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Cyberbullying in Digital Media: An Islamic Perspective

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Abstract

Malaysia is the 9th country to record the most active use of social media in the world, which is almost 80 % of its total population. This widespread use of the internet exposes every individual to ethical violations that can eventually lead to cyberbullying. This act is increasingly becoming a culture among netizens by making an individual as a joke in order to gain attention and pleasure on social media. On that basis, the government has introduced the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 to monitor offenses that exist on social media, especially involving cyber mediums. Thus, this study aims to identify the behavior of cyber bullying in digital media and analyze this act according to the Islamic perspective. The study was conducted qualitatively using the library method by analyzing the texts of the Quran and Hadith as well as the discussions of Muslim scholars related to the practice of cyber bullying. In addition, content analysis methods are also performed on some digital media to examine the behavior of cyber bullying that occurs in digital media. This cyber bullying although in one sense gives pleasure to the perpetrators, but this act is actually immoral and illegal. In fact, it is also forbidden by Islam regardless of the background of each victim. Therefore, digital media users should display good manners and ethics in interacting, especially through cyber platforms to create a more harmonious and secure digital ecosystem.

Keywords: Cyber Bullying, Digital Media, Communication, Ethics, Harmony

Introduction

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has contributed to the rapid development in information and communication technology (ICT). The advance of many online applications and social media platforms has had positive effects on human life. However, this development implicitly causes negative impacts on the virtual citizens, especially the misuse of facilities to conduct activities that violate the ethics of consumerism, civil law and the Islamic law. Among them are cyberbullying, dissemination of false information, defamation and misleading information, as well as online transaction fraud. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the cases of online abuse have increased due to the people's reliance on the internet to communicate and carry out

business following the Movement Control Order (MCO) enforced by the government. The MCO, which was introduced on 18 March 2020, has initiated a new norm among the Malaysians, including the use of social media and online applications for various purposes and needs. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) reported a drastic increase in demand for broadband since the implementation of the MCO as business activities, learning, conferences, and meetings are conducted at home during this period. Compliance with the MCO implemented saw the increase in internet traffic flow by 23.5% nationwide during the first week of MCO, which then further increased by 8.6% in the second week (MCMC, 2020).

The influx of information and communication technology (ICT) has made the life of society more convenient. Many services can be accessed and managed via online facilities quickly. However, not all users fully leverage the advances of the ICT development. Some of them are found to abuse the medium of cyber as a platform to commit crimes and involved in profiteering, contributing to the heinous cybercrimes. The alarming increase in cybercrime has led the government to take some measures to raise awareness and encourage the use of the internet and computers in a positive and ethical manner (Harian, 2017). A study conducted by MyCert found that there are nine forms of cybercrime that are often reported by victims, including content-related crimes, cyber harassment, denial of service, fraud, intrusion, attempt to intrusion, malicious conducts and vulnerabilities report (Syarifah Roziah & Kilausuria, 2017). The increase in the use of medium cyber during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially throughout the MCO period has exposed internet users to these crimes, either as perpetrators or victims.

The misuse of gadgets such as smartphones and computers aimed at bullying victims in cyberspace is now observed to be increasing and evolving in various forms. Symptoms of cyberbullying are more prevalent nowadays due to the transmission (viral) of videos and photos, better known as trolls on social medias such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter and so on (Ansong et al., 2013). Often, social media users use the comments section to share pictures or make a post that to vilify the victim because it is the most exposed and easily accessible space (Griffiths, 2014). Although most of the users claim they are just making a joke and for entertainment, but often, most people overlook the repercussion borne by the victims, for some, such events lead to low self-esteem, risk of mental problems, depression and the worst is suicidal ideation. Therefore, from the Islamic perspective, the perpetrators of cyberbullying are subject to punishment due to the potential threats to the society. Also, the government has set some legislations in force to regulate the use of social media such as the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 [Act 588], Computer Crimes Act 1997 [Act 563], Sedition Act 1948 [Act 15], Defamation Act 1957 [Act 286] and the Penal Code [Act 574]. Thus, this study aims to analyse the behaviour of cyberbullying in today's social media landscape and the mandate according to the Islamic perspective.

Literature Review

a) Digital Communication Patterns in Social Media

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has contributed to the rapid development in information and communication technology (ICT). To ensure that Malaysia is not left behind from the development, the government has drafted the Comprehensive Roadmap for the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0) and National Digital to ensure that the implementation of digital infrastructure in the country can benefit all citizens, thus driving the nation's economic growth. The roadmap shall focus on six key components, namely digital talent development,

the latest technologies, the economy of all, society and government-related services. In addition, under the 12th Malaysia Plan (2021–2025), the government is committed in its efforts to improve the country's digital communications by implementing the digital infrastructure plan, known as the National Digital Network (JENDELA). The plan is a great platform to provide a comprehensive and high-quality broadband service coverage, thus preparing the country for a steady transition to 5G technology. Besides, the government injected RM400 million as additional investments via the Prihatin Rakyat Economic Stimulus Package (PRIHATIN) so that the telecommunications industry can increase their network performance. Thus, all parties including state governments, local authorities, ministries and relevant agencies have been mobilised to support the government's aspiration in providing communication services a basic facility to drive the country towards a digital economy.

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 has brought significant changes in the digital world. The digital world revolution led by information and communication technology (ICT) is now getting more seamless and sophisticated. It also has a great impact on the social interaction pattern in the society. In the interactions that take place today, consumer networks are no longer limited to national, religious, and racial boundaries. They can communicate fast with minimal cost easily and without limits. Based on the global statistics of internet usage, a total of 26.4 million people out of the 32.68 million Malaysian population are the internet users by the second quarter of 2019. The use of internet is focused on the latest social medias such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Whatsapp. Nevertheless, there rise of unhealthy symptoms among the digital users is getting rampant. This involves abuse in social media. The symptoms include spying and cyberbullying, spread of defamation and false news, comments that are deemed as vulgar and hate speech, besides the spark of racial and religious sentiments, as well as insult to the Islam religion and the Malays.

In the current context, the threat of COVID-19 pandemic and enforcement of the Movement Control Order (MCO) have introduced Malaysians to a new norm, including the use of social media and online applications for various purposes and needs. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) reported a drastic increase in demand for broadband since the MCO implementation. This is because business activities, learning, conferences, and meetings are now conducted from home. Compliance with the MCO leads to the increase in internet traffic flow by 23.5% in the first week of MCO nationwide, and further increased by 8.6% in the second week. The development of online applications and social media platforms has had a positive impact on human life. However, this implicitly bring negative effects on the virtual users, especially the misuse of facilities resulting from activities that violate the ethics of consumerism, civil law and the Islamic law.

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology in line with the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era makes everything at your fingertips. Although there are so much benefits because of the development, on the other hand, the aspects of privacy and security for each user of cyberspace also need to be given due attention (Wahyuni, C. & Ana, W., 2019). The sophistication of technology shall not compromise the human value of its users that it becomes a tool to manipulate and encroach on the rights of the fellow human beings. In fact, the ethical use of social media and online applications enables the cyber space to be the great platform that is useful in carrying out many activities and current needs.

b) Social Media Abuse in Malaysia

The use of social media and online applications in Malaysia is regulated by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC). MCMC's role is to implement and

execute the preparation of communication and multimedia laws, regulate all matters related to communication and multimedia activities, control and monitor communication and multimedia activities as well as take action on each complaint made by users pertaining to communication and multimedia. Based on the report, the 11,235 complaints lodged between January and June 2020 are related to social media, encompassing hacking activities, online gambling, pimping and pandering, copyright infringement, forgery, pornography, and sedition. Out of the total amount, 11,216 complaints (99.83%) were handled diligently, 80.56% cases were given advice, guidance and education in the community, 18% of the cases had been cross-checked with the social media platform providers for further action according to the terms and conditions, while the remaining 1.27% cases are found to be in violation of provisions under Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act (CMA) 1998 (MCMC, 2020).

In general, the cases involving online scams, cyberbullying as well as fake and seditious news are deemed to make up majority of cybercrimes throughout the MCO, which saw an increase in complaints related to these three forms of crime. According to the Deputy Minister of Communications and Multimedia, Datuk Zahidi Zainul Abidin, it was reported complaints in regards to cybercrime increased by 91.37 % during the MCO from March 18 to June 30, 2020, in comparison to the cases reported in 2019. According to him, most of the cybercrime cases being reported are cyberbullying, scams, data theft and hacking, especially in the urban areas with high internet speed (RTM, 2020). Thus, swift and collaborative actions have been taken by the authorities, especially those that involve MCMC, Cyber Security and PDRM to prevent the criminal activities from being rampant to protect users of social media and online applications from being lured into the crimes. This era of globalisation has witnessed higher level of sophistication of today's technology, especially that involves cyber space. The growing trend of borderless communication has seen an increase in the use of ICT devices such as computers and mobile phones. Although the existence of the world without boundary ables to give positive impact to the community, there are also negative effects due to the cyberbullying acts.

Indeed, social media is an open space that enable anyone to leave their comments. Users can provide their insights into a broad range of issues, either the trivial matters, entertainment and sports, to serious issues such as matters related to politics, economics and religion. There are users who do not observe the ethics in communication and etiquette of making conversation. They are free to comment without manners and regard on other users' account even if those who are criticised are strangers to the point of tarnishing the victim's dignity and reputation. Likewise, with too much information, users tend to easily receive and spread false information, slander, and gossip on a widespread basis. Such action leads to consequences and to the detriment of other people's name. Apart from these signs, the latest issue that raises a concern among online users in Malaysia is internet addiction. This is because a lot of their time is spent on social media. Such act can affect the quality of their wellbeing, mental health and some resort to seclusion due to antisocial behaviour.

c) Cyber Bullying in Social Media in Malaysia

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of technology-based communications including cellular phones, emails, instant messaging and social networks aimed at subjecting someone to harassment and intimidation through online messages or expressions (Che Hasniza, Yusri & Fatimah, 2018). What is more worrying, these signs are growing and evolving in many forms, thus call for warnings from the authorities. The implementation of MCO has implicitly

exacerbated these signs due to the factors of having a lot of free time and being stressed at home (Noriha, et.al, 2020). According to the Chief Executive Officer of CyberSecurity Malaysia (CSM), Datuk Dr Amirudin Abdul Wahab, the society needs to be more sensitive and prepared to deal with serious threat of cyberbullying which is now getting worse, since it brings more harm than physical bullying. Anyone can commit the acts of cyberbullying without control because of easy access to cyber medium. Sometimes, it is difficult to identify the identity of the bully because the internet enables 'anonymity' setting. In addition, access to the cyberbullying is long-lasting because the materials remain in the cyberspace if it is not taken down by the bully. This causes some victims of bullying overwhelmed with stress and in some cases, the victim's do think to commit suicide because of the pressure (Che Hasniza et.al, 2018).

In 2017, the Malaysian Institute for Research in Youth Development (IPPBM) conducted a study on 1382 youths aged between 15 and 30. The respondents come from six different zones, namely the Northern Zone, Eastern Zone, Central Zone, Southern Zone, Sabah, and Sarawak. This study was conducted to analyse the phenomenon of cyberbullying among youths in Malaysia. The results showed that majority of youths had been victims of cyberbullying, they make up 62.3% of total respondents, with 1.21% of them having emotional stress to the point of attempting suicide (IPPBM, 2017). A study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the MyHealth Malaysia portal on more than 5,000 respondents revealed that, 3 out of 10 youths in Malaysia are victims of cyberbullying, this incident in fact affects their education and social aspects of life (Maria, 2019).

Cyberbullying is a growing problem, in line with the development of social networks (Cohen, 2018) and increasing use of social media (Alim, 2017). The more prevalent issues nowadays are the uncontrolled transmission (viral) of videos and photos, or better known as trolls on social medias such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter and so on (Ansong, et al., 2013). Often, social media users use the comments section because it is the most exposed and easily accessible space to share pictures or make a post that to vilify the victim (Griffiths, 2014). Although most of the users claim they are just making a joke and for entertainment, often, most people overlook the repercussion borne by the victims, for some, such events lead to low self-esteem, risk of mental problems, depression and the worst is suicidal ideation. Ironically, in the digital world, more users are getting bold to voice out abusive, disparaging and derogatory words to others. Some users abuse the anonymity feature as a big license to a handful of produce fake accounts with malicious intent.

Thus, looking at the serious implications of the cyberbullying acts, in July 2020, MCMC in collaboration with Multimedia University (MMU) have conducted a study on anti-cyberbullying laws. The research, which are to be completed within six months, is deemed necessary given the increase in cyberbullying cases in Malaysia that lead to suicide. According to the Minister of Communications and Multimedia, Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, although Malaysia has legal provisions related to medium of cyber via the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998, but a specific act related to cyber-bullying that has been implemented in Singapore, the Philippines and some developed countries needs to be created. Those involved in the research also consult with stakeholders, including the Attorney General's Chambers, Communications and Multimedia Commission, CyberSecurity Malaysia and the Bar Council to scrutinise various aspects related to cyberbullying such as content, types of offence and punishments that are to be provided in the act.

In the context of today's social media, troll culture is one of the forms of cyberbullying that is going rampant. Troll is an internet slang that refers to someone's act in initiating an

argument or harassment against others on the internet for the purpose of drawing the attention of internet users to an issue and topic either for the sake of entertainment solely or a specific goal (Collins, 2019). The word troll comes from a technique of fishing, in which fishermen use baits and cast a rod into the water to lure the fish to the bait before pulling the rod out of water slowly (Fragoso, 2015). In the cyber context, this act of trolls is deemed as an act of attracting the attention of others to get caught up in useless discussion by provoking, mocking, insulting and disrupting online conversation, which is done intentionally or unintentionally (Anuar et. al, 2019). The issues that are often used as bait by trolls often revolve around topics related to stereotyping, race, religion, politics, sports, and entertainment (Morissey, 2010).

Their actions are usually driven by boredom and just for personal pleasure (Ansong et al., 2013). Yet there are also some who are driven by grudge against certain individuals, so they take the approach of demeaning, humiliating, and defaming the victim with accusations or fake messages to tarnish the victim's reputation (Fragoso, 2015). This syndrome is better known as the tall poppy syndrome (TPS), which refers to a situation where social media users will leave negative comments aimed at undermining the dignity of certain individuals because they are unhappy with the individuals' achievement that is better than themselves (Dediu, 2015). So, it is not surprising that this syndrome is also known as 'the politics of envy'. This is associated with human psychology and behaviour, that most people cannot accept the achievement of those who are greater than them, because they are unhappy with the existence of 'tall poppies' (O'Neill, 2014). In return, such successful individuals will be disparaged and attacked with unfounded criticism and negative comments, that are totally unrelated to their success.

Methodology

This study applies a qualitative approach in the process of data collection and data analysis. Qualitative research focuses on efforts to obtain non-numerical information (Cresswell, 2013) that can provide in-depth information about the background matter. Qualitative research uses a natural approach to understand the real state of a phenomenon in a specific context without manipulating any real situation (Patton, 2002). In this study, has used a literature review approach to discuss themes that lead to the scope of discussion of cyberbullying and digital media in Malaysia. The polemics and usage patterns associated with the practice of cyberbullying in social media in Malaysia are highlighted to look at the situation that occurs in the practice of digital media in Malaysia. In addition, a content analysis approach is also implemented in this study by highlighting the concept of cyberbullying according to the Islamic perspective. Content analysis in qualitative studies sees more text as an internal and subjective interpretation of meaning. Berg (1988) distinguishes content analysis (qualitative) as an advantage in examining a content based on context and process. The context aspect is seen through the main content implicitly (latent content) while the process aspect involves the process of text interpretation that is carried out carefully and repeatedly. This content is then analyzed inductively starting with detailed observations in general situations and then moving towards formulating more specific views and theories (Bennard, 2011). This approach is used to describe the problem or phenomenon that is being studied and then the findings of the study will be used towards the formation of specific conclusions that are appropriate to the problem under study.

Cyber Bullying in Digital Media: An Islamic Perspective

Humans are created as unique social beings, each person brings colour to another person's life, depending on the types of relationship formed by their interactions. Interaction takes place from social contact, where both parties display a reaction that can be gauged by each other, even without having physical contact. The initial relationship that is upon a foundation in turn leads to a deeper connection in the form of communication, this happens when the persons involved get to know each other better. Allah SWT says:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (Surah al-Hujuraat 49:13)

Islamic embraces human diversity, therefore, this religion urges everyone to make acquaintance and stay connected with fellow human beings despite their different backgrounds. This bilateral relationship should be a vehicle for positive sharing through the exchange and sharing of language, culture, knowledge, technology, skills, and experience. The rapid advancement of information and communication technology in line with the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era makes everything at your fingertips. Although many benefits are obtained resulting from this development, the aspects of privacy and security for each cyber user has to be given due attention (Wahyuni & Windarsih, 2019). The sophistication of technology shall not compromise the human values of internet users, that it becomes a tool to manipulate and encroach on the rights of the fellow human beings. In fact, the ethical use of social media and online applications enables the cyber space to be the great platform that is useful in carrying out many activities and current needs. For this reason, Islam does not condone any behaviours that can affect interaction and violate the rights of fellow human beings such as cyberbullying. Thus, there are prohibitions and affirmations outlined in the Qur'an al-Sunnah on such acts to preserve human rights and dignity as well as create a harmonious and respectful social ecosystem.

1) Falsification of Information

The act of cyberbullying requires an element of lying as the core to capture people's attention. Most of these behaviours lead to falsification of information, since the facts and made-up stories get jumbled up. This is carried out with the intent is to bring down and degrade certain individuals. So, it is not surprising that most of the content of fake messages is based on mockery and blatant lie. From the Islamic perspective, the act of making up something is strictly prohibited and deemed as a huge sin. In fact, the perpetrators are also warned with severe punishment in the hereafter. The Prophet SAW said:

"You must adhere to the truth, for with it comes righteousness and they both lead to Paradise. And you must beware of lying for with it comes immorality, and they both lead to Hell. (Ibn Majah, no. 3849)

Thus, the invention of any elements of falsehood in social communication does go against Islamic ethics even if it is just a joke.

"Woe to the one who talks about something to make the people laugh, in which he lies. Woe to him! Woe to him!" (Abu Dawud, no. 4990)

This serves as a reminder, apart from striving to be a good Muslim personality, everyone has to restrain oneself from normalising the act of falsehood on the pretext of joking. In fact, falsehood does not only bring down the dignity and honour of an individual, but it also leads to chaos and confusion in the society, thus creates discord between opposing parties.

2) Character Assassination

Dignity and honour are the precious assets bestowed by God on every human being. Thus, Islam does emphasise the need to protect one's reputation (*hifz al-'ird*), which aims to preserve the honour of every human being from being compromised due to any behaviour. Every human being is prohibited from harassing, belittling, making fun of and committing an act that is prejudicial to the honour of any other individuals because this is deemed as violating the value of human dignity (*karamah insaniyyah*) as one of the components of why humans are created (Jasser 'Awda, 2013). The acts of trolling that often occur happen on social media target influential individuals (public figures) in society in to disparage and bring down the reputation of the individuals so that they lose respect from the society. This act is strictly prohibited in Islam because this has do to with shame and honour, which shall be the boundary of every human's social interaction. Allah SWT says:

O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers (Surah al-Hujuraat 49:11)

Although some perpetrators use the excuse of just making a joke so the trolls that they have made shall not be taken seriously, Islam sees this issue from another perspective. The prohibition of such act is in fact intended to preserve human dignity and honour, this area shall remain a restricted zone from any aggression and conduct that can expose the individuals to humiliation and degradation. The Prophet SAW said:

"Whoever spies (searching for weaknesses) on his Muslim brother, surely Allah will expose his weakness even if he is inside his house." (at-Tirmidhi, no. 2032)

3) Personal Insults

Allah SWT has created human beings as the best and glorified creature in comparison to other creations. The differences in terms of physical, skin colour, and ethnicity do not make one person better or lesser than another. In fact, the glory of human beings are only determined from the level of piety, to what extent the persons devote themselves to God. Therefore, Islam forbids any acts of hurting, insulting, humiliating and slandering others, let alone using despicable and vile words as is often the case in social media today. This prohibition is not only intended to protect the one's personality, but also to prevent enmity between the perpetrator and the victim. The Prophet SAW said:

Al-Badha (obscene talk) and Al-Bayan (too much talk) are two branches of Hypocrisy."(at-Tirmidhi, no. 2027)

The acts of name-calling, insulting and humiliating other human beings are gravest sins and are strictly prohibited by Allah. Besides creating a rift between humans, such despicable acts cause the perpetrators to be overwhelmed bad quality such as *riya'*, in which ones feel they are more noble than there is nothing wrong to insult and ridicule others who are lesser than them. This kind of act is far from the noble quality outlined by Islam. The Prophet SAW said:

A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim: he does not oppress him, nor does he fail him, nor does he lie to him, nor does he hold him in contempt. It is evil enough for a man to hold his brother Muslim in contempt. (Muslim, no 6541)

Such behaviour of some social media users who like to expose and shame to degrade others in the name of joke and fooling around is against the communication ethics set by Islam. Any jokes made shall not be filled with even a speck of lies and insults that compromise dignity and honour of other individuals for the sake of entertainment without considering the repercussion borne by each victim. The Prophet SAW said:

'O Abu Dhar! Did you abuse him by calling his mother with bad names You still have some characteristics of ignorance. Your slaves are your brothers and Allah has put them under your command. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of what he eats and dress him of what he wears. Do not ask them (slaves) to do things beyond their capacity (power) and if you do so, then help them.' " (al-Bukhari, no. 30)

4) Spread of One's Weaknesses

Information and communication technology (ICT) facilities as well as the boom of social media has made social interaction via cyber platforms easier and faster. However, the misuse of this platform has led to the increase in *al-sukhriyyah* behaviour, either explicitly or through the act of irresponsible individuals in spreading such immoral activities. Without thinking, this behaviour has led to slandering (*al-ghibah*) and gossiping (*al-namimah*), indeed both acts are condemned by Islam. Allah SWT says:

O ye who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, ye would abhor it...But fear Allah. For Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful (Surah al-Hujuraat 49:12)

The Prophet SAW also explained about this behavior through his words:

"Do not envy one another, and do not inflate prices for one another, and do not hate one another, and do not turn away from one another, and do not undercut one another in trade, but [rather] be slaves of Allah and brothers [amongst yourselves]. (Muslim, no 6541)

Thus, the individuals involved in the act of *al-sukhriyyah* either as the main perpetrator or propagator are to be punished by God in the hereafter. This is if the things that they spread

are obtained from the true and authentic resources. However, the perpetrator or propagator are liable to heavier punishment if they just making thing up and spread the fabricated information to others, albeit for the purpose of entertainment and humour because Islam does not condone any defamatory acts. The propagator who has been abetting in such conduct are liable to same degree of punishment as the perpetrator, as their actions do affect the victim's life in a bad way. Allah SWT say:

Those who love (to see) scandal published broadcast among the Believers, will have a grievous penalty in this life and in the Hereafter (al-Nur, 24: 19)

The use of online social medias such as Facebook, Whatsapp, and Twitter provides a space that enables easy and fast social interaction. Nevertheless, unethical use of the internet to the point of triggering addiction has the potential to cause mental illness and affect the physical health of not only an individual, but the entire society (Lanaj et al., 2014). This development also implicitly causes negative impacts on the virtual citizens, especially the misuse of facilities to conduct activities that violate the ethics of consumerism and civil law. Studies by Akbulut et. al (2010); Bauman (2013); Zhou et al (2013) found that individuals who spend more time on the internet tend to engage in cyber harassment. The findings are consistent with the media effects model, which highlights the potential of media in influencing the propensity and behaviour of an individual (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013). Also, this is in line with the online disinhibition effect that states in the digital ecosystem, individuals in general tend to express their feelings and are free to carry out any activities without reservation (Ho & McLeod, 2008; Suler, 2004).

Furthermore, internet users are found to experience emotional stress because of being harassed on the internet and some are concerned with the security level on the internet. The ambiguity and secrecy of the perpetrators' identity cause the internet users to feel distressed because they are unable to take appropriate protection measures (Sourander et al (2016). The negative effects that are attributed to cyberbullying include deterioration in the academic performance, loss of self-confidence, emotional instability, as well as mental and physical injuries (Patchin & Hinduja, 2008). Therefore, everyone needs to practise self-control while communicating on social media without having to encroach on the privacy and dignity of other users. Although cyber space is a borderless realm, but as a human being every user still needs to respect the rights and privacy of others in social media. Everyone is accountable to create a safe environment in any places by being respectful, besides always complying with the ethics in communication, anywhere the interaction takes place, be it physical or virtual. The act of harassing and encroaching on the privacy boundaries of other social media users are indeed unethical and needs to be curbed. Each party needs to know the limitations of rights and rules set by the government on the use of social media and online applications.

Conclusion

The use of social media is a major need for every individual, especially in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Yet, its unethical use exposes society to social media abuse. Cyberbullying is seen among the latest trends that are becoming more prevalent and among social media users. If left unchecked, this behavior can lead to serious repercussions on society. This cyber bullying although in one sense gives pleasure to the perpetrators, but this act is actually immoral and illegal. In fact, it is also forbidden by Islam regardless of the

background of each victim. Digital media users should display good manners and ethics in interacting, especially through cyber platforms to create a more harmonious and secure digital ecosystem. Therefore, this study contributes to the present body of knowledge on cyberbullying in digital media in Malaysia. The main contribution of this article provides directions for the harmonious interaction in digital platform from an Islamic perspective. Islam guarantees freedom of speech but must be implemented according to established guidelines. Adherence to religious and humanitarian values can create a digital society that is mutually tolerant and united. Suggestion for future study to explore the understanding of the implications of cyberbullying behavior in Malaysia. This is valuable finding that contribute towards the harmony of a digital society in Malaysia, as well as achieving the national cybersecurity agenda.

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