

Intimate Partner Violence and Cyberbullying in Malaysia: Exposing the Covert Abusive Behaviours in Digital Era

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Project Summary

Background:

Cyberbullying is repeated behaviour of cyberviolence that uses digital technologies aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those who are targeted. In Malaysia, every year, police statistics indicate a worrying prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV), but to date, no data to show the occurrence of cyberbullying among IPV cases. Despite the detrimental effects of both IPV and cyberbullying, the cases are underreported, making management to eradicate these behaviours very challenging. Hence, this study aimed to determine the percentages of IPV (physical, emotional and sexual violence) and cyberbullying among the public and examine the associations between both abusive behaviours.

Method:

This study was a cross-sectional online study, using convenient sampling, distributed via Google Forms on social media platforms. Selection criteria include adults aged 18 and above, proficient in Malay, in an intimate relationship, and with internet access. Potential participants were informed of the risks and benefits of the study and those who gave implied consent would proceed with the survey. Participants' IPV and cyberbullying experiences were assessed using i) Women Abuse Screening Tools (WAST) and ii) Cyberbullying Victimization Scale (CVS).

Results:

A total of 3120 participants answered the survey. More than two-thirds of participants had experienced physical (71.8%), emotional (71.2%) or sexual (69.5%) violence and cyberbullying (76.3%). There are significant associations between every item of WAST and the presence of cyberbullying. There is a positive correlation between the total score of WAST and the total score of CVS ($r=0.23$; $p<0.000$).

Conclusion:

There is a high prevalence of IPV and cyberbullying experienced by the Malaysian general public, both male and female adults. It is crucial for the government and non-governmental agencies (NGOs) to address these two violent behaviours, provide comprehensive support for these vulnerable groups of people and provide comprehensive intervention to eradicate IPV and cyberbullying.

Biodata:

Yuhaniz Ahmad is a Statistics lecturer at Universiti Utara Malaysia, UUM, Sintok Kedah. She has been teaching Statistics to undergraduate students for over 24 years. Research on hospital data has been her primary focus since 2004, and she has been involved with a variety of women's mental health projects since 2018.

Associate Professor Dr. Salmi Razali is a distinguished psychiatrist at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), with extensive experience in mental health. She is highly regarded for her expertise in psychiatric care, research, and education. Dr. Salmi has contributed significantly to the field through her academic work, research publications, and commitment to advancing mental health awareness. Her dedication to patient care and education has made her a respected figure in her field.