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Personal Peacefulness and Cyber-Bystanding of Internet Users in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – As internet use grows, cyberbullying has become more common, especially in schools. People who witness cyberbullying (cyber-bystanders) strongly influence these incidents, but little is known about their behavior. To reduce cyberbullying, we need to understand what affects cyber-bystanding. This study examines whether personal peacefulness can predict how people act as cyber-bystanders.

Design/methods/approach – This quantitative correlational study examined 127 Indonesian internet users (36 males, 91 females). Data were collected using the Self Perception Scale and Cyberbullying Bystander Scale, with regression analysis employed to analyze the relationship between variables.

Findings – Results revealed a significant relationship between personal peacefulness and defender bystander behavior. However, no significant relationships were found with passive or reinforcer bystander behaviors. Gender analysis showed that males exhibited higher levels of personal peacefulness than females. Additionally, males were more likely to act as reinforcer bystanders, supporting cyberbullying behavior, compared to females.

Research implications/limitations – This study reveals how personal peacefulness relates to cyber-bystanding among Indonesian internet users. The findings help understand social behavior in schools where cyberbullying often occurs. These insights can help develop strategies to prevent harmful cyber-bystanding behavior by focusing on personal peacefulness.

Originality/value – While cyberbullying behavior in Indonesia has been extensively studied, research on cyber-bystanding remains limited, primarily documented through news articles. This study represents the first investigation of the relationship between personal peacefulness and cyber-bystanding in Indonesia. Future research should explore these variables in relation to other factors and different demographic groups to expand the current understanding of cyber-bystanding behavior in the Indonesian context.

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Introduction

The growth of internet usage has gone hand in hand with dark problems in internet usage, one of which is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has become a significant problem among young people and students around the world. The prevalence of cyberbullying continues to increase due to rapid technological advances and the continuously widespread adoption of social media platforms among adolescents (C. L. Huang et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2023). According to Wu et al. (2022), cyberbullying has become a major concern nowadays, especially in schools. In addition, the increasing use and misuse of information technology has accelerated the emergence of internet-based violent behavior, commonly referred to as cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is bullying using digital technology. It can occur on social media, chat platforms, gaming platforms, and mobile phones. Cyberbullying is aggressive and purposeful behavior by a group or individual, using electronic media repeatedly over time, against someone who is perceived as not easily resisting the action. Thus, there is a power differential between the perpetrator and the victim. The power differential, in this case, refers to a perception of physical and mental capacity (UNICEF, 2023). Cyberbullying data collected by UREPORT Indonesia (2019), from 2777 respondents aged 14 to 24 years, 45% (1250 respondents) stated that they had been victims of cyberbullying, with a percentage of social media of 71% as a means by which cyberbullying occurred and 41% of cyberbullying victims experienced through chat applications.

The constant use of social networks and the internet can raise concerns about the tendency of negative effects on students' well-being, more particularly the phenomena like cyberbullying, which is positively associated with online time (Craig et al., 2020), and the use of smartphones, which allow connection wherever and whenever one wants (Martin et al., 2018). Research by Antoniadou, Kokkinus, and Fanti (2019) classified cyberbullying perpetrators as bystanders (75%), perpetrators and/or victims (11.2%), victims (8.2%), and aggressors (5.6%). The study showed that the percentage of bystanders in cyberbullying situations was significantly higher than the other roles. It makes it crucial to understand the characteristics and behaviors of bystanders since the impact of their actions can affect the development of situations and experiences of victims and aggressors in the context of cyberbullying.

In some studies, bullying is viewed as a group process (Salmivalli, 2010). It means that bullying usually occurs in front of others, where those others play a significant role in the bullying incident. Research utilizing naturalistic observation found that peers are present in 85% of all bullying episodes (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001), and bystander support for the victim can often stop bullying in its tracks. Bystander behavior can influence the development of cyberbullying incidents. Previous research has shown cyberbullying experience as a significant predictor of bystander behavior in cyberbullying. However, only a few studies have explored the explanatory mechanisms underlying bystander behavior in cyberbullying.

In cyberbullying incidents, bystanders are a group of users that has almost no boundaries due to the openness and anonymity of the internet (Barlińska, Szuster &

Winiewski, 2018). A survey conducted by Lenhart et al. (2011) of 799 adolescents aged 12 to 17 years in the USA found that 46%-88% of adolescents witnessed incidents of cyberbullying (Lenhart et al., 2011). The results of the Polling Indonesia survey in collaboration with the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) (Jayani, 2019) found that 49% of 5,900, namely 2981 internet users who became respondents, had experienced cyberbullying, while internet users who reported these actions to the authorities were only 3.6%. It has appeared that there are still a few cyber bystanders in Indonesia who show positive behavior in stopping cyberbullying that occurs. In reality, bystander behavior can change the impact and direction of a cyberbullying incident development (Allison & Bussey, 2017; Salmivalli, 2010). Positive bystander behaviors (e.g., helping the victim) can alleviate the harmful effects on the victim and inhibit cyberbullying incidents. In contrast, negative bystander behaviors (e.g., reinforcing the bully) can strengthen the bully's behavior and exacerbate cyberbullying incidents (Bastiaensens et al., 2014).

Bystanders have an important role in preventing cyberbullying. There is a clear impact if bystanders come to the defense, including comforting the victim involved or confronting the bully. However, there are still many cases where bystanders who witness bullying do not use their potential to stop it. Most of them remain passive when facing cyberbullying incidents, regardless that most people are against bullying and report that they would support peers in a hypothetical situation (Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Gahagan et al. (2016) found that 61% of bystanders in their study of 196 university students did not intervene in any way when witnessing an incident of cyberbullying. In Song and Oh's (2018) study of 1058 middle and high school students in South Korea regarding bystander reactions to cyberbullying, 69.4% of bystanders did not engage in any intervention against cyberbullying. Furthermore, 26 - 30% withdrew from the bullying situation and did not take sides and let it continue. Correspondingly, while individuals may say they are likely to help the victim, this is factually not the case (Salmivalli, Lappalainen, & Lagerspetz, 1998).

Based on the above data, an analysis is required regarding bystander behavior in cyberbullying and to further explore variables that can direct bystander cyberbullying behavior (cyber-bystanding) to be positive. One way that can be done to direct bystander cyberbullying behavior (cyber-bystanding) by individuals is to develop the capacity for peace within the person concerned. The capacity for peace can be developed if an individual personally has personal peacefulness.

Personal peacefulness is the peace that is built within the individual in the form of intrapersonal peace involving inner peace, thoughts that become the basis of individual peace in other people, social groups, countries, nature, and God that are consistent over time (Puopolo, et al., 2014; & Anderson, 2004). As a personality trait, intrapersonal peacefulness can be defined in several ways: (1) as a disposition for self-acceptance, self-compassion, and non-violence toward the self, (2) as a relatively enduring state of harmony between aspects of the self, and (3) as a disposition for emotional states that support peaceful relationships and/or related to peace and harmony (Nelson, 2014).

Building peace within a person, in the form of personal peacefulness, is assumed to reduce and even prevent violent behavior caused by normative beliefs. Believe is a

subjective area that is closely related to individual personalities. Building peace starts from peaceful thoughts and behavior by each individual (Kartadinata, 2014). Several studies' results have shown that personal peacefulness can affect physical health, positive emotions, happiness, life satisfaction, inner calm, psychological health, psychological well-being, meaningfulness of life, empathy, and compassion (Nelson, 2014; & Puopolo, 2014). By building self-peace, one can develop peace and harmony with others. A person who has self-peace will apply it to the various actions he takes. Therefore, it is expected that when the individual becomes a bystander in a cyberbullying event, he or she will also have positive behavior in stopping the cyberbullying.

Departing from this phenomenon, researchers sought to research the relationship between personal peacefulness and cyber-bystanding among the Internet users in Indonesia.

Methods

His research was a quantitative correlation study, namely to see the relationship between personal peacefulness and the cyber-bystanding of Internet users in Indonesia. The population in this study was Internet users in Indonesia. The research sample taken for this study was 127 respondents, consisting of 36 males and 91 females, aged between 16 to 27 years old. The data collected was analyzed using regression analysis techniques. Data collection was carried out using two (2) scales, namely:

(1) Self-Perception Scale (SPS) in Intrapersonal Peace developed by Nelson (2014). The researcher obtained permission to translate the scale into Indonesian so that it could be applicable to this research sample. SPS in Intrapersonal Peace was developed to measure IP as a form of personality trait that a person has. There are two types that the SPS attempts to measure. The first type is self-acceptance, self-compassion, and non-violence towards oneself. The second type is harmony between various aspects of the self. Each item in this scale has a rating of answer options, ranging from 1 for never to 6 for always. The 6 items out of a total of 12 items in the SPS are reverse scored. The higher the score indicated by the respondent, the higher the respondent's disposition in self-acceptance, self-compassion, and non-violence towards oneself, and the more harmonious the aspects within the self. In previous research, the SPS had high reliability, namely $\alpha = 0.81$ (Khayyer, et.al., 2019).

(2) The Cyberbullying Bystander Scale (CBS; Sarmiento et al., 2019) which consists of 40 scale items. Six factors emerged in this measure, assessing various behaviors of the bullying bystander role, both online and face-to-face. The factors are passive bystanders (online and face-to-face), cyber-victim defenders (online and face-to-face), and cyberbullying reinforcers (online and face-to-face). Three CBS scales were used to measure online passivity (5 items), online defending (6 items), and online reinforcing (7 items). Offline cyberbullying behaviors, which can be measured by the other three CBS scales, were not used in this study because the focus of this study was on cyberbullying-related behaviors.

Result and Discussion

The research hypotheses were tested using statistical tests, namely regression analysis techniques, to see the relationship between personal peacefulness and cyber-bystanding among internet users in Indonesia.

The results of the study are shown in the following table:

Table 1. Correlation analysis result

Correlations					
		Intrapersonal Peacefulness	**Passive *Bystander***	**Defender *Bystander***	**Reinforcer *Bystander***
Intrapersonal Peacefulness	Pearson Correlation	1	-.078	.190*	.010
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.384	.032	.909
	N	127	127	127	127

Table 2. Data Description

Group Statistics					
	Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Intrapersonal Peacefulness	Male	36	53.58	10.649	1.775
	Female	91	46.82	11.039	1.157
Passive *Bystander*	Male	36	20.42	5.495	.916
	Female	91	19.59	4.099	.430
Defender *Bystander*	Male	36	15.58	7.769	1.295
	Female	91	15.82	6.528	.684
Reinforcer *Bystander*	Male	36	13.56	7.821	1.304
	Female	91	10.15	5.217	.547

Table 3. Differentiation Analysis Based On Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		**t-test for Equality of Means**		
		F	**Sig.**	**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Intrapersonal Peacefulness	Equal variances assumed	.615	.435	3.141	125	.002
	Equal variances not assumed			3.190	66.417	.002
Passive *Bystander*	Equal variances assumed	2.944	.089	.922	125	.358
	Equal variances not assumed			.814	51.140	.420
Defender *Bystander*	Equal variances assumed	3.066	.082	-.177	125	.860
	Equal variances not assumed			-.164	55.593	.870
Reinforcer *Bystander*	Equal variances assumed	8.243	.005	2.851	125	.005
	Equal variances not assumed			2.406	47.832	.020

From the data analysis results in Table 1, it can be seen that there was a significant relationship between intrapersonal peacefulness and defender bystanders. There was no significant relationship between intrapersonal peacefulness and passive bystander or reinforcer bystander. Additional analysis data regarding gender differences in each variable showed that there were gender differences in the intrapersonal peacefulness variable, where men showed higher intrapersonal peacefulness than women. Gender differences were also exhibited in the bystander reinforcer, which showed that men were more likely to be cyberbully supporters than women.

Cyberbullying is fundamentally different from traditional bullying in several ways. Specifically, in cyberbullying, the bully can remain anonymous (Cassidy, Faucher & Jackson, 2013). It can be widespread because it does not require all parties, whether the perpetrator, victim, or bystanders involved to be physically present (Bastiaensens et al., 2015). It means that victims have the potential to experience the negative impact of cyberbullying anytime or anywhere. Furthermore, with cyberbullying, it is more difficult for adults and authorities to detect online activity, as privacy and account settings can help perpetrators hide the online areas where cyberbullying occurs (Dooley, Pyzalksi, & Cross, 2009). Despite these differences, both cyber and traditional bullying are forms of peer aggression that occur frequently in everyday social contexts.

To prevent bullying, the role of bystanders who witness acts of bullying and violence is considered very significant (Oh & Hazler, 2009). Bystanders who witness bullying can play one of four types of roles – companion, reinforcer, outsider, and defender (Salmivalli, 1999). The companions support and/or participate in the bullying behavior of the perpetrator, while the reinforcers encourage the bullying by laughing, teasing, or yelling at the victim. The outsiders or passive users do not take any action, which can be interpreted as silent acceptance or avoidance of the situation. Finally, defenders try to stop the bullying by interacting directly with the perpetrator or taking other actions, such as calming the victim or reporting the situation to teachers or parents (Salmivalli et al., 1996).

Simply put, cyber-bystanders are bystanders who not only witness incidents of cyber aggression but also have the capacity to increase or decrease the severity of the incidents they witness through their own response or even lack of response (Grigg, 2010; Corcoran, Mc Guckin, & Prentice, 2015). While many cyber bystanders take advantage of this opportunity to intervene positively and defend and/or comfort the victims or even confront the aggressor constructively to defuse the situation, many individuals engage in bystander behaviors that reinforce the situation by acting out acts of aggression towards the victim or perhaps even being hostile towards the aggressor (Shultz, Heilman & Hart, 2014). Moreover, cyber bystanders are also at risk of becoming the primary aggressor (Shultz, Heilman & Hart, 2014).

One of the distinctive characteristics of cyberbullying is that it is easy to participate in bullying by sending damaging messages to the victim without feeling the victim's pain (Kowalski, 2008), making the cyber-bystanders unconsciously doing so without acknowledging that they have become perpetrators (Kraft, 2011).

Based on the bystander effect, it is assumed that bystanders are more likely to defend victims when witnessing bullying acts alone. Obermaier, Fawzi, and Koch (2014) showed a similar result, where cyber bystanders do not intervene when other bystanders are present in the same situation because the responsibility to intervene becomes spread among all people who observe the bullying happening. In the eyes of other bystanders, cyber bystanders tend to believe that there will be others who can defend the victim. Furthermore, it was found that cyber bystanders are less likely to defend the victim when there are many other people watching without helping, as they assume that the bullying is not serious enough to intervene (OlenikShemesh, Heiman & Eden, 2015).

Bystanders of cyberbullying refer to the "individuals who witness cyberbullying," and these bystanders can be divided into three types based on their behavioral responses after witnessing cyberbullying: defenders, reinforcers, and outsiders (Huang et al., 2019). Defenders play an important role in protecting others from cyberbullying, and bystander behavior can quickly and effectively curb the bully's behavior and reduce harm to those being bullied (Lambe et al., 2019), which impacts psychological factors, such as moral cognition, high empathy, and self-efficacy (Olenik-Shemesh, Heiman & Eden, 2017). Conversely, by providing positive feedback to the bully (e.g., encouragement or laughter), the reinforcers strengthen the bully's aggressive behavior towards the victim, magnifying the situation and causing secondary harm (Quirk & Campbell, 2015). Outsiders refer to cyber bystanders who stand on the sidelines when someone is being bullied or who only focus on protecting themselves. Research showed that 59 to 70% of college students have witnessed cyberbullying on social media. However, only a few people react positively or negatively to it; most people choose to remain outsiders and let the cyberbullying continue (Gahagan, Vaterlaus & Frost, 2016).

Passive bystanders - those who are not involved in the bullying situation -make up the majority of individuals who experience bullying episodes (Sarmiento et al., 2019). Although these individuals may believe that intervention is the right course of action, due to moral disengagement mechanisms, they may not feel guilty for not intervening (Barchia & Bussey, 2011). Furthermore, unlike traditional face-to-face contexts, online cyberbullying incidents allow for increased anonymity and accessibility (Wong-Lo & Bullock, 2014). Passive bystanders in cyberspace may not be motivated to help victims because they do not know the victims personally or because frequent cyberbullying situations are often visible to others, expecting that others will intervene (Van Cleemput et al., 2014). Specifically, Van Cleemput and colleagues identified four moral disengagement mechanisms associated with open-ended responses from participants who chose not to intervene in cyberbullying. Participants indicated that they did not intervene because they did not feel personally responsible for the cyberbullying (diffusion of responsibility), they believed that responsibility lay with the victim's actions (displacement of responsibility), they believed the victim provoked the bullying (attribution of blame), and/or that the bullying was not serious (distortion of consequences).

Defender is a prosocial activity that involves helping those who are victimized (Killer et al., 2019). The findings of this study have indicated that intrapersonal peacefulness has

a significant relationship with bystander defenders. It is due to intrapersonal peace as a form of personality that involves more inner peace, and thoughts that become the basis of peaceful individuals in other people including with social groups that are consistent over time (Puopolo, et al., 2014). Accordingly, individuals who develop personal peace will make more efforts to build feelings of peace with the people around them. Personal peacefulness is the peace that is built within the individual in the form of intrapersonal peace involving inner peace, thoughts that become the basis of individual peace in other people, social groups, countries, nature, and God that are consistent over time (Puopolo, dkk., 2014; & Anderson, 2004).

As a personality trait, intrapersonal peace can be defined in several ways: (1) as a disposition for self-acceptance, self-compassion, and non-violence toward the self, (2) as a relatively enduring state of harmony between aspects of the self, and (3) as a disposition for emotional states that support peaceful relationships and/or related to peace and harmony (Nelson, 2014).

The theory of personal peacefulness is derived from the object of psychological studies, especially in the study of personality, social psychology, clinical, positive, and peace psychology. Peace psychology is about non-violence and conflict resolution. Personal peacefulness is also derived from the object of study in all religions. The core of the study is the conception of care and compassion. This concept teaches about peace starting from within the individual (Intrapersonal Peace) and will make individuals peaceful with others (Interpersonal and Social Peace), nature (Ecological Peace), and God (Existential Peace) (Puopolo, dkk., 2014; & Anderson, 2004)).

The conceptualization of personal peacefulness recognizes that peace is a personality attribute that is relevant across multiple domains and that peacefulness is consistent over time and across domains. The results of various studies revealed that people who have personal peacefulness tend to have good physical health (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005; & Goleman 2006), inner peace which is closely related to psychological well-being characterized by positive emotions (Sheldon & Kasser, 2005), inner commitment, feel more meaningful life (McGregor & Little 1998), happiness, life satisfaction, able to choose the best goals for his life (Ryff & Keyes 1995), and have a sense of compassion and happiness, and not easily feel anxious or depressed (Neff et al. 2007a; 2007b).

There are additional reasons to expect that intrapersonal peace is related to interpersonal peace. People who behave peacefully with others are likely to experience positive reciprocal behavior and develop harmonious and friendly relationships with others. Accordingly, they are more likely to experience peaceful emotions. Sigmund Freud and other psychologists mentioned that interpersonal conflicts often lead to intrapersonal conflicts (Sandy et al. 2006). For example, conflict with others can lead to inner conflict. On the contrary, feeling peaceful will influence positive emotions and further facilitate interpersonal peaceful behavior toward others. It has been experimentally proven that individuals with positive emotions can increase conflict resolution, cooperation, and helping behavior (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005). Feeling peaceful can activate peaceful thinking.

Therefore, people who consistently experience peaceful emotions are also likely to approach interpersonal conflicts in peaceful ways.

Although defensive behavior is most often considered a constructive prosocial behavior, several studies (Bussey et al., 2020) have suggested that defensive behavior is a multifaceted construct that not only constitutes a "prosocial/constructive" defense but also an "aggressive" defense. Constructive defensive behavior can include comforting the victim or notifying the authorities. Although aggressive defenses also aim to help those who are victims, their behavior is different compared to prosocial defenses since they face bullying in an aggressive way that can even aggravate the situation. In fact, moral detachment was found to be positively associated with aggressive defense and negatively with prosocial defense (Luo & Bussey, 2019). In this study, the items in the CBS did not explicitly refer to comforting the victim or separating the two types of defenses, which became a limitation of this study.

Conclusion

The results of this study showed that there was a significant relationship between intrapersonal peacefulness and defender bystanders. There was no significant relationship between intrapersonal peacefulness and passive bystander or reinforcer bystander. Additional analysis data on gender differences in each variable revealed that there was a gender difference in the intrapersonal peaceness variable, where men showed higher intrapersonal peaceness than women. Gender differences were also found in bystander reinforcers, which disclosed that men were more likely to be supporters of cyberbullying than women.

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Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper. Alternatively, The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships, which may be considered as potential competing interests.

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