DEALING WITH CYBERBULLYING IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADERS

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ABSTRACT

With the growing prevalence of cyberbullying in schools, school leaders have a crucial role to play in addressing this issue. This case study explores the practices of school leaders in detecting, intervening, and preventing cases of cyberbullying in international schools. Eight school leaders and 12 teachers participated in semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, respectively. Thematic analysis using ATLAS.ti was employed to analyze the data, which revealed the importance of school leaders in fostering a positive learning environment and involving the school community in addressing cyberbullying. Detection, intervention, and prevention strategies were employed by the schools, as well as policies and programs that promote digital citizenship. The article concludes with implications for school leaders and schools, including the need to acknowledge and prioritize the issue of cyberbullying, and to develop and implement relevant strategies, policies, and programs not only in international schools but in other academic institutions dealing with cyberbullying.

Keywords: **Cyberbullying, School Leadership, International Schools, Malaysia**

INTRODUCTION

Cyberbullying is an escalating concern in schools worldwide, including international schools. As a form of aggressive behaviour that is intentional and repeated, executed through digital media such as social networking sites, texting, or email (Biernesser et al., 2023), cyberbullying has several negative consequences for victims, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and even suicide (Kowalski et al., 2012). Especially in international schools, dealing with cyberbullying could be more daunting due to the diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds among students (Mishna et al., 2012).

In the context of international schools, cyberbullying has been a major concern that school leaders worldwide must prioritise. Several studies investigated the most common cases of cyberbullying in primary and secondary schools in which students are regarded as either "outsider" or the "in-crowd" (Beran & Li, 2007; Cassidy et al., 2019; Kowalski & Limber, 2013). The prevalence of social media usage among teenagers plays a crucial role in the perpetuation of bullying online among international school students given that most of them have access to such platforms in and out of school (Cassidy et al., 2019). Hence, school leadership initiatives are expected to be inclined toward the development of practices, policies, and programs targeting the specific needs and issues of students with regards to cyberbullying (Mishna et al., 2012), as well as provide their personnel with adequate resources and professional development to effectively take part in the detection and prevention of cyberbullying (Beran & Li, 2007).

Although a huge number of international schools have policies on anti-bullying, cyberbullying is still often overlooked. Ng et al. (2022) noted that the detection, intervention, and prevention strategies for cyberbullying in some schools are still inadequately implemented due to the lack of reporting mechanisms and structures in place. Furthermore, many schools are still struggling to allocate resources and manpower to deal with incidences of cyberbullying as teachers themselves take into their hands the detection and resolution of such cases in their classroom (Ng et al., 2022). Subsequently, further research must determine appropriate detection and intervention strategies for international schools as Mishna et al. (2012) highlighted that schools must have effective programs in preventing cyberbullying, which is designed by carefully considering the profile of the cases in that schools. Nevertheless, developing a well-structured program on the detection, intervention, and prevention of cyberbullying in international schools according to contextual factors is crucial if schools prioritise the safety and well-being of their students.

Recent studies have explored how strategies for cyberbullying detection, intervention, and prevention in schools could be effective in their respective settings. Mishna et al. (2019) posited that cyberbullying can be prevented in schools by advocating a harmonious school climate emphasising the values of inclusion which can be achieved through socio-emotional learning activities teaching responsible decision-making, self-consciousness, and empathy. Another helpful strategy is providing teachers and staff with resources and training on detecting and intervening in cyberbullying incidents, such as establishing clear reporting protocols and offering staff training on cyberbullying prevention and intervention (Espelage & Hong, 2017). Technology-based interventions, such as anonymous reporting systems and digital educational programs, have also demonstrated potential in reducing cyberbullying incidents and improving students' attitudes towards bullying (Donegan, 2012; Li et al., 2013). Despite the plethora of studies on cyberbullying, perspectives and practices from international schools as reported by school leaders seemed to have been overlooked.

Research has shown that while various interventions have been implemented to address cyberbullying in schools, there is limited research on the role of school leaders in combatting cyberbullying, especially in international schools (Gaffney et al., 2019). School leaders have been recognised as having the potential to influence school culture and policy, and their engagement has been identified as vital in implementing successful interventions (Kennedy et al.,

2012). Thus, this research focuses on exploring specific strategic actions school leaders take, as well as programmes and policies, to detect, intervene in, and prevent cyberbullying cases in international schools in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cyberbullying Detection Strategies

Detection of cyberbullying cases can be traced back to incident reports from students. A study by Dou et al. (2022) noted how cyberbullying is seen by students as one of the most worrying issues that teachers and leaders should urgently address in their schools as students reported cases of cyberbullying in the form of spreading rumours or lies about the victim, name-calling, and hurling insults on social media platforms. In an evaluative study by Wurf (2012), responses from students from Hong Kong indicated that the younger ones who are usually from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more vulnerable to cyberbullying than those who are older and from a higher socioeconomic status.

In other studies, different cyberbullying detection strategies in schools employ the use of technology. Programmers proposed the usage of deep learning machine algorithms in detecting cyberbullying instances on social media platforms, which they found to be employable in school settings (Iwendi et al., 2020). Other than that, the study by Hani et al. (2019) experimented on social media analysis to determine networks and dynamics of cyberbullying. Furthermore, Ioannou et al. (2018) investigated the extent of effectiveness of human moderators in the detection of cyberbullying, whereas Espelage, Hong, and Valido (2018) explored how peer monitoring could be a tool in detecting bullying on social media sites. Although studies value the use of technological tools in cyberbullying detection, human moderators and peer monitoring mechanisms are more feasible in applying in school systems with limited technological resources.

As per the role of school leaders, they should consider a wide array of practices when strategising their detection efforts on cyberbullying. Priority should be given to teacher training and resource allocation for an immediate and appropriate response to cyberbullying detection (Pennell et al., 2020; Touloupis & Athanasiades, 2020). Likewise, principals must value the implications on ethics and privacy in using technological tools designed to detect bullying cases online to make it more reasonable and transparent (Mishna et al., 2012). Evidently, these studies suggest the key role of school leaders in the detection of cyberbullying cases since it is their responsibility to ensure students of a safe learning environment by giving them an assurance that cyberbullying cases can be detected in their schools.

Cyberbullying Intervention Strategies and Programmes

In response to cyberbullying, different intervention strategies and programs were documented in several schools. In a meta-analysis of studies on cyberbullying by Kowalski et al. (2019), school-wide and individual-level interventions for cyberbullying prevention was noted to be common and effective among middle school students. Another intervention program described in a review by Gaffney et al. (2019) focuses on the empowerment of students to be active bystanders or witness to cyberbullying incidences instead of being merely passive bystanders. In addition, cooperative learning programs through curriculum instruction and co-curricular activities was deemed to be effective in improving students' attitude to intervene in cyberbullying and decreasing their chances of becoming perpetrators or victims (Alcala et al., 2019).

Aside from general intervention programs, current research has examined more specific intervention programs dedicated for certain types of cyberbullying instances. For example, Ng et al. (2022) noted that in reducing perpetration occurrences in schools, a mindfulness-based program among middle school students could be done regularly and conducted by specialised teachers. Other than that, a study by Chan and Wong (2019) revealed that psychoeducational methods promoting empathy can drastically reduce potentials of victimization online among students from primary school. With these studies in mind, the development of comprehensive intervention strategies should be tailored according to targeted age groups and that students should be more involved in taking an active role in dealing with cyberbullying to foster a supportive school environment.

Cyberbullying Prevention Strategies, Programmes, and Policies

On top of detection and intervention, cyberbullying prevention requires strategic practices, programmes, and policies to be developed and implemented to reduce the negative impact of cyberbullying on students regardless of their age. A study by Biernesser et al. (2023) found that for a prevention program to be comprehensive, parents, students, and educators must be involved in the entire process. Their research findings emphasised the importance of continuously educating students about the negative effects of cyberbullying and advocating responsible digital citizenship through certain values. Based on another study by Bauman, Toomey, and Walker (2013), the inclusion of empathy and positive social norms in the curriculum can reduce the prevalence of cyberbullying by instigating among students' transformational behaviour through learning points in various subjects.

Moreover, school policies and state laws have been created in response to cyberbullying. Zero-tolerance policies against cyberbullying are commonly stated in schools' guidelines, while some governments around the world have passed laws criminalising certain types of harassment done online. On the other hand, the effectiveness of these policies and laws is still open for debate. Scholars argue that such zero-tolerance policies could be too harsh and unnecessary that they do not really address the root causes of cyberbullying while some believe that the criminalisation of cyberbullying limits freedom of speech (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008). Despite these arguments, it is evident that prevention is as important as detection and intervention of cyberbullying. Hence, further research needs to determine key strategies and programmes, which could be implemented to advocate for responsible digital citizenship and harmonious relations among students.

The Roles of School Leaders in the Detection, Intervention, and Prevention of Cyberbullying

With the increasing concern about the rise of cyberbullying in schools, the roles of school leaders in addressing this issue require attention. In a study by Bauman, et al. (2013), they noted that ensuring and creating positive learning environment are the key responsibilities of school leaders, which can have a positive effect on curbing the cases of cyberbullying. In terms of practices, a study by Carpenter and Ferguson (2020) explained how the quick response of the school's leadership team and teachers could lead to effective resolution of cyberbullying cases. This response could be further supported if school leaders provide the necessary counselling services to the victims of cyberbullying. Likewise, Sheanoda and Bussey (2021) examined how effective various cyberbullying prevention programs on students, and they found that those programs that involve the participation of students and their parents were the most sustainable. School leaders can be at the forefront of creating a supportive atmosphere by promoting positive values and modelling appropriate behaviour to discourage acts of bullying (Espelage & Hong, 2017).

Aside from school leaders, school counsellors who have leadership positions provide effective guidance and support to students especially when they are aware of the trends in cyberbullying (Burlet & Panahon, 2022). Another study investigated the effects of leadership development programs on the school leaders' and teachers' capability to deal with cyberbullying. The researchers found that these development programs can be effective in providing school leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to respond to cyberbullying incidents by employing practices that promote positivity in their schools (Couvillon & Ilieva, 2011). Based on the current research reviewed in this section, it could be surmised that school leaders have a significant role to play in the detection, intervention, and prevention of cyberbullying in schools. However, in the context of international schools, further research is needed to provide a different perspective in understanding the specific roles and strategies that are most effective and appropriate in this setting, as well as the possible challenges that may hinder the school leaders' efforts to address cyberbullying.

METHODOLOGY

A case study design was adopted in this qualitative research on the roles of international school leaders in detecting, intervening, and preventing cyberbullying. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with school leaders and focus group discussions with teachers from three private international schools located in Klang Valley,

Malaysia. In the context of this study, the case study design provides a deeper yet holistic understanding of practices against cyberbullying in international schools in Malaysia by allowing for deeper exploration of the complexities of this phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). By using one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions, a more comprehensive understanding of cyberbullying detection, intervention, and prevention strategies in international schools can be brought to the fore.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in determining the participants in this research. The international schools were selected based on the following set of criteria reported by gatekeepers and published on the school's websites:

a.   Curriculum addressing cyberbullying
b.   Existence of cyberbullying programs
c.   Comprehensive policies against cyberbullying

Through purposive sampling, the selection of international schools with established cyberbullying prevention programs and policies allows the researchers to gain insight into the role of school leaders in addressing cyberbullying (Palinkas et al., 2015).

For the interview, eight school leaders were purposively selected to participate as shown in Table 1. Most of the participants were principals or individuals knowledgeable of cyberbullying programs and policies and had been in their position for at least three years. This approach allowed for the selection of school leaders with relevant experiences and knowledge of cyberbullying prevention programs. The selection process of these participants was justified as they held leadership roles in schools and had relevant experience and knowledge related to the research topic.

Table 1. Profile of Interviewed School Leaders

School Leader	School	Position	Gender	Years in Position
SL_A1	School A	Year Level Leader (P6)	F	4
SL_A2	School A	Head of School (Primary)	F	5
SL_B1	School B	Head of School (Middle)	M	4
SL_B2	School B	Principal (Primary School)	M	6
SL_B3	School B	Head of Secondary	M	3
SL_C1	School C	Principal	M	5
SL_C2	School C	Year Level Leader (Y7)	F	6
SL_C3	School C	Head of Secondary	M	5

For the focus group discussion, three groups of teachers from primary, middle, and secondary levels were purposively selected based on their knowledge of cyberbullying cases and programs for triangulation. The participants were referred by the school principals, ensuring that the selected participants were relevant to the research topic and had relevant experiences and knowledge of cyberbullying prevention programs. The selection process of these participants was justified as they were frontline educators who have direct interactions with students and may have experienced and witnessed cyberbullying cases.

The number of participants in this study was considered sufficient as qualitative research typically involves a small number of participants, and the sample size is determined by the study's research question and purpose. The purposive sampling technique ensured that the participants were carefully selected based on their relevance to the research topic, allowing for the collection of rich and in-depth data (Creswell, 2014). Likewise, this sampling technique allowed for the selection of participants who were knowledgeable and experienced in cyberbullying prevention programs, ensuring that the data collected was relevant and provided insights into the research topic.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection procedures for this qualitative research involved contacting gatekeepers from the three international schools to obtain permission to conduct the study. The principals from each school were then interviewed first, either face-to-face or via audio recording, and were asked to refer other school leaders for the interview. Other school leaders were interviewed via Zoom, and the focus group discussions with teachers from School C was conducted physically and audio recorded. Prior to data collection, permission and consent were granted, and confidentiality agreements were signed to ensure that the participants' privacy was protected.

To achieve credibility, the data collection process involved purposive sampling techniques to ensure that participants with relevant experiences and knowledge related to cyberbullying prevention programs were selected (Palinkas et al., 2015). Additionally, the data collection process involved face-to-face and audio recorded interviews and focus group discussions, allowing for rich and in-depth data to be collected through source triangulation.

After data collection, the data were transcribed, and an auditing process was performed to ensure that the transcribed data were accurate. Thematic analysis using ATLAS.ti software was then performed, with codes and transcript members checked to ensure that the analysis was rigorous and reliable. The rigorous thematic analysis for trustworthiness was justified as it allowed for the identification of key themes and patterns in the data. This analysis involved a systematic and comprehensive approach to identify patterns and themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019), enhancing the trustworthiness of the research findings. In summary, the data collection and analysis procedures used in this qualitative research were carefully designed and executed to ensure that the data collected were rich, in-depth, and trustworthy, providing insights into the role of school leaders in addressing cyberbullying.

FINDINGS

The interview findings from the school leaders were categorised according to the following themes: roles of school leaders in addressing cyberbullying; detection, intervention, and prevention strategies; programs and policies in response to cyberbullying. The data from the interviews will be compared and discussed in this section in triangulation with the findings from the focus group discussions with the teachers.

Roles of School Leaders

The school leaders defined their role on a general note by stating that it is their responsibility to create a safe and supporting learning environment. As this seems like an overstatement, the head of secondary from School C described how he would empower students to speak up about any issues they may be facing online during their school assemblies and even through their newsletters. In addition, the year level leader from School C indicated the importance of collaborating with the members of the school community, especially the teachers, counsellors, and parents, as he highlighted that cyberbullying is not just an issue with one student but should be looked at as a school community's concern.

In line with creating a safe and supporting learning environment, one of the school leaders explained the importance of ensuring that policies and procedures in response to cyberbullying are in place:

"My role is to ensure that our school has clear policies and procedures in place to detect, intervene, and prevent cyberbullying. I work closely with our staff, students, and parents to create a safe and supportive environment where cyberbullying is not tolerated. We have regular meetings, and these initiatives are well-documented to safeguard our students." (4:6 ¶ 16 in SL_B2)

Other than that, the school leaders also mentioned their roles in educating and monitoring students as vital in addressing cyberbullying in their schools. Since most of the school leaders interviewed were also teaching certain subjects, this provided them opportunities to educate their students about cyberbullying as described by the year

level leader from school A:

"I mean, in general, we are educating and letting the students know what is expected of them during our classes. In my case, I'm also a homeroom teacher, so I get to talk to my students about how to be responsible online and where should they go when something happened." (1:4 ¶ 28 in SL_A1)

In terms of monitoring students, the head of primary from School A said:
"We're monitoring the behaviours and they even like, I know it's not something cyberbullying, but even like they know how to carry the iPads properly, they know how to look after it. They do need to be aware of the dangers and what to do. But also to look at the positive of the technology." (2:7 ¶ 40 in SL_A2)

As this role of educating and monitoring students require collaborative effort, School B employs a school-wide approach by designating staff key positions and responsibilities in addressing cyberbullying. According to the head of primary of School B:
"One looks after middle school, one looks after stage 5 which is year 9 and 10, and one looks after stage 6 which is year 11 and 12. They are the front of it, so whenever there is something to work through, they work through with students and then they report back to me or if there is a particular misbehaviour of any kind that needs more intervention, then I would get involved personally as well." (3:3 ¶ 60 in SL_B1)

Except for monitoring students, all the other findings in this sub-section were identified and described by the teachers from the focus group. A teacher from School C explained her thoughts on the role of her school leaders in addressing cyberbullying:
"I think our school leaders play a critical role in setting the tone for the school's approach to cyberbullying. It's important that they prioritize the issue and create a culture of zero tolerance for cyberbullying with clear guidelines and ways to educate our students to be responsible digital citizens." (9:9 ¶ 55 in FGD_CP1)

Cyberbullying Detection Strategies
In detecting cases of cyberbullying, all school leaders agreed that this is a challenge for them as such cases usually happen outside the domains of their schools. The head of middle school from School B explained:
"As you can understand that it's, that not really within our domain to do that because if someone were to have a conversation at a shopping centre that was not pleasant, that would have absolutely nothing to do with us. It's the same way as to young people talking to each other badly outside of school time. So, in terms of incidents that happens during the school day, which is even more rare, we address right away because it happens here." (3:4 ¶ 48 in SL_B1)

Detection of cyberbullying in international schools usually starts from reports from students or teachers who have knowledge of cases of victimisation or perpetration as explained by a leader from School A:
"I mean the whistle-blower often comes from a different child. It's not actually the child in question and also we have our safeguarding policy which is to do with those cases as well. So anything that's coming to us, as in the child comes to me or a colleague and disclose something, then I would deal with it very much the same way. I would let them talk to me and let them also know that I can't keep that as a secret. I would have to write it down and then I give it to the safeguarding lead." (2:8 ¶ 44 in SL_A2)

Other than reports from students and teachers, school leaders also rely on their instincts as they try to be more conscious of cues that manifest victimisation of cyberbullying. Since some of the school leaders are teachers too, like the year level leader from School A, they can be more sensitive of their students' behaviour, such as being isolated, depressed, or sudden change in academic performance, which could trigger them to probe into the student's case and eventually discover an incidence of cyberbullying.

Only after students or teachers report when school leaders initiate further investigation as they monitor social media

activities of the students involved. The head of secondary from School B shared:

"We also train our teachers and staff to be aware of the signs of cyberbullying and to be proactive in addressing any concerns they may have. In addition to these reactive measures, we also use technology to help us detect cyberbullying cases. We monitor our school's network and social media platforms for any signs of cyberbullying or inappropriate behavior once it gets reported to us. It's important to note that detecting cyberbullying can be challenging, as much of it occurs outside of school hours and on personal devices." (5:8 ¶ 20 in SL_B3)

The focus group teachers also agreed with the cyberbullying detection strategies implemented by the school leaders. Among both primary and secondary school teachers, they agreed that detecting cases of cyberbullying only happens when it gets reported to them by their students, which they would escalate to their school leaders or counsellors once they had sufficient evidence and if the case had immensely affected the student mentally, physically, or academically. Teachers in charge of the case would monitor social media activities if the social media account were open or if screenshots were provided by students involved.

Cyberbullying Intervention Strategies

Once cyberbullying cases have been reported and confirmed for further action, international school leaders employ intervention strategies based on restorative practice approach. As defined by an interviewee:

"Restorative practice is basically giving everyone a chance to reflect upon what happened and how they feel about it and we talked through the process of how they feel that leads up to like whatever situation they have. We do this through our teachings, lessons in class, counselling, and community-wide approach." (1:10 ¶ 52 in SL_A1)

In School C, a restorative practice protocol is followed by the teachers according to the year level leader:

"If a cyberbullying incident is reported or detected, we follow a clear protocol for intervention. This includes investigating the incident with a committee, providing support to the victim through counselling, and working with the perpetrator and their parents to address the behavior and prevent future incidents." (7:8 ¶ 27 in SL_C2)

Counselling and providing support services are integral parts of the restorative practice employed in all schools in this case study. The interviewees highlighted that both victims and perpetrators need to undergo counselling sessions with their designated in-school counsellors for the students to understand how to deal with their situation in a better way. At times, school leaders had to also take part in counselling the students, and the head of primary from School A shared how she would counsel victims or perpetrators of cyberbullying:

"I need to be approachable, I need to, to be honest, they need to know that they can always come to me and not to be scared and they should always report something that, I mean we had that in the meeting if and there is a list of all the possibilities and the learners knew that if these things happened, who to talk to. I think that this is all about encouraging the learners to actually, to vocalise whatever is happening to them." (2:10 ¶ 52 in SL_A2)

In the process of intervention, school leaders seek the expertise of designated staff members, especially the teachers of the students involved and the guidance counsellor. The principal from School B mentioned:

"Firstly, we have a team of staff members who are trained to investigate reports of cyberbullying. They will gather information, speak to the parties involved, and take appropriate action based on the severity of the incident. We form a committee of teachers, year level leaders, and counsellors to ensure the intervention process goes smoothly according to our protocol." (4:9 ¶ 26 in SL_B2)

The restorative practice approach as a cyberbullying intervention strategy was supported by the focus group teachers as noted by an interviewee:

"In our school, we use restorative practice, so the learners will know if they go and they talk to a member of staff, they will listen to them. The learner will be able to speak and tell that member of staff what has happened. In this process, we don't simply punish students or give them counselling. They have to be involved in the process and their parents too, along with their teachers and counsellor." (11:15 ¶ 93 in FGD_CM1)

Cyberbullying Prevention Strategies

Digital citizenship has been the buzzword of international school leaders in preventing cyberbullying. As a preventive measure, digital citizenship has been embedded in their curriculum. This was explained by the principal from School B:

"Like I said, the PSD, the digital citizenship is actually like a curriculum, a syllabus and the homeroom teacher will spend two periods per week going over. We have something like responsible digital citizenship, including the appropriate use of technology and social media platforms. We also have specific lessons on cyberbullying, including cyber safety assemblies, digital citizenship lessons, and workshops on responsible social media use." 4:13 ¶ 32 in SL_B2

In line with digital citizenship, the school leaders emphasised the need to continuously educate students in other subjects. For example, the head of primary from School A talked about their ICT curriculum:

"It's part of our curriculum, our ICT curriculum. Well-being and ICT are tied into the whole curriculum from 5 to 11 and we have to make sure we do those learning goals and I can give you a copy of those as well. So that you can see that well-being and ICT are tied in quite closely, and we need to ensure that we cover those goals." (2:11 ¶ 60 in SL_A2)

Other than academic-related initiatives, school leaders reported how they try to foster a sense of community among students and how they encourage students and parents to report cases of cyberbullying. In addition, students are asked to sign a digital citizenship contract or acceptable use agreement at the beginning of the academic year to make them understand their responsibilities as users of technology online. All these preventive measures were reported by the teachers from the focus group discussion, for instance:

"I think one of the most important preventive strategies is to educate students about digital citizenship and responsible online behavior. Our school has implemented a digital citizenship curriculum that teaches students about topics like online privacy, cyberbullying, and respectful online communication. We also implemented a buddy system for technology use, where students work together to ensure that their peers are using technology in a responsible and respectful way. And we have regular workshops for students, teachers, and parents on topics like cyberbullying, digital citizenship, and internet safety." (9:27 ¶ 127 – 129 in FGD_CP1)

Programs and Policies in Response to Cyberbullying

In the interviews with the school leaders, programs implemented in response to cyberbullying were in line with digital citizenship and are mostly awareness campaigns. As a vital program in response to cyberbullying, digital citizenship has been integrated in various subjects to teach students about how to be responsible online and how to respond to cyberbullies. The head of secondary from School C further explained:

"One of the key programs we have in place is our digital citizenship curriculum, which is integrated across all subjects and year levels. This curriculum teaches students about responsible online behaviour, including how to recognize and prevent cyberbullying. We provide regular education and training sessions to students and staff on topics such as cyberbullying, online safety, and positive digital citizenship. We also organise workshops and guest speaker sessions to provide further information and resources on these topics." (7:11 ¶ 36 in SL_C2)

Some of the awareness campaigns described by the school leaders revolve around promoting online safety and responsible use of technology. One of the campaigns, Digital Leaders Program, was shared by the principal from School B:

"We also have a student-led initiative called the Digital Leaders Program, where students are trained to educate their peers on responsible technology use and the prevention of cyberbullying. This program empowers our students to take an active role in creating a positive digital culture within our school. we have created support groups and peer mentoring programs to provide students with a safe and supportive space to discuss any issues they may be facing, including cyberbullying." 4:16 ¶ 38 in SL_B2

Other programs involve collaboration with school stakeholders, in which school leaders, teachers, and counsellors get to have workshops and coffee sessions with parents. For instance, in School A, before students were handed their laptops or iPads at the beginning of the year, a workshop session with parents was conducted to ensure that parents and students understand their responsibilities in using devices online and offline.

As for the policies, the school leaders mentioned that their students' handbook has clearly stipulated codes of conduct, rules and regulations, and consequences in response to cyberbullying cases. Also, protocols in reporting cases of cyberbullying have also been shared by school leaders as a part of their policies. Students are made aware of all these policies not only through their handbook but also at the start of the year when they are asked to sign their digital citizenship contract or acceptable use of technology agreement. According to the interviewee from School C:

"Our policy outlines the behaviors that are considered cyberbullying and the consequences for engaging in these behaviors. We also have procedures for reporting and investigating cyberbullying incidents and providing support to victims. This policy is regularly communicated to students, staff, and parents, and is included in our school's code of conduct." (7:13 ¶ 42 in SL_C2)

The focus group teachers from the primary and secondary schools attested to the programs and policies implemented by the school leaders:

"We had PSHE - Personal, Social and Health Education which very much parallel to PSD as well. One of the core elements that we have is about Digital Citizenship and this is where the child or the learners getting messages about responsible internet use from all the adults in their life at home and at school as well. So we talked about consent. This is one of the very simple outline but it has a very big impact, for example in the classroom where we have one-to-one. That means all learners have devices and sometimes they took pictures of other students in the classroom without the consent with the intent to later use it for like a meme or something online. So we go back to the very common core agreement that consent is very important." (11:17 ¶ 101 in FGD_CM1)

DISCUSSION

This case study presented views of school leaders with respect to their roles in addressing cyberbullying in their respective schools. Based on the interviews, the primary role of school leaders in international school revolves around ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment by monitoring and educating students. Previous studies have shown that the initiatives of school leaders in fostering a positive culture result to positive student outcomes in the affective domain, which could reduce the instances and risks of cyberbullying among students (Burlet & Panahon, 2022; Domitrovich et al., 2017). More importantly, if the policies and programs are in place to safeguard the well-being of students and promote a positive school climate, incidences of cyberbullying could be kept to a minimum or completely eradicated in the school community (Gaffney et al., 2019).

In achieving the ideals of a cyberbullying-free school, international school leaders must be aware of the various types of cyberbullying faced by students to plan detection, intervention, and prevention strategies. As such, school leaders must take the forefront in educating the school community about the risks of cyberbullying, as well as in setting up the proper monitoring and support structures to prevent or address cyberbullying incidents (Purdy & Mc Guckin, 2015). Using technological tools like software for monitoring or an anonymous system of reporting could be utilised by school leaders by engaging the parents and the other school stakeholders to take an active part in preventing cyberbullying (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). However, in the context of this study, the use of any monitoring software or technology was not mentioned by the school leaders and teachers in the interviews since they relied mostly on reports from cyberbullying victims or witnesses.

Despite the unavailability of technological tools for cyberbullying detection in international schools, the school leaders resort to different detection, intervention, and prevention strategies in response to cyberbullying cases. The common practices in the international schools in Malaysia in detecting cyberbullying relies heavily on reports from

students and teachers. Hence, teachers must be aware of the indicators of cyberbullying manifested by victimised students or perpetrators in school. According to research, creating a culture of kindness and respect in the school community enables the students and teachers to be more active in reporting cases of bullying as they are inclined towards the school's goal of fostering positive relationships within the school community (Espelage & Hong, 2017). Furthermore, the inclusion of parents and support groups in cyberbullying prevention programs provides a sustainable, long-term foundation for school-wide efforts in cyberbullying prevention (Gaffney et al., 2019).

In terms of intervention and prevention, educating students by integrating digital citizenship in curricular and co-curricular activities has been the common response among school leaders in this study. Current research has indicated that learners who have undergone instruction in socio-emotional learning and responsibilities of digital citizenship tend to have a better understanding of managing themselves when they interact online thus reducing the risks of cyberbullying (Burlet & Panahon, 2022; Domitrovich et al., 2017). Through a digital citizenship curriculum, students can be provided with the knowledge and skills to use social media platforms safely by teaching them the basics of setting privacy or boundaries and reporting incidences of cyberbullying (Wurf, 2012). Therefore, school leaders have the responsibility to ensure that the curriculum is designed to explicitly teach students and other members of the school community about being responsible digital citizens and acting when they witness or experience bullying online (Purdy & Mc Guckin, 2015). As highlighted in this current study, school leaders must ensure that the members of their school community are committed in educating and in providing support structures to curb the negative effects of cyberbullying on students.

In addition to the practices shared by the school leaders in this study, programs and policies should be implemented fully in the process of intervention and prevention of cyberbullying in schools. As highlighted by the school leaders, anti-cyberbullying programs are commonly done in international schools to promote awareness of cyberbullying while policies serve as a safety net for the school community by providing protocols when intervening in cyberbullying cases. Studies have shown that comprehensive policies that cover cyberbullying prevention and intervention can effectively reduce the incidence of cyberbullying in schools (Gaffney et al., 2019). Likewise, prevention programs at an institutional level have been reported to be successful in making students more aware of cyberbullying and prevent cases from becoming more detrimental to the students' well-being (Burlet & Panahon, 2022). Similarly, the inclusion of Digital Citizenship in the curriculum in the international schools in this case study could have a similar positive effect in curbing cyberbullying among primary and middle school students. Involvement in awareness campaigns against cyberbullying could be more impactful among secondary school students, so school leaders could be more sensitive in employing age-appropriate programs to address cyberbullying in their schools. Generally, providing guidelines for school leaders and staff on how to identify, report, and address cyberbullying can help to ensure that interventions are consistent and effective.

CONCLUSION

Limitations and Implications
Insights from this case study suggest that a combination of consistently employed strategies, policies, and programs is essential in addressing cyberbullying in schools. Policies provide a framework for addressing cyberbullying, while programs promote awareness, provide support, and educate students and staff about the risks and consequences of cyberbullying. Although this study's source has been limited to the small group of international school leaders in Malaysia, their insightful perspectives can be transferable and applied by other school leaders as they play a critical role in ensuring that policies and programs are in place and are effective in addressing cyberbullying.

Addressing cyberbullying in schools requires the commitment of the school community. The school leaders and teachers in this case study have shared their practices in detecting, intervening, and preventing cases of cyberbullying in their respective schools. As a prevalent issue affecting the well-being of students, cyberbullying needs the attention of school leaders. As highlighted in this paper, school leaders need to be at the forefront by acknowledging the issue, fostering a positive learning environment, and involving the members of the school

community to take on cyberbullying. Through the implementation of relevant strategies, programs, and policies, school leaders show how seriously they take cyberbullying in their schools. Although this study only brought forth perspectives from three international schools, leaders from other schools may refer to the findings of this study as they create their programs and policies addressing cyberbullying. Further research could dwell more based on the perspectives of counsellors and students from international schools who had firsthand accounts of cyberbullying. Particularly in strengthening digital citizenship, teachers and curriculum developers should find creative ways to integrate digital citizenship into their teaching and curriculum to educate students about cyberbullying.

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