# CyberBullying in Southeast Asia: A Systematic Review

Napat Ruangnapakul[1], Kringkarn Jaroenkul[2], Apinya Rittipo[3], and Witchaya Khotarathititham[4]

[1-4] Faculty of Information and Communication, Maejo University, Thailand

***Abstract:*** *Modern technology has become the new communication tool and the standard for human daily life. Although there are several benefits that result from electronic based communication, there are also side effects from it; one of these side effects is the cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a dire problem for many youths, leading to severe health and psychological problems. This paper conducted a systematic review of cyberbullying 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 2017, 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 cyberbullying interventions are discussed*

## 1. Introduction

"Cyberbullying is defined as the process of bullying a person with the help of internet technologies" [1]. 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 [2], also this effects can include dropping out of school and negative impacts on mental health [3]. 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 [4, 5]. 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 [4]. In addition, in Southeast Asia, cyberbullying is less well documented [6], and the research in the Southeast Asian countries in this focus is relatively light, but it is starting to appear [4]. This study, therefore, focus on conducting systematic lecturer review on cyberbullying in the 11 Southeast Asian countries: Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Brunei, 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.

## 2. 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, et al. [7]. According to Brereton, et al. [7], 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 September 2017 in these 11 countries for English literature published between 2000 and 2017 in the following databases: Google Scholar, Science direct, Springer Link, and Web of Science. 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.

## 3. 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 16 studies regarding cyberbullying in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippian, and Indonesia, that this paper focus on. However, there were no studies located in Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, or East Timor.

### 3.1 Singapore

The study by Ang and Goh [8] targeted cyberbullying among adolescents in Singapore. The purpose was to examine the connotation between gender, cognitive empathy, and affective empathy among adolescents. 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 induced 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. [9] examined normative beliefs as an intermediary between cyberbullying and narcissistic personality disorder. Findings extended previous empirical research by showing that such beliefs could be the mechanism of action not only in offline but also in online contexts and across cultures. 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 [10] in their study worked on examining cyberbullying on Facebook, and how it related to bullying in schools. 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 one. 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. [11] conducted a self-reporting survey on cyberbullying between Singapore and the United States to investigate the different relations between reactive aggression and proactive, and cyberbullying across two cultures. They found out cyberbullying across both the Singapore and United States associated with aggression associated but not related to reactive aggression.

### 3.2 Philippines

Witkus [12] work on examining the cyberbullying in the Philippines between Visayan Filipino adolescents. 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.

### 3.3 Thailand

A research based in Thailand, and Japan by Musikaphan [13] provided comparative data between these two countries on cyberbullying. In the finding, 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.

Moreover, Songsiri and Musikaphan [3] 's study showed 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.

Sittichai [14] work on a questionnaire survey of 12 schools of 1,183 students aged between 14 and 17 years in southern Thailand. The 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.

Besides, Ojanen, et al. [6] used self-reported online survey with 1234 participants 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. [15] survey 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 result showed pre-service and in-service teachers' internet safety level, cyberbullying encountered experiences, and cyberbullying perceptions did not have any differences in term of gender, age, internet usage time, and teaching experience. The majority of pre-service and in-service teachers thought they can deal with cyberbullying in school but they want some development.

### 3.4 Indonesia

Rahmawati [16] analyse 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 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 [17] study aim 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 [18] 's study found that approximately 80% of seventh grade students who were attending a private school in Yogyakarta, Indonesia had experienced cyberbullying victimization occasionally or regularly. 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.

### 3.5 Malaysia

A study by Faryadi [19] among the university students in Malaysia, aim at investigating the physiological and emotional effects of cyberbullying. 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.

Balakrishnan [5] 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. 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 females cyberbullying more than males.

Ismail, et al. [20] 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.

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The conducted systematic review in this paper has covered the studies responses to cyberbullying using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches in Southeast Asia. The findings of this review demonstrate that most researchers used cross-sectional self-reports among teenagers and adolescent samples. The 16 studies 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 [5], 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.

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 cyberbullying was not constant in some papers, what will confuse the participant in answering the questionnaire. There are different forms of cyberbullying; 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. More studies that focuses on the qualitative research will needed to establish the validity of cyberbullying in these countries, what are usually the instruments for this field in worldwide-based.

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