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UNDERSTANDING CYBERBULLYING ON TWITTER AMONG K-POP FANS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Cyberbullying among K-pop fans in Malaysia is still unclear, but the consequences of this behavior are becoming a growing problem. The problem of cyberbullying cannot be simplified with Malaysia's current laws. There is an urgent need for K-pop fans on Twitter to understand cyberbullying and find ways to combat it. In this study, the researcher highlights the most common types of cyberbullying among K-pop fans on Twitter. The aim of this study is to understand cyberbullying on Twitter among K-pop fans in Malaysia. It specifically examines the community of K-pop fans on Twitter. There are 3 research objectives in this study, namely (i). To discover the most common types of cyberbullying among K-pop fans on Twitter, (ii). To understand the social activities that facilitate cyberbullying among K-pop fans on Twitter, and (iii). To determine whether K-pop fans on Twitter are aware of ways to combat cyberbullying. This research is based on data obtained through in-depth interviews with mass communication students. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis to determine the most common types of cyberbullying and ways to combat cyberbullying. The study found that K-pop fans know what behavior is considered cyberbullying, what types of cyberbullying to expect and what can be done about it. The results of the study also suggest that a different approach needs to be taken to better understand how to combat cyberbullying. It is hoped that the study can help to improve the prevention of cyberbullying on Twitter among K-pop fans.

INTRODUCTION

Long before the advent of technology and social media, bullying existed. It is widespread among children who are physically weak, overweight, unpopular, or disabled and is typically the focus of bullying in schools (Singh et al., 2018). Traditional bullying is characterized by a strength differential between the aggressor and the victim, a defining characteristic. For this reason, someone tall, strong and powerful will often bully someone shorter, smaller and weaker than them (İslamoğlu & Yurtkoru, 2019). In today's era, with the rise of technology, bullying has transformed into cyberbullying (Canty et al., 2016). According to Wuryaningsih et al. (2022), cyberbullying is harassment completed by utilising electronic or computerized media to send messages (text, images, and video) that are forceful and repeatedly, meaning to hurt others separately or in gatherings. It is now an issue in our age, especially among adolescents. Research studies and known real-life incidents have brought attention to the scope of cyberbullying, its online platforms, and its harmful impact on those targeted.

The current global conditions have transformed activities and interactions in a way that primarily involves the comfort of one's home through gadgets and the internet, resulting in the rapid growth of internet users, especially children and teenagers (Andriani et al., 2021). Traditionally, cell phone use and instant message services were the primary channels for cyberbullying. Teenagers' widespread usage of social media has made cyberbullying a significant problem nowadays (Alim, 2016). Not just that, today's technology profoundly affects how people live their daily lives (Johanssen, 2019 in Johanis et al., 2020). Furthermore, since most individuals still have poor levels of digital literacy, they are unaware of the many types of cyberbullying and how to combat them (Andriani et al., 2020). Cyberbullying may affect psychological and behavioral health, such as depression (Amry & Pratama, 2021), which eventually leads to the destruction of self-esteem, depression, turbulent anger, academic failure, and even suicide (Willard, 2007, as cited in Amry & Pratama, 2021).

In this study, cyberbullying happened when the articles published by AllKpop (2022) talked about recent incidents related to cyberbullying. #BLINKSCyberbullying, which went trending on Twitter on September 2022, showed numbers of Blackpink's fans cyberbullying other users on that platform. They frequently crossed the line and cyberbullied many K-pop stars and their followers. The sheer amount of hateful fans in this fandom has also come to light; these people are known for sending death threats to anyone who disses their favourite group. Since the event, many other fans from different fandom have come out using the hashtag "#BLINKSCyberbullying" to claim that this is not the first time cyberbullying happened among K-Pop fans (Koreaboo, 2022).

The increasing use of social media by K-pop fans has made cyberbullying a significant problem. Cyberbullying is the intentional, persistent and hostile use of information and communication technologies to harass and harm (Stopbullying.gov, 2014). However, a study conducted by Andriani et al. 2020 found that most online users do not know what kind of behaviour is cyberbullying. It shows that experience and knowledge are the crucial elements contributing to someone's more skilful use of social media. Since most people still have a low level of digital literacy and do not know what types of cyberbullying exist and how to stop it, many participate without being aware of it or the possible legal consequences of their activities (Andriani et al., 2020).

Due to the adequacy of the study on cyberbullying in Malaysia, many details still need to be clarified, and many questions still need to be answered. For instance, is it more frequent for male or female online bullies to target them? What proportions of internet users have experienced online bullying? What strategies do online bullies often use? What kind of actions are usually taken by the victim when encountering such behaviour? Since

digital literacy is still low among internet users in Malaysia, it is crucial to reach out to them and educate them so that they can avoid such behaviour and legal action. Hence, this study examines K-pop fans' understanding of cyberbullying in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a harmful act that a perpetrator regularly commits against a victim using electronic media (Nasrullah, 2017). These harmful behaviors can leave victims feeling helpless and physically and emotionally damaged. Violence-filled communications intended to harm the victim are defined as cyberbullying texts (Taufik & Rezi, 2022; Utami, 2014). There is no doubt that cyberbullying is on the rise, particularly among younger generations, as evidenced by statistics and research conducted throughout the world (Balakrishnan, 2016). Because of its ties to several tragic, well-publicized suicides, cyberbullying on Twitter has drawn attention recently (Lee, 2016). Despite the high prevalence of cyberbullying, few researchers have attempted to understand how cyberbullying is committed using theoretical frameworks. Social science researchers have recently focused on accurately describing the characteristics of cyberbullying using reliable and valid methods (Berne et al., 2013), identifying risk and mitigating factors (Alvarez-Garcia et al., 2015), and comparing the characteristics of perpetrators and victims (Fisher et al., 2016; Hutson, 2016; Lucas-Molinaet al., 2016; McHugh et al., 2018).

Cyberbullying is frequently broken down into many categories, including cyber harassment, which is when someone is repeatedly threatened and harassed, or defamation, slander, and flame, such as brief insulting online interactions (Kowalski et al., 2012; Marcum et al., 2012; Balakrishnan et al., 2020). Despite several preventative and intervention techniques, cyberbullying has shown no positive feedback but has increased over the past ten years (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). The prevalence of cyberbullying is positively impacted by socioeconomic position and the digital gap, although age and gender have uneven effects (Saleem et al., 2021). Johansse (2019) stated that although most people nowadays have a smartphone, which can be very pricey at times, and can be considered a necessity, a small minority of people have abused this technology for personal gain to defame, curse, and harm others. The abuse of the power of possession contributes to the problem of cyberbullying (Klein, 2012, as cited in Johanis et al., 2020).

In the context of this paper's primary focus, K-pop fans conduct most of their activities online; thus, cyberbullying is a common problem among them. Based on the results of an earlier study, teenage K-pop fans who often engage in online interactions may need more digital literacy. However, people of various ages and backgrounds can engage with anybody in cyberspace, which they may access, and this can make people more likely to treat others poorly or even turn them into cyberbullying offenders, regardless of age (Andriani et al., 2020).

Twitter

Social media has the potential to both lessen and deepen social division. In-group partiality and outgroup derogation are communication patterns linked to intergroup conflict (Burgers et al., 2022). An open equivalent of Facebook's now-famous status update feature is Twitter. Twitter and chat rooms are similar in that communication between users happens via the at-sign (for example, a user can direct tweets to another person by prefixing a post with an at-sign before the target user's name). Twitter is public, in contrast to many chat rooms.

Anyone may send a tweet to @KatyPerry or @BarackObama, and many others (Murthy, 2011). With more than 200 million daily unique users worldwide, Twitter currently generates more than a billion pieces of content every 48 hours (Weller, 2013). Social media users frequently watch videos made by people they find interesting, which can lead to interactions with random people and, although less frequently, celebrities (Murthy, 2012).

Pennacchiotti & Popescu (2011) stated that millions of users of the popular micro-blogging platform – Twitter now utilise them regularly. Micro-blogging platforms are utilised as forums for information sharing, real-time news sources, recommendation services, and keeping in touch with friends, family, and strangers. By providing a space for users to post short messages or "tweets" of up to 280 characters, Twitter has become an important medium for communication in the digital age (Kada et al., 2022). Information concerning a user's demographic characteristics or personal interests and those of other site users might significantly enhance their experience with a micro-blogging service. Such data might enable tailored suggestions for individuals to follow or articles to be read by users; moreover, it could emphasise events and subjects of interest to specific groups (Pennacchiotti & Popescu, 2011).

Twitter has everything to do with self-presentation, much like other social media. The act of tweeting is a product of individual contributions and, sociologically speaking, is about self-production (Murthy, 2012). According to statistics in Twitter's advertising resources, Malaysia had 4.40 million Twitter users at the beginning of 2022. This number indicates that Twitter's ad reach in Malaysia at the time was equal to 13.3% of the country's entire population (Datareportal, 2022). Twitter, in this study, refers to the medium used by K-pop fans in connecting to other fans from all over the world. K-pop fans not only connect with fans but also with their favourite idols in real life. Twitter is a trendy medium for exchanging tweets between fans to idols.

K-Pop Fans
Fans of the Korean wave (Hallyu) are sometimes referred to as K-pop fans. The Korean wave refers to the rising global acclaim for South Korean culture, not just in Asia. Hallyu is a phenomenon where South Korean culture influences people worldwide, including Malaysia. In K-pop, a group of fans are called fandom. Jenol & Pazil (2020) claimed that being in a fandom is similar to having a recognized religion in that it contributes to fans' greater subjective well-being. Ryff (1989) emphasizes that being a part of the fan community encourages someone to work toward their personal growth development (as cited in Jenol & Pazil 2020).

Fandom-related activities centralized on and around the well-known web platform Twitter create the "Stan Twitter" community (Malik & Haidar, 2020; Kawashima, 2010). Stan Twitter is a place where users from different parts of the world come to promote their favourite celebrities, and it is a judgment-free space where people may socialize and discuss their favourite media (Booth, 2018). They are often characterized as a group of loyal supporters (Bellos, 2018), and there are various fan groups within the K-Pop fandom, depending on the idols or bands that are supported. For instance, the boyband EXO supporters are officially referred to as EXO-L by the group's company.

Adriani et al. (2020) discussed how K-pop fans differed from one another in a variety of ways. For instance, there are several categories of fans, such as below-average and above-average fans. Below-average fans are the type of fans least likely to upset other fandoms or non-K-pop fans. They are the typical fans who often participate in online activities and are not harmful; Next, the above-average fans. They often acknowledge that they are obsessed with someone and act immaturely, and as a result, they speak aggressively, become upset

quickly, and burst into unnecessary hysteria. When someone informs them that their idol is merely a two-dimensional persona and the possibility of meeting him or her is rare, they get quickly upset, frustrated, and furious.

With the emergence use of social media, fans now have higher chances to communicate one-to-one with their celebrity. The narrative from the parasocial theory that claims fans have low chances to interact with their favourite celebrity is no longer valid. For example, K-pop fans use Twitter because it offers a better lifetime update, and they have a higher chance of their favourite celebrity replying to their tweet, either by direct reply or a quote tweet. It highlights how social media platforms like Twitter have revolutionised how fans and celebrities interact, contradicting the traditional notion of limited access to celebrities (Zhang, 2022).

Cyberbullying on social media is not something new. A study by Balakrishnan (2015) found that the frequency of internet usage, those who use it between two and five hours per day, plays a vital role in initiating the behaviour of cyberbullying than those who use it for less than an hour per day. These results have likewise proved that cyberbullying victims will have a high tendency to turn into the perpetrator. In another study by Andriani et al. (2020), the types of cyberbullying commonly experienced by K-pop fans are fanfare, hacking, hate comment, spamming and hate speech. There is some familiarisation between these two studies; thus, this paper will focus on K-pop fans understanding towards cyberbullying and whether they can identify which behaviour counts as cyberbullying. Therefore, K-pop fans in this study can define as the people or the community that like the same genre of drama and music. When it comes to K-pop fans, they have a lot of different fans group called fandoms.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the qualitative method to gain more depth and understanding from the informants' perspective. Creswell (2013) defined qualitative research as the study and understanding of the meaning that particular people or groups attach to a social or human issue. Emergent questions and techniques are part of the research process. Data is usually collected in the participant's environment. Data analysis inductively moves from specific to general ideas, and the researcher interprets the meaning of the data. According to Maxwell (2012), qualitative research's flexibility and inductive nature is a reflexive process at each stage, which explains why the processes of data collection and analysis, theory modification, review of research questions, and identification of threats to validity coincide. Furthermore, this study aims to explore the lived experiences of K-pop fans involved with cyberbullies in social media by adopting a phenomenology approach. Phenomenology allows us to delve into the participants' subjective perspectives and understand the essence of their experiences in dealing with cyberbullies. In other words, phenomenology concerns experience from the participant's viewpoint, grouping presumptions and conventional modes of perception (Lester, 1999).

In-depth interviews conducted via Google Meet will serve as the primary data collection method, and thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process was used to analyses the gathered data. Six informants were selected based on their experiences with cyberbullying among K-pop fans. By adopting a phenomenological approach and utilising in-depth interviews via Google Meet, this study seeks to contribute valuable insights into the experiences of online language learners. The thematic analysis will offer a systematic understanding of the rich and diverse aspects of cyberbullying among K-pop fans through social media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis process took place after the completion of the data collection phase. It took around two weeks to complete the data collection, which started on 18th December 2022 until 22nd December 2022, involving six participants who volunteered for the in-depth interview session. Discussions were constructed based on the outcome of the interview session with the six participants' answers to questions about the types of cyberbullying among K-pop fans on Twitter and ways to combat them. Each interview was conducted in an informal session and took an average of 30 to 40 minutes to complete. Each participant was briefed about the purpose of this research, and the interview was audio-recorded using a smartphone. During the interview session, the participants were very comfortable sharing their experiences and pointing out their opinions on the questions asked. Each of the participants is unique because of the different background, thus resulting in various answers given. Detailed background of the participants is as follows:-

Table 1: Demography of the participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Active K-pop fan on Twitter
Participant 1	Female	26	Yes
Participant 2	Female	25	Yes
Participant 3	Female	24	Yes
Participant 4	Female	25	Yes
Participant 5	Female	22	Yes
Participant 6	Female	24	Yes

The Common Type of Cyberbullying among K-pop Fans

Cyberbullying is a complex issue, but any act demonstrated online that can harm other users can be considered cyberbullying. Many different types of behaviours shown online can be classified as cyberbullying. Each behaviour is different in terms but will lead to the same outcome, cyberbullying. Only some themes were derived from in-depth interviews with six participants for this research question. Several themes can be classified on the same term, like past findings, but there are also new findings.

Table 2: Common type of cyberbullying among K-pop fans

Item	Theme Derived
1	Online Harassment – Hate comments
2	Stalking
3	Flaming
4	Fan war
5	Doxing
6	Not Accepting other people's opinions

Online Harassment

During the interview, half of the participants mentioned online harassment and related it with hate comments or hate speech. It is one of the behaviours they see on Twitter daily. However, they thought this kind of cyberbullying was now normalised because it is a daily thing they see on Twitter.

"To me, cyberbullying is when you harass people online by using pictures, videos, or tweets and make the other person uncomfortable" (Participant 4)

"I think the most common is online harassment. From what I see on Twitter when people leave hate comments on other people's videos or tweets when it has nothing to do with the original post just because they disagree with them, they targeted that specific person to cause damage" (Participant 5)

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that online harassment is one of the many types of cyberbullying commonly cast by K-pop fans on Twitter. According to Ariffin et al. (2021) and Santika and Krisnayana (2022), online harassment is cyberbullying frequently displayed on social media.

Stalking

The participants also mentioned Sasaeng fan – a very obsessive fan that does illegal activity, especially stalking idols in real life, which has become considered normal in the K-pop community. However, because of this particular activity, other fans tend to do the same on the sasaeng fan by stalking the sasaeng fan online and leaking the sasaeng fan's information without realizing they are showing the same behaviour as the sasaeng fans.

"I'm not sure if that can be considered cyberbullying because the sasaeng's activity is already wrong, so I want to protect my idol as a fan. But I think anything that consists of personal information is definitely off-limits. Plus, you are targeting a specific person, which can be counted as online harassment" (Participant 4)

"I think it does not considered cyberbullying because the person that makes it a problem is the sasaeng, and she is the one that got them in a position where other fans need to expose her identity. But I think it is wrong if the sasaeng is already being punished, but people still share the sasaeng's personal information online" (Participant 5)

Based on the analysis of this theme, it is safe to say that K-pop fans know that this behaviour is wrong because they are acting exactly like the sasaeng fans, but as long as it can help to put their idols in a safe and better position, then they would go to that extent.

Flaming

Two of the participants shared their thought on the flaming behaviour. They only explain the behaviour in general, and the researcher concludes that it could be classified under the flaming term based on their explanation.

"When a fan is trying to get other fans' attention in engaging the conversation and maybe like start a fan war, I think that can also be considered cyberbullying" (Participant 1)

"Fans love to initiate the fight between them and other fans. Yes, sometimes because they want to protect or back up their idols, but most of the time, they do it out of boredom" (Participant 2)

The researcher could conclude from the statement of these two participants that K-pop fans see flaming as something normal and not dangerous. However, it could lead to a more extensive and extreme situation without them knowing.

Fan war

Half of the participants shared their opinions and experiences on fan war, and some considered that situation should not be considered cyberbullying because it is not as extreme as the other cyberbullying. Participant 3 even stated that fan war is okay if it does not harm the other party.

"I have been involved in a fan war, but it is not a major situation. It is just a clash of opinions. Because I think it will only be considered a major fan war if the fight between us will harm each other" (Participant 3)

"A normal fan war is, for example, I like group A, and the other person like group B, and then we fight. However, the extreme fan war is when the other person brings their friends to harass me online" (Participant 4)

Doxxing

During the interview sessions, half of the participants recognized Doxxing as one of the cyberbully types they encountered on Twitter. Participant 5 explained that Doxxing is usually a situation between K-pop fans and idols.

"K-pop fans like to post their encounter with the idols, and they know that certain situations can cause damage to the idols, so they purposely do that" (Participant 5)

"I think behavior that can be counted as cyberbullying is online harassment- like Doxxing." (Participant 6)

Past research has also mentioned Doxxing as one of the behaviour of cyberbullying that are commonly discussed. Ariffin et al. (2021) mentioned that Doxxing publically discloses private and delicate information about a person without consent. This cyberbullying primarily aims to humiliate the victim on social media platforms by disseminating private images, documents, or communications.

Not Accepting Other People's Opinions

From the analysis of the participant's responses, three opinions emerged from the participants on the reasons for cyberbullying and, thus, on this issue.

"What else can be called cyberbullying is when someone tweets about their personal opinion, but others judge this opinion badly and do not accept it. Everyone has their own opinion, but when you feel the world revolves only around you, it can lead to such behaviour. I have often seen people not accepting other opinions, especially on Twitter" (Participant 2)

"I think K-pop fans need to start accepting other people's opinions. Cyberbullying happens easily when one person cannot accept the opinion of others" (Participant 3)

As reported by the two participants above, K-pop users on Twitter exhibit the behaviour of not accepting others' opinions. This happens when the user feels that the world revolves only around them and wants everyone to listen to them.

Social Activity That Encourages Cyberbullying

For this research question, around 11 themes were obtained through the analysis of the interview session. The in-depth interview conducted with six participants has found several findings, and below are the themes that emerged after the researcher did the thematic analysis. Researchers found similar opinions on the main contributors that encourage cyberbullying and social activities that lead to cyberbullying.

Table 3: Social activities that encourage cyber bullying

Item	Theme Derived
1	Looking for attention/cloud
2	Past victim of cyberbullying try to cover their image online
3	Anonymous
4	Akgae
5	Bring other idols down
6	Quoting harmless tweets

Looking for Attention / Cloud

Participant 1 and Participant 3, mentioned how an account or a fan could initiate cyberbullying behaviour to get the cloud's attention.

"Sometimes people initiating the cyberbully behaviour or fans interacting with such tweets only want to gain attention" (Participant 1)

"These people want attention, cloud, and everyone to talk about them, so that is why they start the flame, treat something small as controversial, and that will lead to cyberbullying" (Participant 3)

Because of a simple and harmless intention like this, they might drag someone into a significant serious situation to get the attention of other fans.

Past Victim Turned Bully

This theme emerged as Participant 1 discussed the similarity between physical and online bullying. According to Participant 1,

"It is not impossible because usually when a person had become the victim of cyberbullying in the past, once they gained power or gained followings, they will try to recover their online image, and sometimes they tend to cyberbully another person with a small number of followings" (Participant 1)

Thus, the researcher could sum up that most of the victims of cyberbullying might be shown casting the same behaviour as the bully when they want to cover up their online image or to build credibility for their account again.

Anonymous

It is the nature of social media that a person can create an account without any information about their true self. Half of the participants agreed when asked if anonymity contributes to cyberbullying.

"I have seen big accounts hide by being anonymous, but interestingly, their minions (followers) will defend them even when they do not know who is behind that account" (Participant 3)

"Yes, because you can be anonymous on social media or Twitter. It is like armour for them to be brave in cyber bullying" (Participant 5)

"I think anonymity also contributes to cyberbullying because we are not talking to them face to face, so it kind of gives them confidence in saying anything and not facing the consequences of it" (Participant 6)

Anonymity has always been an issue with the emergence of internet social media platforms. The K-pop community also cannot run from it. The fact that people can cyberbullying on Twitter by being anonymous shows how damaging Twitter can be.

Akgae

Four participants stated that social activity within a fandom, such as Akgae, could also contribute to cyberbullying. Akgae is a fan who only likes one idol in a group, and Akgae will always try to bring the other members down.

"In one fandom, there will always exist Akgae. So sometimes, the algae's tweet can also lead to cyberbullying. They tend to tweet something like 'this group will not survive without their favourite member,' which can trigger the whole fandom" (Participant 1)

"Akgae is when you only like one member in a group, and you will try to defend that idol and sometimes even initiate cyberbullying" (Participant 3)

The activity performed by Akgae was not condoned in the K-pop community, especially in each specific fandom. Such behaviour committed by Akgae was seen as flaming and can lead to fan war and other cyberbullying behaviours.

Bring Other Idols Down

However, according to Participant 3, not only Akgae, but even a normal fan should be moderate with their idol's success. They should stay in their lane and not bring other idols down.

If fans want to celebrate their idol's success, they do not have to exaggerate about it or do not bring other idols into it. They should focus on their idols. Do not try to trigger other fans or do not try to initiate the cyberbully behaviour, or like, start the flame between two fandoms" (Participant 3)

According to Participant 3, a fan or a fandom should focus on their favourite idol's success instead of trying to bring other groups down. Fans tend to tweet something like "My favourite group (group A) won first

place, but the other group can never", and this will make other fans from different fandom be involved with the tweet, which could be the start of cyberbullying itself.

Quoting Harmless Tweets

Based on Participant 4 response, any tweet being quoted outside of its supposed area could also lead to cyberbullying. A tweet from fandom A should stay in fandom A instead of spreading it to fandom B. because even a harmless tweet can fail to understand correctly when it is taken out of its context.

"For example, that tweet could be harmless, but when it continued to get attention, get so many RTs and quote tweets, non-k-pop fans will use that to initiate the fight. However, it is so stupid because they did not know what the original tweet was about. So quoting just a part of a tweet from a thread could also contribute to cyberbullying" (Participant 4)
"....if it involves other group fans, it will somehow trigger them in a way. Moreover, if someone quotes tweeted that tweet, the situation could lead to something worse because it spread to an even bigger audience" (Participant 4)

However, because of the nature of Twitter features that allow people to retweet the picture and the K-pop community, where one fan can like many groups at once, it is hard to make sure the tweet stays within one fandom only. Even with the function of screenshots, the tweet could spread to other people. A harmless tweet can create misunderstanding when other fans misread it.

Ways to Combat Cyberbullying
All participants during the in-depth interview session showed a positive outcome when asked if they knew ways to combat. After a thorough thematic analysis, the themes derived from the interview sessions are below.

Table 4: Ways to combat cyberbullying

Item	Theme Derived
1	Soft blocking
2	Direct block
3	Unfollow
4	Report the account
5	Ignore / don't engage with the account
6	Put less information on twitter
7	Strict laws

Soft blocking

Soft blocking is an action of blocking and unblocking an account on Twitter. This is sometimes done in order to make it not obvious to unfollow one account.

"Whenever I see someone engaging too much on fan wars, and it brings down the whole vibe of my timeline like it brings so much negativity, I would just soft block their account" (Participant 6)

Initially, the purpose of soft blocking is to ensure the other person who got soft block did not see the tweets of the person who did this action. This can prevent both sides from engaging in cyberbullying.

Direct block

Another way to avoid getting involved with cyberbullying, according to three participants, they will block the account that shows the negative vibes leading to cyberbullying. The difference between a soft block and a direct block is that, when soft blocking, the other person's content is still readable, while in the direct block, the content cannot accessed at all, which means that there is no need to worry if such content will go through the timeline.

"If there are people that did not agree with my opinion, I would just block them. Maybe at one point, I would reply to them and explain, but if they still did not accept my opinion, I would block the account" (Participant 3)

"Sometimes if my mutual retweet or quote tweet stupid tweet that can lead to fighting, I will just block that account..."(Participant 4)

This action is agreed to be good in preventing cyberbullying, as the person who blocked their tweet will not come up through the timeline of the person who blocked them. Even if their followers retweeted the tweet, Twitter would tell them to block that account so they would not be bothered to look at it.

Unfollow

During the interview sessions, two participants were quick to share with the researcher that they were going to unfollow any account that tweeted content irrelevant to their liking.

"Sometimes, if that person tweets something I feel is irrelevant and I get annoyed, I will just unfollow and block. That's all" (Participant 2)

"If I sense a negative vibe from that person, I will just unfollow them..." (Participant 5)

An early stage to prevent cyberbullying would be unfollowing the account that conducts the behaviour of cyberbullying. K-pop fans may unfollow someone on Twitter who is bullying them simply by clicking on the "unfollow" option.

Report the Account

Not only that, by reporting the account, it may suspend the account that is spreading negative vibes in the K-pop community. However, high chances are the owner of the suspended account will create a new account and do the same behaviour again.

"So far, many of us will report the account until it gets suspended. However, they can make a new account." *(Participant 1)*

"...whenever you get bullied severely, you should just block and report the account" (Participant 6)

K-pop fans on Twitter have access to report the account that conducts cyberbullying behaviour to the point that the account will be suspended. However, there is no guarantee of this because the owner of the suspended account will create another account and commit such behaviour again.

Ignore or do not engage with the account

From the participant's statements, they knew that ignoring the tweet and not engaging with the account in the presence of cyberbullying behaviour is the best way to avoid becoming the victim or being the bully

unintentionally.

"So far, because my mutual was involved in cyber bullying and became the victim, I told her to ignore all the comments and not interact with the account… once we ignore them, they will not have any topic to carry on the conversations, and it will stop at that" (Participant 1)

"Realistically speaking, we must ignore the behaviour to prevent cyberbullying." "If it is something not serious and just a small matter, I will probably just ignore or advise them not to interact with the bully" (Participant 4)

Put less information on Twitter
All six participants shared their opinions during the interview session regarding putting less information on Twitter and whether it could prevent cyberbullying. Three participants stated that more information is needed to mean that there will be cyberbullying.

"In cyberbullying case, right? Even if you have less information online, if the other person is not satisfied with your tweets, they will still cyberbully you, regardless of the less information. Plus, now, everything can be found easily" (Participant 2)

"Honestly, it is just the same. Cyberbullying happens when you try to engage with others. It is almost like not relevant" (Participant 3)

Strict Laws
Five participants believed that the classification of punishment for perpetrators of cyberbullying, the establishment of preparations for perpetrators and victims of cyberbullying, and the creation of stand-alone legislation to curb cyberbullying are all urgently needed to prevent cyberbullying on Twitter.

"..Should have strict laws to gatekeeper social media. People will think before publishing something because they know they will face the consequences of their actions. They will think twice before committing such an act" (Participant 1)

"It needs its laws. Because, as I said just now, the police will not be taking this matter seriously. So perhaps with the enforcement of the law, they will take this matter even more seriously" (Participant 2)

Many users' on Twitter continuously do cyberbullying because there are no strict laws that will use against them. The authority needs to devise a solution to prevent cyberbullying from happening in the future.

Based on the findings, the researcher was able to meet the objectives of this paper—first, the common types of cyberbullying on Twitter among K-pop fans. Online harassment and hate comments going around on Twitter is something K-pop fans are used to seeing. It shows how badly Twitter had shaped the K-pop community to accept such behaviour, and many commit it without even realising that it is considered a cyberbullying act. Some fans support and even back up those that spread hate comments. Moreover, a few K-pop fans are brainwashed by a more extensive account that has many followers to do such acts to prove that they are protecting their idols.

K-pop fans are easily triggered by social activity on Twitter, which can lead them to cyberbullying. For instance, the behaviour of a solo stan, or Akgae, can create a much bigger tension within the fandom, and they are trying to 'educate' the solo stan is considered as cyberbullying as they are targeting a specific individual, and that might cause harm to that person without them realising it. However, according to them, the behaviour shown by the solo stan is wrong, so they will justify their wrong action. The same goes for the situation of Sasaeng fans. The activity and behaviour shown by Sasaeng fans were already wrong, so the other fans trying to spread personal information about the sasaeng fans should not justify that it was okay to do so to protect their favourite idols.

However, many K-pop fans, as they grow older, realise that they have been in a situation where they have been bullied or become the bully themselves. It is inevitable because growing up in a community that sees fighting as something considered normal, they will also tend to do it. The surroundings can easily influence them. Among the efforts that had done incredibly, to combat cyberbullying was to report the account that did cyberbullying until the account was suspended. In addition, not giving the perpetrator the attention they are looking for could help prevent cyberbullying from continuing.

From the findings, the researcher can conclude that K-pop fans knew the level or seriousness of cyberbullying. They shared the same opinions regarding having stricter laws for the internet and social media to gatekeep such behavior. Because with no laws, other fans or Twitter users can do cyberbullying behavior and have no limits nor boundaries as they have no fear of the consequences of the situation they created. Additionally, when asked if they would report such a situation to the police or responsible organization, all participants concluded that they would not be lodging a report. According to one of the participants, even with physical harassment, police are not taking the victim's report as seriously as they should, so cyberbullying would be the same.

Nevertheless, K-pop fans actively seek cooperation from media professionals or influencers to keep doing events or campaigns that raise awareness of cyberbullying. Yes, some media talked about cyberbullying, but to what extent and what solution had been made from the discussion? Because up until now, cyberbullying still happens on social media, especially Twitter. Although the findings for the third objective are met, K-pop fans are still stuck in the cyberbully situation, and some even have to endure the consequences of other actions. Thus, the more reason why Cyberbullying should not be classified as something small as it can affect someone's mental health badly.

CONCLUSION

According to the research findings, K-pop fans on Twitter understood the behaviours counted as cyberbullying. Although those behaviours were normalised in the K-pop community, all the participants can still develop ideas and opinions on combating them. Based on this study's objectives, cyberbullying behaviours on Twitter are normalised with the many common types of cyberbullying among K-pop fans in Malaysia.

Based on the participant's information shared with the researcher, the themes were grouped into one element: (i) Attacking other fans or users. The participants agreed that K-pop fans cyberbully daily and sometimes without even realizing that the behaviour they put on Twitter was considered cyberbullying. Because they were exposed

to such behaviour every time they were on Twitter, they could not care less about cyberbullying unless it reached an extreme level that can do nasty damage to the particular fan or user. To summarise, this behaviour should not be something K-pop fans should normalise in their community. The common types of cyberbullying among K-pop fans on Twitter prove that Twitter users interact with each other and spread negativity on that platform, not just within their community but also with people outside of it.

Social activity is the main contributor that encourages cyberbullying among K-pop fans on Twitter. The themes of factors that contribute to cyberbullying were divided into two respective groups, which are (i) Big accounts with lots of followers and (ii) Obsession. All interviewees agree that Twitter social activity does contribute to the cyberbullying behaviour among K-pop fans in Malaysia. Twitter's re-tweeting and quote re-tweet function allows for disseminating a tweet from one account to many others. With these qualities, a tweet that should not bother anybody else might upset a fan while having nothing to do with them. All six participants had already been a user of Twitter for more than five years, the same with being K-pop fans.

After the extensive and comprehensive interview sessions with all six participants, the researcher must interpret their opinions or point of view. Based on the opinions shared by the participants, there are several ways of them combatting cyberbullying behaviour and three groups of themes were derived from that, such as (i) the account that initiates the behaviour, (ii) individual and (iii) authority. All participants agreed that soft blocking or blocking the account that gives out negative tweets that could lead to cyberbullying could prevent them from becoming the victim or the perpetrator.

Soft blocking removes the account from the followings and followers list without the account owner noticing it. However, the tweet coming from that person will still be able to go through the timeline of the person that was soft blocking them. Unlike blocking, the tweets of the owner of the blocked account will be able to notice that she or he was blocked, and their tweet will not come up on the timeline of the person blocking them.

Next, at least half of the participants confirmed that they have to initiate something from their side to avoid getting involved with cyberbullying. They can either curate their timeline by being selective in following the account or accepting followers for their account. They also believe that the authority should take extra measures in gatekeeping the internet, or in this study, Twitter, so it can be safe for everyone to use. They should implement a strict law for users that do cyberbullying on Twitter. They also stated that the laws should be why internet users are afraid to do such behaviour because they will face the consequences.

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