

CYBERBULLYING Perpetrator and Its ASSOCIATED FACTORS among School-going Adolescents in Malaysia



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INTRODUCTION

- Cyberbullying is becoming a significant issue in schools as a result of the development of digital communication technology.
- However, research is still scarce on the factors associated with cyberbullying perpetration activities among adolescents, especially in middle-income countries like Malaysia [1].
- This study aims to determine the associated factors of cyberbullying perpetrators among school-going adolescents in Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY

- Data was obtained from the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2022, a multi-stage stratified cross-sectional study which was conducted among school-going adolescents aged 13 to 17 years old.
- A total of 33,523 adolescents participated in this study by answering the self-administered questionnaire.
- The perpetration of cyberbullying was defined as bullying or harassment through the internet, cell phones, or other electronic devices a few times within a year.
- Complex sample design analysis was used to estimate the prevalence and complex sampling multivariable logistic regression was used to determine factors associated with cyberbullying perpetration. All analysis was done using SPSS version 26.0.

RESULTS

- The prevalence of cyberbullying perpetration among school-going adolescents in Malaysia was 18.3% (95% CI: 17.47, 19.09).
- Male adolescents showed a higher prevalence [21.7% (95% CI: 17.83, 26.20)] compared to females [16.1% (95% CI: 13.36, 19.27)].
- The most common ways of involvement in cyberbullying activities (perpetrator) among school-going adolescents are shown in Table 1.
- Factors associated with cyberbullying perpetrator among school-going adolescents are shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Most common ways of involvement in cyberbullying activities (perpetrator) a few times within a year or more among school-going adolescents in Malaysia, 2022 (N=5822)

Cyberbullying activities	Unweighted count	Estimated population	Prevalence (%)	95 % CI	
				Lower	Upper
Ever made rude comments to anyone online	3502	231844	11.3	10.69	11.94
Ever sent or posted others' embarrassing photos online	1540	98398	4.8	4.37	5.26
Ever spread rumours about someone online	2220	140934	6.9	6.46	7.31
Ever made threatening comments to hurt someone online	588	41978	2.0	1.81	2.32
Ever asked someone to talk about sex online	586	37377	1.8	1.60	2.08
Ever asked someone to do something sexual online	313	20735	1.0	0.83	1.23

DISCUSSION

- The prevalence of perpetration of cyberbullying among school-going adolescents found in this study was 18.3%. The findings were slightly lower compared to Indonesia, 36% and Vietnam, 24%. Nonetheless, it was consistent with the finding of the systematic review by Zhu C et al (2021), that cyberbullying perpetration ranged from 6.0% to 46.3% based on 63 references and increased significantly in the observed years duration[2].
- The most common form of adolescent involvement in cyberbullying activities, 'Ever making rude comments to anyone online' was similar to the study conducted by Yude C et al (2020)[3].
- Multiple logistic regression analysis showed that male adolescents, anxiety, depression, having no close friend, being involved in physical fights, experiencing physical and verbal abuse, being bullied, truancy, a lack of peer support, being smokers, alcohol drinkers, a lack of parental connectedness, and a lack of parental privacy were significantly associated with cyberbullying perpetration. These findings were consistent with those in other previous studies [4-6].

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Table 2: Factors associated with cyberbully perpetrator among school-going adolescents in Malaysia

Variables	Crude OR	95% CI		p-value	Adjusted OR	95% CI		p-value
		Lower	Upper			Lower	Upper	
Sex								
Male	1.82	1.68	1.97	<0.001*	2.24	2.02	2.49	<0.001*
Female	1				1			
Age								
13 years old	0.78	0.67	0.92	0.003*	0.86	0.74	1.01	0.062
14 years old	1.03	0.90	1.18	0.703	1.04	0.91	1.20	0.548
15 years old	1.02	0.89	1.15	0.811	1.07	0.95	1.22	0.278
16 years old	1.01	0.88	1.15	0.929	1.05	0.92	1.20	0.454
17 years and older	1				1			
Parent's Marital Status								
Married	0.85	0.77	0.92	<0.001*	0.96	0.87	1.05	0.362
Separated or widowed	1.00				1			
Loneliness								
Yes	1.57	1.44	1.72	<0.001*	0.94	0.84	1.04	0.241
No	1				1			
Anxiety								
Yes	1.72	1.57	1.90	<0.001*	1.19	1.06	1.34	0.003*
No	1				1			
Having close friend								
Yes	1.01	0.85	1.19	0.938	1.41	1.17	1.70	<0.001*
No	1				1			
Depression								
Yes	1.91	1.76	2.06	<0.001*	1.46	1.32	1.61	<0.001*
No	1				1			
Involved in physical fight								
Yes	2.88	2.65	3.14	<0.001*	1.73	1.58	1.90	<0.001*
No	1				1			
Being physically abused at home								
Yes	2.88	2.57	3.22	<0.001*	1.31	1.15	1.49	<0.001*
No	1				1			
Being verbally abused								
Yes	2.33	2.16	2.52	<0.001*	1.96	1.79	2.15	<0.001*
No	1				1			
Having been bullied								
Yes	2.92	2.56	3.33	<0.001*	1.63	1.42	1.88	<0.001*
No	1				1			
Truancy								
Yes	1.74	1.59	1.89	<0.001*	1.28	1.17	1.40	<0.001*
No	1				1			
Lack of peer support								
Yes	0.96	0.88	1.05	0.403	0.81	0.73	0.88	<0.001*
No	1				1			
Lack of parental connectedness								
Yes	1.27	1.17	1.38	<0.001*	1.13	1.02	1.26	0.017*
No	1				1			
Lack of parental bonding								
Yes	1.14	1.04	1.25	0.004*	0.98	0.88	1.08	0.657
No	1				1			
Parental respect for privacy								
Parent do not respect their privacy	1.51	1.39	1.65	<0.001*	1.19	1.08	1.30	<0.001*
Parent respect their privacy	1				1			
Smoker								
Yes	2.33	2.12	2.56	<0.001*	1.49	1.35	1.65	<0.001*
No	1				1			
Alcohol drinker								
Yes	2.22	1.94	2.53	<0.001*	1.73	1.46	2.05	<0.001*
No	1				1			

*p-value < α = 0.05 was considered statistically significant

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one in five school-going adolescents in Malaysia was involved in cyberbullying perpetration activities. To date, no adequate strategies aimed at adolescents to address the ethics of online social communication have been implemented. Therefore, awareness programmes for cyberbullying should now focus on the perpetrator, in order to reduce the prevalence of cyberbullying activities among school-going adolescents.

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