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CYBER WELLNESS AMONG MALAYSIAN YOUTH: THE CASE OF CYBERREADI MALAYSIA

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Abstract

The cyber world is a contemporary platform for world society to interact in this era. The use of social media is not only a method for all these groups to socialise, but it is also a medium for information, education, politics and economics. While we enjoy the various benefits of interacting in cyberspace, this phenomenon has also proven the various challenges and threats that exist. In this regard, CyberREADI Malaysia 2020, a regional project at the ASEAN level has been implemented to foster a culture of cyber wellness among the youth. The results of this four-month program found that the participants have shown a high level of knowledge and understanding of cyber wellness. Data analysis of the results of this experimental study also showed a high level of intention to behave towards cyber well-being. In this regard, it is recommended that programs with direct participation of youth being implemented as it able to better enhance their understanding and behaviour to build a cyber-wellness community.

Keywords: Cyber well-being, cyber bully, cyber crime, participatory communication, Social media

1. Introduction

In tandem with global movement, the #cyberREADI program is part of ASEAN-Japan Media and Literacy for Youth Project that promote healthy and secure cyber space. This project is to promote local based values of ASEAN to be placed in global trend. Responsibility, Empathy, Authenticity, Discernment and Integrity (R-E-A-D-I) were the values that mole cyber wellness or well-being for ASEAN. In this regard, #cyberREADI Malaysia 2020 a Universiti Utara Malaysia project sponsored by ASEAN-Japan Media and Information Literacy for Youth with the support of the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia has been mobilised. #cyberREADI Malaysia aims to promote cyber well-being especially in the use of the Internet and social media among youths in Malaysia. The unique about this project was it tend to mobilised active engagement of the target group in promoting its aim. This participatory communication approach that grounded from theory of communication action offers ability to accommodate analysis of social change in non-western settings (Jacobson, 2016; Servaes, 2020).

2. Problem Statement

The cyber world is a contemporary platform for world society to interact in this era. It is well integrated with connectivity in cyberspace regardless of the society's generation, whether children, teenagers, adults or the elderly. The use of social media is not only for all these groups to socialise, but also as an arena for information, education, politics and the economy (Shiratuddin et al., 2016). While we enjoy the various benefits of interacting in cyberspace, this phenomenon has also proven the various challenges and threats that exist. Cybercrime, cyberbullying, cyber abuse and numerous other cyberspace challenges have caused individuals and society in general to become vulnerable.

Putnam and Pulcher (2007) defined cyber well-being or cyber wellness as the positive practices and culture of Internet users. Cyber wellness encompasses an understanding of online conduct and how to secure oneself in while using Internet (Fisser & Phillips, 2020). In the context of digital equity, cyber wellness need to be considered within the larger frame of a social-critical perspective. As argued by Ntebutse and Collin (2018), cyber wellness must be understood within the context of socio-culture, politics and economics of the community. While cyberspace has emerged as global phenomenon, managing its issues and challenges should be locally based. Thus, adopting participatory approach into cyber wellness promotion model for Malaysian youth is an approach that is in line with Ntebutse and Collin recommendations.

Based on data from the Malaysia Computer Emergency Response Team (MyCERT), there are four major cyber issues in Malaysia that are the focus of #cyberREADI Malaysia Project. These issues are cyber safety, cyber harassment, cyber bully and cybercrime (https://www.mycert.org.my/portal/statistics?id=b75e037d-6ee3-4d11-8169-66677d694932). Various activities were implemented by #cyberREADI Malaysia to educate awareness and positive attitudes toward achieving cyber well-being. All these activities were locally tailored for Malaysian youth. Therefore, theoretically and practically it is interesting to understand the extent do this participatory model affects the promotion of cyber well-being among Malaysian youth.

3. Research Questions

Participatory communication approach promised a better theoretical and practical analysis of community engagement for social change. As #cyberREADI Malaysia adopting this approach, it can be experiment to what extend this project has impacted the youth cyber wellness. There are two main research questions that this study intends to address: (i) is there any impact of participatory communication approach in #cyberREADI Malaysia on its target group? (ii) What is #cyberREADI Malaysia's effect on youth awareness and their cyber wellness behavioural intent?

4. Purpose of the Study

The #cyberREADI Malaysia project is a regional initiative that strives to strengthen a positive digital ecosystem. Exposing and promoting cyber well-being especially among the youth is one of the goals of this project. Thus, various efforts and activities have been organised to achieve this goal. Most importantly, this project crafted in two-fold: firstly, to develop a better participatory model of cyber wellness for youth and secondly to promote cyber wellness understanding and practices. Therefore, these study objectives are: (i) to describe social media usage phenomena of youth; (ii) to identify the impact of #cyberREADI on youth cyber wellness understanding; and (iii) to explain the impact of #cyberREADI on youth's cyber wellness behavioural intention.

5. Research Methods

An experimental design of one-shot case study technique was applied in this study. The study consisted of a total of 150 youths who were exposed to the intervention programs of #cyberREADI Malaysia. Recruitment of participants was done through call for participants via few social media platforms. They were randomly invited to join this programme. At first, we have set 100 participants only. But due to overwhelming responds, the number was increased to 150. In two months' period, participants were actively engage in posting, sharing and commenting materials prepared by #cyuberREADI Malaysia team. To increase their participations at higher level, a short video competition on cyber wellness was organised. The highlight of the event was the Cyber Wellbeing Seminar 2020. To ensure this program is youth centred, 75 percent of the speakers were among the participants.

After attending the last intervention program, the participants were asked to complete the online survey. The questionnaires were formulated by adapting instruments by Turker and Cakmak (2019) and Kennedy (2014). The survey contained 29 questions in total. There are 12 questions related to knowledge and understanding of cyber well-being, another 12 questions about the intention to act towards cyber well-being, and five additional questions about participant's background and their usage of social media. Questions about the cyber wellness knowledge and behaviour intentions revolve around four major cyber issues as explained in the introduction section. All items on cyber wellness were measured and operationalised using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Based on some references, the interpretation descriptive analysis of mean score is based on the following; high (3.67 to 5.00), moderate (2.34 to 3.66), and low (1.00 to 2.33) (Bernard, 2000; Berger, 2016).

Of the 150 who were invited to participate in this survey, 126 youth or 84 percent have responded to the survey. The data recorded through this online questionnaire was downloaded and analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences version 23 (SPSS Statistics 23). Descriptive data analysis techniques were employed to answer the research questions.

6. Findings

The report of this study data analysis focuses on three main aspects. Firstly, this survey reported some backgrounds on social media usage among the participants. Secondly, to explains the impact of the intervention program on respondents' knowledge and understanding of cyber well-being. While the third focus is to discusses the impact of #cyberREADI Malaysia program on participant's intention or desire to behave towards cyber well-being.

Basically, the study instrument was found stable and indicate good consistencies. The measure of cyber wellness knowledge consisting of twelve items indicate Cronbach Alpha coefficient value of 0.742. While Cronbach Alpha value for cyber wellness behavioural intention is 0.786. As both Cronbach Alpha values are higher than 0.70, they are considered having internal consistency coefficient (Baxter & Babbie, 2004).

A total of 126 respondents were involved in this survey. They are made up of 76.2% of women (96 participants), while another 23.8% (30 participants) are male. With 79.4 percent, the Malays constitute the largest ethnic group, followed by 17.5 percent of Chinese respondents, 2.4 percent were Indians, while a respondent reflecting 0.8 percent is Siamese.

6.1. Youth and social media

Data analysis outcomes shown that there are 12 social media brands owned by the respondents. From the list of 12 brands, WhatsApp is the most owned social media. 124 out of 126 respondents (98.4 percent of respondents) having at least a WhatsApp account. Instagram was ranked second highest in social media ownership among the participants. It is owned by a total of 121 respondents or representing 96.0 percent of respondents. The social media brand in the third highest position is Facebook. It is owned by 95.2 percent or a total of 120 respondents. Based on data review, with 88.1 percent or 111 respondents claiming to have an account, YouTube ranks fourth highest in ownership. Meanwhile, about 60 to 75 percent of respondents stated that they have FB Messenger (92 respondents or 73.0%) and Twitter (75 respondents or 59.5%) accounts as shown in Figure 1. The increasingly popular social media, namely TikTok, reportedly owned by 34 respondents (27.0 percent). With 23.8 percent (30 participants) respondents, Wechat, which is common among the Chinese community, is in eighth place. Other social media platforms are Telegram (4 respondents, 3.2%), Snapchat (3 respondents, 2.4%) and Line (3 respondents, 2.4%).
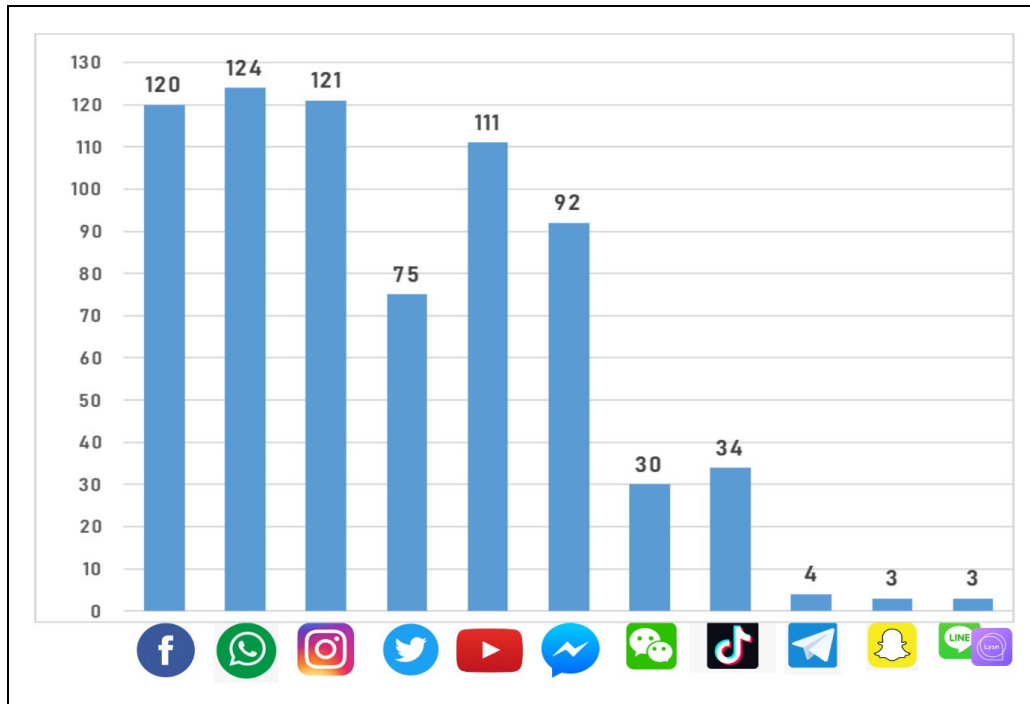
Figure 1. Frequency of social media account ownership

The statistical analysis of the data also reveals that most of respondents have more than five different accounts on social media. The largest group of respondents (49 respondents or 38.9%) has six different social media accounts. Meanwhile the second highest group is having five social media accounts (40 respondents or 31.7%). A total of 16 respondents (12.7%) had seven registered social media sites. The smallest ownership group is the one with two social media accounts only, which is four respondents (3.2 percent). While only one respondent (0.8 percent) stated to have ten different social media accounts.
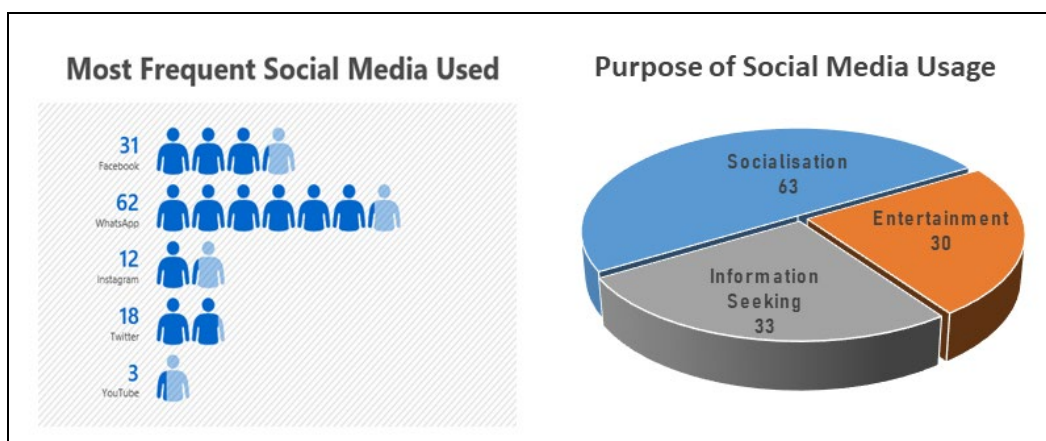

Figure 2. Frequent social media used and usage purpose

In addition to social media brands, the study also collected data to rank the most widely used (preferred) social media by respondents. Of the 12 social media brands, the analysis shows that only five are the respondents' priority. As presented in Figure 2, the WhatsApp application is the most frequently

used with 49.2 percent (62 respondents). This was followed by Facebook with 24.6% or a total of 31 respondents. In addition to the two common social media, Twitter has emerged as the third-highest social media commonly used by respondents. A total of 14.3 percent or 18 respondents chose it as their most used social media. Instagram became the fourth top social media choice with 9.5 percent (12 respondents) using it. With a frequency of 2.4 percent (3 respondents), YouTube is the least used social media.

In order to further understand the phenomenon of social media among the respondents, they were asked questions about the main purpose of using it. The findings found that the main purpose is to socialise with friends and relatives. A total of 63 respondents or 50.0 percent mentioned socialisation as their main choice in using social media. Figure 2 shows the search for information as the second main purpose of social media among respondents. This was acknowledged by 26.2 percent of respondents (33 people). With a consensus of 23.8% (30 respondents), seeking entertainment appeared to be the third purpose of social media consumption.

6.2. Impact on cyber wellness knowledge and understanding

To assess the impact of the #cyberREADI project on youth knowledge and understanding of cyber well-being, the data were descriptively analysed. Table 1 displays the results of the analysis on the level of knowledge and understanding on cyber well-being among the respondents following this program.

Overall, the findings of the survey found that respondent's level of knowledge and understanding regarding cyber wellness is at a high level with a mean score of 4.0251. Based on the mean score, it can be interpreted that the #cyberREADI project has led respondents to comprehend about cyber wellness.

If examined in more detail, the four dimensions of cyber wellness also recorded a positive mean score. The Cyber Safety dimension showed the highest mean score of 4.2540 compared to others. This finding indicate a positive development given that cyber safety is one of the issues that is increasingly being identified to MyCERT. Similarly, the other two issues that are commonly reported, namely Cyber Bullying and Cyber Crime also recorded a high level of knowledge and understanding with the mean score of 4.1058 and 3.9974 respectively. Meanwhile, Cyber Harassment recorded a mean score of 3.7434 which is the lowest compared to other elements. However, the mean score still indicates a high degree of knowledge and understanding on cyber wellness.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of knowledge on cyber wellness

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Knowledge on Cyber Wellness	**126**	**3.00**	**4.92**	**4.0251**	**.40032**
• Cyber safety	126	3.00	5.00	4.2540	.58943
• Cyber harassment	126	2.33	5.00	3.7434	.58448
• Cyber bully	126	3.00	5.00	4.1058	.49288
• Cyber crime	126	2.33	5.00	3.9974	.59254

6.3. Impact on cyber wellness behaviour intention

The third section of this research questionnaire focuses on topics linked to behavioural intentions towards cyber wellness. The results of the data analysis are recorded in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive analysis of behaviour intention on cyber wellness

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Behaviour Intention on Cyber Wellness	**126**	**2.92**	**4.83**	**3.9868**	**.40006**
• Cyber safety	126	2.00	5.00	3.7593	.67414
• Cyber harassment	126	3.33	5.00	4.1058	.49468
• Cyber bully	126	2.33	5.00	3.9418	.59640
• Cyber crime	126	2.67	5.00	4.1138	.58144

In general, respondents showed a very positive level of behavioural intentions towards cyber wellness. With a mean score of 3,9868, this suggests that respondents have a high degree of behavioural intent to perform healthy practises while on-line. The details of the analysis demonstrate the behavioural intentions to curb Cyber Crime and Cyber Harassment recorded the highest mean score with 4.1138 and 4.1058 respectively. The findings of this study indicate that respondents concentrate on these two elements in order to improve their cyberspace conditions. This result is also related to the prevalence of current cyber abuse and to the growing incidence of cyber-crime in society. Meanwhile, Cyber Bully showed the third highest mean score of 3.9418. While the behavioural intention related to Cyber Safety revealed a mean score of 3.7593.

7. Conclusion

From this survey findings, it can be concluded that the use of cyberspace is quite comprehensive in the lives of youths. Not only do they socialise in cyberspace, but the ecosystem is also used as a platform for information and entertainment. All this is done through various social media applications. The influence of this platform is quite enormous because the average respondent has between five to six social media accounts. The findings also indicate that the participatory model of cyber wellness promotion adopted by #cyberREADI Malaysia is potential. Outcomes from the analysis also shows that the #cyberREADI Malaysia project has succeeded in giving a positive impact in guiding the youths to understand and to practice actions that contributes to cyber wellness. The survey found that the respondents showed a high level of knowledge and understanding of cyber wellness. Furthermore, the survey data also explained that the respondents showed optimism to behave positively in achieving cyber well-being. In order to assess the feasibility of participatory model to enhance cyber wellness, it is proposed that future research be carried out focusing on more specific social, economy and political issues of the society.

Acknowledgments

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