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INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, COUNSELING HELP-SEEKING ATTITUDES AND CYBERBULLYING ENGAGEMENT AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research study is to investigate the influence of social media, counseling attitudes and cyberbullying engagement among young adults in Selangor. It explores how social media platforms influence the prevalence and impact of cyberbullying incidents in the local community. It also investigates the role of counseling help-seeking attitudes in mitigating the adverse effects resulted from cyberbullying. This study employs a quantitative methodology by collecting data from a sample of young adults residing in Selangor. Statistical analyses, including descriptive analysis, correlation, and multiple regression were conducted to examine the relationships between these variables. The result revealed that there is no significant direct effect of social media usage on cyberbullying perpetration. However, there are statistically negative relationships between social media usage and counseling attitudes on cyberbullying victimization. Counseling attitude is significantly and negatively associated with cyberbullying perpetration, reflecting its role to potentially minimize the risks of young adults being exposed to cyberbullying. This study underscores the importance of implementing effective counselling strategies, particularly within higher education institutions, to mitigate cyberbullying engagement and social media use among young adults in Selangor, Malaysia.

Keywords: bullying behavior, counselling attitude, cyber world, mental health, online violence, youth

1. Introduction

Social media has created new opportunities for people to network, exchange ideas, feelings, and generate content. Social media platforms are rapidly altering the public discourse and establishing trends for subjects including politics, technology, education while also having an impact on the entertainment sector due to its accessibility, speed, and reach (Kamisan & Abu Bakar, 2021). Nevertheless, it is vital to acknowledge that along with the benefits, there can be negative impacts associated with the utilization of technology. One of the disadvantages of social media usage is the possibility of being exposed to cyberbullying, either as a perpetrator or a victim. Like bullying, cyberbullying is concerning for an individual's mental health status because it makes victims feel incompetent and diminishes their self-esteem (Peebles, 2014). The continuous harassment, humiliation, and intimidation inflicted through online platforms can lead to profound psychological distress and emotional harm. The consequences of cyberbullying also extend beyond mental health as there have been documented cases of individuals resorting to extreme measures such as suicide or acts of violence as a result of the psychological pressure associated with cyberbullying (Adebayo et al., 2020). The potential for long-lasting damage and irreversible outcomes highlights the severity and urgency in addressing this issue.

Cyberbullying comes in different forms such as impersonation, harassment, cyberstalking, and cyberthreats (Willard, 2006). These activities are performed in many ways to reach the victims, including social networking websites, instant messaging over the Internet, and text messaging by phone. Young adults are now becoming more technologically savvy that they can easily register websites and accounts to send harmful messages with relative anonymity. The anonymity of cyberbullying over the use of the Internet is often out of the legal reach of authorities (Peebles, 2014). This allows bullies to happen around the clock and leaves victims in a constant struggle to find peace.

UNICEF Malaysia (2020) reported that 3 out of 10 young Malaysians encounter cyberbullying on a regular basis through private messaging, gaming, and social media sites including WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Another poll conducted by UNICEF Malaysia in 2020 also revealed that 4 in 9 young people in Malaysia are aware of the private online groups that function as bullying platforms. However, only 2 in 7 young Malaysians knew of a helpline to seek help if they are a victim of cyberbullying. According to Cybersecurity Malaysia (2020), young Malaysians have a moderately high likelihood of becoming cyberbullies, reported at more than 53% while around 25% of young Malaysians have been bullied online. More than 44% of young Malaysians experienced cyber-related anxiety, despair, and stress as a result of cyberbullying engagement. It is important to note the data may not be the actual reflection of cyberbullying cases as these activities are often under-

reported in Malaysia as people lack awareness of the significance of cyberbullying situations (Adebayo et al., 2020).

Young adults refer to individuals who are in the transition period between adolescence and adulthood, generally ranging from late teens to early thirties. In reference to Balakrishnan's (2022) study on problematic use of online information among young adults in Malaysia, this study considers young adults as those aged between 18 to 35 years old. This age range overlaps with those in universities, as many students in Malaysia enter university around the age of 18 or older. This demonstrates that there is a significant portion of young adolescents transitioning into university education, making them vulnerable to cyberbullying throughout their academic journey.

It has been shown that an empowering support network with appropriate resources can guide young people in comprehending and navigating through the cyber world safely while protecting them from cyberbullying engagement (Dennehy et al., 2020). Seeking counselling services has also been identified as an effective strategy in response to cyberbullying victimization and perpetration. However, cyberbullying engagement, especially victimization goes largely unreported. Young people's reluctance to report cyberbullying has been attributed to challenges in establishing cybervictimization, anxiety about losing access to cyberspace, worry about reprisals or intensification of bullying, lack of faith in adults' ability to assist, and the notion that little can be done to stop cyberbullying. Therefore, counsellors and mental health professionals are in a distinctive position to mitigate the psychological impacts resulted from cyberbullying engagement and increased social media use. Young adults must first become aware of cyberbullying incidents and feel safe to disclose with authorities.

There are considerable research studies on young adults' problematic Internet use in Malaysia which demonstrated the detrimental consequences of the Internet on the psychological health of students (Balakrishnan, 2022). However, the literature yield very few studies on cyberbullying practices. The majority of empirical research on cyberbullying has focused on children and teens rather than adults (Schodt et al., 2021). There is comparatively lesser research that studies the interrelation between cyberbullying and mental health among adults. Yet, it is important to recognize that adult populations are affected differently than younger ones since they use social media for various things and are more likely to engage in cyberbullying in different ways.

In the context of Malaysian young adults, this study seeks to add empirical evidence to the exploration of the relationship between social media use, counseling help-seeking attitudes, and cyberbullying engagement. Research conducted by Lee and colleagues (2023) revealed that among 270 medical students from a Malaysian

public university in Kuching, the prevalence of cyberbullying victimization was 24.4% and cyberbullying perpetration was reported at 13.0%. The same study revealed that social media addiction was associated with higher tendencies in depression, anxiety, and stress. By offering statistical analyses based on the experiences of Malaysian young adults residing in Selangor, this study seeks to add depth to the existing studies. It is expected that the findings would contribute to the literature and help practitioners especially Malaysian counselors in developing resources for counseling the young adults who face issues with social media usage and cyberbullying.

However, it was highlighted that the majority of studies on cyberbullying were conducted with students in primary and secondary school, ranging in age from 9 to 18 years old (Peled, 2019). Studies exploring individuals beyond this age group is crucial to improve understanding and provide empirically supported data for future intervention strategies aimed at mitigating cyberbullying issues. Studying human behavior on social media usage and cyberbullying practices may enhance mental health practitioners' knowledge and skills in combating the negative consequences of such online practices. The findings may help counselors to understand how social media usage can be linked with young adults' cyberbullying behaviors. This could be beneficial for the case management of the counseling services in university or community settings.

Understanding the identified patterns of association between the variables, counselors could modify their intervention strategies to ensure social media safety in preventing cyberbullying practices. The findings will act as references for counselors to develop appropriate interventions and counseling services for young adults. It holds potential for reducing young adults' mental health issues stemming from social media usage and cyberbullying behaviors, which in turn can improve their overall psychological wellbeing.

Selangor was chosen to be the location of this study as it is Malaysia's most urbanised state and boasts the country's highest Internet penetration rate. It belongs to one of the 13 states that make up Malaysia. In light of these considerations, the current study aim to study the influence of social media usage, counseling help-seeking attitudes, and cyberbullying engagement among young adults in Selangor. The specific goals of this research include:

- (1) To measure the prevalence of social media usage, counselling help-seeking attitudes, cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among young adults in Selangor.
- (2) To investigate the relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying perpetration among young adults in Selangor.
- (3) To investigate the relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying

victimization among young adults in Selangor.

- (4) To investigate the relationship between counselling help-seeking attitudes and cyberbullying perpetration among young adults in Selangor.
- (5) To investigate the relationship between counselling help-seeking attitudes and cyberbullying victimization among young adults in Selangor.
- (6) To investigate the influence of social media usage and counselling help-seeking attitudes on cyberbullying engagement.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Cyberbullying

A meta-synthesis review revealed that there were no articles that referenced 'cyberbullying' before 2004 (Tokunaga, 2010). This reflects that the concept of cyberbullying is a recent emergence following technological advancement in communication and entertainment. Cyberbullying is commonly defined as a deliberate and aggressive act performed by an individual or a group using electronic forms of contact persistently and over time against a victim or a group of people with a power imbalance that they cannot easily defend themselves (Willard, 2006). Cyberbullying is sometimes referred to as online violence, cyberharassment, and electronic aggression. Forms of cyberbullying that occur on social networking sites include mocking, uploading photos or videos to embarrass others, offending others with status updates, commenting with harsh words, insulting the person's body image, stalking victims through fake accounts, spreading gossip, or pretending to be someone else (Husna et al., 2020).

According to a meta-analysis conducted by Lozano-Blasco and colleagues (2020), university students and young adults are subject to cyberbullying, with incidence rates ranging from 3% to 40% for perpetration and 7% to 62% for victimization. Another study conducted by Lai and colleagues (2017) revealed that compared to male respondents among Malaysian university students, female respondents had a higher prevalence rate of cyberbullying. Additionally, it was discovered that compared to other ethnic groups, Malay people made up the majority of cyber victims. They cited Facebook as the common venues for cyberbullying. It is alarming that bullying on social media platforms continues to increase and expose more people to emotional and psychological stress. A research conducted by Saharrudin and colleagues (2019) also reported 10% of the 400 youths investigated have moderately engaged in cyberbullying activities. Hence, it is essential to determine the current prevalence of cyberbullying engagement as there are mixed findings in this area.

2.2. Social media usage and cyberbullying

Several research have attributed the interrelation between cyberbullying and mental health towards social media use. One study conducted by Balakrishnan (2022) that investigated cyberbullying issues among young adults in Malaysia concluded that internet usage frequency could initiate cyberbullying. Another study by Shaikh and colleagues (2021) reported that cyberbullies and the victims are mainly heavy social media users which therefore stimulate the youths to harm each other. Cyberbullying victimization has a higher occurrence when both victims and perpetrators are using the same virtual venues as social media platforms without adequate safeguards in place. This presents the increased chances for cyberbullying engagement when there is a higher degree of social media use. Thus, the following hypotheses were formulated to examine the relevant relationships for young adults residing in Selangor, Malaysia:

H1: There is a significant relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying perpetration.

H2: There is a significant relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying victimization.

2.3. Counselling help-seeking attitudes and cyberbullying

Counseling services have gained attention over the years as Malaysian society continues to grow in diverse settings including population, economy, and international recognition (Talib, 2010). Despite the fact that recent research indicated a rise in the number of people seeking assistance for mental health issues, a sizable portion of people continue to decide against using psychological services (Pheng et al., 2019). Research pointed out that the counseling services have been underutilized among Malaysian young adults (Arifin et al., 2022). The level of help-seeking was reported to be low among Malaysians. The rationales behind this phenomenon were often related to stigma, lack of awareness about the counseling services and anticipated costs. There are also attitudinal barriers towards counseling help-seeking where people choose to handle the problem on their own and thinking that the problem will go away.

A pilot study conducted by Chillemi and colleagues (2020) revealed that adolescents were more likely to use coping skills after going through an online, self-guided psychoeducational program. There was a significant increase in adolescents' help-seeking attitudes that resulted in the increased likelihood of engaging counselling services in the event of being victim of cyberbullying. This implies that counselling initiatives are vital to increase youths' behavioural intentions in seeking help during cyberbullying engagement. Besides that, research shows that school children who had suffered from cyberbullying had worse help-seeking attitudes (Gustainiene & Valiune, 2015). It is important to educate youths to change their attitudes toward help seeking if they encounter cyberbullying.

Hence, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H3: There is a significant relationship between counselling help-seeking attitudes and cyberbullying perpetration.

H4: There is a significant relationship between counselling help-seeking attitudes and cyberbullying victimization.

2.4. Research framework

The underpinning theory used in this research is Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 2005). It is predicated that a person's subjective desire to engage in a particular behaviour is the most accurate predictor of that behaviour. The attitudes towards the behaviour, the subjective normative beliefs about executing the behaviour, and the perception of behavioural control to conduct the behaviour are the three factors that determine the intent to perform a certain behaviour. Theoretically, a person's behavioural intention will rise with more favourable assessments of the three elements, increasing the likelihood that they will engage in the particular behaviour. As a result, we develop positive attitudes towards behaviours we feel will predominantly result in desirable results while developing negative attitudes towards behaviours we think will mostly result in bad consequences. This theory has been applied in many research studies to understand help-seeking behaviors (Hamidi, 2014) and likelihood of involving in cyberbullying behavior (Shaikh, 2021). The following hypothesis is developed to investigate factors influencing cyberbullying engagement:

H5: There is a significant influence of social media usage and counselling help-seeking attitude on cyberbullying perpetration and victimization.

With TPB as a theoretical framework, it helps to inform how mental health professionals can develop interventions to increase the chances of behavioral changes. Particular procedures can be followed to increase the likelihood of behavior change. The conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 1. This framework aided in developing research objectives, research questions and research hypotheses. It laid out the variables studied in this research. Independent variables are social media usage and counseling help-seeking attitude. Dependent variable is cyberbullying engagement, which has two domains, perpetration, and victimization.

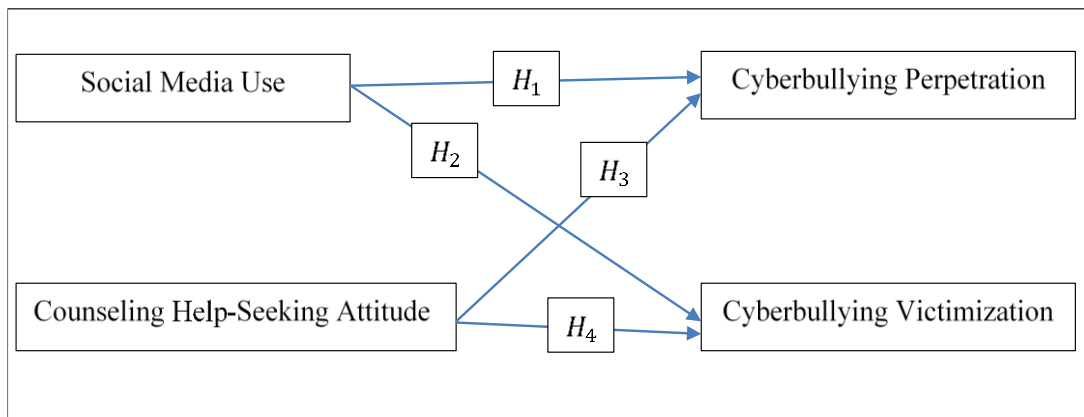


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

The current research utilizes a quantitative approach to examine the influence of social media usage and counselling attitudes on cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among young adults in Selangor, Malaysia. The present study utilizes a combination of descriptive and correlational research designs. The current state of undergraduate students' use of social media, cyberbullying behaviors, and counselling help-seeking attitudes are described in depth through descriptive research design. It also serves as a preceding strategy to assemble data about the research interest.

The population of the present study is the young adults residing in Selangor. Based on the research objectives, the inclusion criteria included (1) people aged between 18 to 35 years old, and (2) Selangor residents. According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2022), there are 1.9 million people who aged between 18 to 35 years old who stay in Selangor.

The primary sample strategy used was cluster sampling, followed by simple random sampling. At the primary stage, all nine districts under Selangor were listed. They are Sabak Bernam, Kuala Selangor, Hulu Selangor, Petaling Jaya, Klang, Kuala Langat, Hulu Langat, Gombak, and Sepang. Estimates were made of the typical population members in each cluster. Four clusters are required for this investigation, as determined by dividing the sample size by the predicted size per cluster. By giving each district a number and choosing from a table of random numbers, four districts were chosen at random. The chosen districts are Hulu Langat, Petaling Jaya, Gombak, and Klang. All young adults in each of the four districts are in the sample.

For the present study, the significance level (α) is set at 0.05, indicating that the results have a 5% of occurring, or less, if the null hypothesis is true. The confidence level is set at 95%. This infers that one can be 95% certain that the results contain

the true mean average of the specified population. The standard deviation is set at 0.05, with a margin of error plus or minus 5%.

Using Cochran's formula for sample size estimation, $n_0 = \frac{Z^2pq}{e^2}$.

The symbol e refers to the margin of error; p is the estimated proportion of the population that has the attribute in the research question, and q is $1-p$. Taking into consideration the above, for a population size of 1.9 million, with primary variables being continuous data, the sample size needed is 385.

3.1 Instrumentation

Several instruments are used to measure the variables of the present study. There are four parts for the survey questionnaire. The first part collects the respondents' demographic information. These include respondents' age, gender, and ethnicity. By capturing the diversity of the study population, this study can provide insights that are more representative of the broader young adult population in Selangor, Malaysia. Participants are also required to respond affirmatively to the question "Are you currently residing in Selangor?" in order to be included in the study. It is followed by the second part that assesses respondents' social media usage using Social Networking Activity Intensity Scale (SNAIS) (Li et al., 2016). The third part of the questionnaire examines respondents' cyberbullying engagement through the Revised Cyber Bullying Inventory (Erdur-Baker & Kavut, 2010). The fourth part of the survey explores respondents' counselling attitudes using the Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS) (Fisher & Farina, 1995). In adherence to the ethical standards and protocol, the present study obtained permissions from the respective authors of the instruments utilized in the research. No adaptations were made to the instruments as they were validated and established in previous research contacts. This serves to minimize cultural biases and distortions in the data.

Given that cyberbullying can occur in various social media channels, Social Networking Activity Intensity Scale (SNAIS) developed by Li and colleagues (2016) was used. In a systematic review conducted by Sigerson & Cheng (2018) that investigated psychometric properties of scales related to problematic use of social media, SNAIS fulfills both entertainment and social function of measuring social media engagement. It shows positive correlation with Facebook Intensity Scale (FBI) and two additional scales measuring social networking and Internet addiction. The items are written in the format of questions, "How often have you performed the following on online social networking activities in the last month" and respondents are required to answer with the 5-point Likert scale from 0 (Never), 1 (Few), 2 (Sometimes), 3 (Often), and 4 (Always). Scores are added up with no specific cut off for specific level of social network activity usage, higher scores imply higher usage

levels. The overall internal reliability was reported to be adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$).

The Revised Cyber Bullying Inventory (Erdur-Baker & Kavrut, 2010) was adopted to examine respondents' cyberbullying engagement. It was revised upon the Cyber Bullying Inventory (CBI) that was first introduced in 2007. It added acts of cyber bullying performed on specified social media platform such as Facebook to increase relevancy for respondents. The Bully scale and Victim scale are the two subscales that make up the inventory. Each scale has 14 distinct examples of behaviors, totaling a 28-item self-report questionnaire with a 4-point Likert scale. Participants are required to rate from 1 (not at all) to 4 (more than 3 times) by reflecting on their behaviors over the past twelve months. The inventory links aggressive cell phone, email, social networking, and general computer usage to the behaviors indicated. With Cronbach coefficients of .80 for the Victim scale and .92 for the Bully scale, the RCBI is demonstrated to have high reliability.

Respondents' counselling attitudes were assessed using the Attitudes toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPHS) (Fisher & Farina, 1995). The original scale was developed by Fisher and Turner in 1970 while the shorted version was revised in 1995, and has consistently demonstrate acceptable psychometric properties across a range of samples. It is a 10-item Likert scale where respondents rate their level of agreement with each item ranging from disagree (0) to agree (3). Items 2, 4, 8, 9 and 10 are reverse scored. All scores are added together. The higher the score, the more favorable one's attitude towards asking for assistance is. The reliability of the four dimensions included in the 29-item scale ranged from .62 to .74. The reliability of the overall scale was .86.

3.2 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures for this study involve the use of a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the targeted population through community centers located at the four selected districts. Individuals visiting the community centers and those who are in the mailing list for community events were invited to participate in the survey by completing the questionnaire. Permission from the Ethics Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects Universiti Putra Malaysia (JKEUPM) were obtained before recruiting participants for this study. Each participant must acknowledge informed consent on the first page of the questionnaire in order to participate in the study, which is required to assure ethical compliance. A description of the nature of the research, including its objectives, and ethical considerations, along with the researcher's contact details were displayed with the consent form. Additionally, the responders were made aware of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

3.3 Data Analysis

Given that standardized instruments are used for data collection, each participant's responses were scored following the manual key respectively. After that, the data was screened to address problems such outliers, missing data, and normality. A descriptive statistical analysis was used to characterize the data and present the participants' demographic information and their prevalence of social media usage, cyberbullying engagement and counselling help-seeking attitude. The hypotheses were tested using correlation and regression analyses. Correlation analysis assesses the strength and direction of the relationship between variables, aiding in understanding how changes in one variable may be associated with changes in another. Regression analysis investigates which variables have significant predictive value in explaining variations in cyberbullying engagement. The statistical analysis was carried out with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

4. Results and Discussion

In the present study, a total of 395 responses were obtained through the proposed methodology. These responses represent valid cases with complete information. Upon initial screening, it was discovered that eight respondents declared that they did not reside in Selangor, Malaysia, the specific location of interest for this study. Hence, they were excluded from the final sample. This helps to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of the findings within the targeted population. The number of respondents who met the inclusion criteria and were considered for the analysis amounted to 387.

4.1. Demographic Information

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency (n=387)	Percentage (%)
Age		
18 – 25	158	40.8
26 – 30	159	41.1
31 - 35	70	18.1
Gender		
Male	200	51.7
Female	187	48.3
Ethnicity		
Malay	172	44.4
Chinese	158	40.8
Indian	56	14.5
Others	1	0.3

This section presents the respondents' demographic data including age, gender, and ethnicity. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the respondents in details. The data was analysed using the IBM SPSS software. The demographics of the respondents were examined using descriptive statistics. Out of the total of 387 samples, 200 were males and 187 were females. 158 (40.8%) of them were between the ages of 18 and 25; 159 (41.1%) were between the ages of 26 and 30; and 70 (18.1%) were between the ages of 31 and 35. Among the samples, 172 (44.4%) were of Malay ethnicity, followed by 158 (40.8%) Chinese, 56 (14.5%) Indians, and 1 (0.3%) who belonged to other ethnic groups.

4.2. Descriptive Analysis of Social Media Usage, Cyberbullying Engagement and Counseling Help-seeking Attitude

The level of social media usage of the respondents is shown in Table 2. The total scores range from 0 to 56, with the mean of 39.2 (SD = 13.8). A total of 219 (56.6%) respondents reported very high usage of social media, rated to be always engaging in online social networking activities in the last month. It is followed by 68 (17.5%) respondents that reported either sometimes or often engaging in online social networking activities. 63 (16.3%) respondents reported low social media usage while 37 (9.6%) respondents reported very low social media usage over the past month.

Table 2: Prevalence of Social Media Usage

Level	n	%	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Social Media Usage			0	56	39.2	13.8
Very low (<20)	37	9.6				
Low (20 – 29)	63	16.3				
High (30 – 39)	68	17.5				
Very high (40<)	219	56.6				

Findings on the high prevalence of social media usage among young adults in Selangor is consistent with the report published by the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (2020) on social media usage and the research conducted by Kamisan and Abu Bakar (2021) on the usage patterns of social media among young adults in Malaysia. It shows that social media is becoming a necessity for young adults as it encompasses a major part of our daily lives.

The level of cyberbullying perpetration is summarized in Table 3. The total scores range from 14 to 45, with the mean of 19.1 (SD = 9.0). There were 316 (81.7%) respondents reported low level of cyberbullying perpetration, where they rated their engagement in cyberbullying perpetration to be never or once. 64 (16.5%) respondents were moderately involved in cyberbullying perpetration, with an average of involvement between two to three times. There were 7 (1.8) respondents with high engagement in cyberbullying perpetration, indicating that they have

committed to this act for more than three times.

Table 3: Prevalence of Cyberbullying Perpetration

Level	n	%	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Cyberbullying Perpetration			14	56	19.1	9.0
Low (14 – 27)	316	81.7				
Moderate (28 – 41)	64	16.5				
High (42 – 56)	7	1.8				

Current findings revealed that there is a low prevalence of cyberbullying perpetration among young adults in Selangor. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Saharrudin and colleagues (2019), where they reported 10% of the 400 youths that they investigated have moderately engaged in cyberbullying activities. However, this finding differs slightly with other research studies. The findings by Lai and colleagues (2017) indicating one-third of Malaysian young adults had cyberbullied someone, and a meta-analysis conducted by Lozana-Blasco and colleagues (2020) revealed that the cyberbullying perpetration rate among university students and young adults were 3% to 40%. The inconsistencies in findings may be due to the act that there is social desirability that influenced respondents' reported rates. It may also be an increase of digital resilience among young adults surveyed due to greater cyber safety awareness created by the society that encouraged positive Internet use.

The level of cyberbullying victimization is presented in Table 4. The total scores range from 14 to 56, with the mean of 22.1 (SD = 8.8). A total of 283 (73.1%) respondents reported low level of cyberbullying victimization, where they have never experienced cyberbullying or had one encounter in the past. 99 (25.6%) respondents reported moderate level of cyberbullying victimization, and 5 (1.3%) respondents have experienced cyberbullying for more than 3 times.

Table 4: Prevalence of Cyberbullying Victimization

Level	n	%	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Cyberbullying Victimization			14	56	22.1	8.8
Low (14 – 27)	283	73.1				
Moderate (28 – 41)	99	25.6				
High (42 – 56)	5	1.3				

Compared with cyberbullying perpetration, the prevalence of cyberbullying victimization is higher but it is also comparatively low among the sample studied. This finding is consistent with other research findings that revealed a higher

prevalence rate in cyberbullying victimization than perpetration (Zhu et al., 2021; Lozano-Blasco et al., 2020). The fact that a substantial number of cyberbullies were also cybervictims can complicate the research findings. This study revealed a moderate-high correlation between cyberbullying victimization and perpetration ($r = .76$), which is consistent with Lozano-Blasco and colleagues' findings.

The counselling help-seeking attitudes of the respondents are captured in Table 5. The total scores range from 0 to 30, with the mean of 17.3 ($SD = 4.2$). According to Fischer and Farina (1995), higher scores obtained from this scale indicate a better counselling help-seeking attitude. The threshold score is greater than 20 points, the attitude is regarded as negative for points below 10. A total of 133 (34.4%) respondents scored above 20 points, showing a positive attitude toward counselling help-seeking, while 230 (59.4%) respondents scored between 10 to 19, reflecting a neutral attitude toward counselling help-seeking. There were 24 (6.2%) respondents who held negative attitudes toward counselling help-seeking.

Table 5: Prevalence of Counselling Help-seeking Attitude

Level	n	%	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Counseling Help-seeking Attitude			0	30	17.3	4.2
Negative (<10)	24	6.2				
Neutral (10 – 19)	230	59.4				
Positive (20<)	133	34.4				

Current findings show that majority young adults are neither having positive nor negative counseling help-seeking attitudes. The study outcome differs from other research studies (Salim, 2010; Arifin et al., 2022) that found that Malaysian young adults have reservations about seeking counseling services even when they struggle academically, professionally, socially, or personally. These two studies reported that majority of young adults rarely seek for help with low scores on the scale, followed by those with neutral category, and the least was those with positive counseling attitudes. It is worth noting that the current finding is in line with Berry and colleagues' (2019) finding that young people in Malaysia have a non-stigmatizing counseling attitude.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

Correlational analysis was used to analyze the relationship between variables, alongside multiple regression analysis. All the research objectives were achieved, and the results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of Research Hypotheses, Results of Analysis

Research Hypothesis	Result	Decision
There is a significant relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying perpetration.	$r = -.02,$ $p = .72$	Rejected
There is a significant relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying victimization.	$r = -.20,$ $p < .05$	Accepted
There is a significant relationship between counselling help-seeking attitudes and cyberbullying perpetration.	$r = -.44,$ $p < .05$	Accepted
There is a significant relationship between counselling help-seeking attitudes and cyberbullying victimization.	$r = -.59,$ $p < .05$	Accepted

The findings suggested that social media usage has no significant direct relationship with cyberbullying perpetration but it has a significant relationship with cyberbullying victimization. Besides, counselling help-seeking attitude has a significant relationship with cyberbullying engagement among young adults residing in Selangor.

Multiple linear regression was used to test if social media usage and counselling attitude significantly predicted the frequency of cyberbullying perpetration among young adults. SPSS output is outlined in Table 7.

Table 7: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis with Cyberbullying Perpetration as the Dependent Variable

Variables	Beta	SE	β	Sig.
Social media	.10	.02	.15	.000
Counseling help-seeking attitude	.09	.05	.05	.000
Cyberbullying victimization	.96	.03	.94	.000

Note: Dependent variable: Cyberbullying Perpetration; SE: Standard Error

The results of the regression model show that the three predictors explained 79% of the variance ($R^2 = .79, p < .05$). The largest beta coefficient is .94, which is for cyberbullying victimization. This indicates that cyberbullying victimization makes the strongest unique contribution to the cyberbullying perpetration, when the variance explained by all other variables in this model is controlled for. It was found that social media usage significantly predicted cyberbullying perpetration at a lower level ($\beta = .15, p < .05$), followed by counselling help-seeking attitude ($\beta = .05, p < .05$). All relationships are shown to be making statistically significant unique contribution to the dependent variable.

The multiple linear regression analysis with cyberbullying victimization as the dependent variable is shown in Table 8. All three independent variables explained 82% of the variance ($R^2 = .82, p < .05$). Cyberbullying perpetration has the highest beta coefficient, reported at .78, indicating that it makes the strongest unique contribution to the cyberbullying victimization. Following that is counselling help-seeking attitude that significantly predicted cyberbullying victimization ($\beta = -.21, p < .05$), and social media usage ($\beta = -.11, p < .05$). Therefore, the research hypothesis is accepted as there is a significant influence of social media usage and counselling help-seeking attitude on cyberbullying perpetration and victimization.

Table 8: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis with Cyberbullying Victimization as the Dependent Variable

Variables	Beta	SE	β	Sig.
Social media	-.07	.02	-.11	.000
Counseling help-seeking attitude	-.31	.04	-.21	.000
Cyberbullying perpetration	.76	.02	.78	.000

Note: Dependent variable: Cyberbullying victimization; SE: Standard Error

4.3.1. Relationship between Social Media Usage and Cyberbullying Engagement

The current research findings indicated that there was no significant relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying perpetration as the influence was reported to be at a negligent level. However, it was found that there was a significant yet negative relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying victimization. This is inconsistent with previous studies that found significant and positive relationships between social media usage and cyberbullying behaviors (Shaikh et al., 2021; Balakrishnan, 2022).

One of the factors resulting in the found insignificance could be that social media usage was investigated as a moderating or mediating role between cyberbullying intention and behavior (Abaido, 2020). The lack of causality indicates that higher social media usage does not directly lead to higher cyberbullying engagement. The presence of other mediating variables can influence the relationship between social media usage and cyberbullying engagement. Factors investigated in previous studies include individual personality traits (Ghazali et al., 2020), depressive symptoms (Pang et al., 2023), aggression (Yusup, 2019), etc.

These mixed findings suggested that the relationship is complex and context-dependent. Though the previous studies showed that increased utilization of social media platforms stimulates cyberbullying engagement among young adults, it is also vital to consider the positive aspects of social media usage that can positively impact users' behaviors and attitudes, such as fostering social connections virtually,

supporting mental health, and providing educational opportunities. Individual factors can result in different objectives and goals when utilizing social media. Hence, a balanced view of the influence of social media is needed to understand the influence between social media usage and cyberbullying engagement.

4.3.2. Relationship between Counseling Help-Seeking Attitudes and Cyberbullying Engagement

The findings on the relationship between counselling help-seeking attitudes and cyberbullying engagement revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between counselling attitudes and cyberbullying engagement. In other words, as one has a more positive counselling help-seeking attitude, their level of cyberbullying engagement are deemed to be at a lower level. This result is in line with previous findings that revealed positive help-seeking attitudes can reduce one's likelihood to engage in unfavorable activities (Arifin et al., 2022; Pheng et al., 2019). Counseling help-seeking attitudes have also been studied as a potential mediating factor that influence an individual's cyberbullying engagement. Tazilah and colleagues (2022) pointed out that a positive attitude towards counselling may be linked to higher self-esteem, empathy, emotional regulation skills, and problem-solving abilities. These protective factors can contribute to healthier relationships and lower tendencies to engage in cyberbullying behaviors.

Drawing upon the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2005), attitudes toward the behavior is one of the determinants of the intent to perform a specific behavior. Counseling help-seeking attitudes are linked with one's subjective intention to engage in cyberbullying. This indicates that as one has a positive counselling help-seeking attitude, the negative appraisals towards cyberbullying intention will decrease the likelihood of engaging in cyberbullying behavior. The present finding and previous results (Shaikh et al., 2021) confirmed that a positive attitude towards help-seeking can lead to a lower chance of engaging in cyberbullying behavior.

5. Implications and Suggestions for Future Studies

Cyberbullying is a growing social issue that affects people around the world, including Malaysia, where young adults have easy access to technology. The research findings present an alarming rate of social media usage among young adults residing in Selangor. However, the cyberbullying engagement may not have been a prominent concern among the current sample population. Nevertheless, the high level of reported social media usage still warrants consideration for preventive measures for addressing the possibility of cyberbullying engagement. This data could help higher education institutions to integrate various mental health support services into campus resources through understanding the current trend among young adults. It is also worth noting that social media platforms are constantly evolving and the dynamics of online interactions can change rapidly. Therefore,

preventive measures can be taken in place to mitigate the negative consequences resulted from problematic use of Internet.

This study added new findings to the current literature that mainly focused on studying cyberbullying behavior in the population of children, adolescents, or school students. This new findings can shed light in identifying key factors related to cyberbullying among young adults in Malaysia. It is also important to recognize that cyberbullying goes beyond schooling age. It is with higher risk when young adults are not under the surveillance of their parents, especially when they first enter colleges or universities. As they begin to gain freedom in making own choices, their behaviors and attitudes can also be easily influenced by personal, social and environmental factors.

Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, this study highlighted the negative relationships between counselling attitudes and cyberbullying engagement. This helped inform general public, including counselling professionals, the importance of promoting positive counselling attitudes among young adults and effective counselling interventions to address cyberbullying issues. It is also vital to identify risk factors and protective factors associated with the prevalence rates of cyberbullying engagement. By encouraging help-seeking behavior, individuals may be more inclined to address their own emotional needs rather than resorting to cyberbullying.

There is a need for comprehensive research that adopts the lens of qualitative research in the future. Comprehensive methodologies, such as longitudinal studies, detailed interviews, and mixed-method approaches can be adopted to uncover the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that contribute to the relationship. The quantitative findings may not have been providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between the variables studied. Combining quantitative data from self-reported questionnaires with other qualitative methods can provide researchers a deeper understanding of respondents' experiences, motivations, and perceptions.

Besides that, future study should recruit participants according to the ratio of ethnicity, age, and gender among Malaysian young adults to generate more representative results. The recruitment process can be tailored to target undergraduate students from either private or public universities, thereby enhancing the clarity of the population of interest and minimizing potential result distortions. The surveys should also be targeted at cyber bullies and victims directly to collect more accurate responses. Particular constructs in Theory of Planned Behavior shall be investigated closely to understand the actual intention, attitudes, or subjective norms behind cyberbullying engagement. To comprehend how technological applications and psychological impacts affect the behavioral intents of

cyberbullying, other theories, such as Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and the Technology Acceptance Model, might be applied.

Although cyberbullying has not been recognized as a mental condition by any classification systems for mental illnesses, it is portrayed as a kind of problematic internet use. Future studies might want to look into those with problematic internet use and investigate its connections with cyberbullying, examining if they exhibit similar addiction symptoms that are linked to distress or functional impairment. Given the available research, it seems premature to categorize cyberbullying as a separate mental disease. Future studies might therefore examine the psychopathology of cyberbullying and its presentation in greater detail.

Overall, the key information obtained is essential to help policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals in developing targeted interventions and preventive measures to address cyberbullying issues in the country. Policymakers can adopt the present research outcomes in developing regulations aimed at addressing cyberbullying and promoting safe social media environments. Educators and counselling professionals can use the findings to develop effective educational initiatives and prevention programs to combat the cyberbullying issues. Fundamentally, the mental health aspects are crucial for an individual's wellbeing to cope with challenges in life.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the relationship between social media, counselling attitude, and cyberbullying engagement among young adults in Selangor, Malaysia. Through quantitative descriptive and correlational research approaches, this study aimed to contribute useful analytics for various stakeholders including the higher education institutions in tackling the issues arising from cyberbullying and social media use. The findings indicated that there was no significant correlation between social media usage and cyberbullying perpetration but there was a significant yet weak and positive correlation between social media usage and cyberbullying victimization. This showed that social media usage alone may not necessarily lead to increased cyberbullying. Other factors, including individual characteristics, situational factors, and cognitive processes may play a part in determining the cyberbullying engagement. This study also revealed a significant and negative relationship between counselling help-seeking attitudes and cyberbullying engagement. Specifically, individuals with more positive attitudes towards seeking help from counselling professionals demonstrated a lower likelihood of engaging in cyberbullying activities. This finding suggested that fostering positive counselling attitudes among young adults may serve as a protective factor against cyberbullying. Overall, this contribution aids university counselling units, educators, and policymakers by providing valuable insights to develop targeted interventions as proactive measures to mitigate the escalating challenges associated with cyberbullying and social media usage.

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