

## Empirical Analysis on Cyberbullying in Social Media: A Case Study in Palu City

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**Abstract:** Information and communication technology is growing rapidly, it reflects the social behavior of people in cyber life. Harassment is common in real world, it is then applied in virtual life, which leads to cyber harassment or cyberbullying either in the form of flame war, harassment, defeating, impersonation, deception, and social exclusion. The behavior of cyberbullying communication is an adverse behavior not only for the object (victim) but also the subject (actor) of cyberbullying itself. The purpose of this research is to analyse the formation of cyberbullying communication behavior as response behavior (respondent behavior) and as behavior of operant (operant behavior). This is an empirical qualitative approach using a case study in Palu city of Indonesia. The results revealed that the behavior of cyberbullying communication as respondent behavior occurs through observation, recording, and imitation. Meanwhile, cyberbullying as an operant behavior occurs in the form of repetition of behavior affected by provocation.

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**Key words:** Cyberbullying, social media, communication behavior, harassment, deception, Social

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### INTRODUCTION

Internet generates new innovations in the world of communication where we are able to create our own communication network as well as the communication networks as we are able to create it in social life even more than that, the networks we create are capable of spreading around the world. The internet produces new media in communication activities. This is a new world called cyberspace formed as a result of the new media we call social media. Social media allows us to live in its virtually. Our presence in it is marked through the identity that displays the data themselves on each account we have. The development of social media is

characterized by the diversity of social media that we can now enjoy through smartphones (smartphones) or Personal Computer (PC) which of course is connected to the Internet, such as Facebook, Twitter, Path, Instagram, Black Berry Messenger (BBM), Google Plus and many more. Among social media, Facebook is a social media with the most users in Indonesia.

Margono *et al.* (2014) in a Journal of Mining Indonesian Cyber Bullying Patterns in Social Networks mention that more than 40 million Indonesians access the internet per year in 2011 and it grows to 70% per year by 2014. It is also mentioned that more than 63.1 million people use the internet to interact, especially using social media Facebook and Twitter. 43.6 million of them recorded

using Facebook while 19.5 million others use Twitter as communication media. It indicates that Indonesia has great potential for the use of social media as communication media to share information. Facebook is a social media that has so many users based on the above description, most of the users are teenagers. It is also a vulnerable media of cyberbullying behavior. This research intends to identify how cyberbullying behavior of adolescent in Palu City on social media formed up as a process of respondent behavior and operant behavior. Cyberbullying behavior is one form of communication behavior. There is a process of exchanging message in it. In addition, social media like Facebook allows sources to send public messages addressed to one or two specific people as well as harsh words are often used for the purpose of harming the psychic of cyberbullying objects. Donegan (2012) points out that the clinical repercussions that bullying and cyberbullying have on today's youth present the most troubling issue at hand. The permanent mental effects are what both the law and prevention programs are striving to eliminate. The fact that these initial emotional responses to bullying in any form have been proven to escalate to the point of suicidal thoughts and violent response is the primary reason for why this issue has become a matter of pressing public concern. The thought of children getting so caught up in the psychological battery of bullying that they commit suicide is extremely troubling, an issue that must be dealt with. The results of preliminary observations found that 157 posts put people in corner and it can be categorized as cyberbullying communication behavior because it contains condemnation or verbal abuse to others. The submission is public post. Therefore, it can be accessed by everyone through Facebook account.

Figure 1 shows an increase in the number of disapprobation statuses on Facebook on 2016. The disapprobation words that are often mentioned in cyberbullying behavior are dogs, PHO (destroyer relationships of people) and shit. Here is an example of cyberbullying communication behavior conducted by adolescent in Palu city on Facebook.

The behavior of cyberbullying communication by sending disapprobation status as a public submission is analogous as abusing or attacking someone in a public place where many people who recognize them can see it (Fig. 2).

**Communication behavior:** Gould and Kolb (Suranto, 2011) defines that communication behavior is all activities aims at seeking and obtaining information of various sources to spread it to any party that need it.

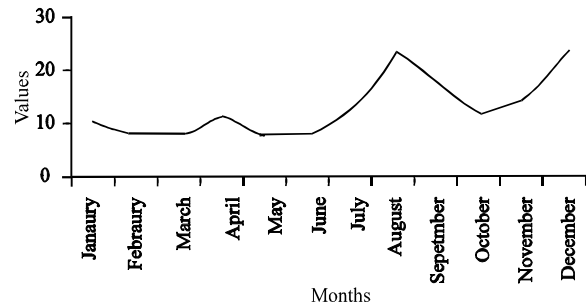


Fig. 1: Harassment post in facebook; Harassment status through facebook in Palu city on 2016



Fig. 2 Facebook status of cyberbullying subject

Communication behavior essentially is goal-oriented in the sense that one's behavior is generally motivated by a desire to gain certain purpose. Bungin (2014) explains, the effects of media have wide discussion on the consequences of social processes, both individuals, groups, communities and the world as well as damaging aspects such as violence, harassment, humiliation, even to criminal matters.

Human behavior is very complex (Khairil *et al.*, 2017). Human behavior cannot easily be understood by the law of causality. Burrhus Frederic Skinner a psychologist, formulated that behavior is a response or a person's reaction to stimulus (stimuli from the outside). Skinner distinguishes two types of behavior (Jaenudin, 2015). Respondent behavior, is the response generates by organism to respond a stimulus that is specifically related to the response. Reflex responses are included in this component, such as salivating when looking at food, dodging a punch with bowing, being afraid when asked by a teacher or feeling embarrassed when praised.

Operant behavior is the response that raises by an organism without a specific stimulus that directly compels the response. The increase of a new stimulus occurs within a new response.

Respondent behavior is an automatic or reflex behavior, which in classic conditioning is where behavior

learned by utilizing the innate reflex stimulus-response relationship, the response cultivated can be raised in other situations with the original situation. Besides, the operant behavior (operant behavior) may never have been owned by individuals, but when people do so the person gets a reward. The operand's response gets reinforcement, so it has chance to happen more often (Hambali, 2013, Ali *et al.*, 2017).

**Cyberbullying:** Mahabbati (2012) in her journal mentions cyberbullying behavior or action is also an aggressive behavior, which is included in the conduct disorder or physical and mental disturbing behavior and harm or physically harm others. Nasrullah (2016) in his recent study of social media defines cyberbullying or cyber-harassment as an act of humiliation, psychic violence or intimidation by a person, group or institution through technology and information tools in the cyber media against other people, groups or institutions. Muss cites the theory of Psychodynamics of Kurt Lewin who embraces psychology of gestalt, which is self and outside world is a wholeness mentions teenagers are usually shy and sensitive, but also aggressive, so that adolescents feel the contradiction between behavior, values, ideology and lifestyle which will cause conflict. This is reinforced by the transition from child to adult so that it can be called a marginal human (child is not, adult yet), because sometimes teenagers put themselves very extreme (Budiargo, 2015).

Myers (Sarwono, 2002) suggests that aggressive behavior is a physical or verbal behavior with the intention to harm others. Meanwhile, according to Bandura (Jaenudin, 2015) aggressive behavior is formed through observing others, direct experience with positive and negative reinforcement, training or instruction and odd confidence. Rudi (2010) mentions some common behaviors in cyberbullying actions, namely: Flame war which is a non-essential debate or strong baseless refutation by using abusive and insulting language; Harassment is repeatedly posting or sending inappropriate messages through Facebook; Disapprobation, spreading gossip (true or not) about a person in order to criticize and to damage a person's reputation; Impersonation, pretending to be someone else and sending a message that aims to get the other person in trouble or damage his friendship and reputation; Guile, pretending to be a friend to dig up information and disseminate the information with the intends to damage a person's reputation; Social exclusion, deliberately boycott, disregard, alienate or excommunicate someone from an online group.

Cyberbullying cause by the unstable emotion of the adolescent. Morissan (2014) cites four rules that bind the emotions according to Averill, they are:

- The rules of appraisal, the rule that will essentially determine what is emotion, to whom the emotion is directed and whether the emotion is positive or negative
- The rules of behavior (rules of behavior), the rules that determine whether the emotion is worth showing or must be hidden
- The rules of opinion (rules of prognosis), the rules that determine the progress and direction of emotion related to how long the emotion must be maintained, how to start and end it, how the stages and so on
- The rules of attribution, the rule that determines how an emotion should be explained or justified

Notar *et al.* (2013) studies shows that cyberbullying is often an extension of real-world bullying with some young people, such as bully-victims, being especially at risk. While it is tempting to think that tighter regulation and stricter sanctions will have an impact on rates of cyberbullying, it may be more productive to work holistically with the relationships in the peer group and at school in order to develop heightened awareness of the consequences of cyberbullying as well as empathy towards those who are badly affected. Kowalski and Limber (2013) in their study showed that the level of anxiety and depression is very high among high school students.

Hemphill and Heerde (2014) found that as young adults, 5.1% self-reported cyberbullying perpetration only, 5.0% reported cyberbullying victimization only and 9.5% reported both cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. In fully adjusted logistic regression analyses, the adolescent predictors of cyberbullying perpetration only were traditional bullying perpetration, traditional bullying perpetration and victimization and poor family management. For young adulthood cyberbullying victimization only, the adolescent predictor was emotion control. The adolescent predictors for young adult cyberbullying perpetration and victimization were traditional bullying perpetration and cyberbullying perpetration and victimization

Waasdorp and Bradshaw (2015) says that multilevel analyses indicated that as compared to those who were only traditionally bullied, those who were cyberbullied were more likely to have externalizing (odds ratio ¼ 1.44) and internalizing symptoms (odds ratio ¼

1.25). Additional analyses examined detailed characteristics of the cyberbullying experiences, indicating a relatively high level of overlap between cyber and traditional bullying.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This is a descriptive qualitative research using case study. Object of this research is the communication behavior of cyberbullying of adolescent in Palu city through Facebook. Subject of this research consisted of six adolescent lived in Palu city who are the subject of cyberbullying. Data were collected through observation and in-depth interview. Data were analyzed through qualitatively covers data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**The reality of cyberbullying on Facebook:** The results showed that there are three forms of cyberbullying communication behavior that occurs on Facebook where the subject is the final teenager. The three forms of cyberbullying communication behavior are impersonations, flogging and flame war. Impersonation is expropriating Facebook account of a someone for a while and use it to embarrass the real account of the owner. This behavior can trigger the emergence of cyberbullying communication behavior in form of disapprobation because when the owner of the account realizes that he/she has been the victim of impersonations then the owner will post a disapprobation status. Meanwhile, the behavior of cyberbullying communication in form of disapprobation can cause a greater effect that is to trigger cyberbullying behavior in the form of flame war, where there is a debate that is not essential or not fundamental. Furthermore, it proved that some subject of cyberbullying were the object of cyberbullying.

**Cyberbullying as communication behavior:** Cyberbullying behavior is seen as one of the forms of communication behavior because cyberbullying basically involves sending messages and influenced by the receipt of messages that can lead to the search and the spread of information. So that, cyberbullying behavior involves communication components such as communicators, media, messages, communicants, interference, effects and feedback. Communicators in cyberbullying process through Facebook is the subject of cyberbullying itself. The subject of cyberbullying acts as a communicator in

cyberbullying behavior when they takes the initiative to send messages. The subject of cyberbullying composes messages in form of disapprobation and then sends it. The disapprobation message contains inappropriate sentences that ultimately aim at hurting the cyberbullying object. Messages is assembled and sent through Facebook.

Facebook is used as a media of cyberbullying because it can reach the communicant or the desired audience. Facebook allows users who act as communicators to share messages in form of posts called status. Status may be shared to the public, a circle of friends, or a custom circle depending on settings that have been customized by Facebook users. The reader of the message in case of cyberbullying can be a wide audience and individuals (communicant). The recipient of the message in form of a wide audience when the status posts are shared publicly. It allows anyone to receive the message even though the message is not intended to be accepted by everyone, but everyone can see and read it. The recipient of the message in the form of a communicant when the message is received as a private message. For example through a messenger or status that is sent to specific friends who will ultimately only reach people who are intended as cyberbullying object itself that caused certain effects. The effect desired by the communicator in cyberbullying communication behavior that in fact occurs in the communicant is a feeling of shame, guilt and regret. Teenagers are basically feeling shy but also aggressive. Then, the researcher divides the cyberbullying effect into three forms, namely rejection, neglect and acceptance.

Rejection means that the communicant or cyberbullying object does not accept what the subject of cyberbullying does and they do not responds the treatment. In this case, cyberbullying objects may result in flame war. Flame war is one form of communication behavior of cyberbullying where there are two sides or camps namely the pros and cons which both parties do debate is not essential or has no basis. Automatically, cyberbullying objects can be transformed into cyberbullying subjects. This obviously has a very big chance to happen especially if the communicant or cyberbullying object is talkative. As Morissan defines some nature of individual communicator such as, selfish, like to argue, and often feel anxious. Abandonment, means that cyberbullying object ignores what is done by cyberbullying subject. This can happen if the communicant thinks it is not important, so they ignore the subject cyberbullying. This happens when the communicator does not get any sign of rejection or

acceptance of the cyberbullying object intended by the communicator. Acceptance, means that there is a common understanding and concept of thinking patterns between communicators and communicants if the cyberbullying object does make a mistake and realizes what the cyberbullying subject says is true. This can be identified if there is a statement of attitude of communicant to communicator.

Cyberbullying can also be done by the communicant in connection to the fact above, as a form of feedback on what is sent by the communicator to the communicant. The behavior of cyberbullying communications like this can happen in case of flame war which is non-essential debates or strong baseless arguments by using abusive and insulting language.

**Cyberbullying as respondent behavior:** The behavior of cyberbullying communication in Facebook done by teenagers in form of respondent behavior when the subject of cyberbullying do the impersonation, flogging or flame war due to the sensation received by the subject as a trigger of cyberbullying behavior. In other words, the behavior of cyberbullying communication as a respondent behavior occurs because of a situation that causes adolescents to respond in form of cyberbullying communication behavior. This response can arise automatically when teenagers experience pressure such as reproaches or accusations from others either offline or online. The behavior of cyberbullying communication emerges as a result of learning from the social environment. The final adolescent learns through the experience of others, so in the end the behavior is then practiced in certain situations and conditions. Conditions in which teenagers feel depressed to trigger aggressive behavior. Teenagers perform cyberbullying for several reasons that allow this behavior to appear as a form of aggressive behavior. These reasons include the presence of weak objects or bad traits, because of competition, the fear of threats, the irritation, the existence of things to be protected, and the purpose to be achieved.

The subject of cyberbullying felt that his behavior was a form of emotional release aimed at hurting cyberbullying objects but the subject does not understand the impact of the behavior. Such behavior in fact is not only hurting cyberbullying objects but also hurting the subject itself. Therefore, neither the subject nor the cyberbullying object is a victim in any case of cyberbullying. First of all, the subject hurt the cyberbullying object with a message of accusation (harsh words). If the messages are on target, then the cyberbullying object will be hurt psychically. Furthermore, even though the message is on

target, anxiety will occur not only in the object itself, but in the subject itself. The subject does not know whether the message is right on target, the subject will be curious and the feeling of misgivings whether the message sent is correct, whether the message sent is enough, question after question will continue to press the subject's psychic. Without a good response from the object or from the environment, then cyberbullying behavior will only be a boomerang for the subject. If the understanding of the behavior of cyberbullying communications is known or understood beforehand by the subject, then this behavior can be controlled through a long process of thinking related to the impact of the behavior.

**Cyberbullying as operant behavior:** The behavior of cyberbullying communication as an operant behavior occurs when the subject of cyberbullying has certain goals to be achieved through its behavior, that is to hurt the feeling of cyberbullying objects. Behavior of cyberbullying as an operant behavior gain strength, either positive or negative reinforcement so as to enable repetition of behavior. Cyberbullying as an operant behavior occurs when there is reinforcement that causes repetition of behavior. As the definition of operant behavior which is a response that arises and develops followed by a certain stimulus called reinforcing stimulation or reinforce because it reinforces the response. Reinforce itself can be differentiated into positive and negative reinforce. Positive and negative words in this case refer to addition and subtraction, not on good and bad. This means that there is a difference in the procedure that occurs between positive reinforce and negative reinforce. Positive reinforce increase in the intensity of the stimulus so that the behavior will tend to continue, and negative reinforce means that there is a reduction intensitas stimulus that is not fun so that the behavior is might happen.

Positive reinforcement is an increase or addition of a stimulus that allows for repetition of behavior. Researchers found some positive reinforcement that allows the subject of cyberbullying to repeat its behavior in the research that has been done. Behavior of cyberbullying in form of impersonation which means they get good response from friends who knows the subject's actions. The good responses come up in form of laughter and enthusiasm to see the effect that will happen to the cyberbullying object. Cyberbullying behavior of adolescents on Facebook occurs as an operant behavior, in which subjects get support from others, it can also be due to the absence of restrictions from others, so that this behavior is ultimately might repeat as operant behavior. The repetition of cyberbullying behavior depends on the

response received by the subject of cyberbullying. Aggressive behavior in form of cyberbullying communication behavior can keep continuing when every actor gets encouragement or support from those around him. Meanwhile, although it does not get encouragement, but when this behavior does not get direction, get no rewards, no punishments by people, then cyberbullying communication behavior will continue on and on. Researcher got the idea that if positive reinforce such as support, then intensity is reduced or even eliminated, then cyberbullying communication behavior can be prevented to get repetition behavior. Similarly, if the negative reinforcement applied such as no punishment, no advice or anything unpleasant then the intensity cyberbullying behavior will increase.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study it can be concluded that the behavior of cyberbullying communication as a process of respondent behavior is formed gradually through observation, recording, and imitation or in other words occur as a result of observations of the behavior of others stored in human memory, to be applied to the situation which is almost the same. While cyberbullying as an operant behavior is formed in the cycle of repetition behavior that is influenced by the provocation of positive and negative reinforcement.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was conducted by using funding from the research projects of the XX-2017-006.

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