

The Relationship Between Peer Conformity and the Tendency of Cyberbullying Among High School Students in Yogyakarta

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Abstract. Adolescence is a transitional phase toward adulthood, characterized by physical, psychological, cognitive, and social changes. During this period, adolescents often experience conflicts, particularly within peer environments, which may arise due to competition, provocation, or misunderstandings. One common form of conflict in this era is cyberbullying, in which perpetrators use electronic media to carry out their actions. A significant factor influencing this phenomenon is peer conformity. Close relationships among peers encourage adolescents to adjust their attitudes and behaviors to gain acceptance within their groups, thereby increasing their social and psychological needs. This study aimed to examine the relationship between peer conformity and cyberbullying among high school students in Yogyakarta. A quantitative method with a correlational approach was employed, involving 116 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using scales and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment correlation. The results indicated that most respondents had low levels of cyberbullying (81.0%) and low peer conformity (71.6%). Analysis revealed a significant positive relationship ($p = 0.000$; $r = 0.778$), suggesting that higher peer conformity is associated with higher motivation for cyberbullying. It is recommended that adolescents be selective in choosing peer groups that support positive behaviors.

Keywords: peer conformity, cyberbullying, adolescents

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, characterized by physical, psychological, cognitive, and social changes (Sarwono, 2019). Socially, adolescents face developmental tasks related to adjusting to their social environment. They are required to adapt to increasing peer influence, changes in social behavior, new social groupings, and emerging values in friendship, support, and social rejection (Hurlock, 2017). According to Kartono (2013), adolescence is divided into three stages: early, middle, and late adolescence, with ages 15–18 classified as middle adolescence. At this stage, adolescents begin to develop self-awareness regarding their personality and bodily life, establish personal values, and reflect on philosophical and ethical thinking, making them vulnerable to confusion in forming their identity.

Adolescence is also closely related to the emergence of conflicts, especially in interactions with peers. Such conflicts can arise from competition, provocation, or misunderstandings, which may trigger anger and hostility as a defensive mechanism (Repi et

al., 2018). One common form of conflict is cyberbullying, defined as actions that mock, insult, intimidate, or humiliate individuals through digital media, the internet, or mobile phones (Kurnia, 2016; Wiyani, 2012). Cyberbullying can take various forms, including threatening emails, posting embarrassing photos, spreading defamation through websites, or accessing someone's social media account to harass them. The motivations behind cyberbullying vary, including anger, revenge, frustration, attention-seeking, or even joking (Kurnia, 2016).

Cyberbullying among adolescents is influenced by multiple environmental factors, including family, school, and peer groups. School interactions often drive students to commit cyberbullying as a way to gain attention or acceptance within their social groups (Syah & Hermawati, 2018). Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) shows 904 reported cases of cyberbullying, with 80% of victims being high school students. Research conducted by the Center for Digital Society (CfDS) and the Center for Lifespan and Development (CLSD) at Gadjah Mada University reported that 38.41% of students had experienced cyberbullying, most commonly in the forms of exclusion, defamation, and harassment (Sucahyo, 2021). Preliminary interviews with high school students in Yogyakarta confirmed that cyberbullying via social media platforms such as WhatsApp, TikTok, and online games is still prevalent, usually targeting peers or strangers.

A key factor influencing cyberbullying is peer conformity, the tendency of individuals to adjust their behavior under group pressure to be accepted socially (Feist & Feist, 2016; Song, 2012). Peer conformity can have positive and negative effects. Negative conformity in adolescence can manifest as the use of harsh language, smoking, alcohol consumption, cyberbullying, or other collective negative behaviors. School interactions may encourage adolescents to engage in cyberbullying as proof of acceptance within a group (Kurnia, 2016).

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the relationship between peer conformity and the tendency to engage in cyberbullying among high school students in Yogyakarta. This is important because cyberbullying can have serious consequences for victims, including psychological distress and, in extreme cases, suicidal behavior. Therefore, the title of this study is: "The Relationship between Peer Conformity and the Tendency of Cyberbullying among High School Students in Yogyakarta."

2. METHODE

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design, which aims to determine the degree of relationship between two or more variables using statistical data (Silalahi, 2019; Neuman, 2018). The research variables include peer conformity as the

independent variable (X) and cyberbullying behavior as the dependent variable (Y). Peer conformity refers to the influence of social groups that shapes an individual's attitudes and behaviors to align with group norms (Umi & Jauhar, 2014; Sears et al., 2019), while cyberbullying is defined as deliberate harmful behavior conducted via electronic media, including flaming, harassment, demigration, impersonation, exclusion, outing, trickering, and cyberstalking (Kowalski, 2012). The population consisted of high school students aged 15–18 in Yogyakarta, with a purposive sample of 116 students selected based on specific criteria. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, justice, and inclusiveness, were strictly followed throughout the research process (Hidayat, 2014; Neuman, 2018).

Data were collected using psychological scales developed for cyberbullying (84 items) and peer conformity (72 items), both measured on a Likert scale and validated through expert judgment with Aiken's $V > 0.5$, followed by reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding 0.967 for cyberbullying and 0.955 for peer conformity (Azwar, 2012; Sugiyono, 2016). Prior to the main study, a tryout was conducted with 134 respondents to ensure validity and reliability. Data processing involved editing, coding, data entry, cleaning, and tabulation using Microsoft Excel and SPSS 22. Statistical analyses included normality testing (Kolmogorov-Smirnov), linearity testing, Pearson's correlation, and coefficient of determination (R^2) to examine the strength and direction of relationships between peer conformity and cyberbullying. The research steps were systematically designed to ensure empirical rigor and the accurate interpretation of results

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Result

1) Normality Test

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the research data were normally distributed. Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the significance (p-value) of the cyberbullying variable was 0.065 and peer conformity was 0.200, both greater than $\alpha = 0.05$, indicating that the data were normally distributed (Nuryadi et al., 2017).

Table 1. Normality Test Results

Variable	Sig. (p-value)	α	Interpretation
Cyberbullying	0.065	0.05	Normally distributed
Peer Conformity	0.200	0.05	Normally distributed

2) Linearity Test

The linearity test aims to determine whether the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is linear. The results showed a Deviation from Linearity value of $0.674 > 0.05$, indicating a linear relationship between peer conformity and cyberbullying (Sugiyono & Susanto, 2015).

Table 2. Linearity Test Results

Variable	Deviation from Linearity	Interpretation
Cyberbullying – Peer Conformity	0.674	Linear

3) Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination measures the extent to which the independent variable explains the variance in the dependent variable (Ghozali, 2013). The R^2 results are as follows:

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Sample	R	R Square	R Square	SE
All Students	0.778	0.605	0.602	16.069
Male Students	0.759	0.576	0.568	17.083
Female Students	0.825	0.680	0.674	13.381

These results indicate that peer conformity explains 60.5% of the variance in cyberbullying for all students, 57.6% for male students, and 68.0% for female students.

4) Hypothesis Test

The Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between peer conformity and cyberbullying. The results showed a correlation coefficient of 0.778 ($p < 0.01$), indicating a strong positive relationship between the two variables.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation Test Results

Variable	Cyberbullying	Peer Conformity
Cyberbullying	1	0.778**
Peer Conformity	0.778**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000

These findings indicate that higher peer conformity is associated with higher cyberbullying behavior among high school students in Yogyakarta. Conversely, lower

peer conformity is associated with lower cyberbullying behavior. This highlights the importance of social interventions and education regarding peer influence to prevent cyberbullying in school settings.

b. Discussion

Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, marked by physical, psychological, cognitive, and social changes (Sarwono, 2019). Adolescence is generally divided into three stages: early, middle, and late adolescence. Middle adolescence occurs between 15 and 18 years of age. At this stage, adolescents may still display childlike personality traits, but a new element emerges: self-awareness and bodily identity. Adolescents begin to form personal values and engage in reflection on philosophical and ethical thinking. During this stage, they are also vulnerable to uncertainty in establishing their identity (Kartono, 2013).

In this study, the sample consisted of 116 high school students, evenly divided by gender (58 males and 58 females). Gender is considered a factor influencing cyberbullying among adolescents. Research indicates that female adolescents are not only more likely to be victims of cyberbullying but also have a higher likelihood of becoming perpetrators. This is often because females can intimidate others without direct confrontation or physical aggression, which males may be more inclined to use.

Regarding age, the subjects in this study were middle to late adolescents: 18 students were 15 years old, 24 were 16 years old, 53 were 17 years old, and 21 were 18 years old. One of the developmental tasks during adolescence is social interaction, particularly with peers. Adolescents seek acceptance from friends and tend to conform to peers who share similar traits (Oktavia, 2014).

The respondents came from 19 different high schools in Yogyakarta. Among the 116 students, 24 were from SMA PGRI 1 Kasihan (20%), 23 from SMA Negeri 1 Wates (19%), 19 from SMA Negeri 2 Yogyakarta (16.4%), 13 from MAN 1 Sleman (11.21%), 8 from SMK Negeri 1 Godean (6.9%), 6 from SMA N 2 Bantul (5.17%), 5 from SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu (4.3%), 4 from SMA Negeri 3 Yogyakarta (3.5%), 4 from SMA Muhammadiyah 7 Yogyakarta (3.5%), and 1 student each from the remaining schools (1%).

Based on cyberbullying levels, 0% of students were categorized as high, 19% (22 students) as moderate, and 81% (94 students) as low. For male students, 0% were high, 10.3% (12 students) moderate, and 39.7% (46 students) low; for female students, 0.9% (1 student) were high, 26.7% (31 students) moderate, and 22.4% (26 students) low. Overall, cyberbullying among high school students in Yogyakarta is considered low. This aligns

with Adawiyah (2019), who found that cyberbullying is influenced not only by conformity but also by gender, age, personality traits, emotional regulation, parenting style, school climate, social media use, and anonymity.

Regarding peer conformity, 0% of students exhibited high conformity, 28.4% (33 students) moderate, and 71.6% (83 students) low. Among males, 0% were high, 16.4% (19 students) moderate, and 33.6% (39 students) low; among females, 0% were high, 12.1% (14 students) moderate, and 37.9% (44 students) low. Low conformity is associated with deindividuation, where individuals wish to be seen as distinct from others, reducing their tendency to conform (Yunalia & Etika, 2020).

The hypothesis testing revealed a significant positive correlation between peer conformity and cyberbullying ($r = 0.778$, $p = 0.000$), indicating a strong relationship. The positive correlation suggests that higher peer conformity is associated with higher levels of cyberbullying. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.605$) indicates that peer conformity explains 60.5% of the variance in cyberbullying, with the remaining 39.5% attributed to other factors.

When examining gender differences, the R^2 values were 0.576 (57.6%) for males and 0.680 (68.0%) for females, indicating that peer conformity has a stronger influence on cyberbullying among female students. This is consistent with Sulastri (2020), who noted differences in online behavior between male and female adolescents: males tend to play games or browse websites, while females spend more time on social networking, chatting, and online shopping. Rohman (2016) reported that adolescent females aged 15-18 send an average of 100 text messages per day almost double the number sent by males indicating greater engagement in online communication, which could increase the likelihood of cyberbullying.

Supporting these quantitative findings, interviews with several students revealed similar patterns. Students expressed reluctance to engage in harmful or negative online behavior, citing awareness of consequences, parental guidance, school policies, and personal values. For example, one female student (17 years old) rarely comments online, another (18 years old) avoided cyberbullying due to parental and school guidance, and several others emphasized maintaining a positive image and avoiding conflict online.

In conclusion, peer conformity has a significant positive relationship with cyberbullying among high school students in Yogyakarta. Higher conformity corresponds with higher cyberbullying, while lower conformity corresponds with lower cyberbullying. This is supported by previous studies (Syadza & Sugiasih, 2017; Mawardah & Adiyanti,

2014), which also found that conformity to peers increases the likelihood of engaging in cyberbullying.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, peer conformity among high school students in Yogyakarta is predominantly low. Of the 116 respondents, 0% exhibited high conformity, 28.4% exhibited moderate conformity, and 71.6% exhibited low conformity. Similarly, the level of cyberbullying was largely low, with 0.9% of students classified as high, 26.7% as moderate, and 72.4% as low. Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between peer conformity and cyberbullying, with a correlation coefficient of 0.778**, indicating that higher levels of peer conformity are associated with higher levels of cyberbullying, and vice versa. Determination analysis showed that peer conformity contributed 60.5% to the variance in cyberbullying, while the remaining 39.5% was influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as parenting style, emotional maturity, and individual characteristics. Gender-based analysis revealed differences in the contribution of peer conformity to cyberbullying, with 57.6% for male students and 68.0% for female students, indicating that peer conformity has a greater influence on cyberbullying among female students compared to male students, considering the role of females as future educators of the next generation

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