

The Role of Celebrity Worship in Increasing Cyber-Aggression: Analysis of Early Adult BTS Fans in X (Twitter)

Daryndra Wishnu Wardhana¹, Gisella Arnis Grafiyana², Tri Na'imah³, Fatin Rohmah Nur Wahidah⁴

^{1, 2, 3, 4}Psychology Faculty, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: K-pop fans often display cyber-aggression behavior with the fan war phenomenon. Cyber-aggression is an individual's aggressive behavior on the internet that is driven by anger and hostility. Aspects of cyber-aggression are impulsive-appetitive aggression, impulsive-aversive aggression, controlled-appetitive aggression, and controlled-aversive aggression. One of the factors causing cyber-aggression is celebrity worship. Celebrity worship is an abnormal phenomenon where individuals are obsessed with one or more celebrities. The dimensions of celebrity worship include entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline pathological. This research aims to find out how much influence celebrity worship has on cyber-aggression among BTS fans in early adulthood on platform X (Twitter). This research uses quantitative methods. The population in this study is BTS fans. The sample in this study were BTS fans using X (Twitter) with an age range of 18-25 years. The sampling technique used in this research is the accidental sampling technique. The scales used in this research are the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) and the Cyber-Aggression Typology Questionnaire (CATQ). The research results show the influence of celebrity worship on cyber-aggression among early adult BTS fans on the platform It is recommended for future researchers to add variables or use other research methods.

KEYWORDS: celebrity worship, cyber-aggression, bts fans

I. INTRODUCTION

K-pop fans often display cyber-aggression behavior with the fan war phenomenon. Fan war is a dispute that occurs between one or more fans and other fans to defend their idols in any context (Pohan & Gustiana, 2023). Fan wars can occur due to competition between idols, such as chart rankings, similarities in choreography, album sales, and criticism given to their idols. Fan war is carried out by throwing insults at other fans which can involve the fandom as a whole. For example, on August 16, 2023, Kim Namjoon better known as RM (Rap Monster) BTS uploaded a story on his personal Instagram account regarding a snippet of the lyrics to Frank Ocean's song entitled "Bad Religion". The song's lyrics are considered to contain insulting elements of Islam. Therefore, many fans criticize and even blaspheme RM BTS's behavior, but there are also quite a few fans who still loyally defend him. One of the insults made stated that RM BTS was a racist monster and the king of racists (CNNIndonesia, 2023; Rostanti, 2023).

Cyber-aggression is a behavior that hurts other people's feelings on the internet or social media (Farisandy et al., 2023). Cyber-aggression can be triggered by individuals who feel threatened by the behavior of other individuals who are seen as negative. These feelings then develop into hatred which can be expressed via social media (Walters & Brown, 2016). Cyber-aggression can take the form of defamation, insults, and threats via social media (Widiasih, 2019). Among the factors that influence cyber-aggression are the use of fake accounts, gender, and celebrity worship (Farisandy et al., 2023; Jagayat & Choma, 2021; Nabelliasari & Widyastuti, 2023). Celebrity worship is an interesting variable to research because it is still very rare to research the influence of celebrity worship on cyber-aggression. There is only one study that has examined these two variables. This research was conducted by Nabelliasari & Widyastuti (2023) who found a positive relationship between celebrity worship and cyber-aggression among early adult K-pop fans on Twitter. Therefore, researchers want to investigate further regarding these two variables.

Celebrity worship can have both positive and negative impacts. The negative impact of celebrity worship is having a low body image, a sense of dependence, consumer behavior, and viewing money and popularity as a source of happiness (Ayu & Astuti, 2020). An example of the negative impact of celebrity worship occurred with a K-pop fan. This fan is willing to spend 50 million rupiah to buy merchandise and items related to his idol. There is also a fan who is willing to spend 20 million rupiah to watch his

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concert abroad (Salsabila, 2023). The positive impact of celebrity worship is that coveted idols can be used as inspiration and role models in achieving dreams and goals. The search for role models often occurs in early adulthood because at that age individuals carry out the process of searching for identity during the transition from adolescence to adulthood. In early adulthood, they are vulnerable to cyber-aggression due to their unstable emotions (Arnett, 2000). One of the celebrities who is used as a role model is BTS. Individuals who are fans of BTS are referred to as ARMY.

ARMY has a large number of members throughout the world. Based on the 2022 ARMY census, there are 562,280 BTS fans worldwide with 54% aged 18-29 years. Indonesia is in third place with the number of BTS fans as many as 38,453. The first rank is occupied by Mexico with a total of 104,420, while the second rank is occupied by Peru with a total of 39,821 (BTSARMYCensus, 2022). ARMY is very active in holding events such as gatherings to strengthen relationships between its members. There are other events such as watching concerts and videos related to BTS together, celebrating BTS's birthday, holding social activities, and so on. In expressing their love, ARMY will usually buy merchandise, albums, and concert tickets (Hanifah & Nurmina, 2023).

ARMY itself is known as a toxic fan community. This is because other fan communities are often attacked and bullied by ARMY on Twitter. It's not just other fans who feel this way, artists do too. This behavior is caused by ARMYs who feel they have close intimacy. So if there is something that concerns BTS, ARMY tends to be defensive and aggressive (Sihombing & Andini, 2022). According to Goldstein (2016), individuals tend to participate in negative behavior if their friends or acquaintances behave negatively too. This is also supported by social psychology theory where individuals will be carried away by emotions from their group or community and act based on these emotions, such as cyber-aggression (Mardianto et al., 2020). Researchers hypothesize that celebrity worship has a role in increasing future cyber-aggression behavior. Therefore, this research aims to examine how much influence celebrity worship has on cyber-aggression.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Celebrity worship

According to Maltby et al. (2003), celebrity worship is an abnormal phenomenon where individuals are obsessed with one or more celebrities. The dimensions of celebrity worship include entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline pathological (Maltby et al., 2003). The first dimension of celebrity worship, namely entertainment-social, is the lowest level of celebrity worship. At this level, individuals enjoy discussing the daily lives of their idols with other individuals. The second dimension is intense-personal. At this level, individuals feel a personal connection or feeling towards their idol. The third dimension or highest level is borderline-pathological. At this level, individuals will do anything for their idols (Maltby et al., 2003).

The concept of celebrity worship was born as a result of Americans becoming increasingly interested in the personal lives of celebrities. At that time, many television stations chose newscasters based on their physical attractiveness and showed more news about celebrities, thereby encouraging the trend of celebrity worship. News about celebrities' activities and life situations invites a variety of responses, from the strange to the pathological. For example, loyal fans who hear the news of a celebrity's death sometimes experience bereavement hallucinations. Bereavement hallucinations occur as a result of individuals feeling like they have lost their loved ones (McCutcheon et al., 2002).

Cyber-aggression

According to Runions (2013), cyber-aggression is the aggressive behavior of individuals on the internet that is driven by anger and hostility. Cyber-aggression has 4 aspects, namely impulsive-appetitive aggression, impulsive-aversive aggression, controlled-appetitive aggression, and controlled-aversive aggression. Impulsive-appetitive aggression is aggression that is driven by pleasure and enjoyment when carrying out aggression. Impulsive-aversive aggression can be defined as aggression that arises as a result of provocation or threat to the individual. Controlled-appetitive aggression is aggression that is planned and aims to obtain self-reward. Controlled-aversive aggression can be defined as aggression aimed at revenge against provocation received in a controlled process (Runions, 2013).

Cyber-aggression arises due to the increasing use of the internet and gadgets in society. Along with the development of the internet, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others have also emerged (Runions, 2013). Another theory adds that cyber-aggression is a negative behavior that appears on the internet where individuals send messages aimed at hurting individuals regardless of age and consider this behavior as hostility, insult, and attack (Grigg, 2010). The difference between cyberbullying and cyber-aggression can be seen in the behavior, encouragement, and victims. Cyberbullying aims to maintain an imbalance of status between the victim and the perpetrator through repeated aggressive behavior on the internet. Perpetrators of cyberbullying will choose victims whose status is below them, while cyber-aggression does not look at the status of the victim (Grigg, 2010).

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III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses quantitative correlation methods. This method is a method that uses data in the form of numbers collected through measurement procedures and processed through statistical analysis (Azwar, 2017). The population in this study is an unknown number of BTS fans. Population is a general description of objects/subjects that have certain characteristics in accordance with the researcher's provisions for research and conclusions are drawn (Sugiyono, 2019). The sample in this research is BTS fans aged 18-25 years who use social media X (Twitter). Samples are a source of research data taken from a population that is part of the characteristics (Sugiyono, 2019). Sampling in this study used accidental sampling technique. The accidental sampling technique is a sampling technique by chance or individuals who are met by the researcher and are deemed to meet the requirements as a sample can fill out the research questionnaire (Sugiyono, 2019).

The scale used is a modification of the Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) by Maltby et al. (2006) to measure celebrity worship which consists of 34 items measuring entertainment-social, intense-personal, and borderline-pathological aspects with a reliability of 0.891. One example of a statement in CAS is " Jika bertemu idola saya, dia akan mengetahui bahwa saya adalah fans beratnya." The scale used to measure cyber-aggression is a modification of the Cyber-Aggression Typology Questionnaire (CATQ) compiled by Runions (2013). This scale consists of 27 items that measure aspects of impulsive-appetitive aggression, impulsive-aversive aggression, controlled-appetitive aggression, and controlled-aversive aggression with a reliability of 0.953. One example of a statement in CATQ is " Jika seseorang mencoba menyakiti idola saya, saya akan menggunakan gadget untuk segera membalasnya." One modification was made by changing the word "selebriti" to "idola" to make it more appropriate to the subject under study.

Dissemination of the research scale uses Google Forms and is distributed via social media X (Twitter) via the base account. Before answering the statement on the Google form, respondents are asked to fill in informed consent and personal identification such as name (can be initials), age, how long they have been a fan, total expenses while being a fan, as well as photo evidence of being a fan. When filling in the scale, respondents will be asked to choose among 5 available responses, namely Strongly Disagree (STS), Disagree (TS), Neutral (N), Agree (S), and Strongly Agree (SS). The data analysis technique uses simple linear regression analysis with the help of the Jamovi 2.3.28 application. Simple linear regression analysis is a statistical technique used to determine how much influence the independent variable has on the dependent variable with a linear equation (Azwar, 2007).

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the following table you can see the demographic data of respondents obtained in this research:

Table 1. Demographic Data

Category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)	18 – 21	247	49,60%
	22 – 25	251	50,40%
Gender	Man	2	0,4%
	Woman	496	99,6%
Length of time as a fan (years)	1 – 4	156	31,33%
	5 – 8	291	58,43%
	9 – 11	51	10,24%
Expenditure	<Rp1.000.000	196	39,36%
	Rp1.000.000-Rp5.000.000	183	36,75%
	Rp5.000.000-Rp10.000.000	66	13,25%
	Rp10.000.000	53	10,64%

Based on table 1, the majority of respondents were aged 22 - 25 years with a percentage of 50.40% of respondents. As many as 99.6% of respondents were female. As many as 58.43% of respondents have been fans for 5 - 8 years. The total expenditure incurred by respondents while being a fan was mostly less than 1 million rupiah with the number of respondents being 39.36%.

Normality test

The normality test is carried out to determine whether the data is normally distributed or not. If the p-value <0.05 then the data can be said to be not normally distributed. Meanwhile, if the p-value is > 0.05 then the data can be said to be normally distributed. In this study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was carried out which produced a p-value of 0.262, so it can be concluded that the p-value is > 0.05 so it can be said that the data is normally distributed.

Regression Test

In the following table, you can see the results of the simple linear regression test in this study

Table 2. Simple Regression Analysis Results

	t	F	a	b	R ²	p
Celebrity worship to cyber-aggression	9,41	88,5	12,459	0,518	0,151	> 0,001

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Based on the F test, it can be seen that the p-value is <0.001 , which means H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, so it can be concluded that celebrity worship has an influence on cyber-aggression among BTS fans in early adulthood on platform X (Twitter). Then, to find out how much increase or decrease occurred, it was calculated using the linear equation formula $Y = a + bX$, so we get $Y = 12.459 + 0.518X$, which means that if celebrity worship increases by 1 point, cyber-aggression will increase by 0.518. If we look at the R^2 value, it is found to be 0.151, which means that cyber-aggression is influenced by celebrity worship by 15.1%, while the remaining 84.9% is influenced by other factors not examined in this research.

Celebrity Worship Categorization

We can see the categorization of data on the celebrity worship variable

Table 1. Celebrity Worship Categorization

Skor Interval	Kategori	N	Persentase
$X < 66$	Rendah	70	14%
$66 \leq X < 92$	Sedang	352	71%
$92 < X$	Tinggi	76	15%

Based on table 3, it is known that the celebrity worship of BTS fans in early adulthood on platform X is mostly in the medium category.

Based on the research results that have been presented, it can be seen that this research is able to prove the influence of celebrity worship on cyber-aggression among BTS fans in early adulthood on platform X (Twitter). The influence that celebrity worship has on cyber-aggression has a strength of 15.1%. These results are in line with research conducted by Nabelliasari & Widyastuti (2023) which found a positive relationship between celebrity worship and cyber-aggression among early adult k-pop fans on the Twitter platform. This shows that cyber-aggression behavior will increase among BTS fans on platform X along with the increase in fan celebrity worship. On the other hand, cyber-aggression behavior will decrease among BTS fans on platform X along with the decline in celebrity worship.

In table 1 it is stated that 496 (99.6%) fans are female. This is in line with research findings by Hidayati & Sari (2023) which found that women dominate in numbers as K-Pop fans. According to Maltby et al. (2003), gender is one of the influences on celebrity worship. Women tend to idolize celebrities who are musicians, actors, dancers, etc. (Maltby et al., 2003). BTS members are men who have attractive appearances, so it is not surprising that BTS fans are dominated by women.

In this research, the level of celebrity worship of most fans was determined through data categorization. Most fans have a moderate level of celebrity worship. According to Maltby et al. (2006), the moderate level of celebrity worship shows that fans feel they have a personal connection with their idols and often imagine various fantasies and scenarios involving their idols. This can develop into obsessive behavior to the point of not being able to differentiate between fantasy and reality if you don't have good self-control (Hidayati & Sari, 2023).

The level of celebrity worship can also be seen through how much fans spend. Based on table 1, it is known that as many as 70% of fans have spent less than 1 million rupiah on their idols. However, quite a few fans are willing to spend more than 1 million to tens of millions to buy merchandise, albums, concert tickets, and so on. This is in line with research conducted by Lubis & Aulia (2024) which states that celebrity worship has a positive influence on fans' consumptive behavior. Fans who feel they have a high-intensity relationship with their idols will tend to spend money to buy their idols' items.

Fans who have high celebrity worship tend to feel that they are right in all aspects (Silalahi et al., 2024). This further strengthens the assumption that fans who spend a lot of money on their idols are likely to commit cyber-aggression. In fandom, there are acts of aggression that are often carried out under the name of participation culture. This participation culture is participated in by fans with great love for their idols. This love can be seen in the time and money they spend to support their idols. Activities carried out in participation culture force fans' thoughts onto other fans, thus often triggering fan wars between fan communities (Silalahi et al., 2024).

Fan wars can also be triggered by haters who hide behind the anonymity of social media so that these individuals feel free to spread controversial things. This controversial matter then sparked debate between communities (Pohan & Gustiana, 2023). Anonymity on social media is obtained through the use of fake accounts. Research conducted by Farisandy et al. (2023) found that individuals had 1-2 fake accounts. The fake account is used to carry out cyber-aggression with the motive of releasing sadness and forgetting anger.

Research conducted by Mardianto et al. (2020) found that men tend to commit cyber-aggression more often. However, the study also stated that women tend to post gossip about other people to hurt them emotionally and psychologically. This is in line with this research with the large number of respondents who are female. Other research also states that women tend to carry out verbal aggression such as insults, curses, and threats with words (Nura Natingkaseh et al., 2022).

Research conducted by Anshori et al. (2023) found the influence of self-control on verbal aggression carried out by K-pop fans on social media. The duration of social media use was also found to influence cyber-aggression (Silalahi et al., 2024). Individuals

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who use social media for a long time tend to carry out cyber-aggression without thinking and just want to vent their anger. The duration of social media use is related to self-control and smartphone addiction. It was found that self-control influences smartphone addiction (Wibowo et al., 2024).

Based on the regression analysis that has been carried out, it was found that 15.1% of cyber-aggression was influenced by celebrity worship, and the remaining 84.9% was influenced by other factors not examined in this study. One of these factors is child parenting (Zhang et al., 2021). Fans who frequently feel rejection, overprotectiveness, and a lack of warm emotions may be less able to feel remorse for doing bad things like cyber-aggression. Other research suggests anonymity plays a role in cyber-aggression. Haters can send controversial or hateful tweets via their base account. Other research also found the influence of individual emotional intelligence on cyber-aggression (Paskarista et al., 2021). Individuals who have high emotional intelligence tend not to carry out cyber-aggression because these individuals have awareness and can manage their emotions well.

The limitation of this research is that data collection was carried out online via Google Forms so the condition and situation of the subjects cannot be ascertained when filling out the questionnaire. Respondents could fill out the questionnaire in a crowded place so they would not focus on filling out this research questionnaire. This research also cannot measure the influence of each aspect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Apart from that, there are still several factors that can influence cyber-aggression such as parenting style, anonymity, and emotional intelligence which can be added to become variables in research. Apart from that, the data obtained is less able to explain the experiences and motivations behind celebrity worship and cyber-aggression carried out by BTS fans in early adulthood on platform X (Twitter).

V. CONCLUSIONS

The research results show that the influence of celebrity worship on cyber-aggression among early adult BTS fans on platform X (Twitter) was found to be 15.1%. There are still many other factors amounting to 84.9% that can influence cyber-aggression as have been found in other studies but were not examined in the research. These factors include parenting style, self-control, emotional intelligence, and others. For this reason, the researcher suggests that future researchers add variables to the research other than celebrity worship to be able to explain cyber-aggression more broadly. Apart from that, researchers also suggest measuring the influence of each aspect of celebrity worship on cyber-aggression. Future research can also change the method to qualitative to find out the experiences of cyber-aggression perpetrators, especially BTS fans who have done this.

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