

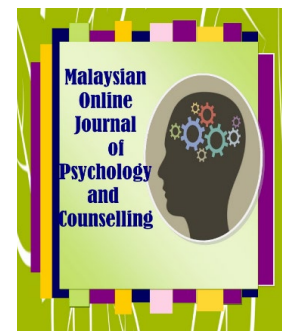
THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ANONYMITY AND VERBAL AGGRESSION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SOCIAL MEDIA USERS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the correlation between anonymity and verbal aggression in university students who use social media. Anonymity is a condition where an individual cannot be identified by others and his or her true identity is not known. Verbal aggression is a behavior that attacks individuals through verbal expressions with the aim of hurting others. The research method used is quantitative with a correlational research design. The sample consist of 101 students and utilised the purposive sampling technique. The criteria for the research subjects are Malang State University (UMS) students, aged 18-24 years, using social media and having anonymous accounts. The scales used in this study are (1) the adaptation scale of the Anonymity Scale by Lee, Choi, and Kim (2013) with a validity between 0.425-0.691 and reliability of 0.627 and (2) Verbal Aggression Scale by Worthington & Bodie (2017) with validity between 0.377 - 0.777 and reliability of 0.848. The conclusion of this study is that there is a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.452$; $p < 0.05$) between anonymity and verbal aggression in students who use social media in the moderate category. It is hoped that further studies will explore more sources of references related to anonymity or verbal aggression to get better and comprehensive research results.

Keywords: *anonymity, verbal aggression, social media user*



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INTRODUCTION

The development of technology in this era is growing rapidly and the internet is an example of the development of technology in the field of communication and information. Currently, the number of internet users in Indonesia has reached 196.7 million people (Bayu, 2020). Furthermore, data obtained by Kemp (2021), states that the number of active social media users in Indonesia is 170 million people or 61.8% of the total population in Indonesia. Although social media also offers various benefits such as ease of communication, social media also has negative things, such as hoaxes, hate speech, discrimination, misogyny, cyberbullying, trolling, fraudulent micro-aggression, doxxing, and pornography. The ease with which social media users can comment and send messages by hiding behind social media accounts makes many people free to say anything to others.

This is evidenced by the low level of Indonesia's "Digital Civility Index", from 32 countries showing Indonesia is ranked 29th. The data explains that individuals over the age of 18 are considered to contribute on the low level of Indonesia's digital civilization. This is in accordance with Stasia's data which explains that most internet users are 18-24 years old (Annur, 2020). This age range is mostly found in students. After the data from Microsoft was published, Indonesian internet users immediately attacked Microsoft's Instagram account. Quoted from CNN Indonesia, there were at least 2,000 comments from anonymous accounts that did not accept the survey results, causing Microsoft to disable the comments column on the account. Apart from that, there is another case that happened to Rahmawati "Kekeyi" Putri Cantika, who was insulted and made as a laughing stock in cyberspace by many anonymous accounts, which were indicated by words such as 'buck teeth (overbite)', 'short' or 'ugly' in the column in her personal YouTube comments (Kumparan, 2019). Some of the above-mentioned activities are forms of cyberbullying. According to Kowalski et al. (2014) cyberbullying is a certain type of aggression that is carried out intentionally and repeatedly in an electronic context. Types of aggression are divided into two, namely physical aggression and verbal aggression (Myers, 2010). This study focuses on verbal aggression because only verbal aggression can be done in cyberspace.

According to Eraslan and Kukuoglu (2019) the concept of verbal aggression is defined as verbally detrimental behavior towards an individual to cause psychological harm. Furthermore, Berkowitz (2003) explains that verbal aggression behavior is a form of aggressive behavior that is carried out to hurt others, in the form of reproaches, ridicule, and threats. It can be concluded that verbal aggression is a behavior that attacks individuals through verbal expressions with the aim of hurting others. The aspects of verbal aggression according to Infante and Wigley (1986) are (1) insults, insults or body-shaming is an arrogant behavior towards others; (2) character attacks, attacking or disturbing someone's character; (3) competence attacks, underestimating the abilities of others; (4) ridicule, or laugh at others; (5) profanity, saying disrespectful statements to others; (6) maledictions, swearing at others; (7) teasing, mocking, or insinuating with the aim of making fun of others; and (8) nonverbal emblem, showing hostility or dislike to others. The factors of verbal aggression according to Feldman (1995), include (1) physical arousal increases a person's level of aggression; (2) de-individuation is an effective trait that is predicted to have something to do with the increase of an individual's aggressive behavior; (3) Provocation from others is a trigger for the acts of aggression.

According to Pfitzmann and Hansen (2010) anonymity is a condition that is not identified by others. According to Wallace (1999), anonymity occurs when the anonymous cannot be associated with the real person. Anonymity is a condition when a person cannot be identified by others and his or her true identity is also unknown. Aspects of anonymity according to Pfitzmann and Hansen (2010) are:

(1) unlinkability, cannot be linked to their real identity; (2) unobservability, cannot be detected by others; (3) pseudonymity, do not use their real identity. Anonymity makes someone not afraid of expressing whatever they want without fear of knowing their social identity. This is in accordance with Zimmerman and Ybarra (2016) who called such anonymity as a "cloak".

As Fajriani, Sekarningrum, and Sulaeman (2021) conducted research on the effect of cyberspace on behavioral deviance, it was found that the majority of participants in cyberspace formed more aggressive behavior. Another study also conducted by Amry and Pratama (2021) found that there is a positive correlation between anonymity and cyberbullying. Based on the explanation that has been described above, it can be assumed that anonymity has a correlation with aggression, so if the level of anonymity is high, the aggression will also be high in that individual. Although research on aggression on the internet has been done, this study focuses on verbal aggression with students aged 18-24 years. Therefore, the researchers aim to examine the correlation between anonymity and verbal aggression on students who use social media.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research conducted by the researchers use quantitative methods in the form of correlational research with the aim of observing whether there is a correlation or relationship between anonymity and verbal aggression of students using social media. The independent variable (X) in this study is anonymity, while the dependent variable (Y) is verbal aggression.

Population and Sample

The population of this study is Malang State University students aged 18-24 years, using social media, and having an anonymous account/second account/alter account. The sampling technique in this research is purposive sampling, i.e. the sampling technique based on the criteria that have been determined by the researchers. The number of samples in this study amounted to 101 people.

Research Instruments

The instrument in this study is adopted from the one used by Lee, Choi, and Kim: 2013 (?) that includes a process with the following steps: forward translation, back translation, expert judgment, and testing. The anonymity scale was developed by Lee, Choi, and Kim (2013) based on the anonymity aspect of Pfizmann and Hansen (2010), namely unlinkability, unobservability, pseudonymity. On the anonymity scaling done after the trial, consisting of 8 items. One item was dropped and it was item no. 4. Item number 4 has a validity score between 0.425-0.691 and a reliability score of 0.627. One of the items from this scale says "It is impossible to trace my online identity back to offline identity". Then adapt the verbal aggression scale of Worthington and Bodie (2017) based on aspects of verbal aggression from Infante and Wigley (1986), i.e.: teasing, competence attacks, profanity, insults, character attacks, maledictions, ridicule, and nonverbal emblems. While on the verbal aggression scale, there were 20 items and 3 items were dropped with item number 3, 9, and 10 with a validity score between 0.377-0.777 a reliability score of 0.848. One of the items on this scale is "When someone is very stubborn, I use insults" to soften his or her stubbornness." The instrument is formed on a Likert scale with tiered answer choices from very suitable (SS), appropriate (S), not suitable (TS), and very unsuitable (STS) with a maximum value of

four and a minimum value of one for favorable items, while for unfavorable item maximum value is one and minimum value is four.

Research Procedure

This research procedure consists of several steps, including: formulating problems, determining theoretical foundations, formulating hypotheses, adapting measuring instruments, conducting trials, collecting data carried out with the assistance of Google Form application which was distributed to students at the State University of Malang via WhatsApp messages on the 24th February - March 3, 2022, analyzing the data, and finally drawing conclusions.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of this research used a hypothesis test that applied the Pearson Product Moment correlation to determine the correlation between anonymity and verbal aggression. Before testing the hypothesis, the researchers conducted a prerequisite test, namely the normality test with Kolmogorov-Smirnov to determine whether the data was normally distributed or not and linearity test with ANOVA to check whether or not there is a linear correlation between the two variables.

RESULTS

Overview of Subject Demographic Data

In this study, the number of female respondents was 67 (66.34%) and male respondents were 33 (33.66%). Dominated by respondents aged 21 as many as 48 (47.52%), followed by respondents aged 20 years with a total of 23 (22.77%), then respondents aged 22 years as many as 18 (17.82%), then respondents aged 19 years as many as 6 (5.94%), then respondents aged 23 years as many as 3 (2.97%), the last respondent aged 18 years were as many as 2 (1.98%), and 24 years old as much as 1 (0.99%).

Furthermore, the distribution of data from the groups of respondents came from the Faculty of Psychology as many as 37 respondents (36.63%), followed by the Faculty of Economics and Business as many as 15 respondents (14.85%), then from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences as many as 10 respondents (9.90%), then from the Faculty of Engineering as many as 9 respondents (8.91%), then from the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Letters had the same number of 8 respondents (7.97%), and finally students from the Faculty of Education and The Faculty of Sports Science has the same number of 7 respondents (6.93%).

Descriptive Analysis

The description of this research data reveals about anonymity and verbal aggression variables. The findings were further processed by using descriptive statistics. The results are as follows:

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis

Hypothetical					
Var.	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Anonymity	101	17.5	3.5	7	28

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Verbal Aggression	101	42.5	8.5	17	68
Empirical					
Var.	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Anonymity	101	17.44	3.422	9	28
Verbal Aggression	101	33.15	7.864	19	68

The analysis in Table 1 above uses hypothetical and empirical data. On the hypothetical anonymity scale, the following results were formulated: from 7 items, it was found that the minimum score was 7 and the maximum score was 28, the average score was 17.5 with a standard deviation of 3.5. On the hypothetical verbal aggression scale, there were a total of 17 items with a minimum score of 17 and a maximum score of 68, and has an average score of 42.5 with a standard deviation of 8.5.

On the empirical anonymity scale, it was resulted as follows: from 7 items there was a minimum score of 9 and a maximum score of 28, the average score was 17.44 with a standard deviation of 3,422. On a hypothetical verbal aggression scale with a total of 17 items, there was a minimum score of 17 and a maximum score of 68, and it has an average score of 33.15 with a standard deviation of 7.864. The categorization in this study was done by changing the X score into a standardized T score which has a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10.

Table 2: The Categorization of Anonymity

Range	Categorization	Number	Percentage
$T \geq 50$	High	43	42.57%
$T \leq 50$	Low	58	57.43%

Based on Table 2 above, it can be seen that out of the 101 anonymity respondents who use social media at the State University of Malang, there are 43 respondents (42.57%) who are in the high category, and 58 respondents (57.43%) who are included in the low category. This shows that students who use social media at the State University of Malang have a low level of anonymity.

Table 3: The Categorization of Verbal Aggression

Range	Categorization	Number	Percentage
$T \geq 50$	High	44	43.56%
$T \leq 50$	Low	57	56.44%

Based on Table 3 above, it can be seen that out of the 101 verbal aggression respondents using social media, who are the students of the State University of Malang, there are 44 respondents (43.56%) who are included into the high category and 57 respondents (56.44%) who are included into the low category. This shows that students who use social media at the State University of Malang have a low level of verbal aggression.

Table 4: Categorization of Verbal Aggression by Gender

Sex	Categorization	No.	Percentage
Male	High	17	51.52%
	Low	16	48.48%
Female	High	27	40.30%
	Low	40	59.70%

Based on Table 4 above, it can be seen that out of the 33 verbal aggression respondents using social media at the State University of Malang who are male, there are 17 respondents (51.52%) who are in the high category, and 16 respondents (48.48%) are included into the low category. Furthermore, out of 67 female respondents using social media at the State University of Malang, there are 27 respondents (40.30%) who are in the high category, and 40 respondents (59.70%) are included in the low category.

Pre-Requirement Test

To perform the pre-requisite test on this research, the researchers conducted normality test and linearity test. The normality test in this study used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov with certain condition that if the data is normally distributed so it has a sig value of > 0.05 and if the data distribution has a sig value < 0.05 , then the data distribution is not normally distributed. The results of the normality test can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5: The Results of the Normality Test

Var.	Sig.	Note
Anonymity	0.086	Normal
Verbal Aggression	0.658	Normal

In Table 5 above, it can be seen that the significance value of the variable of anonymity is 0.086 (sig > 0.05) and the significance value of the variable of verbal aggression is 0.658 (sig > 0.05). So it can be concluded that the data distribution of the variables of anonymity and verbal aggression are normally distributed.

Linearity test is done to perceive whether or not there is a linear correlation between the two variables. The researchers used SPSS with the ANOVA test method to perform the normality test. If the data produces a significance of sig > 0.05 , then the data is linear and if the significance has a value of sig < 0.05 , then the data distribution is not linear. The results of the linearity test can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6: The Results of Linearity Test

Variation	Significance	Note
Anonymity & Verbal Aggression	0.510	Linear

In Table 6 above, it can be seen that the significance value of the variables of anonymity and verbal aggression are 0.510 ($\text{sig} > 0.05$). So it can be concluded that the correlation between the variables of anonymity and verbal aggression is linear.

Hypothesis testing aims to prove the hypothesis in this study. Hypothesis testing in this study used the Pearson Product Moment correlation method with the assistance of SPSS. The results of the hypothesis test are significant if the results of the significance score are $\text{sig} < 0.05$ so that it can be proven. In sum, there is a correlation between the two variables.

Table 7: Hypothesis Testing Results

Var.	r	Sig.
Anonymity and Verbal Aggression	0.452	0.00

The results of the hypothesis test in Table 7 are as follows: the correlation coefficient (r) has a total of 0.452 and a significance value of 0.00 ($\text{sig} < 0.05$). It can be interpreted that there is a significant positive correlation between anonymity and verbal aggression of students using social media at the State University of Malang.

DISCUSSION

From the results of hypothesis testing, it was found that there was a significant positive correlation between anonymity and verbal aggression of students using social media at the State University of Malang with. The results of the test show a moderate correlation. This means that the higher the level of anonymity, the higher the level of verbal aggression of the students who use social media.

The results of this study illustrate that an individual who can neither be associated with his or her real identity nor be detected with such identity is prone to perform verbal aggression. This is in line with the research conducted by Zimmerman and Ybarra (2016), which explained that an individual's online aggressiveness is influenced by anonymity and there is a positive correlation between anonymity and verbal aggressiveness. In addition, related to this study, someone who was anonymous tended to be more aggressive than those who were not. This was a form that anonymity is a "coverage".

Based on the results of the measurements with an anonymity scale it was found that more respondents in this study had low category of anonymity, which means that many students who use social media at the State University of Malang are easily identified by others and their true identity can also be known on social media. According to Goleman, this can happen because students,

who are in the early adulthood stage, already have good emotional intelligence so that students have high self-confidence and self-awareness (Papalia et al., 2013).

Furthermore, based on the measurements conducted with the verbal aggression scale, it was found that more respondents in this research had verbal aggression scores in the low category, which means that many students who use social media at the State University of Malang do not attack other individuals through verbal expressions with the aim of hurting others on social media. This act of aggression can be triggered by several factors according to Feldman (1995), including (1) physical arousal, namely the desire to do something related to emotions, in this case men tend to have a higher level of arousal than women (Knight, et. al.: 2002, 2011). These factors related to the category of verbal aggression. The categorization was done on the basis of gender. Based on this study, more male respondents were categorized into high verbal aggression category compared to female respondents. This is also in line with the research conducted by Harris and Knight-Bohnhoff (1996) that male students tended to be more aggressive than female students, (2) de-individuation, it can be seen from the results of measurements with the anonymity scale, respondents have a low level of anonymity. According to Mukhoyaroh (2020), there is a positive correlation between anonymity and de-individuation of social media users. It can be interpreted that due to the low level of anonymity of students using social media at the State University of Malang, the level of de-individuation is also low, (3) provocation, because the respondents of this study are students, it is not easy for students to be provoked because students have a high level of social media literacy. This is explained in a study by Kartika (2019) who found the results that the higher an individual's literacy level, the lower his or her aggressive behaviour.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results obtained, the researchers formulate the following conclusion of this study: anonymity has a positive correlation with verbal aggression of students using social media at the State University of Malang. In other words, if students who use social media have a high level of anonymity, the verbal aggression that is raised will also be high. By doing this research, the researchers hope that the readers will have better understanding on the correlation between anonymity and verbal aggression, which in turn is expected to make the readers use social media in a better manner and it is also hoped that further researchers will examine more sources of references related to anonymity or verbal aggression in order to get better and more detailed research findings.

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