

SOCIAL MEDIA AND BULLYING: WISE EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL WORLD FOR STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT The development of social media among teenagers has had a positive impact on expanding interaction. Access to social media is very high even from school age in Malaysia. This increased access is followed by a higher risk of misuse and opens opportunities for digital bullying (cyberbullying). Cyberbullying directly affects psychological, emotional, and social functioning in interpersonal relationships, thus necessitating awareness campaigns to foster understanding and the wise use of social media. This activity aims to provide education and awareness to teenage students about the forms of cyberbullying, its impacts, and to shape wise attitudes in the use of social media for students at Sanggar Bimbingan Muhammadiyah Kampung Baru, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The activity was carried out using a participatory educational-preventive outreach method, through interactive lectures, case simulations, and the creation of digital campaign media. The results showed changes in students' understanding of the forms, impacts, and responses to cyberbullying. It increased student awareness of respecting digital privacy. This activity was not only informative but also transformative in building empathy and responsible digital behavior. It confirmed that direct approaches to students in alternative education communities are effective in fostering a healthy digital culture.

KEYWORDS: *Wise, Cyberbullying, Social Media, Digital Literacy, Community Service.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies has transformed social interaction patterns in society, including among teenagers. Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube have become the main means of communication and self-expression. Today, social media is an integral part of teenage life, including students at the Sanggar Bimbingan Muhammadiyah Kampung Baru, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

According to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC, 2023) approximately 87% of teenagers aged 13–17 in Malaysia are active social media users, with platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp being the most popular. According to Twenge, cited in Fransisca Iriani RD (2023), stated that excessive use of social media can cause an imbalance between real life and the digital world and increase the risk of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying among students is not a new issue. It includes actions such as online insults, digital exclusion, spreading rumors or hoaxes, and even threats of violence via social media. UNICEF (2022) reported that around 20% of teenagers in Southeast Asia have experienced cyberbullying.

Shariff et al. (2021) also found that cyberbullying has serious impacts on adolescents' mental health, such as increased anxiety, social isolation, depression, and even suicidal ideation, as well as decreased motivation to learn. Moreover, cyberbullying creates a culture of fear and distrust, contributing to the erosion of civil discourse and the breakdown of social norms (Dewi et al., 2023).

Thus, cyberbullying has become a societal concern. It is considered a social illness (Abubakar et al., 2024) if not addressed, perpetrators may remain unaware of their violations of social norms. It may also constitute criminal behavior under the law (Sakban et al., 2019).

Various efforts have been made to address this problem. The Malaysian Ministry of Education initiated the 'Stop Bullying Now!' campaign, which includes awareness initiatives and teacher training to recognize signs of bullying. Programs like 'Bully-Free Schools' and collaborations with agencies such as Cyber Security Malaysia have also been launched to promote wise digital behavior. However, student empowerment programs that focus on recognizing, preventing, and responding to cyberbullying remain limited and often lack a character education perspective based on empathy and social values. Therefore, there is a need for contextual, interactive, and sustainable digital literacy programs, particularly among adolescents.

This community service activity was carried out to build digital awareness and promote responsible social media use. The goal was to educate teenage students about the forms and impacts of cyberbullying and encourage wise behavior in digital spaces to foster a healthy digital culture. The program employed participatory counseling methods, involving students in recognizing real-life scenarios they might face. The main target was students at Sanggar Bimbingan Muhammadiyah Kampung Baru, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, who have access to social media. Community involvement was achieved through collaboration with teachers and sanggar leaders, including providing space and time for activities, assisting students during the sessions, and supporting digital campaign initiatives.

Conceptually, this activity refers to Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, which posits that social behavior, including bullying, can be learned through observation and interaction. The activity was also supported by contemporary research, such as Lim & Yeo (2020), emphasizing digital literacy's role in reducing cyberbullying, and Abdullah et al. (2021), who recommend preventive approaches based on values and empathy education in secondary schools.

Hence, this community service initiative was not only informative but also transformative in shaping a wise, empathetic, and responsible digital generation

2. METHOD

The participants in this activity were students from Sanggar Belajar Muhammadiyah Kampung Baru, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. They came from diverse social and economic backgrounds, with the majority being children of migrant workers.

The method used in this activity was a counseling approach based on educational and preventive strategies. The implementation process consisted of three main stages:

a. Problem Identification

Initial observations and questionnaires were conducted to assess the students' level of understanding regarding cyberbullying and their behavior on social media. This was done two weeks before the activity.

b. Implementation of Counseling

The activity was conducted directly at the school using interactive lectures, case simulations, group discussions, and digital quizzes. The material was presented by a team of lecturers and facilitators experienced in digital literacy and character education.

c. Evaluation and Follow-Up

Evaluation was conducted through a question-and-answer session. The activity concluded with a shared student commitment in the form of a digital poster themed "Wise in the Digital World."

This method was adapted from the school-based participatory approach developed by Noor & Mohamed (2019), tailored to suit the needs of adolescent students.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This community service activity aimed to raise awareness among students about wise social media use and to foster awareness and prevention of cyberbullying.

The materials delivered during the activity included the definition of bullying and cyberbullying, types of cyberbullying, the consequences of cyberbullying, and appropriate attitudes in dealing with cyberbullying.

Throughout the implementation of the community service activity, students showed positive responses, as evidenced by their attentiveness and focus, with no distractions or chatting during the sessions. This reflects a shift in their understanding of cyberbullying. At the beginning of the activity, most students had a limited understanding of cyberbullying. Some believed that actions such as mocking friends on social media, sharing screenshots without permission, or creating fake accounts to ridicule others were normal and even humorous.

Following the counseling sessions, students gained knowledge and awareness that cyberbullying is not funny but instead has serious consequences. They developed a deeper understanding of the importance of respecting others' privacy and not normalizing harmful behavior in digital spaces.

Students also learned what steps to take when confronted with cyberbullying, whether they experienced it themselves or witnessed it happening to others. They also became aware that the state provides legal protection for cyberbullying victims through existing laws.

The community service activity concluded with the creation of digital posters by the students, as an expression of care and commitment to addressing and preventing cyberbullying.

By delivering information through counseling on cyberbullying and wise digital behavior, students became more aware and better equipped to use social media responsibly. The efforts carried out in this activity helped students understand cyberbullying, thereby supporting prevention efforts due to its negative impacts on victims and perpetrators alike—affecting psychological, physical, academic, and social dimensions.

4. CONCLUSION

This community service activity successfully increased the knowledge and awareness of teenage students at Sanggar Bimbingan Muhammadiyah Kampung Baru, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, regarding the issue of cyberbullying and the wise use of social media. The educational-preventive approach was effective in reaching students both personally and collectively. Active student participation and support from the school environment were key success factors.

The program had a positive impact both individually and on the school community. After the activity, students gained greater insights about cyberbullying, became more cautious in their social media use, and developed more responsive attitudes toward cyberbullying incidents.

It is expected that with increased knowledge of cyberbullying, students will continue to act wisely in the digital world. Similar activities should be replicated and sustained in other student communities.

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