youtube (80.6%).

Although only 47% of internet users feel safe on social media, the rest perceive digital platforms as at risk of being exposed to cyber threats if they do not remain vigilant. According to Omar et al. (2019), when it comes to the youth group, they are indeed on the journey to explore their own identity. This situation requires them to communicate with those around them. However, such unbridled

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interactions put them vulnerable to exposure to unethical practices on social media. There are nine types of cybercrime, including content-related crimes, cyber harassment, denial of service, fraud, intrusion, attempt at the intrusion, harmful conduct, and vulnerability report, according to a study by Cyber Security Malaysia (2020). The Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 [Act 588], the Computer Crimes Act 1997 [Act 563], the Sedition Act 1948 [Act 15], the Defamation Act 1957 [Act 286], and the Penal Code [Act 574] are some of the laws that the government has put in place to control the usage of social media.

1.2. Cyberbullying on Social Media

Social media is a public forum where anyone can post remarks. Users can share their opinions on a wide range of topics, from frivolous ones like entertainment and sports to important ones like those involving politics, economics, and religion. Unfortunately, some users disregard proper conversational etiquette and communication ethics. They are free to comment on other users' accounts without regard for manners or decency, even if the critics are strangers to the point where they impugn the victim's honor and reputation. Similar to how users can distribute false information, defamation, and gossip quickly and widely when too much information is available. Such behavior has adverse effects on other people's reputations. Cyberbullying is described as using technologically-based communications, such as mobile phones, emails, instant messaging, and social networks, to subject a person to harassment and intimidation through online messages or expressions (Che Hasniza et al., 2018).

What's more concerning is that these warning indicators are changing and growing in number, necessitating official caution. Having a lot of free time and being under stress at home has contributed to implementing MCO, tacitly exacerbating these symptoms (Noriha et al., 2020). Society needs to be more sensitive and ready to cope with the significant threat of cyberbullying, which is currently getting worse and does more harm than physical bullying, says Datuk Dr. Amirudin Abdul Wahab, the CEO of CyberSecurity Malaysia (CSM). Due to easy access to cyberspace, anyone can engage in acts of cyberbullying without being held accountable. Due to the internet's "anonymity" setting, it can sometimes be challenging to determine who the bully is. Moreover, the materials used in cyberbullying remain in cyberspace even after the bully takes them down, making access to it persistent. This scenario overwhelms some bullied victims with stress; in some circumstances, the victims consider suicide due to the strain (Che Hasniza et al., 2018).

2. Problem Statement

According to Cohen (2018), as social networks evolve and social media use rises, cyberbullying is a problem that is getting worse (Alim, 2017). Trolls on social media platforms like Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, and Twitter are the more common problems today, as are the unregulated transmission (viral) of films and photographs (Ansong et al., 2013). In addition, social media users frequently post in the comments section since it is the most visible and convenient location to share images or condemn the victim (Griffiths, 2014). Although most of the users claim they are only doing it for fun and enjoyment, most people frequently ignore the consequences suffered by the victims. For some, such incidents cause low self-esteem, a higher risk of mental health issues, depression, and suicide ideation.

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Several studies, including those by Bauman (2013), Zhou et al. (2013), and Akbulut et al. (2010), revealed that those who spend more time online are more likely to engage in cyberbullying behavior. The results align with the media effects paradigm, emphasizing how media can impact people's propensities and behavior (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013). Additionally, this is consistent with the online disinhibition effect, which holds that people generally express their feelings and are free to engage in any activity without restraint in the digital ecosystem (Ho & McLeod, 2008; Suler, 2004). Someone's innate response to this circumstance is to act aggressively toward others (Espelage et al., 2013). In addition, engaging in dangerous online activities, including posting private information or images (Kwan & Skoric, 2013; Mesch, 2009) and accepting friend requests from strangers (Görzig & Lafsson, 2013; Kwan & Skoric, 2013) could put them at risk for cyberattacks.

Ironically, people are becoming increasingly willing to use harsh, insulting, and disrespectful language online. In addition, some people take advantage of anonymity by creating a few bogus accounts with harmful intentions. Using 1382 young people between the ages of 15 and 30, the Malaysian Institute for Research in Youth Development (MIRYD) conducted a study in 2017. The Northern Zone, Eastern Zone, Central Zone, Southern Zone, Sabah, and Sarawak are the six zones from which the respondents are drawn. This research was done to examine the issue of cyberbullying among young people in Malaysia. The findings revealed that 62.3 percent of all respondents were young people who had experienced cyberbullying, and 1.21 percent of those people had experienced emotional stress to the point of considering suicide (IPPBM, 2017). Three out of ten Malaysian teenagers are victims of cyberbullying, according to a survey by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the MyHealth Malaysia portal, which included more than 5,000 respondents. This incident affects the youngsters' social and academic lives (Ruiz, 2019).

In July 2020, MCMC and Multimedia University (MMU) undertook a study on anti-cyberbullying regulations in light of the grave consequences of cyberbullying acts. Given the rise in cyberbullying-related suicides in Malaysia, the research—which must be finished within six months—is deemed essential. The Communications and Multimedia Act of 1998 in Malaysia contains legal provisions relating to electronic communication. Still, the Minister of Communications and Multimedia, Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, claims that more needs to be done to combat cyberbullying than has already been done in Singapore, the Philippines, and other developed nations. To examine various aspects of cyberbullying, such as content, offenses, and punishments that should be provided in the act, researchers consult with stakeholders, such as the Attorney General's Chambers, Communications and Multimedia Commission, CyberSecurity Malaysia, and the Bar Council.

Troll culture is one of the prevalent types of cyberbullying in today's social media. Troll is a term used on the internet to describe someone who starts an argument or harasses someone online to draw attention to a problem or topic, either for entertainment or to achieve a specific objective (Collins, 2019). The name "troll" derives from a fishing method in which anglers use bait to entice fish to the appeal before gently dragging the pole out of the water (Fragoso, 2015). In cyberspace, baiting, mocking, insulting, and interrupting online communication are all considered acts by trolls that draw attention to themselves and others to engage in pointless discussion, whether on purpose or accidentally (Mohd Anuar et al., 2019). Stereotyping, ethnicity, religion, politics, sports, and entertainment are among the areas that

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trollers frequently utilized as bait (Morissey, 2010). Their activities are mainly motivated by boredom and selfishness (Ansong et al., 2013).

3. Research Questions

This study focuses on the relationship between the duration of internet use on the propensity of cyberbullying on social media among youths in Melaka. Thus, the research question of this study related to:

i. What are the internet and social media use patterns among youths in Melaka?
ii. To what extent is the propensity of cyberbullying on social media based on the duration of internet use among youths in Melaka?

4. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to identify the relationship between the propensity of cyberbullying on social media based on the internet use duration among Melaka youths. Specifically, this research is based on the youth's perspective to gain some vital evidence on actualized affordances. The initial assumption of the study − since youths are hardcore users of the internet platforms, they have the potential to get involved as perpetrators or victims of cyberbullying activities on social media.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Research Design

The research is the quantitative survey type of research. The link to the online survey was distributed through social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Email. Social media platforms make it easy to reach the public as the study focuses on public response.

5.2. Sampling Technique

The study used a convenient sampling technique which was nonprobability sampling. According to Lavrakas (2008), in non-probability sampling, the population may not be well denned, and non-probability sampling is often divided into three purposive categories, convenience and quota sampling. The study used a convenience sampling technique where the target respondents were youths of various types: workers in the government and private sector, self-employed, housewives, students, and unemployed. The total number of respondents for the survey was 436.

5.3. Research Measurement

The questionnaire consisted of 40 questions included in the demographic section. The questionnaire was related to the research objectives of the research. The questions used ordinal, nominal, and scale to measure the data. The data were key-in in the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS).

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The questions were reliable and valid, making it easy for the respondents to understand and answer questions.

5.4. Data Analysis

The method used for data analysis was through Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) software version 23. Data analysis included creating the survey stage, pilot testing, and data transferring. The survey or questionnaire was designed with questions that were related to the research objectives of the research. First, the questionnaire was distributed to the first 40 respondents to identify the reliability of the study. Then, the survey was continued to complete the data of 436 responses, and the data collected were transferred to SPSS software for analysis and finding purposes. Researchers used the Independents Sample T-Test and One Way Anova for the data analysis.

6. Findings

6.1. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Men	140	32.1
	Women	296	67.9
Age	15 to 25 years old	214	72.3
	25 to 35 years old	65	21.9
	35 to 45 years old	17	5.8
Frequently Used Social Media	Facebook	14	4.6
	Twitter	41	13.8
	Whatsapp	111	37.4
	Telegram	4	1.4
	Instagram	52	17.4
	Youtube	44	14.7
	Tik Tok	21	7.1
	Others	12	3.6
Purpose of Surfing the Internet	Play games	12	4.1
	Information/Learning	91	30.7
	Get Rid of Boredom	104	35.1
	Completing Assignments	72	24.3
	Others	17	5.8
Internet Surfing Period	Below 1 hour	2	0.5
	1 to 3 hours	34	11.5
	4 to 6 hours	111	37.4
	6 hours and above	149	50.6

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The number and percentage of respondents by age are shown in Table 1. According to the demographic analysis, this survey included 296 female and 140 male respondents. This study's age ranges are divided into three categories: 15 to 25 years, 25 to 35 years, and 35 to 45 years. Two hundred fourteen respondents, or 72.3 percent, fall into the 15 to 25 age group, followed by 65 respondents, or 21.9 percent, in the 25 to 35 age group, and 17 respondents, or 1.7 percent, in the 35 to 45 age group (5.8 percent). The majority of respondents use the Whatsapp application, which has 111 users (37.4%), followed by Instagram, which has 52 users (17.4%), Youtube, which has 44 users (14.7%), Twitter, which has 41 users (13.8%), Tik Tok, which has 21 users (7.1%), Facebook, which has 14 users (4.6%), and Telegram, which has four users (1.4 percent).

The majority of respondents (104, or 35.1%) say they use the internet to kill boredom, followed by 91 others, or 30.7%, who say they do it to learn something new, followed by 72 others, or 24.3%, who say they use it to finish work, and as many as 12 others, who say they use it to play games (4.1 percent). The most recent demographic analysis looks at different internet usage degrees, broken down into four categories: less than an hour, between one and three hours, between four and six hours, and more than six hours. The majority of respondents—149 persons, or 50.6 percent—surf the internet for 6 hours or longer, followed by 111 respondents for 4 to 6 hours (37.4 percent), 34 for 1 to 3 hours (11.5 percent), and two respondents for less than an hour (0.5 percent).

6.2. The Relationship Between Internet Usage And Cyber Bullying

ANOVA analyses are the following (Table 2):

Table 2. Anova Analysis

Variable	n	M	SD	F	p
Below 1 hour	2	2.25	.265	8.857	.000
1 to 3 hours	50	2.22	.672		
4 to 6 hours	163	2.52	.622		
6 hours and above	221	2.73	.714		

Table 2 shows the significant difference in the mean score of the impact of cyberbullying practices based on the amount of time spent surfing the internet (($f = 8.857$); ($p < 0.05$). Since the data obtained are significant, the hypotheses are accepted. Therefore, the Scheffe post hoc tests shed more light on each category in more detail.

Table 3. Homogeneity Test

	Levene Statistic	Sig.
Content Mastery	1.617	.185

Next, Table 3 shows the result of homogeneity test. Looking at the variance homogeneity table, the significant value for the test is 0.233, which is greater than 0.05. Thus, the variances corresponding to the population of each group in this study are deemed equal.

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Table 4. Post Hoc Test

(I) Internet Surfing Period	(J) Internet Surfing Period	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Below 1 hour	1-3 hours	.03000	.48694	1.000	-1.3366	1.3966
	4-6 hours	-.27224	.48041	.956	-1.6205	1.0760
	6 hours and above	-.47936	.47964	.802	-1.8255	.8668
1-3 hours	Below 1 hour	-.03000	.48694	1.000	-1.3966	1.3366
	4-6 hours	-.30224	.10917	.055	-.6086	.0041
	6 hours and above	-.50936*	.10575	.000	-.8061	-.2126
4-6 hours	Below 1 hour	.27224	.48041	.956	-1.0760	1.6205
	1-3 hours	.30224	.10917	.055	-.0041	.6086
	6 hours and above	-.20712*	.06972	.033	-.4028	-.0114
6 hours and above	Below 1 hour	.47936	.47964	.802	-.8668	1.8255
	1-3 hours	**.50936***	**.10575**	**.000**	**.2126**	**.8061**
	4-6 hours	.20712*	.06972	.033	.0114	.4028

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4 demonstrates that a significant relationship only exists between the Age Category of 1 and 3 to 6 hours spent on social media, where the value obtained is (p =.006), i.e. (p <.05). Thus, this study found that there was a significant relationship between frequency of ICT use and cyberbullying behavior. Specifically, the associations between the frequency of ICT use and cyberbullying behavior were more substantial in studies that used non-random samples compared to studies that used random samples (Chen et al., 2016). The findings of Akbulut et al. (2010), Bauman (2013), and Zhou et al. (2013), who discovered that those who spend more time online tend to engage in cyberbullying behavior, are supported by this research. According to Chen et al. (2016), regular social media use has a more significant effect than other platforms on the likelihood of cyberbullying. Therefore, the authorities must offer appropriate social support and self-control to ensure that each user can contribute to building a peaceful and secure digital ecosystem in the public interest.

7. Conclusion

Social media use has primarily taken over many people's lives, particularly in the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. However, unethical social media behaviors expose users to abuse social media for purposes beyond accepted social standards and the law. Cyberbullying is considered a current phenomenon that is becoming more widespread and, if unchecked, might have significant adverse effects on society. According to the study's findings, prolonged usage of social media exposes users to the signs of cyberbullying. Social media and online applications' ethical standards make the internet a perfect platform for carrying out numerous tasks and assisting consumers in meeting their immediate needs. Therefore, using this technical innovation wisely and practicing self-preservation is essential to building a secure and peaceful digital ecology. Cooperation and support from all stakeholders are necessary to ensure that the digital platform is free from unethical behaviors like cyberbullying.

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