A Systematic Analysis of Cyber bullying in Southeast Asia Countries

Napat Ruangnapakul, Yasir Dawood Salam, Aymen Riyadh Shawkat

Abstract: The beginning of electronic based communication era has facilitate the human global communication. In today's world, social networking websites are an integral part of youth and kids. Although there are several benefits, there are also side effects; one of these side effects is the cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is a wilful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. This paper conducted a systematic review of cyber bullying in Southeast Asia to investigate the current research in this area. Research in this area has been comparatively low, but in recent years has begun to appear and manifest. This paper, review studies in the 11 Southeast Asian countries. Multiple online databases were searched to identify studies published between 2000 and 2018, to summarize the main findings and the nature of these studies. The important of date of data collection and self-reporting methods and how a better understanding of the process is needed to design effective cyber bullying interventions are discussed.

I. INTRODUCTION

The wide increasing of internet usage around the world, and the major role it plays in every aspect of human life, provide variety possibilities for finding information, communication, and many other activities, what makes the internet one of the necessary tools in everyday life of the modern world (Tsirtsis, Tsapatsoulis, Stamatefatos, Papadamou, & Sirivianos, 2016). This necessity makes the using of the internet not limited to adults but to children, teenagers, and adolescents. The continuously evolving of the modern technology in current times, developing a very serious social problem, which is cyberbullying, the traditional bullying has transformed from being physical to virtual (Balakrishnan, 2015; Faryadi, 2011).

The current spread of the internet in social communications, attracted a wide range of users, however the internet authorising anyone to do or say anything anonymously (Balakrishnan, 2015). Therefore, traditional bullying has been changed to be a form of electronic and internet harassment as cyberbullying (Tokunaga, 2010; Vivolo-Kantor, Martell, Holland, & Westby, 2014).

“Cyberbullying is defined as the process of bullying a person with the help of internet technologies” (Weider, Gole, Prabhuswamy, Prakash, & Shankaramurthy, 2016).

More than half of the adolescents that been reviewed by Silva, Rich, Chon, and Tsosie (2016) suffer from cyberbullying, and they found out more than a third of them contribute in cyberbullying. Furthermore, more half of them when they experience cyberbullying, do not inform their parents (Silva et al., 2016). This is because of the cyberbullying victims do not have the courage to tell their stories openly, and they choose not to disclose most of the time, which affects their life in the future (Weider et al., 2016). Cyberbullying has several negative effect on the victims, at the individual and societal level including anxiety, depression, shame, stress and feelings of victimization, and even suicide (Silva et al., 2016), also this effects can include dropping out of school and negative impacts on mental health (Songsiri & Musikaphan, 2011).

Aside from the traditional bullying (physical bullying), the cyberbullying has its own typical features that clearly differentiate it (Navarro, Yubero, & Larrañaga, 2015). This has led some researchers, such as Dredge, Gleeson, and de la Piedad Garcia (2014), to doubt that the traditional bullying definition can be applied to cyberbullying. Therefore, the studies applied in traditional bullying cannot be used with cyberbullying.

Most of the current conducted research on traditional bullying and cyberbullying has taken Europe and the United States as a base for their research, with few studies focusing on the Asian countries (Balakrishnan, 2015; Sittichai & Smith, 2015). In the Southeast Asia countries, a significant amount of researchers demonstrates that there are different characteristics in the cultural contexts in these countries, also diverse points to cultural and educational aspects (Sittichai & Smith, 2015). In addition, in Southeast Asia, cyberbullying is less well documented (Ojanen et al., 2014), and the research in the Southeast Asian countries in this focus is relatively light, but it is starting to appear (Sittichai & Smith, 2015).

There are 622 million people in the Southeast Asian countries together, which compose about 16% of the total population of the world. In Brunei, Singapore, and Malaysia the internet usage penetration is very high, and in Thailand, and Philippines 27.5% above the world average usage (Sittichai & Smith, 2015). These Southeast Asian countries are more socialist than the most unusual cultures of Australasia, North America, and Western Europe (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede et al., 2010). In addition, they are high on the power distance index; but they differ from Hong Kong, China, South Korea, and Japan in being less industrialized, and have many religious verities (Sittichai & Smith, 2015).

The Microsoft (2012) study showed that 58% of youth in Singapore reported cyberbullying with the second highest reported incidence of cyber victimisation in the world in compared with a 25 country the average was 37%.
The most frequent type of cyberbullying was “mean or unfriendly treatment” (36%), followed by “made fun of or teased” (30%), and “called mean names” (30%) in Singapore (Microsoft, 2012). In Malaysia, the same study reported that 33% of youth faced cyberbullying. The most frequent type of cyberbullying was “mean or unfriendly treatment” (20%), followed by “called mean names” (16%), and “made fun of or teased” (11%) in Malaysia (Microsoft, 2012). However, other southwest Asia countries were not surveyed.

Therefore this focus on conducting systematic lecturer review on cyberbullying in the 11 Southeast Asian countries: Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, East Timor, and Vietnam. The review will include these researchers’ methodological and characteristic features. Then summarizing the main findings of these studies, comment on similarities and differences, and noted some limitations of the researches to date.

II. METHODOLOGY

The present study is a systematic review on cyberbullying in Southeast Asia. This systematic review is based on a methodology for literature review proposed by Brereton, Kitchenham, Budgen, Turner, and Khalil (2007). According to Brereton et al. (2007), There are three major phases to conduct the review on the relating articles: planning the review, conducting the review, and discussion.

The first step was planning the review by conducting a search for cyberbullying measurement in August 2018 in these 11 countries for English literature published between 2000 and 2018 in the following databases: Google Scholar, Science direct, Springer Link, and Web of Science. In addition, from the resulted article in the current study section, these articles references were searched for possible additional documents.

From reviewing the literature, the key search terms were selected and included such as cyberbullying, Asia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Cambodia, East Timor, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, Southeast Asia, harassment, bully, bullying, violence, aggressive, victim, and victimization. To narrow the search results, the search terms were combined with each other. For example to retrieve relevant publications, the terms “bullying”, “victimization”, and “cyberbullying” were entered simultaneously. To identify additional manuscripts, a search for bibliographies of the included manuscripts was conducted also.

The resulted articles abstract were screened to insure their suitability. The publications were selected when that a publication abstract was suitable for this study scope and area. Then the full publication was reviewed, and the intended data were retrieved. When the measure not available within the publication, the authors or copyright holders were contacted.

III. CONDUCTING THE REVIEW

This section reviews the relevant researches related to cyberbullying that conducted qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches, in Southeast Asia countries. There are 21 studies regarding cyberbullying in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Phillipian, and Indonesia, that this paper focus on. However, there were no studies located in Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, or East Timor.

Table 1 Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Time of Study</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ang and Goh (2010)</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>396, aged 12–18 years</td>
<td>Middle and high school</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Self-report questionnaire, Basic empathy scale</td>
<td>The empathy efface on the incidence of cyberbullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ang, Tan, and Talib Mansor (2011)</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>336, aged 14 years in Singapore, 374, aged 15 years in Malaysia</td>
<td>Secondary and primary students</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Self-report questionnaire, Normative Beliefs about aggression Scale, Narcissistic Personality Questionnaire</td>
<td>Associations between narcissism, cyberbullying, test mediational model, and approval-of-aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwan and Skoric (2013)</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>1597, aged 13-17 years</td>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Self-report questionnaires, based on Facebook use</td>
<td>There are relation between cyberbullying and risky online behaviours, and school bully victim rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ang, Huan, and Florell (2014)</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>332, aged 14 years in Singapore, 425, aged 13 years in U.S.</td>
<td>Middle school and secondary school</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Self-report questionnaire, Reactive–Proactive Aggression Questionnaire</td>
<td>Cyberbullying associated with aggression associated and not with reactive aggression, and nationality was not a moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Findings/Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witkus (2012)</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>11-17 years</td>
<td>Public and private high schools</td>
<td>Self-report questionnaire</td>
<td>Students reported to their friends more often than their teachers and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vargas, Niguidula, Hernandez, Marquez, and Caballero (2018)</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>Senior high school</td>
<td>2016. Tweet sentiment visualization</td>
<td>Most students felt unpleasant and not comfortable with cyberbullying experience and others doing it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musikaphan (2009)</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Self-report questionnaire for cyberbullying behaviour, and qualitative interviews</td>
<td>Japanesecyberbullied attitudes different from Thai, also the cyberbullying incident was different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songsiri and Musikaphan (2011)</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Secondary and vocational students</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Self-report survey of cyberbullying behaviour</td>
<td>Cyberbullying related to internet usage, family income, and family relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ojanen et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>1234</td>
<td>University students, secondary school students, and out-of-school youth</td>
<td>2012. Self-report mix method</td>
<td>Cyberbullying depending on the education level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tantaphalin, Suwannatthachote, and Punlumjeak (2017)</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>102 pre-service teachers 133 in-service teachers</td>
<td>online</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Self-report questionnaire</td>
<td>Different cyberbullying perceptions between pre-service and in-service teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sittichai and Smith (2018)</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>1049</td>
<td>secondary and high schools</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Self-report questionnaire</td>
<td>Schools, teachers, parents and peers have important roles to play in reducing the prevalence and harmful consequences of bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rahmawati (2015)</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>school students</td>
<td>2014. Self-report qualitative</td>
<td>Group conformity effects cyberbullying and it can became a trend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dina and Siti (2016)</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>Secondary and high schools</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Self-report questionnaire (cyberbullying and cyberbullying victim)</td>
<td>The incidence of cyberbullying smaller than cyberbullying victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safaria (2016)</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>Junior high school</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Self-report questionnaire</td>
<td>Relationship between cyberbullying victimization and level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above summarizes various studies on cyberbullying in different countries. Each study provides insights into the prevalence, methods used, and findings related to cyberbullying.
in offline but also in online contexts and across cultures. Cyberbullying prevention and intervention efforts should include modification of norms and beliefs supportive of the legitimacy and acceptability of cyberbullying. The results of this study showed that narcissistic personality disorder was significantly correlated with both normative beliefs with cyberbullying and aggression in both participant groups.

Kwan and Skoric (2013) in their study worked on examining cyberbullying on Facebook, and how it related to bullying in schools. They surveyed 1597 students aged 13–17 from two secondary schools in Singapore. The findings show that 59.4% of the participant that use Facebook suffer from cyberbullying at least once in the past year, and 56.9% admitting to engaging on Facebook cyberbullying at least once. Males were more involved that females in cyberbullying as victims or bullies, and there were strong positive relationships between Facebook bullying and school bullying, as well as between Facebook victimization and school victimization. They also found out that engagement in risky online behaviours was positively related to bullying.

In recent study by Ang et al. (2014) conducted a self-reporting survey on cyber bullying between Singapore and the United States to investigate the different relations between reactive aggression and proactive, and cyberbullying across two cultures. The United States sample was 425 adolescents from middle schools and 323 adolescents from Singapore secondary schools. Their findings indicated that reactive aggression and proactive were both connected with cyber bullying across two cultures, also percentages of cyber bullying across

Singapore

The study by Ang and Goh (2010) targeted cyberbullying among adolescents in Singapore. The purpose was to examine the connotation between gender, cognitive empathy, and affective empathy among adolescents. Participants were 396 adolescents selected from one middle school and one high school with age ranging from 12 to 18 years. Adolescents responded to a survey with 9-item cyberbullying behaviour scale, validated using exploratory factor analyses, and confirmatory factor analysis, with a 5-point frequency scale. They reported that 3.7% of males and 0.9% females frequently cyberbullying of others, and 19.9% of males and 14.2% of females infrequent cyberbullying. Their result indicated that at low affective empathy and low cognitive empathy, both males and females had higher scale on cyberbullying than those who had high cognitive empathy. However, for females, they show similar levels of cyberbullying, if cognitive empathy resulted levels, were high or low. This study concludes with the importance of positive caregiver-child relationships and the need for empathy training to reducing the cyberbullying behaviour among adolescents.

A study by Ang et al. (2011) used samples with 336 adolescent from Singapore and 374 from Malaysia to examine normative beliefs as an intermediary between cyberbullying and narcissistic personality disorder. The finding of this paper highlighted the positively relation between narcissistic personality disorder and normative beliefs with cyberbullying. Normative beliefs were a significant partial intermediary in both samples; these beliefs served as one possible mechanism of action by which narcissistic could exert its influence on cyberbullying. Findings extended previous empirical research by showing that such beliefs could be the mechanism of action not only
Singapores and the United States by adolescents were comparatively similar. They found out cyberbullying across both the Singapore and United States associated with aggression associated but not related to reactive aggression.

**Philippian**

Witkus (2012) work on examining the cyberbullying in the Philippines between Visayan Filipino adolescents. The Filipino participants were 579 compute classes’ students, ages of 11 and 17 years old. The questionnaire included 38 items was handed to the participants to survey their cyberbullying experiences, as well as to identify their demographic information. This study used Chi-square tests and descriptive statistics to address the research questions. This study confirms that most of the survived adolescents had access to some technology communication devises. The findings show that 40.04% of the participant had knowledge about cyberbullying incident, however only 19.52% have reported it to an adult, where the student prefers to tell their friends more than their parents and teachers. In addition, 16% admit to cyberbullying others on purpose. No significant different appears between the males and females bullies and victims percentage. However, they found out that cyberbullying was more frequent in private schools more than public schools. The limitations of this study were in the using of the self-report survey that might hard for the students tell the truth about sensitive questions, also the sample was not random selecting what will affect the result.

Vargas et al. (2018) in their paper aims to understand the opinions of senior high school students’ on cyberbullying in a university in the Philippines. This study uses a tweet visualization tool to present the opinions of Twitter. The results of the study indicate that most of the students feel pleasant on cyberbullying as the university administration officers continuously drives information awareness campaign that decreases fear and unpleasant emotion among the senior high school students. The results also indicate that more students were becoming aware that cyberbullying can be solved in many ways, and can be good opportunity to help others who have experienced it.

**Thailand**

A research based in Thailand, and Japan by Musikaphan (2009) provided comparative data between these two countries on cyberbullying. This study adopts mix method, where the quantitative study surveyed 2,000 students in Thailand and for the qualitative purposes chooses 14 key informants. In Japan for quantitative study, they survey 100 students and for the qualitative purposes choose 12 key informants. For the quantitative study they did not state the age of the participants, however they state it is based on school students. In their founding, nearly 59% of participants from Thailand had been cyberbullied more than once per month; however, in Japan the cyberbullying incident frequency were very low. The respondent in Japan were more aware to the right attitudes toward cyberbullying, with 68% were seeing cyberbullying as bad behaviour, while in Thailand 35% believed it might be an acceptable behaviour to cyberbullying. Their quantitative findings conform the quantitative study by suggesting that cyberbullying is more in Thailand than in Japan, and in Thailand, it is less negative attitudes towards cyberbullying. The qualitative finding explicates that this different aspect of cyberbullying, related to the differences in culture and philosophy of living between these two countries.

Songsiri and Musikaphan (2011) in their work survey 1,200 students from 21 secondary schools in Bangkok, Thailand, aged mostly between 14 and 16 years old. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. Their sample have high technology access with 95% used the internet and 96% owned a mobile phone. The findings show that 54.8% of the students have negative attitudes towards cyberbullying with 44.8% having mixed attitudes and less than 1% rating it positively. The most frequently cyberbullying act they found was sending messages with angry and vulgar language followed by revealing secrets or embarrassing information online, and repeatedly sending insulting, mean, and nasty messages. Cyberbullying found to be having a significant relationship with the frequency usage of internet, family income, and family relationships (violence in the family); however, no details of these findings are presented.

Sittichai (2014) work on a questionnaire survey of 12 schools of 1,183 students aged between 14 and 17 years in southern Thailand. Their questioner was based on experiences of being a committer or a victim of bullying or cyberbullying, and the demographic information. The participants were asked if in the past couple of months they had been bullied or cyberbullied at school. They used two criteria of involvement: strict and lenient. In the strict criterion, 3.7% cyberbullying victimization and 6.0% were traditional bullying victimization. In the lenient criterion, 14.9% cyberbullying victimization and 16.0% were traditional bullying victimization. To predict the victim status, they carried out logistic regression analyses, based on five variables: parent education, religion, grade, gender, and province. They carried out separate analyses for traditional bullying and cyberbullying victim, and for lenient and severe criteria. For all five of these analyses, three criteria were non-significant: religion, province, and grade. Gender was significant in all analyses: male students were more likely to be victims, especially cyberbullying victims. Parental education was significant, but only for light cyberbullying victimization: here, higher parental education was associated with greater risk of being a victim.

Ojanen et al. (2014) in their work conducted mix method dataset collection approach on bullying and cyberbullying among 5-24 year-old students in Thailand, the sample was from university students, out-of-school youth, and secondary school students. This study used self-reported online survey with 1234 participated in it. Data collection methods included a custom-built self-reported computerised survey and in-depth focus group interviews discussions. The finding indicates that in a given population when the aim is to find out the percentage of gender minority youth, this percentage depends heavily on the educational context of the youth sampled.
Tantaphalin et al. (2017) surveyed on a comparison between pre-service and in-service teachers' internet safety level, cyberbullying encountered experiences, and cyberbullying perceptions in terms of various variables. The survey collected from 102 pre-service teachers and 133 in-service teachers in Thailand by online questionnaires. The result showed pre-service and in-service teachers' internet safety level, cyberbullying encountered experiences, and cyberbullying perceptions did not have any differences in terms of gender, age, internet usage time, and teaching experience. In addition, both pre-service and in-service teachers had significant different cyberbullying perceptions in terms of internet safety level and cyberbullying encountered experiences. The majority of pre-service and in-service teachers thought they can deal with cyberbullying in school but they want some development.

Sittichai and Smith (2018) surveys a total of 1,049 students aged between 12 and 18 years, in 12 schools from 3 provinces in southern Thailand, of experiences of being a victim of traditional and cyberbullying over the past couple of months, and recommended coping strategies. Telling a teacher or parent was the most recommended strategy for traditional victimization; this was less so for cyber victimization, where blocking messages/identities or changing email address or phone number were most recommended. Older pupils were more likely to recommend reporting to the police, and keeping a record of bullying incidents. There were many gender differences, with girls recommending telling and reporting more, for both traditional and cyber victimization. Girls also recommended ignoring it more, or blocking messages; while boys recommended fighting back, but also making new friends.

Indonesia

Rahmawati (2015) analyses the behaviour of cyberbullying among teenagers in Pekalongan, Indonesia is using qualitative approach, with 50 teenagers as school pupils, age 15 – 16 years old. The collection of data was through observation, interviews, and literary studies. The results showed that, Muslim teenagers, has become the main cause of the rise of this cyberbullying behaviour, thereby defeating the comprehension of religious values they believe. The conclusion is that cyberbullying is regarded as a trend for teenagers in Pekalongan, because of group conformity, internalized among them, which has a negative impact on the offenders and on the victims.

Dina and Siti (2016) study aimed to examine the prevalence of cyberbullying among the adolescence. The research method used in this research is a quantitative method. While the data for this study were obtained by using a self-report questionnaire. Samples were selected using multistage cluster random sampling method to choose 232 students from the secondary and high schools in Medan, Indonesia. They found that the incidence of cyberbullying smaller than cyberbullying victims.

Safaria (2016) study looked at 102 seventh grade students who were attending a private school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Of this sample, 70.6% were males, 29.4% were females, and all were between the ages of 12 and 13 years old. Out of these students, approximately 80% had experienced cyberbullying victimization occasionally or regularly. No significant differences were found based on the gender of the victim. Males and females were both equally victimized online through cyberbullying. However, males were found to engage in cyberbullying perpetration significantly more often than females. The results suggest a positive relationship between cyberbullying victimization and level of students' psychological distress.

Wiguna et al. (2018) study aimed to elaborate and identify the association between cyberbullying experience and high-risk behaviour outcomes based on gender differences among adolescents in Indonesia. A cross-sectional study that involved junior and senior high schools in Jakarta were applied. There were 2917 adolescents who took part in this study. The cyberbullying questionnaire was used to identify the cyberbullying experienced. High-risk behaviour included in this study was tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption, and self-harm behaviour. They found out that cyberbullying returned negative impacts on both genders of adolescents. Boys showed a greater tendency to externalize while girls showed a greater tendency to internalize. Furthermore, the study indicate that the adolescents who were victims and perpetrator of cyberbullying had a higher risk to consume cigarette and alcohol, also self-hurting behaviour increased for both female and male.

Malaysia

A study by Faryadi (2011) among the university students in Malaysia, aim at investigating the physiological and emotional effects of cyberbullying. They used a triangulation method (quantitative, qualitative, and descriptive) to carry out the investigation. In this study, 365 students participate in interviews, questionnaires, and checklists and observations. The results of the study indicated that 85% of the respondents stated that cyberbullying caused them emotional and psychological stress, and 13% of them had suffered emotionally due to cyberbullying. Furthermore, 70% agreed that students’ academic performance was badly affected by cyberbullying. Results further designate that 16.6% of the respondents admit of bullying someone inside the university, while 1.1% of the respondents had bullied someone outside of the university. The researcher suggested increasing the awareness of the teachers and parents toward the cyber space risk, to be able in taking the necessary steps in protecting the victims.

Balakrishnan (2015) conducted an online questionnaire survey of 393 young adults aged between 17 and 30 years in Malaysia. They found out in the previous six months 39.7% of the participant had been cyberbullied, which indicate that cyberbullying still exists even after schooling years. In addition, the main source for cyberbullying was the social networking sites. A connotation was observed between cyberbullies and cyber-victims indicating that there is a tendency for cyberbullying victims to become cyberbullies, and likewise cyberbullies become cyberbullying victims. In their study the cyberbullying victimization was more for females than male, however the femalecyberbullying more than males.
Though this study shows the availability of cyberbullying in adults, it indicates that the cyberbullying decease with the increasing of age.

Ismail et al. (2017) examines the features of social media networks that may contribute to the cyberbullying behaviour in social media networks in the perspective of technology. They conduct explorative and qualitative studies with seven postgraduate students representing youth. The results revealed that higher levels of exposure to the media showing antisocial and risk behaviour influence cyberbullying behaviour. With higher levels of exposure to harmful media content, the cyberbullying behaviour increased faster over time.

Yusuf et al. (2018) in their article illustrate the links between the three factors of parental attachment and cyberbullying experiences among school-going children. The sample was 375 students aged between 9 and 16 years old from 8 schools in Selangor, they were selected using a stratified sampling method. The findings of this study suggested that the high scores of parental detachment and alienation could predict children’s tendency to get involved in cyberbullying incidences as low scores of parent-child communication and trust could weakly or not affect the likelihood of children becoming cyberbullies or cyber victims. However, as they grow up, they seek parental assistance for approval, advice, and emotional support.

Wan et al. (2018) in their study used semi-structured interview with 30 university students, who have social media accounts and are currently residing in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Based on the data collected, it was found that the majority of the respondents experienced flaming and stalking types of cyberbullying. Such experience they claimed caused emotional, social, and psychological distress. The action taken upon experiencing cyberbullying as well as emotional reaction that they experienced do differ across the type of bully experienced. These effects can be argued to be exacerbated because a sizeable number of respondents chose to keep bullying experience to themselves instead of sharing with others, especially adults.

IV. DISCUSSION

The conducted systematic review in this paper has covered the studies responses to cyberbullying using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approachin Southeast Asia. The findings of this review demonstrate that most researchers used cross-sectional self-reports among teenagers and adolescent samples. The 16 studies identified in Table 1 were from a range of countries with the most being conducted in the Thailand, with five studies. Other countries represented included Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Philippine.

From the studies in the five countries that have some prevalence data on them, they revile that cyberbullying is common in these countries and especially between adolescent. Some studies show that cyberbullying still exist even after high school age (Balakrishnan, 2015), still its incidents percentage decreases in compare. For the studies, the sample sizes mostly in the hundreds or more, and the population based on secondary school and university age. Even there are not many studies on cyberbullying in Southeast Asia, these studies make a remarkable contribution in this area. Therefore, any critical remarks in this paper aim to positively aid research to progress further in an effective way.

Giving the date of data collection is quite a common feature in reports of cyberbullying internationally (Sittichai & Smith, 2015) however, most of the studies in Table 1, did not give the date of data collection. Despite these differences in reporting periods may seem slight, the differences can result in great differences in occurrence estimates, particularly depending on the time of year when measures are conducted(Vivolvo-Kantor et al., 2014).

An insight was illustrated by these studies on the students’ ways to handle or manage cyberbullying, where the students choose not to reveal the incidents to anyone in general, or the adults in specific. Most of the reported strategies are general problem-solving strategies such as looking for social support, trying to ignore or avoid the problem. In addition, the definitions of cyber bullying was not constant in some papers, what will confuse the participant in answering the questionnaire. There are different forms of cyber bullying; however, there was a lack of studies on how victims’ responded to them and to what extent the successful solutions might relate to the form of cyberbullying. Furthermore, in regarding selected solving strategies, there was a lack of theoretical background.

From the studies there are evidence that youth are often both victims and bully in the same time, where reports shows that cyber bullying victims, intend to be a coming a bully in the future. However, almost all of the measures in the reviewed studies captured victimization of cyber bullying. In addition, the main method used to measure cyberbullying was youth self-reported. Nonetheless, this method has been the most widely used, it has quite the challenges in using it to collect information on an individual’s behaviour (Furlong, Sharkey, Bates, & Smith, 2004), where the participant will be shy to reveal some sensitive information to the researcher. To overcome this, it is suggested to use support information from multiple-source reporting (parent report, school records, or peer nomination),also to increase information gleaned from youth self-report, to assess cyber bullying reporters.

V. CONCLUSION

In the last decade, cyber bullying start to get the researchers attention around the world however is getting less attention in the Southeast Asia, what this paper address. The studies in Southeast Asian countries are contributing both locally and potentially for international comparison. More studies that focuses on the qualitative research will needed to establish the validity of cyber bullying in these countries, what are usually the instruments for this field in worldwide-based. In addition, this paper recommends that future studies should state the date of data collection, clearly specify the used definitions, and the use of multiple-source reporting also capture both behavior, victimization of cyber bullying.
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