

# The Impact of Empathy towards Cyberbullying Behavior among Adolescents Who Accessed TikTok in Indonesia

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**Keywords:** Empathy, Cyberbullying, Adolescents.

**Abstract:** The study was based on numerous phenomenon of cyberbullying among Indonesian adolescents who use social media, especially the adolescents who access TikTok videos. The aim of this study was to determine the effect of empathy on cyberbullying behavior among adolescents who access TikTok videos. The respondents were Adolescents who accessed TikTok using TikTok Application and also those who used various video viewing platform like Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and other to see TikTok videos. There were 708 adolescents across Indonesia had participated as respondent with age range of 12-21 years old. The data was collected using Empathy Questionnaires (19 items) and Cyberbullying Questionnaires (31 items). Both scale items was selected by using Corrected Item Total Correlation ( $\geq 0,30$ ). The two scales coefficient of reliability by using Chronbach's Alpha was  $\alpha=0,86$  for Empathy Questionnaires, and  $\alpha=0,924$  for Cyberbullying Questionnaires. The collected data were analyzed using linear regression analysis. The study found significant impact of empathy towards s cyberbullying behavior among adolescents who accessed the TikTok videos ( $\text{sig}<0,05$ ). The direction of the correlation of empathy towards cyberbullying is negative ( $F=-0,543$ ).

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Before getting to know the internet and its various features, face-to-face communication was one of the requirements for healthy and acceptable communication in societal norms. But because of the advancement of internet technology, which includes social media, it has changed the form of communication and social life in an increasingly modern society (Ünal, 2018). Around 3.80 billion internet users are active users of social media (Kemp, 2020). Meanwhile, according to reports on the collaboration between APJII (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers) and Indonesian Polling (2019), the number of social media users in Indonesia are 170 million (59%). Because of this, communication through instant message sharing applications, video calls, and other social media applications is commonplace and widely used. The use of these communication lines certainly makes it more convenient for its users (Shippis & Phillips, 2013).

Social media is a collection of applications based on the internet on which ideological pillars are built along with web 2.0, which allows users to create and

exchange content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2017). In all age ranges who use social media, the majority are teenagers. As stated by a survey from APJII (2019), in the age range of 10 to 24 years the average percentage of internet and social media users is 81.9%, where in each category the age range of the percentage of users is more than 60%. The greater the number of teenagers who use social media, the greater the openness of information and media for them. That statement confirm Chan-Olmsted, Cho, & Lee's findings in 2020 that openness is considered the most obvious quality representing all types of social media. In addition, the main driver for individuals to access social media is for entertainment (Reinecke, Vorderer, & Knop, 2014). Removing the dimensions of space and time, social media is a very interactive media that makes it easy for youth to be able to share information and stay connected with others (O'Dea & Campbell, 2012). One of the social media applications that is currently being discussed is the short video-based social media called tiktok. Tiktok was created by a technology company from China called Byte Dance (Leskin, 2020), where videos can be made and given various special effects with a

duration of thirty seconds to one minute (Susilowati, 2018).

Although there are many advantages that can be obtained by having social media, there are still negative impacts that cannot be avoided on social media itself. Social media makes it easier for teens to be exposed to various risks (George, 2019). One of the risks is cyberbullying or bullying in cyberspace. Willard (2007) explained cyberbullying as behavior that sends or spreads something harmful or aggressive through the internet or other digital media. Parks (2013), stated that one in five adolescents aged 10 to 18 years had encountered cyberbullying, both as the perpetrator and the victim. Meanwhile, from several studies in Indonesia, it can be seen that many adolescents aged 12 to 18 years (junior high and high school students) have encountered cyberbullying (Ruangnapakul, Salam, & Shawkat, 2019). There are several factors that cause teenagers to engage in cyberbullying. Several possible factors are internet usage frequency and empathy (Erdur-Baker, 2010). Many literature states that teenagers access their social media for more than one hour per day. The next cause is the lack of empathy in individuals who do cyberbullying.

Davis (1996) defined empathy as a series of constructs that relate a person's response or response to another individual's experience. Where the construction specifically includes the process of taking from within the observer and the affective and non-affective results they get from the process. Regarding the cyberbullying behavior of adolescents, those with a low level of empathy are more likely to intimidate people who are considered weak, and vice versa (Erdur-Baker, 2010). It can be said that the image of the victim who is considered weak or does not have the resources to fight back makes it easier for the perpetrator to do cyberbullying.

Brewer & Kerslake (2015) stated that a lack of empathy can be a predictor of cyberbullying behavior. This shows that cyberbullying behavior is the same as traditional bullying behavior when viewed from the empathy of the perpetrator (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2004). This shows that adolescents who have low empathy can bully in the real world as well as cyberspace and vice versa. Adolescents who have low empathy sensitivity make them less competent to understand the condition of their victims, don't care, and will continue to commit violence against others (Rachmah, 2014). Studied that compared the level of empathy between cyberbullying perpetrators, victims, and adolescents who are not perpetrators also stated that the level of empathy of offenders is lower than the other two groups (Steffgen, König, Pfetsch,

& Melzer, 2011). So there are indeed differences in the level of empathy of the three groups or groups of adolescents. Based on some of the dynamics of past studies, it can be concluded that the level of empathy can be the cause of cyberbullying. Although it is quite clear that there is a relationship between the two in the world of social media, researchers still want to know more specifically the influence of both on adolescents who access Tiktok videos. Unlike other social media where the perpetrator may not be active enough to use the social media, in the TikTok application the perpetrator and victim can mix together to create video content. Where the TikTok application provides a duet feature, which is used as the perpetrator to ridicule or commit cyberbullying to the victim (Krishna, 2018). Not only fellow users can do cyberbullying, social media users who do not have a Tiktok account can also enjoy the content in the application because of the sharing feature. There are several examples of cyberbullying cases that have occurred in various countries and in Indonesia, such as cyberbullying received by Natalia from America (Krishna, 2018), Bowo Alpenlibe (Fanani, 2018) and Cimoy Montok (Yuniarta, 2020) from Indonesia, and others. Based on previous descriptions of empathy and cyberbullying, to the ease with which Tiktok videos are accessed on various social media, researchers are interested and want to know what kind of impact empathy has toward cyberbullying in adolescents who access Tiktok videos. In contrast to previous studies which only discussed empathy and cyberbullying on the internet in general, this study emphasizes cyberbullying behavior towards tiktok video content that can be accessed on various social media platforms. This approach helps a more comprehensive understanding of cyberbullying that occurs on other social media, not only on the TikTok application platform but also among other TikTok video viewers through other platforms that display videos. This provides an important novelty for research in the field of cyberbullying, in part because it can reveal the possibility of repeated bullying by perpetrators to victims through several platforms containing videos of victims. In addition, multi-platform based research also provides an advantage for this study to measure various levels of cyberbullying due to variations in the characteristics and user profiles of each platform which differ by age. For example, on the Instagram platform, currently active users in Indonesia are dominated by teenagers and early adults, while on the Facebook platform there are also middle-aged to middle-aged users who have user profiles and are still quite active in accessing Facebook. The findings of this study can

be an update of the findings on the level of cyber violence in Indonesia and reveal the level of empathy of multi-platform internet users more clearly than before.

## 2 METHODS

The research method is quantitative correlational design. Correlational quantitative research seeks to ascertain or measure the relationship between two or more variables (Thompson, 2014). Where in this discussion the researcher tries to see the impact of empathy (X) towards cyberbullying behavior (Y) on adolescents who accessed TikTok in Indonesia. Respondent population of this research is adolescents across Indonesia who had social media accounts and can access social media to watch TikTok videos. Sampling technique in order get match samples of population is by using non-probability purposive sampling. Samples were taken based on criteria in accordance with the objectives of the study.

### Participant

Participant in this research are: 708 adolescents spread across 33 provinces in Indonesia with an age range of 12-21 years old, have an access TikTok videos, have watched TikTok videos, and have responded to the videos watched.

### Measurement

The research instrument used a Likert item response model in questionnaires form. For empathy, we used an instrument that has been made based on previous research, namely the empathy scale by Sari (2019). The scale refers to aspects of empathy proposed by Davis (1983), including perspective taking, fantasy, empathy concern, and personal distress. The reliability of this scale is 0.86. The cyberbullying scale is taken from Willard's (2007) seven cyberbullying aspects: flaming, harassment, denigration, impersonation, outing and trickery, exclusion, and cyberstalking compiled by the researchers themselves.

### Data Collecting

The statement items of cyberbullying totaling 43 items were distributed via Google Form to 180 respondents and processed using the SPSS for Windows version 20 to test the validity of each item. The validity of these items is known through the product moment validity test. Based on the analysis, there were 12 items that failed so only that 31 items could be used in the study. Meanwhile, the

cyberbullying coefficient value is 0.924. Thus, there are 19 items on the empathy scale and 31 items on the cyberbullying scale used in data collection. Several stages of research carried out include:

#### 1. The preparation stage

In the form of preparation of measuring instruments for research. Aspects based on Willard's theory for measuring the cyberbullying scale are developed into statement items. The items compiled were also determined into direct items and reverse items.

#### 2. The trial phase

Measuring instruments that have been compiled are transferred to google form format and distributed to social media. The collected sample data was 180, then tested for validity and reliability using the SPSS for Windows. After finding the missing items, the researcher rearranged the measuring instrument with a valid scale and asked for professional judgment and obtained approval so that this measuring instrument could be distributed in research.

#### 3. Implementation Stage

Valid measuring tools are disseminated through various social media platforms. Researchers also include the criteria for respondents when distributing the link so that those who fill in are the desired respondents. The data collection process was carried out on December 27, 2020 to January 4, 2021. All data from 708 respondents were then analyzed for normality test, linearity test, and analysis of regression using the SPSS.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis used simple linear regression analysis to determine the impact of empathy toward cyberbullying. Data were processed using SPSS for Windows.

## 3 RESULTS

The number of research subjects was 708 adolescents spread across 33 provinces in Indonesia with an age range of 12-21 years. Female subjects totaled 561 persons (79.2%), while male respondents are 147 persons (20.8%). The majority of respondents in this study were students, as many as 331 non-students participants (46.8%) and followed by 292 students participants (41.2%). Meanwhile, 64 respondents (9.0%) were employed. Finally, there are as many as 20 respondents were uncategorized (2.8%). It is known that the majority of respondents have had at

least oneTiktok account as many as 415 people (58.6%) and 293 people (41.4%) who does not have Tiktok account.

The empirical avarage score for the empathy variable was greater than the hypothetical average score (Hypothetic Avg = 47.5 < Empirical Avg = 58.42). This shows that the empathy of adolescents who access Tiktok videos on social media is greater than the general population. Whereas on the empirical average, the cyberbullying variable was lower than the hypothetical average (Hypothetical Avg = 77.5 > Empirical Avg = 51.13), which means that the cyberbullying behavior of adolescents who accessed the Tiktok was lower than the general population.

Table 1: Empathy and cyberbullying score categories.

Categories	Empathy	Cyberbullying
Very low	$X \leq 33,25$	$X \leq 54,25$
Low	$33,25 \leq X \leq 42,75$	$54,25 \leq X \leq 69,75$
Moderate	$42,75 < X \leq 52,25$	$69,75 < X \leq 85,25$
High	$52,25 < X \leq 61,75$	$85,25 < X \leq 100,75$
Very high	$X > 61,75$	$X > 100,75$

Then to find out the categorization of the subject according to the score obtained, the researcher divided the categorization into five levels as shown in the table above. The results of calculations on the research data obtained. Below is an overview of the subject categories for each variable.

Table 2: Categorization of respondents' scores.

Categories	Cyberbullying		Empathy	
	F	(%)	F	(%)
Very low	454	64,1%	-	-
Low	234	33,1%	2	0,3%
Moderate	19	2,7%	71	10%
High	1	0,1%	441	62,3%
Very high	-	-	194	27,4%
Total	708	100%	708	100%

Most respondents or subjects with cyberbullying behavior are in the very low category, where a total of 454 people (64.1%). This means that most of the subjects who access Tiktok videos have a very low level of cyberbullying. Then, subjects with low levels of cyberbullying were 234 people (33.1%). In the medium category, 19 people (2.7%) accessed video tiktok with cyberbullying behavior. The high cyberbullying category is only in one respondent, with a percentage of 0.1%. From the description above, it can be seen that the level of cyberbullying in research subjects is very low.

From the empathy variable categorization table, it can be seen that the most subjects are in the high category. Where there are 441 people (62.3%) in this category, which means that the subject has high empathy. In the very high category, there were 194 people (27.4%) of respondents, with their level of empathy being the highest compared to other subjects. Then in the medium category, there are 71 people (10%) of respondents, and there are 2 respondents who are in the low category with a percentage of 0.3%. Finally, in the very low category, no subject occupies this position. It can be concluded that the respondent's empathy is high.

Furthermore, hypothesis testing is carried out to determine whether the research hypothesis could be accepted or rejected. As stated, the data scores hasmetall the assumption test requirements, and can be analyzed using a simple linear regression test. The testing results described in this following table:

Table 3: Hypothesis results.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standar dized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	11,276	0,532		21,165	0,000
1 empathy	-0,543	0,70	-0,282	-7,802	0,000

The constant 11,276 means that the consistent value of the cyberbullying variable is 11,267. While the Empathy (X) coefficient of regression are -0.543 means that when 1% of the value of empathy is added, the cyberbullying behavior is reduced by 0.543. Due to the regression coefficient has a negative value, it means that the direction of the influence of the Empathy on Cyberbullying is changing in reverse order.

The hypotheses are cofirmed as a significant with 0.000 significance value(in table 3) which means the significance value are less than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). This means that the Emphaty (X) affects the Cyberbullying (Y) significantly more than 95%. This has concluded the research hypothesis has been confirmed by the data. This research found there is a significant contributions of empathy on cyberbullying behavior in adolescents who access Tiktok videos. In other words, Empathy (X) contributes to Cyberbullying behavior (Y) can be seen through the model of this research (see table 3).



The coefficient value in the determination column or R square ( $R^2$ ) is 0.079, so the effect of Empathy (X) to Cyberbullying behavior (Y) is 7.9%. While the rest is influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

## 4 DISCUSSIONS

Social media users are always increasing in Indonesia. Due to the increasing number of needs or daily activities that require the built-in features of social media, especially, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, students and workers need social media to do their tasks or needs. Teenagers are the largest number of social media users in Indonesia. Indonesian teenagers have been accessing various applications like social media, and one of the most popular application to them is TikTok, an application for creating and sharing short videos.

TikTok had experienced controversy in various countries, so that the application and its users received unpleasant treatment by fellow users, like cyber-harassment, mock videos, offensive comments, and many kind of cyberbullying. Despite the growing popularity and many teenagers have had registered for accounts in TikTok, those cyberbullying are still common among the users (Krishna, 2018). Cyberbullying not only occur within the scope of the application or fellow users, but it also got extend in to other social media (Pacer, 2019) and even the real life. This happened due to the TikTok's *share* features made it easy for the offender to share any videos they want. Cyberbullying perpetrators are known to have lower empathy than victims or other people who are not perpetrators (Steffgen et al., 2011). Therefore, this study aims to find out whether there is an effect of empathy on cyberbullying in adolescents who access TikTok videos, and how much the empathy had influence to cyberbullying behavior among teenagers using or accessing TikTok videos.

Data was collected from 708 teenagers aged 12 years to 21 years and live in 33 provinces in Indonesia, who have accessed TikTok videos. This aims to determine to find out whether empathy do have effects to cyberbullying. After being analyzed using simple linear regression analysis, it was found that there is an influence of empathy on cyberbullying in adolescents who access TikTok videos. In this study it can be said that adolescents who have high empathy tend to be aware of their behavior on social media and cause their participation in cyberbullying against TikTok videos also low.

The regression coefficient value are -0.543 shows that when the empathy of adolescents is increased by 1%, their cyberbullying behavior will decrease by 0.543. The negative sign on the coefficient value indicates that the effect of Empathy (X) on Cyberbullying (Y) is in reverse. These finding supports the previous research finding by Wahyuni & Adiyanti (2011) which stated that the ability to empathy has a negative relationship with a tendency to bullying behavior or in this case cyberbullying on TikTok videos. Based on the score, the most subjects were in the low and very low categories of cyberbullying behavior. In the other hand, their empathy were mostly in the high and very high categories. This mean that tendency of cyberbullying behavior of a person can be measured by the their level of empathy.

This research was not found any significant difference between men and women counterparts regarding cyberbullying behavior level. The majority of both groups are in the low and very low categories. This supports a study which states that there is no significant difference in ones cyberbullying behavior when viewed from gender (Ruangnapakul et al., 2019). In this study, the majority of subjects also had TikTok accounts totaling 415 people (58.6%) and the rest were teenagers who did not have accounts. This means that now the TikTok application can be said to have received acceptance from social media users. As Michel (2018) stated that the short video platform, in this case, TikTok is increasingly popular among teenagers. As TikTok videos got more and more acceptable among teenage users it getting less and less cyberbullying in this application.

To determine the contribution of empathy to cyberbullying behavior, it can be seen from the value of R square ( $R^2$ ). It can be seen that the coefficient value is 0.079, indicating the effect of empathy on cyberbullying is 7.9%. Meanwhile, other contributions are influenced by variables not included in this study. This supports the researches of Wahyuni & Adiyanti (2011) and Setianingrum (2015) which states that low empathy can be a predictor of cyberbullying. So that in the future, when you find someone committing cyberbullying, it can be said that one of the causes of their behavior is low empathy.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, most of the adolescents who access TikTok videos have cyberbullying behavior which is in the very low and

low categories. Meanwhile, the level of empathy among adolescents who access Tiktok videos is mostly in the high and very high categories and the rest are in the medium and low categories. There is an impact of empathy toward cyberbullying in adolescents who access Tiktok videos. This study shows that the direction of the influence of empathy on cyberbullying is negative. The direction of the negative influence shows if the higher the empathy for someone, the lower the level of cyberbullying behavior. Conversely, when the empathy for someone gets lower, the level of cyberbullying behavior will be higher. Lastly, empathy contributes 7.9% to cyberbullying behavior in adolescents who access Tiktok videos.

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