CYBER DEFAMATION AWARENESS AMONG ADOLESCENT: CASE STUDIES IN ONE PRIVATE INSTITUTION

Zahidah Zakaria¹ Siti Aminah Harun¹
¹Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, Widad University College, BIM Point, Bandar Indera Mahkota, 25200 Kuantan, Pahang

Abstract. Defamation sounded itself is unprecedented proliferation. This unprecedented proliferation in information and communication technology (ICT) such as electronic mail (e-mail), chat groups, online forums, web logs (blogs), social media platforms and many others, our daily lives have changed significantly. Therefore, the finding of this research shown the level of awareness for cyber defamation among adolescent users is still at medium level which is 3.01. Awareness in cyber defamation cases among adolescent can practically differ from the perspective of early adulthood and the aim of this research is to increase the behavior of helping and academic shared writing. These findings should be the early initiatives in helping our students to be aware of this cyber defamation. Future research regarding this should be applied into the bigger population, respective fields and difference ranged because this research limit only for respondents on specific target (case studies) and these findings can not be generalized to Malaysian context.

1. Introduction
Globally, people appear to be unaware of the risks shared on other social media by negative or derogatory posts, and the internet has made it difficult to control defamation. [22]. During adolescence, individuals have an increasingly higher need for complex tasks, sharing info and to take part in decision making which is related to an individual personality [25]. A person between ages 10 and 24 likely called adolescence has long been recognized as a period of heightened risk-taking and requires special oversight from adults. The World Health Organization [57]. One research conducted among undergraduate students in Malaysia shown that the severe level stress is (12.9% to 21.6%) [2] and internet addiction is one of the clues leading to this stress level. As concerned, our teenager that we computed as an adolescent may face the cyber defamation and indirectly being abused in cyberbullying [9]. However stills the impact of cyber bullying derived from cyber defamation which is matters we need to concern on. Therefore, addressing these issues is essential in order to improve the mental health among undergraduate students. The issues in mental health has been uprising following the increase in prevalence of mental health problems [14].

Through the advent of numerous forms of Web 2.0 applications, especially blogs, all sorts of online content, including hate speech, incitement to racial and religious discrimination, and defamatory publications can be easily disseminated to the public domain. However, the awareness among internet
users towards cyber defamation behaviour still lacking. Indirectly, they were not aware that kind of the behaviour will lead them to commit a cyber-crime [6] and cyber defamation. Cyber defamation, also known as 'internet defamation' or 'online defamation', can be a type of behavior defamation (defamatory people) that occurs all over the world. Computers and Mobiles are today act as one of the tools for other criminal offenses [59]; [13]. Defamatory people choose to use the internet as a medium for libel acts, as for the low barriers to entry and the almost no need to pay anything and reachable to millions of other internet users through online all over the world. The "eyes of the world" phrases, is one of the infinite define of defamation because it has tarnished the good name or status of the person in society [28]. Whereas cyber defamation may not only occur in words written, it may also be portrayed by images or symbols [35]. A false profile may be used to defame someone's reputation in cyberspace [6]. or conduct online bullying [10].

Cyber defamation is one of the types of cybercrime, while it refers to series of events that involve repeated interactions with the target [12]. In the perspective of cyber law is the law that cover the crimes committed within the cyberspace. Cyber defamation is also a cyber crime [42]. The aspect is fulfilled with respect to wrongfulness if the credibility of an individual has been damaged and an objective examination is used to assess whether the good name of a person has actually been tarnished. Once the release of defamatory content has been confirmed, the courts conclude the intention to harm. [28, 29]. With the aid of computers or the internet, cyber defamation is publishing defamatory content against another person. Publishes a defamatory statement about someone else on a website or sends emails containing defamatory information to others by the purpose of defaming the other person about whom the statement was made, it would be called cyber defamation. The harm caused to a person by publishing on a website a defamatory statement about someone else is widespread and irreparable as the information is available to the whole world. This cyber defamation behaviour defines can be analogy as "information on the internet will be commented by the other internet users and vastly forwarded and shared". Directly cyber defamation happened instantly and being spread to all corners of the world. Cyber defamation, is characterized by its fast propagation speed, higher level of attention, strong occult, and low cost of law, which makes defamation crimes easier to implement and more difficult to reduce. In other word defamation is generally considered to be 'an intentional infringement of someone's right to his good name or, more fully, an erroneous, deliberate publication of words or conduct concerning another person whose status, good name or reputation is likely to be undermined [12].

Online or cyber defamation is considered to be "the act of defaming, abusing, offending, or otherwise harming a person in cyberspace by false statements [6, 12].This kind of harming will alarming the other peoples in imitating and increased the behavior of cyber defamation. However in the perspectives of awareness for individual, publications should take place after at least one other person has been made aware of the defamatory statement and in various ways, such as speeches, print and online forums, such as websites, newsgroups and newsletters [6]. The ordinary or primary meaning of the conveyed words must be challenged in order to prove that the material is defamatory in nature. Sometimes words can have a secondary or hidden significance and this innuendo has to be recognized before the defamatory statement is established. In the famous Twitter joke trial, Chambers v DPP [2012] EWHC 2157 (Admin), [2013] 1 AllER 149, a man was convicted for sending a message of a ‘threatening character’ by a public electronic communication network contrary to sections 127(1)(a) and (3) of the Communications Act 2003. This is not surprising given that statements published on the Internet have the potential to damage reputation and infringe privacy expectations. The regulation of online publications by general law or by specific media laws covers a wide range. The opportunity to post comments about oneself and others came with a degree of responsibility but many users fail to exercise some restraint when making comments about others. The statistic in year 2018 shown that the range of age below 20 – 20's had spent their time average duration
within 6 – 8 hours daily in using internet [33]. This paper therefore imperative to see the awareness of cyber defamation and the main Social Networking Sites (SNSs) among adolescent.

2. Purpose of the Study
Emergent awareness and reliance on this digital medium and widely of cyber adolescent users directly by the relatively low cost of internet connection providers, created the opportunity for online defamation to increase [25]. The main purpose of this study is:

- To determine the level of awareness of an adolescent toward cyber defamation
- To determine the main social networking used by an adolescent in one particular places (private institutions)

![Research Framework](image)

**Figure1.** Research Framework

2.1 Hypothesis
H1: Level of awareness of cyber defamation behaviour is high among adolescent.
H2: Instagram is preferable social networking apps among adolescent

3. Research Methods
Quantitative methodology with 35 adolescent respondents in age range between are 18 to 24 years old choose through Stratified Random Sampling. Awareness level explains based on the concept of defamation & cyber defamation itself derived from these three theories (the choice theory, and theory of vicarious liability. Data collected was analysed with SPSS mean range. The questionnaire used had shown
respective acceptable loadings and reliability. Below are the dimensions used in determine the level of awareness.

Table 1. Indicator – mean range (the level of awareness of an adolescent toward cyber defamation)

| Mean Range | Level  |
|------------|--------|
| 0.00-1.67  | Low    |
| 1.68-3.35  | Medium |
| 3.36-5.02  | High   |

4. Literature review/ Operational and conceptual definition
Defamation its self can cause image tarnished. Our image-driven culture pushes us to be more concerned with what other people think than with how we feel. We seek approval from others instead of self-acceptance. In this research, the theoretical framework adaption derived from three main theories, which is “the choice theory”, “theory of vicarious liability” and “theory of risk society”.

Defamation refers to the publication of a statement which reflects on a person’s reputation and tends to lower him in the estimation of right thinking members of society generally or tends to make them shun or avoid him [2, 19]. In the choice theory, person drive to behave based on five view of human nature (Power, Survival, Fun, Freedom and Belonging). Human nature such as making fun and shun the power of individual is behavior choice that lead to cyber defamation among adolescents. This adolescent age range falls within WHO definition of young people, which refers to individuals between ages 10 and 24 [57]. In many societies, however, adolescence is narrowly equated with puberty and the cycle of physical changes culminating in reproductive maturity. In other societies adolescence is understood in broader terms that encompass psychological, social, and moral terrain as well as the strictly physical aspects of maturation. In these societies the term adolescence typically refers to the period between ages 12 and 20 and is roughly equivalent to the word teens. Study shown, the highest population actively surf the internet and used social networking 13 hours per day is young peoples. [15, 45] and higher probabilities having cyber defamation without intentions. [25]. Communication and Multimedia Act1998 aim is to regulate and incidentally regulate the converging communications and multimedia industries [33].

Theory of vicarious liability discussed the act of cyber defamation based on employee participapating and perspectives awareness. However still, the concept of cyber defamation in this research applicable to cyber defamation behavior and distinct items in the questionnaires developed through this theory understading of awareness in defamation. Relying on the theory of vicarious liability, an employer will be liable under vicarious liability for the act of the employee in publishing defamatory statements within the course of employment [45], through participating, by providing the computer system, in any further acts of publication in which the email is further disseminated, or by means of which other users see the email.

Defamation is defined by someone who has deliberately published or said something that has harmed the reputation of another person. For instance, is where a person intentionally states or spreads information about another person to cause others to think less of that person [18, 45]. There are two types of defamation. First is libel that is the publication in permanent form of a defamatory statement such as writing or printing. Second is libel that is transitory form such spoken word or gestures [41]. Proven defamation, the plaintiff must establish three elements which are the words are defamatory, the words
refer to the plaintiff and the words have been published. Cyber defamation occurred indirectly because of the lacking awareness among internet users.

In the case of National Union of Bank Employees v Noorzeela binti Lamin and Anor, some defamatory comments were published to all the defendant's friends on Facebook and also to all others who could have access to view the defendant's Facebook page. The plaintiff case was that by reading comments made by the defendants, anyone would think that the plaintiff is a dishonest union who cheats its members; that the plaintiffs are all dishonest and have their own agenda; that the plaintiff does not pay its members from the Benevolent Fund; that the plaintiff's misappropriates the monies; and that the plaintiffs are corrupt; that the plaintiff is incompetent in serving its members. Therefore, the plaintiff argued that their reputation was damaged due to making these comments, and claimed damages. The court order to pay damages and issued an order prohibiting the defendant from publishing and/or allowing similar libels to be published in the future. On defamatory statements on Facebook webpage, the Court opined that this is equally serious. In this day of social media networking, a comment posted on one's Facebook page has the ability to reach a large number of persons in a short space of time. The comments of the defendant which are read by her Facebook friends can in turn be read by their friends, depending on the privacy settings". After due consideration of the evidence adduced by both parties, the Court found that the plaintiff has succeeded in making out its case against the defendants on a balance of probabilities. The literature suggests that on the issue of defamation, the law is complex where there is a need to distinguish whether a defamatory statement is libel or slander. In a case of libel, if it is determined that the statement is defamatory then, there are presumptions against the author or the publisher. However, it must always be borne in mind that the publication in a web site or online is to the public [1, 35]. However, in the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (“CMA”), the main provisions prohibiting illegal content are provided under sections 211 and 233 of the CMA.

5. Findings
Malaysian societies define the term adolescence in the period ages 12 and near to 20 and is roughly equivalent to the word teens. The respondents choose through simple stratified random sampling belongs to this kind of group. Majority of the respondents is female and majored in Technology management courses and taking law subject for elective. Cyber defamation is the publication of a statement that reflects the reputation of a person and tends to reduce him or her in the estimation of right-thinking members of society in general, or tends to shun them or avoid them (58).

Table 2. Table of Finding

| Esteem Level | 3.01 (Medium) |
|-------------|---------------|
| Preferable used social networking | Instagram |

Finding shown the preferable used social networking among adolescent is Instagram. Blogging or updating status in Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, these kind of cyber defamation behaviour can be taken against the post makers or updates on defamatory online statements. Available literature also rephrases the importunateness of the result of our studies. It is found that Yang, et, al., found that The Effect of Early Adolescents’ Psychological Needs Satisfaction Upon Their Perceived Competence. This is clearly an integral contributor to students affect towards perceived information skills, uses and research and higher possibilities to act cyber defamation because of the competency and liability in using search engine and
internet vastly. Students require social contextual supports for all their basic psychological needs, which include not only autonomy but relatedness and competence. During this ages of adolescent social contact regains from follower on their social media such as Instagram and WhatsApp status can be replaced their basic psychological needs [14] and intended to perceived more attention and lead to cyber defamation behaviour. Network defamation refers to the behavior of people using computer networks, mobile networks and other modern communication tools, fabricating, spreading false information; damage the reputation of others [17, 30]. Results also acquired that the majority respondents were using mobile phone as a device to access internet. It is because a current technology need is to have a mobile phone as a device in accessing internet other than easier and affordable to buy within the range-aged teenager at the University level. This is supported with year 2018 statistic which shown that 93.1% of the internet users using a smartphone as a device in accessing internet [33]. Majority of these respondent have their own social networking and communication apps account which is the most popular are Instagram and WhatsApp apps. The WhatsApp apps is easier to be used compared with Telegram in exchanging the notes, documents, photos, videos other than to facilitate messaging and voice calling. Furthermore, in social networking platforms, Instagram is the highest compared with Twitter. Based on statistic in year 2018, there are 24.6 million of social networking users, which are 97.3%, are Facebook users and 57.0% are an Instagram users. While 27.8 million of communication apps users which are 98.1% WhatsApp users and 25.0% are Telegram users [33].

Majority of respondent agreed that Social networking has become one of our main sources of communication between peoples and creating a chance to share the opinion or information about others. This is not a problem as the fact that a transmission of this information in such circumstances it is not a big deal. The problem is when such transmitted information is used negatively, that is where a person transmitted such information gets some legal responsibility. One among of those legal responsibilities is defamation. For the negative impacts it is where a person accumulates a large quantity of information from a person or institutions which are not true hence false statement and spread them or transmit them through electronic means in a very fastest way to a third party.

Crucial findings point out that the word like “bully”, “misunderstanding “and “damage someone reputation” is the first word appeared in their mind when they heard about the defamation. Moreover, for the cyber defamation, the first word appeared were “defamation through online”, “false defamation” and “bully online”. It is clearly shown that the researcher has a basic knowledge about the defamation and cyber defamation. Moreover, 90% of the respondent disagreed that defamation is the right to protect one's reputation. In order to increase the awareness, introducing the elective law subjects in the higher institution is highly recommended, as the results shown majority of respondents agreed by learning law subject at University or College were helped them in disclosing by the term of defamation and cyber defamation. All of respondents agreed that they gain knowledge about the information of Cyber Defamation through Social networking (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, YouTube, WhatsApp & WeChat). It is because these social networking are low barriers to entry and the almost no need to pay anything other than easier to access it [11, 40].

This research finding contain the deficit answers in level of awareness among this group of respondent. These adolescents agreed that a cyber-defamation is the same thing with cyber bullying and the statement that the “cyber defamation is one of the ways to harm the reputation of someone that is lead to spread false information to another person”. Accordance with previous study, define this cyber defamation as “the effect of this kind of behaviour will damage the others reputation and ruin to their life other than abuse and harming the others” [1, 27, 45, 51]. As a result, an adolescent may face the cyber defamation and indirectly being abused in cyberbullying [9]. It must be noted that a cyber defamation affects the welfare of the community a whole and not merely of the individual victim as majority of respondents agreed for this statements “the factors of habit, being jealous and intention to harm others reputation influences
someone to do cyber defamation”. It also has its impact on the economy of a country depending upon the information published and the victim against whom the information has been published [42, 44].

6. Conclusion and Discussion

Through the previous research by Harun and colleagues, in 2015, they emphasized personality of adolescent can be one of the factors contribute to the cyber defamation. People who are high in extroversion tend to seek out social stimulation and opportunities to engage with others. However, during years, peoples having less communication through real life and had less face contact. Apparently seeking the attention from their followers not their friends. These two word “followers” & “friends” offenses the majority life adolescent nowadays. Computers and Mobiles are today act as one of the tools for other criminal offenses [13, 59] like statements in any of the blogs, Facebooks, Instagram, Twitter, and other crimes prescribed by criminal law. The reason why defamatory people choose to use the internet as a medium for libel acts is that except for the low barriers to entry and the almost no need to pay anything and reachable to millions of other internet users through online all over the world. Extroverts are often unfairly pegged as overly-talkative or attention-seeking. In reality, they simply gain energy from engaging in social interaction. People who are high in extroversion need social stimulation to feel energized. They gain inspiration and excitement from talking and discussing ideas with other people [32, 54]. Unfortunately, discussing ideas mostly now through online which is being called “group discussion” between followers, friends, contact and etc. Definite the possibly of cyber defamation behavior were higher. Cyber defamation as “the effect of this kind of behaviour will damage the others reputation and ruin to their life other than abuse and harming the others” [1, 35, 25, 31, 44]. As a result, an adolescent may face the cyber defamation.

7. Research limitations and implications

Further studies can be proposed and this study finding can be helpful and accordance with findings. Future research regarding this should be applied in the bigger population,respective fields and different ranged because this research limit only for respondents in specific target (case studies) and these findings can not be generalized to Malaysian context.

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