Jurnal Komunikasi:
Malaysian Journal of Communication
Jilid 39(3) 2023: 292-312

The Right to Cyberbully? A Gendered Analysis During COVID-19 in Malaysia

BENJAMIN Y. H. LOW
Taylors University, Malaysia

VILASHINI SOMIAH
Universiti Malaya, Malaysia

KHO SUET NIE
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the rhetoric of cyberbullying with a focus on Malaysian female influencers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research objectives entailed identifying various critical rhetoric and attacks against female influencers on digital platforms, understanding diverse levels of cyberbullying experienced by influencers from different backgrounds, and analysing reasons behind online aggressive behaviours. The study's theoretical framework contributes to intersectionality theory by examining how the COVID-19 context shapes nuances in Female Cyber Victimisation. Methodologically, the research employs critical discourse analysis to study language in online comments and responses reflecting cyberbullying against Malaysian female influencers. The analysis covers social media platforms (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok) and forums (Hardware Zone, Lowyat.net, Cari.com.my), focusing on cyberbullying content over two years. Three prominent Malaysian female influencers targeted by cyberbullying namely Cathryn Li, Veveonah and Ain Husniza were selected for their distinct demographics and contexts, showcasing varying cyberbullying rhetoric. Findings reveal male internet commenters' presumptions about female influencers are shaped by religion and modesty perceptions. Influencers challenging gender norms face escalated negativity. Cathryn Li, perceived as less modest and non-Muslim, faced extensive derogatory comments affecting her mental health. Ain Husniza faced mockery due to her Malay Muslim background, while Veveonah was targeted for political motives. Rooted in conservative gender roles, societal expectations contribute to targeting female influencers, resulting in ridicule and harassment. These cases underscore the intricate interplay of gender, cultural norms, and online harassment, highlighting the necessity for comprehensive interventions to combat cyberbullying and safeguard the well-being of female influencers.

Keywords: *COVID-19, cyberbullying, gender, influencers, female cyber victimization.*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a substantial shift in how people live, work, and connect with one another around the world. Individuals and businesses have been forced to rely more heavily on digital platforms to preserve interaction, education, and commerce in the face of social distancing measures and lockdowns. Malaysia has also been forced to quickly accelerate its digital transformation as a result of the pandemic (Muthaly, 2022). While digitalisation has brought many positives, such as enhanced convenience and accessibility, it has also resulted in an alarming spike in cyberbullying occurrences in Malaysia. According to The Sun Daily (Supramani, 2022), from 2020 to July 2021, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) received 6,598 public complaints about online abuse.

E-ISSN: 2289-1528
https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2023-3903-16

Cyberbullying is a type of technology abuse that has developed as a major social concern affecting today's youth (Paez, 2020). It is defined as "willful and repeated harm caused through the use of computers, cellphones, and other electronic devices" (Hasse et al., 2019). This description incorporates a wide range of activities, including harassment via unpleasant or repetitive communications, denigration and posting untrue or harsh statements, privacy violations, and intentional exclusion from an online organisation (Willard, 2005).

There are several definitions of cyberbullying by scholars, but one that is widely used is that is "an aggressive purposeful act carried out by a group or individual, utilising mobile phones or the Internet, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself or herself" (Cassidy et al., 2013). Scholarly literature has also defined cyberbullying as any behaviour performed through electronic media by individuals or groups of individuals that repeatedly communicate abusive or vindictive communitisation to cause harm or distress on someone else (Tokunaga, 2010), or clearly intentional and repeated harm performed through the use of mediums such as cell devices, e-mails, Internet chats, social media, and blog sites (Hinduja & Patchin, 2018). The act is especially prevalent with the spread of social media (Görzig & Frumkin, 2013), and can take many forms, including sending hurtful messages to someone's phone, e-mail, or social media accounts, spreading malicious rumours online, and sexting, which is the practice of sending sexually suggestive pictures or messages about someone with the intent to hurt or humiliate them.

With a focus of COVID-19, there are a number of reasons that contributed to the rise in cyberbullying during the epidemic. To begin with, the pandemic compelled more people to spend time online, raising the likelihood of encountering bullies or being a victim of cyberbullying. Social media is the most popular medium for cyberbullying throughout the pandemic. This is due to more screen time and less face-to-face connection, which can lead to a lack of empathy and awareness of the consequences of one's actions. Second, the anonymity given by digital platforms can enable bullies, allowing them to say or do things they would not do in person. Third, fear and anxiety regarding the socio-economic impact of the pandemic rendered people more vulnerable; the psychological toll of the pandemic played a role in the surge in reported instances of cyberbullying (Wiguna et al., 2021).

The trend to digitisation has also had an impact on youths, who are more susceptible to harm as their lives rapidly move online during lockdowns. Throughout the pandemic, there were numerous reports of cyberbullying in Malaysia, with the country ranked second in Asia in 2020 for cyberbullying among youths, according to a UNICEF report (Malay Mail, 2022). UNICEF (2020; 2021) explained that the pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented increase in screen usage, and not all children have the essential information, skills, and resources to keep themselves safe and protected in digital spaces. This further raised the possibility of cyberbullying attacks and putting children at risk.

But as this paper argues, during the pandemic, cyberbullying of women particularly had serious consequences, with many who experience online gender based violence enduring anxiety, sadness, and post-traumatic stress disorders. Women are more likely to be victims of such cyber bullying which includes cyberstalking, pornography, online defamation, and blackmail (Citron, 2015). During the pandemic, some of these instances of cyberbullying have ended in fatalities. The Sun Daily (McIntyre, 2020) and Sinar Daily (Selvam, 2022) covered examples of two social media users both of whom died by suicide after being cyber-bullied endlessly by their followers; 20-year-old R. Thivya Nayagi uploaded a video of her with a Nepali co-worker which went viral on Facebook with treats and mockeries being hurled at

Thivya, and in a separate case Shashikala Nadarajah, a 44-year-old mother of three had received a barrage of hateful comments over her appearance and her handbag collections on her TikTok account.

In an effort to critically increase awareness about the impact of cyberbullying and in hopes of assisting with the implementation of proper preventative steps against this offense against vulnerable groups, this paper delves into the interrogation of how cyberbullying affects women depending on social class and social demographics; a good demographic that allows us public access of such a phenomena would be through the investigation and interrogation of the impact of cyberbullying on Malaysian female influencers during the COVID-19 pandemic. As presented in the following pages, not enough have been published and written about how female influencers experience cyberbullying in Malaysia. As the gender theoretical model influences the research to be approached more holistically, the authors of this article are left to ask the following research questions; 1) what are the types of abusive languages and tactics that Malaysian female influencers experience online?; 2) how does cyberbullying differ based on the nuances owing to class, ethnicity and socio-economic differences and lastly; 3) why do attackers feel entitled to such aggression and violence towards Malaysian female influencers?

Following this, the research objectives are designed to read into the intersectionality of cyberbullying, and here the authors have: identified the different types of critical rhetoric and attacks used against female influencers in digital settings on various issues; sought to understand the different cyberbullying scales of female influencers from various class, racial and socio-economic backgrounds; and analysed reasons why operators feel they are entitled to such aggressive behaviours online.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

a) Cyberbullying Cases in Malaysia (Pre-Pandemic)

In 2012, a survey among 25 countries revealed that Malaysia has the 17th-highest rate of cyberbullying (Microsoft, 2012). The investigation additionally discovered that 33% of children aged 8 to 17 had engaged in online activities that may be classified cyberbullying, such as being mocked or called harsh names. Later in 2018, a global survey now among 28 countries concluded that Malaysia was the sixth worst nation in cyberbullying, and the second worst in Asia (Rosli, 2018), an indication of how severe the issue was in Malaysia. The following year in 2019, a UNICEF survey reported that 1 in every 5 young Malaysians have skipped school owing to cyberbullying, indicating how the problem had begun to cause damage to the education of youths (Bernama, 2019a).

One of the most tragic cases of cyberbullying in Malaysia happened in 2019 in the remote district of Padawan, Sarawak. A teenager who held an online suicide poll was discovered dead hours later (Dawum, 2019). This case emphasised the terrible implications of cyberbullying that lacked general awareness and education in solving the problem.

Despite efforts to prevent it, cyberbullying remains a big issue in Malaysia; the country was placed second in Asia for youth cyberbullying in 2022, demonstrating that the problem continues to persist. Local news outlet Bernama (2019b) reported that while there have been efforts to mitigate the issue has resulted in the reduced number of reported cyberbullying cases throughout Malaysia, cases continue to be reported. This implies that more needs to be done to address the problem and safeguard vulnerable people from the negative impacts of cyberbullying.

b) Stakeholders Reactions to Cyberbullying

Several high-profile examples of cyberbullying have occurred in Malaysia in recent years, provoking public indignation and prompting government and civil society organisations to take action. With the lack of explicit laws in place to address the issue of cyberbullying in Malaysia currently, it can be extremely challenging for victims and survivors to seek justice or protection. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), for example, the country's communications and multimedia industry's regulating agency, has undertaken efforts to raise awareness about cyberbullying and has established a reporting system to allow individuals to report cyberbullying incidents directly to the police (Bernama, 2019b).

However, it is important to note that the rise of social media platforms has made it easier for cyberbullies to target their victims anonymously, leading to an increase in cyberbullying instances in Malaysia. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are the most prevalent avenues for cyberbullying in the country. Cyberbullying has had a profound impact on victims and survivors, with many experiencing emotional stress, anxiety, sadness, and even feelings of suicide. Unfortunately, many internet users in Malaysia are not well versed or trained in handling such scenarios or how to report it to the authorities (Bernama, 2019c). The issue of cyberbullying in Malaysia has also attracted international attention; backlash against former Miss Universe Malaysia Samantha Katie James in 2020 for her comments against the Black Lives Matter movement is an example as reported in The Rakyat Post (Kaur, 2020).

Mental health experts and support groups in Malaysia have called for tougher measures to combat cyberbullying. The death of a popular TikTok content creator and single mother in August 2022, again linked to cyberbullying, spurred Befrienders Kuala Lumpur to call on the government to criminalise cyberbullying, reported Free Malaysia Today (Azhar, 2022).

Furthermore, non-governmental organisations in Malaysia have been striving to increase awareness about cyberbullying and support victims. Publicly open hotlines aimed at supporting victims and survivors of cyberbullying have been hosted by Befrienders KL and also the Malaysian Mental Health Association (MMHA) with the MMHA receiving 500 calls per month regarding cases of cyberbullying (The Vibes, 2023). Other organisations, including Befrienders Malaysia, as well as Penang Protect and Save the Children, and Women's Centre for Change, provide helplines to specifically help children experiencing cyberbullying.

In Malaysia, various stakeholders are involved in the fight against cyberbullying. By the adoption of laws and policies, anti-bullying websites, national cybersecurity awareness campaigns, hotlines, and helpline services, efforts have been made to address the issue. In Malaysia, the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and private organisations continue to raise awareness and provide assistance in the fight against cyberbullying.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a) Online Gender-Based Violence

Online gender-based violence (OGBV) is an emerging area of concern that is widely prevalent. The increase of OGBV is a result of the advancement of information and communication technology, which has led to the development of a new form of crime against women. According to the United Nations Broadband Commission's Working Group on Gender in 2015,

around 73% of women worldwide had encountered some form of digital violence, such as intimidation, harassment, or stalking (Kumar et al., 2021).

Cyber abuse, cyber aggression, digital abuse, technology-related violence, and online victimisation are some of the terms used to describe the various forms of harm experienced by individuals on and through technology (Mishna et al., 2020; Wolford-Clevenger et al., 2016; Bauman & Baldasare, 2015; Marganski & Melander, 2018; Runions & Bak, 2015; Wright, 2015; Franks, 2016; APC Women's Rights Programme, 2015; Athar, 2015; Fascendini & Fialova, 2011; Gámez-Guadix et al., 2015; Mitchell et al., 2011; Montiel et al., 2016; van Wilsem, 2013). The most commonly used term to date is cyberviolence. Cyberviolence is a phrase that refers to harm and abuse that is enabled and committed through the use of digital and electronic methods. The term was used by the United Nations in their 2015 report on Cyber Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). However, debates have emerged regarding the definition of cyberviolence, its overlaps with other forms of violence and crime, and also the accuracy and fairness of capturing all forms of online violence under this term (Chisholm, 2006).

Aside from cyberviolence, another term widely used in the literature of OGBV is technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), which is a type of violence enabled or made simpler by technology. TFGBV encompasses internet and/or mobile technology-enabled behaviours that harm individuals based on their sexual or gender identity or by imposing harmful gender norms. TFGBV is the most contemporary type of gender-based violence that has gained prominence as digital technology has become more widely available. During the pandemic, people began to shift their lives online, leading to the surge in TFGBV (UN Women, 2020). TFGBV perpetrators and survivors can be of any gender, and the violence is frequently motivated by hostile and hurtful actions based on a person's sexual or gender identity.

TFGBV is not limited to only a single type of abuse; it can take the shape of various types of violence and harassment on technologies and online platforms such as mobile phones, social media, and interactive websites (Halder, 2017; Gurumurthy et al., 2017). The research, however, strongly suggests that women, girls, and LGBTQI+ people are far more likely to be targeted. Although the internet can be used to empower people, it can also be used to disenfranchise them. Social media initiatives, for example, can be used to combat sexual harassment, but social media platforms can also be used to perpetrate violence (Hassan et al., 2018).

Adding to this is that scholars have noted the importance of paying attention to the dangers of comments on social media platforms in how cyberbullies attack their victims, as toxic and unregulated comments are often shaped by "prevailing patriarchal and heteronormative ideologies" (Murib, 2022, p. 69). More importantly the comment section on social media platforms can most like bring about negative attention to the owner of the account through the disagreements and hostile debates of followers and subscribers (Dutceac Segesten, Bossetta, Holmberg, & Niehorster, 2022) which is an indication if the influence ill-informed commenters of a particular topic have on the larger audience reception (Gearhart, Moe & Zhang, 2020).

Identifying the nature of TFGBV is difficult because it differs from offline harassment. Internet platforms provide anonymity that offline encounters do not (Digital Rights Foundation, 2017). Because of the difficulties associated with its prosecution, the vague nature of online harassment can have serious negative effects on women's physical,

psychological, and financial well-being, as well as societal stigmatisation (Zhong et al., 2020). As a result, it is critical to address this issue and strive towards making the internet a safer and more inclusive environment for all people.

Because of the progress of the digital world and social media, gender-based violence has become a big concern in the virtual sphere (Marwick & Miller, 2014; Rodríguez-Darias & Aguilera-Ávila, 2018), receiving much public and scholarly attention in recent years (Ojanen et al., 2014). Numerous studies have discussed the experiences and forms of online sexual abuse (Ging & Siapera, 2018; Henry & Powell, 2018; Kavanagh & Brown, 2019; Shariff & DeMartini, 2015; Vitis & Gilmour, 2017). With the escalating prevalence of digital violence, notably cyberbullying, scholars have investigated this issue in various countries including South Korea, China, Japan, Thailand, India and Pakistan (Ruangnapakul et al., 2019; Lee, 2016; Bhat et al., 2013; Blaya et al., 2018; Suzuki et al., 2012; Saleem et al., 2021).

Sexual harassment, cyberbullying, cyberstalking, and revenge porn have all been labelled as kinds of online harassment (Dreßing et al., 2014; Lindsay & Krysik, 2012; Ojanen et al., 2015; van Wilsem, 2013). Electronic harassment (Fenaughty & Harre, 2013), cyber harassment (Melander, 2010; Redondo-Sama et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2014), and Internet harassment are other names used to characterise this sort of assault. There is no universal definition of online harassment, although it is often defined as offensive behaviour aimed at an individual utilising technology channels such as the Internet or text messaging (Jones et al., 2013). The target's reaction to and experience with the behaviour is also an important component of the definition (Lenhart et al., 2016).

b) Gender and Cyberbullying

Much study has been conducted on the gendered character of cyberbullying, with inconsistent results. Imawan (2021) discovered that anyone can encounter online-based gender abuse in numerous forms. While some research revealed no gender differences in cyberbullying (Balakrishnan, 2018; Saleem, 2022), others found gender differences that differed between geographic locations and cultural groupings (Sun et al., 2016). Prior studies on cyberbullying yielded inconclusive results when it came to gender differences. Some studies found no significant differences between males and females in cyberbullying perpetration or victimisation (Li, 2010; Macdonald & Roberts-Pittman, 2010; Varjas, Henrich, & Meyers, 2009), while others found that females were more likely to become cyber-victims (Adams, 2010)

According to Cassidy et al. (2013), the gendered aspect of cyberbullying may have a greater impact on girls' reputations than on their male peers, as girls are more likely to face cyberbullying methods such as gender-based harassment and exclusion. Furthermore, evidence suggests that female students are more likely than male students to be victims of cyberbullying (Bauman et al., 2013). Yet, some studies contend that females are more prone to engage in cyberbullying because they may feel less constrained online and more encouraged to harass others attributable to the Internet's anonymity (Keith & Martin, 2005). Furthermore, some research has discovered that males are more likely to be cyberbullies than females, a pattern similar to traditional bullying in which males are more frequently involved as bullies compared to females (Boulton et al., 2012; Li, 2007).

In recent research, gendered cyberbullying has been investigated across various geographic regions and cultural groups. In Malaysia, for example, Adebayo et al. (2020) found that high school and undergraduate male students were more likely to be perpetrators of cyberbullying, but into their adulthoods, Fitriana et al. (2020) posited that Malaysian men

were more likely to be victims of both traditional and cyberbullying. Similarly, Bhat et al. (2017) discovered that boys were more likely than girls to engage in cyberbullying, but Sharma et al. (2017) argued that women were also active offenders and enablers of cyberbullying themselves. Current research on the association between gender and cyberbullying victimisation continues to yield inconclusive results. Abd Ajis et al. (2022) discovered no significant gender differences in cyberbullying victimisation among university students, however Gönültaş (2022) and Khine et al. (2020) stress that females continue to be the most likely victims of cyberbullying. However, the research conducted by Abd Ajis et al. (2022) contradicts earlier findings showing females are more likely instead to be victims of cyberbullying. While the gendered nature of cyberbullying is a complicated and multifaceted phenomenon, it is obvious that gender disparities in cyberbullying perpetration and victims cannot be generalised across cultural and geographic contexts.

c) Other Cyberbullying Narratives in Malaysia

In regards to cyberbullying research in Malaysia, Balakrishnan (2015) discovered that cyberbullying continues to have an impact among Malaysian young adults even after they finish school, with females being more likely to engage in both cyberbullying and become cyber-victims. Those who spent the most time on the internet were also shown to be more active in cyberbullying practices. Gan (2017) discovered that among Malaysian university students, women were more likely than men to encounter cyberstalking. Adding to this is a study conducted by Shahidatul et al. (2020) that focused on how cyberbullying attacks amongst youth on the Malaysian online space often utilises aggressively insulting language by affronting the victim's intellect, regardless of gender.

Yusuf et al. (2021) discovered that cyberbullying is common among Malaysian youngsters, with Ahmad Ghazali et al. (2020) citing age, loneliness, self-esteem, and empathy as major predictors of cyberbullying. Males were also found to aid and abet cyberbullying more often than females. Scholarship has also pointed out that relationship concerns such as feelings of envy, concerns over physical appearance, familial troubles, and intolerance were the most prominent causes for cyberbullying among Malaysian youths (Simon, 2017). According to Lai et al. (2017), 66% of respondents reported being cyberbullied, with female cyber users having a greater prevalence rate. Students of Malay descent had the largest percentage of cyberbullying victims, with Facebook and mobile phone social apps being the most commonly used venues for cyberbullying.

According to Ooi et al. (2022), the majority of children who encountered cyberbullying also suffered physical bullying at school. This emphasises the importance of combined preventative and education initiatives. The most significant contributing factor to adolescent cyberbullying was found as media exposure, with exposure to sexual content and sexting being a new element that requires rapid attention.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Scholars have attempted to theorise our understanding of cyberbullying, with theories such as Barlett & Gentile Cyberbullying Model (BGC Model), Female Cyber Victimisation Theory, and Objectification. The BGC Model offers a framework to understand cyberbullying. It underlines the significance of individual attributes, social surroundings, and situational context in shaping the cyberbullying events. The BGC Model (Barlett & Gentile, 2012) notably posited the influence of gender, especially women on the experience of cyberbullying (Berne

et al., 2014). BGC Model is useful to identify factors and designs of preventative measures and interventions. Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) delves into the objectification of women in digital media and its association with gender-based cyberbullying. It underscores how women are often reduced to their physical appearance and sexuality, leading to diminished agency and control over their own experiences. This objectification paves the way for cyberbullying that degrades, objectifies, and dehumanises women.

The Female Cyber Victimisation theory on the other hand seeks to understand cyberbullying in the larger context, in which cyberbullying is a symptom of bigger societal issues, namely gender disparities and societal oppression. Studies have highlighted that women are disproportionately targeted in both traditional and cyber victimisation (Douglass et al., 2018). Mishna et al. (2020) for example, suggested that cyberbullying happens more to females as the result of social construction of gender roles and expectation. As females are expected to be passive and submissive, it brings the notion that females are easier targets of bullying. The Female Cyber Victimisation theory also stresses on the effect of cyberbullying such as anxiety, difficulty thinking positive thoughts, and an inability to focus on tasks (Nobles et al., 2014). This theory highlights the role of societal gender norms in facilitating cyberbullying, accentuating the need to develop strategies promoting gender equity and combating cyberbullying.

The theory of Female Cyber Victimization is chosen as the theoretical framework behind our efforts to understand online rhetoric especially comments and responses on Malaysian influencers. Firstly, the premise of the theory focusing on women are aligned with the objective of this study. Secondly, while the Female Cyber Victimization theory spoke vastly on cyberbullying, there are not many studies that looked specifically into the gender based words aimed at female influencers (Mishna et al., 2020).

We seek to highlight the gender bias terms that are used to cyberbully few local Malaysian influencers. Using this theory can provide a comprehensive understanding of how cyberbullying intersects with rhetoric that are gender based and the gender dynamics in the context of COVID-19 and Malaysia.

The value of this study is that it contributes to the intersectionality understanding of the theory. Given the unique situation of COVID-19 pandemic, how will the context of pandemic affect the nuances of Female Cyber Victimisation? This would be a key contribution to the existing body of knowledge on the intersection of gender and cyberbullying.

METHODOLOGY

With the chosen theoretical framework, this study utilised a critical discourse analysis approach based on van Dijk's Ideological Square Model, which offers a useful framework to study how ingroup-outgroup dynamics influence behaviours in online spaces (van Dijk, 2015). This Model provides a useful framework to study directed and discriminatory hate speech that has been utilized by other studies (Cicilia & Irawan, 2023; Noor & Hamid, 2021). Our study utilizes the Ideological Square Model to focus on the language that is used by commenters and responses online as a reflection of acts of cyberbullying against Malaysian female influencers. Through this method, we examined various social media platforms that our sampled female influencers created content on and sought out negative or critical remarks against them. We conducted a search of the names of these influencers and looked at articles, social media posts and threads in forums that discussed them. Among the social media platforms examined are YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok as well as other internet forums such as Hardware Zone, Lowyat.net and Cari.com.my where many male

commenters would share posts made by these influencers with the intention of criticising and building negative feelings towards them. The data was collected over a two years period but we primarily focused on content that had become focal points for cyberbullying.

We sampled from a series of popular Malaysian female influencers on various social media platforms that have become targets of cyberbullying. During the pandemic period, there were a number of female influencers that became targets of cyberbullying and we chose three of them based on their specific contexts that reflect different forms of cyberbullying rhetoric and engagement due to differing demographics and perceived intentions of the influencer.

We identified three prominent cases based on the following:
Cathryn Li is a Malaysian social media influencer, YouTuber, and entrepreneur. She gained popularity through her fashion, beauty, and lifestyle content on platforms like YouTube and Instagram. She often shares makeup tutorials, fashion hauls, travel vlogs, and snippets from her daily life. As a public figure, she was no stranger to online controversies and was once was lambasted online for glorification of thinnes as she posted “size M is fat”. On 9th March 2021, she was invited as a special guest on a Facebook talk show, FaceTalk. However, she stormed off during the live interview after she read derogatory comments from Facebook users. On 14th March 2021, Cathryn Li shared a photo of her suicide attempt on Instagram, which was removed shortly after. She took some time away from her online Heypresence and when she returned, she no longer addressed the issue. Today, Cathryn Li has 3 million followers on Instagram, and 25,000 followers on YouTube. She continues to be the subject of scrutiny by netizens.

Ain Husniza is a Malaysian student activist who gained prominence in 2021 after posting a TikTok video on her experiences with a male teacher who made inappropriate rape jokes in class. This video went viral and sparked a nationwide discussion about sexual harassment and misconduct in schools. The case then spilled over into a long battle of court cases between Ain Husniza and the teacher. Ain started a movement called "#MakeSchoolASaferPlace" to raise awareness about such issues which led to calls for stricter regulations and policies against sexual harassment in Malaysian schools. She faced some backlash from certain groups but continues to be a strong advocate for change. However, she is often scrutinised for her clothing and unveiled appearances, was ostracised for her activism and was forced to move to another neighbourhood due to backlash from her community. Many that criticised her implied that she invited sexual jokes upon herself. As of today, Ain Husniza has 16,700 followers on Instagram, and 33,500 followers on X (formerly known as Twitter). She continues to advocate for the safety of girls in school and university.

Veveonah Mosibin, a 21 years-old that hails from Pitas, Sabah, gained accidental fame in 2020 when she posted a video of her commitment to her education by spending 24 hours on a makeshift tree platform to get a stable internet connection in order to complete an online exam. The video highlighted the challenges faced by many rural students in East Malaysia due to the lack of reliable internet connectivity. Veveonah soon became the icon of the digital divide between urban and rural Malaysia. While many including the Deputy Chief Minister of Sabah lauded her for her commitment, Veveonah was later accused of lying and having ulterior motives by a deputy minister and government MP. The post was later removed by the MP after his claims were proven false. However, the unfounded fame took a toll on Veveonah and she went offline as she was unable to deal with the cyberbullying. As of today,

Veveonah continues to be a YouTube influencer with 149,000 subscribers and shares life from rural Sabah.

These women were selected for this study as they represent different forms of cyberbullying that occurs depending on the social standing and perception of the influencer in question. Cathryn Li, who is older, is seen as an influencer by choice that engages in fashion and beauty topics, making her a more commonly expected target for cyberbullying like other female influencers in the country. Ain Husniza, much younger and being Muslim, did not seek becoming an influencer, but in calling out sexist behaviour, was thrust into the limelight. Cyberbullying attacks against her have been especially fierce, focusing much on her Islamic heritage and highlighting the many struggles that non-conservative Muslim women in Malaysia have to endure on social media. Veveonah Mosibin, who came from a more modest and rural upbringing was thrust into the national limelight that made her a political target and as such represents the challenges faced by many non-urban Malaysian women who are seeking an audience in the social media space.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The attacks against all three influencers were often highly gendered and focused entirely on the perceived social status (based on demography) of each influencer. Much of these attacks emerged due to some action that seems to be disrupting the status quo of society in some way; for Cathryn, most of it was due to her perceived "celebrity" status that meant that negative criticism online is part of the territory and for Ain and Vevonah, they were challenging societal norms in ways that subverted the gender norms of women being subservient and meek. As such, we have divided our analytical themes based on each of these influencers as a way of understanding how gendered cyberbullying occurs to women depending on their age, ethnicity, religion, geography, and pathway to being an influencer and examine the kinds of language, rhetoric and justifications that are used by these cyberbullies.

As a Self-made Influencer - Cathryn Li

Cathryn Li represents an ideal template to understand how society (and men) view non-Muslim women who choose to become influencers where they leverage their youth and beauty. Likening her to a lower form of celebrity, the most common criticism against influencers like Cathryn is that they are attention seeking individuals. Any and all actions undertaken by them is all done in the name of gaining more clout and fame with the assumption that they are inauthentic with all social media posts being considered purely performative with no sincerity.

Seen as a "self-made influencer", this puts influencers like Cathryn in an enviable position where they are seen as faux-celebrities; they deserve to be ridiculed and attacked for anything that they do simply because of their choice to be famous or popular. In our analysis, many posts from influencers such as this would be regularly shared on non-social media sites (or at least on platforms that they do not use) purely with the intention to shame, embarrass or smear these influencers amongst predominantly male users. As a non-Muslim, she was also blamed for being allowed to exploit her sexuality to gain male followers. In many of these posts, all manner of male users would regularly use gendered pejorative terms such as "whore", "bimbo", "slut", "porn star", or "pretty vase" to denigrate her.

While Cathryn did receive infrequent negative male attention in this way, it reached a fever pitch when she made that post about her suicide attempt. In the post, she was explaining the toll of being an influencer on her mental health, especially being the target of negative male attention. They dismiss the state of her mental health as part of being an influencer, that as it was her choice to be an influencer, she has to endure the downsides. They also note that as a successful influencer, she has the finances and the means to seek mental healthcare and should not be complaining about it. Others were also dismissive of mental health issues, arguing that young people lack mental fortitude and are unable to accept or process negative feedback.

The case of Cathryn Li provides a good example of how non-Muslim influencers are seen as inauthentic and deserve all the negative attention they get since they chose to participate in this profession. From her choices in how she presents herself and dressing they perceive that she is intentionally targeting male audiences for clout and as such deserves all the negative attention that comes with it. Mental health awareness amongst these male users is also antiquated as her fame and wealth should be sufficient to solve her mental health issues, misunderstanding that negative feedback and mental illness can still occur regardless of her material gains. They liked her success as an influencer to that of a traditional celebrity and so feel that they can ridicule and criticise her in similar fashion. Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers operate in a space with their audience more directly which means they lack the separation barrier and thus are more susceptible to negative feedback and criticism more directly and thus have less mental health resilience.

As an Activist Influencer - Ain Husniza

With Ain, her claim to fame was more sudden and with less planning. What started out as a simple TikTok video to voice her frustration has exploded into a national movement that challenges the dominance of rape culture in Malaysian society and how schools need to do more to protect their students. As activism is her focus, Ain received a lot more negative feedback and criticism, especially since she was challenging the social norms of Malaysia. But unlike the other two influencers studied here, Ain was very proactive and aggressive in not just responding to her detractors, she actively fought back against them which cemented her reputation as a no-nonsense influencer who is willing to stand up for her beliefs.

As a result, Ain received a lot more hate and vitriol compared to the other influencers in our study. All of her posts would be filled with comments from many (not just men) who are attacking her for her beliefs and demeanour. She had been doxed and was forced to change schools after being harassed constantly.

Being a Muslim, the majority of hateful comments towards her are centred around her being a Muslim-Malay girl. As she does not wear a headscarf nor dress in what is socially accepted as conservative clothing, many commenters would point out her lack of Islamic identity, often blaming her father for not better instilling Islamic teachings. The fact that she is speaking truth to power in this fashion is also not seen as being Islamic as young girls should know to be respectful of authority and not question it. Her dress sense is often used to attack her Muslim faith arguing that she is in no position to challenge authority as she is not the perfect Muslim due to her lack of modesty in dressing.

Her presentation is of course a focal point for attacks and disgusting comments against her. They consider that because she dresses in a nonconservative manner (without a headscarf and her figure can be seen), she is “inviting attacks” against her. Some men have

publicly indicated that her pictures online have caused them to "*batal puasa*", cancel their religious fast due to them having impure thoughts about her. Body shaming often takes place as well with men calling out her fuller figure and some insulting her by saying she has the body of a woman who has had multiple children.

Ain perseveres to this day on these issues and these attacks continue to persist. She is lucky to have a family that supports her in her activism. For everyone else, especially those who come from Malay-Muslim backgrounds, these attacks against Ain also serve as a warning to other young Malay female influencers who may seek to challenge authority or present themselves in a manner that is seen as non-conservative.

As an Accidental Influencer - Vevenoah Mosibin

Veveonah's path to fame was not planned nor something she had wanted. Her video that started it all was just part of her vlog style videos that she did, but it became a rallying cry for many other Malaysians, especially from rural parts of the country that were left behind due to the COVID-19 lockdowns. Opposition politicians were quick to use her video as evidence of lacklustre government support and welfare during the pandemic crisis. As such, much of her attacks (and support) were based on political affiliations; opposition supporters supported her efforts and applauded her ingenuity (in spite of government failings) and government supporters were aggressively attacking her.

Her detractors focused primarily on discrediting her claims and seeking to downplay the severity of the issue of poor Internet connectivity in rural Sabah. Through political means, her family was doxed and there were attempts to smear her character, arguing that her actual village had internet connectivity and that she did the video as a stunt for fame. There was also a subtext to these attacks that were seeking to dismiss the notion that the federal government had been derelict in providing necessary basic infrastructure to Sabah. This was most evident when her case was brought up in Parliament where government politicians called her a liar and said that Sabah's Internet infrastructure is well established and she lied to gain attention. While they had to recant their statements, this started a wave of abuse towards Veveonah, especially from Peninsular Malaysians who saw her as damaging the goodwill image of the government.

From this point on, any of her videos (which were just regular vlog style videos) would be filled with Malaysians from West Malaysia attacking her for being political and for disparaging the federal government. Among the insults used against her was that she was an uneducated native and was intent on causing harm and disharmony in the country. A lot of these comments seem to come from government cybertroopers (politically affiliated accounts on social media) or used rhetoric from government spokespersons. Once her village and family were revealed, her family members were getting harassed about her and she ended up closing her YouTube account and moved to another spot.

Veveonah therefore serves as an example of how anyone can suddenly be thrust into the limelight, used as political fodder and be forced to bear the brunt of it all with minimal support from anyone. This highlights the precarious nature of online existence and how incendiary political issues can transform them into uncontrollable disasters forcing these unsuspecting victims to leave these spaces. In being an indigenous Sabahan, there were also many commenters that focused on gaslighting her or trying to dismiss her experiences as being just for attention or politically motivated.

CONCLUSION

While the results of our study above will not be a surprise to Malaysian women who have to endure similar abuse, harassment and societal pressures (regardless if they are influencers or not), it provides useful and important insights into how intersectional issues can influence the kinds of negative attention and abuse women receive online daily. Malaysian Internet commenters (most who are presenting as masculine on these online platforms), have developed certain expectations and assumptions about female influencers, most apparently with their religion, followed by changes in attitude depending on whether they present themselves as modest or not, and finally if the influencer is from a minority background which ultimately determines if they are seen as someone with agency or not.

Cathryn Li, generally perceived as a non-Muslim, was considered the least modest, and was a self-prescribed influencer resulting in her receiving the most vitriol from male commenters. Often resulting in name calling and all commenters were generally very callous and mean-spirited towards her, especially after her suicide attempt. Ain Husniza did not meet the criteria of being the "perfect victim" and thus was often the subject of ridicule due to her presentation and background as a Muslim Malay woman. Veveonah Mosibin was seen as a political sockpuppet, out to embarrass the government and was heavily doxed in a bid to deny that all her experiences were authentic and true.

In Malaysia, societal expectations and interactions with female influencers are still largely influenced by conservative views of gender roles of women in society. Many of these male presenting commenters openly justify their cyberbullying with clearly misogynistic and sexist language, both as a means to remind women of their place and to reinforce these gender stereotypes in online spaces. As influencers act quite independently, have strong agency in advocating for themselves or engaging in acts that step out of bounds of traditional gender roles, they are the target from male commenters who see them as problematic women that deserve ridicule, to be shamed, and in some cases subject to sexual harassment and abuse. Out of the three cases, Ain was the only one that made a clear point to challenge any egregious comments against her but had severe impacts on the other two; Cathryn's mental health suffered while Veveonah was forced to go offline.

It is important to understand that the online cyberbullying of women can vary based on the perceived demography of the influencer, and as such new means are necessary to address these nuanced concerns to ensure that women from all walks of life have access to a safe and equitable way to livelihoods as influencers as a profession of choice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work was supported by the Universiti Malaya FASS RU Grant (Grant Number: GPF037A-2020). The authors would like to thank Aishah Mutmainnah Binti Khairul Annuar for her help in assisting with this article.

BIODATA

Benjamin Y. H. Loh is a senior lecturer at the School of Media and Communication, Taylor's University, Malaysia. His works include co-edited books "Sabah from the Ground: The 2020 Elections and the Politics of Survival" (ISEAS/SIRD 2021), and "New Media in the Margins: Lived Realities and Experiences from the Malaysian Peripheries" published in year 2023. Email: benjaminyewhoong.loh@taylors.edu.my

Vilashini Somiah is an anthropologist and gender scholar whose work covers the agency of Bornean women, migrants, indigenes, and other sexual and gender minorities. “Irregular Migrants and the Sea at the Borders of Sabah, Malaysia: Pelagic Alliance” is her first single authored book. She is currently a senior lecturer at the Gender Studies Programme, Universiti Malaya. Email: vilasomiah@um.edu.my

Kho Suet Nie is a senior lecturer in the Center for Research in Media and Communication, National University of Malaysia. She graduated with a PhD in Communication from National University of Malaysia. She specializes in the study of the mediatization of politics in Malaysia, public relations and corporate communication. Email: suetnie@ukm.edu.my

REFERENCES

Abd Ajis, M. K. A., Kasim, N. M., & Ghazali, F. A. (2022). Gender differences in cyberbullying victimization. *Selangor Humaniora Review*, *6*(1), 51-60.

Adams, C. (2010). Cyberbullying: How to make it stop. *Instructor, 120*(2), 44–49.

Adebayo, D. O., Ninggal, M. T., & Bolu-Steve, F. N. (2020). Relationship between demographic factors and undergraduates' cyberbullying experiences in public universities in Malaysia. *International Journal of Instruction*, *13*(1), 901-914.

Ahmad Ghazali, A. H., Abu Samah, A., Omar, S. Z., Abdullah, H., Ahmad, A., & Mohamed Shaffril, H. A. (2020). Predictors of cyberbullying among Malaysian youth. *Journal of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, 6*(1), 67–80. https://doi.org/kv7x

APC Women's Rights Programme. (2015). Technology-related violence against women—A briefing paper. https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/HRC%2029%20VAW%20a%20briefing%20paper_FINAL_June%202015.pdf

Athar, R. (2015). *From impunity to justice: Improving corporate policies to end technology-related violence against women.* APC: Association for Progressive Communications. https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/impunity-justice-improving-corporate-policies-end-0

Azhar, D. (2022, August 11). *Experts sound alarm on cyberbullying after single mum's death*. *Free Malaysia Today*. https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2022/08/11/experts-sound-alarm-on-cyberbullying-after-single-mums-death/

Balakrishnan, V. (2015). Cyberbullying among young adults in Malaysia: The roles of gender, age and Internet frequency. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *46*, 149-157.

Balakrishnan, V. (2018). Actions, emotional reactions and cyberbullying–From the lens of bullies, victims, bully-victims and bystanders among Malaysian young adults. *Telematics and Informatics*, *35*(5), 1190-1200.

Barlett, C. P., & Gentile, D. A. (2012). Attacking others online: The formation of cyberbullying in late adolescence. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture, 1*(2), 123–135. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028113

Bauman, S., & Baldasare, A. (2015). Cyber aggression among college students: Demographic differences, predictors of distress, and the role of the university. *Journal of College Student Development*, *56*(4), 317-330.

Bernama. (2019a, September 5). 1 in 5 young people skip school because of cyberbullying - UNICEF poll. *New Straits Times.* https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2019/09/519070/1-5-young-people-skip-school-because-cyberbullying-unicef-poll

Bernama. (2019b, November 19). Fewer cyberbullying cases but threat still looming. *Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital*. https://www.kkd.gov.my/233-kkd-news/16092-bernama-19-nov-2019-fewer-cyberbullying-cases-but-threat-still-looming

Bernama. (2019c, November 25). Specific law needed to stem cyberbullying. *Malaysiakini*. https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/501119

Berne, S., Frisén, A., & Kling, J. (2014). Appearance-related cyberbullying: A qualitative investigation of characteristics, content, reasons, and effects. *Body image*, *11*(4), 527-533.

Bhat, C. S., Chang, S. H., & Ragan, M. A. (2013). Cyberbullying in Asia. *Education About Asia, 18,* 36–39.

Bhat, C. S., Ragan, M. A., Selvaraj, P. R., & Shultz, B. J. (2017). Online bullying among high-school students in India. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 39*, 112-124.

Blaya, C., Kaur, K., & Sandhu, D. (2018). Cyberviolence and cyberbullying in Europe and India: A literature review. In P. Smith, S. Sundaram, B. Spears, C. Blaya, M. Schäfer, & D. Sandhu (Eds.), *Bullying, cyberbullying and student well-being in schools: Comparing European, Australian and Indian perspectives* (pp. 83-106). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316987384.006

Boulton, M., Lloyd, J., Down, J., & Marx, H. (2012). Predicting undergraduates' self-reported engagement in traditional and cyberbullying from attitudes. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 15*(3), 141-147.

Cassidy, W., Faucher, C., & Jackson, M. (2013). Cyberbullying among youth: A comprehensive review of current international research and its implications and application to policy and practice. *School Psychology International*, *34*(6), 575-612.

Chisholm, J. F. (2006). Cyberspace violence against girls and adolescent females. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1087*(1), 74-89.

Cicilia, S., & Irawan, A. M. (2023). Discourse on ethnic discrimination: A critical discourse analysis of political statements presented by the members of Indonesia House of Representative in social media. *e-Journal of English Language & Literature, 12*(1), 139-151.

Citron, D. K. (2015). Addressing cyber harassment: An overview of hate crimes in cyberspace. *Case Western Reserve Journal of Law, Technology & the Internet, 6*(1).

Dawum, G. (2019, May 14). Padawan teenager conducts online poll on suicide, found dead hours later. *New Straits Times*. https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2019/05/488380/padawan-teenager-conducts-online-poll-suicide-found-dead-hours-later

Digital Rights Foundation. (2017). *Measuring Pakistani women's experience of online violence: A quantitative research study on online gender-based harassment in Pakistan*. Hamara Internet. https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Hamara-Internet-Online-Harassment-Report.pdf

Douglass, C. H., Wright, C. J., Davis, A. C., & Lim, M. S. (2018). Correlated sexual 27 harrassment in person and technology facilitated harassment from an online survey among young Australians. *Sexual Health, 15*(4), 361-365.

Dreßing, H., Bailer, J., Anders, A., Wagner, H., & Gallas, C. (2014). Cyberstalking in a large sample of social network users: Prevalence, characteristics, and impact upon victims. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 17*(2), 61-67.

Dutceac Segesten, A., Bossetta, M., Holmberg, N., & Niehorster, D. (2022). The cueing power of comments on social media: how disagreement in Facebook comments affects user engagement with news. *Information, Communication & Society, 25*(8), 1115-1134.

Fascendini, F., & Fialova, K. (2011). *Voices from digital spaces: Technology related violence against women.* APC WNSP. https://genderit.org/resources/voices-digital-spaces-technology-related-violence-against-women

Fenaughty, J., & Harré, N. (2013). Factors associated with distressing electronic harassment and cyberbullying. *Computers in Human Behavior, 29*(3), 803-811.

Fitriana, M., Souket, R., & Yie, L. J. (2020). Positive orientation effect on aversive peer experiences such as cyber aggression and cyber victimisation. *SEARCH: Journal of Media and Communication Research,* (Special Issue), 11-30.

Franks, M. A. (2016). *'Revenge porn' reform: A view from the front lines*. Florida Law Review, Forthcoming, University of Miami Legal Studies Research Paper No. 16-43. https://ssrn.com/abstract=2853789

Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T. A. (1997). Objectification theory: Toward understanding women's lived experiences and mental health risks. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *21*(2), 173-206.

Gámez-Guadix, M., Almendros, C., Borrajo, E., & Calvete, E. (2015). Prevalence and association of sexting and online sexual victimization among Spanish adults. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 12,* 145-154.

Gan, J. (2017). Gender inequalities in the prevalence, perception, and reporting of cyberstalking in Malaysian university students. *International Journal of Gender & Women's Studies*, *5*(2), 1-10.

Gearhart, S., Moe, A., & Zhang, B. (2020). Hostile media bias on social media: Testing the effect of user comments on perceptions of news bias and credibility. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies, 2*(2), 140-148.

Ging, D., & Siapera, E. (2018). Special issue on online misogyny. *Feminist Media Studies*, *18*(4), 515-524.

Gönültaş, M. (2022). Cyber bullying and victimization among university students. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, *9*(2), 297-307.

Görzig, A., & Frumkin, L. A. (2013). Cyberbullying experiences on-the-go: When social media can become distressing. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, *7*(1).

Gurumurthy, A., Chami, N., & Vasudevan, A. (2017). *Technology-mediated violence against women in India*. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3875169

Halder, D. (2017). Revenge porn against women and the applicability of therapeutic jurisprudence: A comparative analysis of regulations in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. In D. Halder & K. Jaishankar (Eds.), *Therapeutic jurisprudence and overcoming violence against women* (pp. 282-292). IGI Global.

Hassan, B., Unwin, T., & Gardezi, A. (2018). Gender, mobile, and mobile internet| Understanding the darker side of ICTs: Gender, sexual harassment, and mobile devices in Pakistan. *Information Technologies & International Development*, *14*, 1-17.

Hasse, A., Cortesi, S., Lombana-Bermudez, A., & Gasser, U. (2019). *Youth and cyberbullying: Another look.* Berkman Klein Center Research Publication No. 2019-4. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3477297

Henry, N., & Powell, A. (2018). Technology-facilitated sexual violence: A literature review of empirical research. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *19*(2), 195-208.

Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. W. (2018). *Cyberbullying research summary: Cyberbullying and suicide*. The Cyberbullying Research Center. http://cyberbullying.org/cyberbullying_and_suicide_research_fact_sheet.pdf

Imawan, R. P. (2021). Berebut kuasa tubuh: Norma agama dan kuasa tubuh dalam kekerasan gender berbasis online. *Jurnal Wanita dan Keluarga*, *2*(2), 131-142.

Jones, L. M., Mitchell, K. J., & Finkelhor, D. (2013). Online harassment in context: Trends from three youth internet safety surveys (2000, 2005, 2010). *Psychology of Violence, 3*(1), 53-69.

Kaur, K. (2020, June 2). Backlash against former miss Universe Malaysia highlights our cyberbullying problem. *The Rakyat Post*. https://www.therakyatpost.com/news/malaysia/2020/06/02/backlash-against-former-miss-universe-malaysia-highlights-our-cyberbullying-problem/

Kavanagh, E., & Brown, L. (2020). Towards a research agenda for examining online gender-based violence against women academics. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *44*(10), 1379-1387.

Keith, S., & Martin, M. E. (2005). Cyber-Bullying: Creating a culture: Reclaiming children and youth. *Journal of Strength-based Interventions, 134*(3), 224-228.

Khine, A. T., Saw, Y. M., Htut, Z. Y., Khaing, C. T., Soe, H. Z., Swe, K. K., ... & Hamajima, N. (2020). Assessing risk factors and impact of cyberbullying victimization among university students in Myanmar: A cross-sectional study. *PloS ONE*, *15*(1), e0227051.

Kumar, P., Gruzd, A., & Mai, P. (2021). Mapping out violence against women of influence on Twitter using the cyber–lifestyle routine activity theory. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *65*(5), 689-711.

Lai, C. S., Mohamad, M. M., Lee, M. F., Salleh, K. M., Sulaiman, N. L., Rosli, D. I., & Chang, W. V. (2017). Prevalence of cyberbullying among students in Malaysian higher learning institutions. *Advanced Science Letters*, *23*(2), 781-784.

Lee, S. H. (2016). Cyberbullying in Eastern countries: Focusing on South Korea and other Eastern cultures. In Navarro, R., Yubero, S., & Larrañaga, E. (Eds.), *Cyberbullying Across the Globe* (pp. 149–167). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-25552-1_8

Lenhart, A., Ybarra, M., Zickuhr, K., & Price-Feene, M. (2016). *Online Harassment, Digital Abuse, and Cyberstalking in America*. Data & Society Research Institute; CiPHR. https://www.datasociety.net/pubs/oh/Online_Harassment_2016.pdf

Li, Q. (2007). New bottle but old wine: A research of cyberbullying in schools. *Computers in Human Behavior, 23*(4), 1777–1791. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2005.10.005

Li, Q. (2010). Cyberbullying in high schools: A study of students' behaviors and beliefs about this phenomenon. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 19*(4), 372–392. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10926771003788979

Lindsay, M., & Krysik, J. (2012). Online harassment among college students: A replication incorporating new Internet trends. *Information, Communication & Society, 15*(5), 703-719.

Macdonald, C. D., & Roberts-Pittman, B. (2010). Cyberbullying among college students: Prevalence and demographic differences. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 9,* 2003–2009. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.436

Malay Mail. (2022, Jan 14). Malaysia ranked second in Asia for cyberbullying among youth. https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2022/01/14/malaysia-ranked-second-in-asia-for-cyberbullying-among-youth/2035100

Marganski, A., & Melander, L. (2018). Intimate partner violence victimization in the cyber and real world: Examining the extent of cyber aggression experiences and its association with in-person dating violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 33*(7), 1071-1095.

Marwick, A. E., & Miller, R. (2014). *Online harassment, defamation, and hateful speech: A primer of the legal landscape*. Fordham Center on Law and Information Policy Report No. 2. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2447904

McIntyre, I. (2020, June 4). Social media firms slammed for not checking harmful content. *The Sun Daily*. https://www.thesundaily.my/local/social-media-firms-slammed-for-not-checking-harmful-content-BC2510355

Melander, L. A. (2010). College students' perceptions of intimate partner cyber harassment. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 13*(3), 263-268.

Microsoft. (2012, June 25). Online bullying is a top concern among youth. Microsoft News Center. https://news.microsoft.com/2012/06/26/online-bullying-is-a-top-concern-among-youth/

Mishna, F., Schwan, K. J., Birze, A., Van Wert, M., Lacombe-Duncan, A., McInroy, L., & Attar-Schwartz, S. (2020). Gendered and sexualized bullying and cyber bullying: Spotlighting girls and making boys invisible. *Youth & Society*, *52*(3), 403-426.

Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., Wolak, J., Ybarra, M. L., & Turner, H. (2011). Youth internet victimization in a broader victimization context. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 48*(2), 128-134.

Montiel, I., Carbonell, E., & Pereda, N. (2016). Multiple online victimization of Spanish adolescents: Results from a community sample. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 52*, 123-134.

Murib, Z. (2022). Don't read the comments: Examining social media discourse on trans athletes. *Laws, 11*(4), 53. https://doi.org/10.3390/laws11040053

Muthaly, R. (2022, August 13). Malaysia needs to beef up on digital upskilling. *The Sun Daily*. https://www.thesundaily.my/home/malaysia-needs-to-beef-up-on-digital-upskilling-EH9584431

Nobles, M. R., Reyns, B. W., Fox, K. A., & Fisher, B. S. (2014). Protection against pursuit: A conceptual and empirical comparison of cyberstalking and stalking victimization among a national sample. *Justice Quarterly, 31*(6), 986–1014.

Noor, N., & Hamid, B. A. (2021). Cyberbullying in the Name of God: Critical discourse analysis of online responses to the act of de-hijabbing in Malaysia. *3L: Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, *27*(4), 215–229. https://doi.org/kv78

Ojanen, T. T., Boonmongkon, P., Samakkeekarom, R., Samoh, N., Cholratana, M., & Guadamuz, T. E. (2015). Connections between online harassment and offline violence among youth in Central Thailand. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *44*, 159-169.

Ojanen, T. T., Boonmongkon, P., Samakkeekarom, R., Samoh, N., Cholratana, M., Payakkakom, A., & Guadamuz, T. E. (2014). Investigating online harassment and offline violence among young people in Thailand: Methodological approaches, lessons learned. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *16*(9), 1097-1112.

Ooi, P. B., Ahrumugam, P., Teh, P. L., & Chan, N. N. (2022, October). Factors associated with adolescent cyberbullying perpetration and victimization in Malaysia. *Proceedings of International Academic Symposium of Social Science 2022* (82(1), 109). MDPI. https://doi.org/10.3390/proceedings2022082109

Paez, G. R. (2020). Assessing predictors of cyberbullying perpetration among adolescents: The influence of individual factors, attachments, and prior victimization. *International Journal of Bullying Prevention, 2*(2), 149–159. https://doi.org/kv79

Redondo-Sama, G., Pulido-Rodríguez, M. A., Larena, R., & de Botton, L. (2014). Not without them: The inclusion of minors' voices on cyber harassment prevention. *Qualitative Inquiry, 20*(7), 895-901.

Rodríguez-Darias, A. J., & Aguilera-Ávila, L. (2018). Gender-based harassment in cyberspace. The case of Pikara magazine. *Women's Studies International Forum, 66,* 63-69.

Rosli, J. (2018, Oct 27). Malaysia sixth-worst in global cyber-bullying ladder, survey shows. *Malay Mail.* https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2018/10/27/malaysia-sixth-worst-in-global-cyber-bullying-ladder/1687181

Ruangnapakul, N., Salam, Y. D., & Shawkat, A. R. (2019). A systematic analysis of cyber bullying in Southeast Asia countries. *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering*, *8*(8S), 104-111.

Runions, K. C., & Bak, M. (2015). Online moral disengagement, cyberbullying, and cyber-aggression. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 18*(7), 400-405.

Saleem, S., Khan, N. F., & Zafar, S. (2021). Prevalence of cyberbullying victimization among Pakistani Youth. *Technology in Society*, *65,* 101577. https://doi.org/kv8b

Selvam, K. (2022, August 7). *Mother of three believed to have committed suicide after alleged cyber bullying*. *Sinar Daily.* https://www.sinardaily.my/article/177853/malaysia/national/mother-of-three-believed-to-have-committed-suicide-after-alleged-cyber-bullying

Shahidatul Maslina Mat So'od, Tan Kim Hua, & Bahiyah Abdul Hamid. (2020). Cyberbullying through intellect - Related insults. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication, 36*(1), 278–297. https://doi.org/10.17576/jkmjc-2020-3601-16

Shariff, S., & DeMartini, A. (2015). Defining the legal lines: eGirls and intimate images. In J. Bailey and V. Steeves (Eds.), *eGirls, eCitizens* (Chap. XI, pp. 281-305). University of Ottawa Press. https://books.openedition.org/uop/514?lang=en

Sharma, D., Kishore, J., Sharma, N., & Duggal, M. (2017). Aggression in schools: Cyberbullying and gender issues. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry, 29,* 142-145. https://doi.org/gcx9fm

Simon, S. (2017). Cyber victimization: School experience of Malaysian cyberbullied teenagers. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 11*(3), 713-720.

Smith, P. K., Thompson, F., & Davidson, J. (2014). Cyber safety for adolescent girls: Bullying, harassment, sexting, pornography, and solicitation. *Current Opinion in Obstetrics and Gynecology, 26*(5), 360-365.

Sun, S., Fan, X., & Du, J. (2016). Cyberbullying perpetration: A meta-analysis of gender differences. *International Journal of Internet Science, 11*(1), 61-81.

Supramani, S. (2022, January 19). *Cyberbullying cases spike due to high online usage*. *The Sun Daily*. https://www.thesundaily.my/local/p5-lead-jan-19-cyber-bullying-BC8774131

Suzuki, K., Kumazaki, A., Katsura, R., Sakamoto, A., & Kashibuchi, M. (2012). *Effects of mobile Internet usage on cyber- and school-bullying experiences: A two-wave panel study of Japanese elementary, secondary, and high school students 2011*. Paper presented at the 3rd Global Conference Bullying and the Abuse of Power, Prague, Czech Republic.

The Vibes. (2023, January 2). Educate the young to combat cyberbullying: Survivors. *Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital*. https://www.kkd.gov.my/en/public/news/233-kpkk-news/23356-educate-the-young-to-combat-cyberbullying-survivors

Tokunaga, R. S. (2010). Following you home from school: A critical review and synthesis of research on cyberbullying victimization. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *26*(3), 277-287.

UN Women. (2020). COVID-19 and ending violence against women and girls: Addressing the shadow pandemic. Policy Brief No. 17. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/policy-brief-covid-19-and-violence-against-women-and-girls-addressing-the-shadow-pandemic

UNICEF. (2020, April 14). Children at increased risk of harm online during global COVID-19 pandemic. https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/children-increased-risk-harm-online-during-global-COVID-19-pandemic

UNICEF. (2021, February 8). Growing concern for well-being of children and young people amid soaring screen time. https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/growing-concern-well-being-children-and-young-people-amid-soaring-screen-time

van Dijk, T. A. (2015). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton, & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (2nd edition, pp. 466–485). Wiley Blackwell.

Van Wilsem, J. (2013). Hacking and harassment—Do they have something in common? comparing risk factors for online victimization. *J Contemp Criminal Justice, 29,* 437–453.

Varjas, K., Henrich, C. C., & Meyers, J. (2009). Urban middle school students' perceptions of bullying, cyberbullying, and school safety. *Journal of School Violence, 8*(2), 159–176.

Vitis, L., & Gilmour, F. (2017). Dick pics on blast: A woman's resistance to online sexual harassment using humour, art and Instagram. *Crime, Media, Culture*, *13*(3), 335-355.

Wiguna, T., Minayati, K., Kaligis, F., Ismail, R. I., Wijaya, E., Murtani, B. J., & Pradana, K. (2021). The effect of cyberbullying, abuse, and screen time on non-suicidal self-injury among adolescents during the pandemic: A perspective from the mediating role of stress. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, *12*, 743329.

Willard, N. (2005). Educator's guide to cyberbullying addressing the harm caused by online social cruelty. https://www.chino.k12.ca.us/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=24949&dataid=41040&FileName=EducatorsGuidetoCyberbullying.pdf

Wolford-Clevenger, C., Zapor, H., Brasfield, H., Febres, J., Elmquist, J., Brem, M., ... & Stuart, G. L. (2016). An examination of the partner cyber abuse questionnaire in a college student sample. *Psychology of Violence, 6*(1), 156–162.

Wright, M. F. (2015). Cyber aggression within adolescents' romantic relationships: Linkages to parental and partner attachment. *J Youth Adolesc, 44*, 37–47.

Yusuf, S., Mohamed Al-Majdhoub, F., Mubin, N. N., Chaniago, R. H., & Rahim Khan, F. (2021). Cyber aggression-victimization among Malaysians youth. *Asian Journal of University Education (AJUE)*, *7*(1), 240-260.

Zhong, L. R., Kebbell, M. R., & Webster, J. L. (2020). An exploratory study of Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence in online romantic interactions: Can the Internet's toxic disinhibition exacerbate sexual aggression? *Computers in Human Behavior*, *108*, 106314.