

Verbal Aggression Behavior in Social Media Interactions: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The development of social media has significantly changed human communication patterns, but on the other hand, it has given rise to various forms of negative behavior, one of which is verbal aggression. Verbal aggression in social media interactions has become a fairly frequent phenomenon due to the high intensity of use of digital platforms that are fast, anonymous, and have minimal social control. This study aims to comprehensively examine the findings of previous research related to verbal aggression behavior in social media interactions between 2015 and 2025. The method used is a literature study by analyzing 18 scientific articles obtained from various national and international journal databases. The results of this study indicate that verbal aggression on social media is influenced by various factors, including user emotional responses, personality traits, loneliness, fanaticism, socio-political dynamics, and digital media characteristics such as anonymity and discourse polarization. Verbal aggression manifests itself in the form of abusive comments, insults, hate speech, and threats, which negatively impact individual psychological well-being and the quality of online communication. The conclusion of this study confirms that verbal aggression on social media is a multidimensional phenomenon that requires an integrative approach through digital literacy, psychological interventions, policy regulation, and ethical and sustainable technology development.

Keywords: *Verbal Aggression, Social Media, Cyber Aggression, Literature Review.*

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INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes in the way individuals interact and communicate. Social media exists as a virtual space that allows users to express opinions, share experiences, and build social relationships without being limited by space and time (Langi, 2020). Platforms such as social media not only function as a means of entertainment and information, but also serve as an arena for meaningful discussion, the formation of public opinion, and broad social participation. The increasing intensity of social media use has made online interaction an integral part of daily life, especially among teenagers and young adults.

According to 2015 statistics, 2.5 billion people worldwide use the internet and have approximately 1.8 million accounts on various social media networks. Nearly one in three people on

Earth has a social media account. Kemp (2017) reported that, according to data from the website 'Wearesocial', 2.80 billion people worldwide actively use social media. The number of people connected to social media via mobile devices reached 2.56 billion, while the total number of mobile social media users was 4.92 billion. Among social media platforms, Facebook leads this year. After Facebook, Messenger dominates the digital platform, while WhatsApp ranks third. YouTube ranks fourth. According to the same review, 48 million people in Turkey, representing 60% of the country's population, are connected to the internet almost daily. The report indicates that 48 million people in Turkey actively use social media for more than just personal purposes. When analyzed in terms of growth since January 2016, Turkey saw a 4% increase in internet users by 2 million, and a 14% increase in social media users by 6 million. The total number of users accessing social media via mobile devices increased by 17% compared to last year.

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) data (2016), 61.2% of total households are connected to the internet. The April 2016 statistical data includes the percentage of computer and internet usage rates. Usage in the 16–74 age group was 54.9% and 61.2% respectively, with 64.1% of males and 45.9% of females for computer usage and 70.5% of males and 51.9% of females for internet usage. The computer and internet usage rates in 2015 were 54.8% and 55.9% respectively. According to the same data, approximately 8 out of 10 households have internet access, and social media use is the most prominent reason for internet connections. Internet use is defined as a new form of virtual communication that allows many users to access a large amount of information at the touch of a finger (Pritchard, 2008). Currently, face-to-face communication among young people is losing its value. On average, a young person sends 420 messages per week, which is equivalent to 60 messages per day. Nearly 7.5 million Facebook users are under 13 years old, and 1 in 10 of these children complain of being bullied. This figure equates to 800,000 children. 81% of young people report that Online bullying is much easier than face-to-face bullying. Every month, 3 million children miss school due to fear of being bullied (Eraslan, 2015).

Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter serve not only for sharing information or entertainment, but also as a space for real-time communication and interaction between individuals. While social media facilitates the sharing of opinions and self-expression, it also opens up opportunities for negative behavior, such as verbal aggression (Langi, 2020). However, despite these benefits, social media also creates complex interaction dynamics that can potentially lead to negative behavior. One frequently occurring phenomenon is verbal aggression, which involves attacking, belittling, or hurting others through words, either directly or indirectly. Verbal aggression on social media can take the form of rude comments, insults, hate speech, excessive sarcasm, or even threats conveyed through text, images, or symbols. The anonymity, minimal social control, and non-face-to-face communication characteristics of social media often make individuals more willing to express negative emotions than in direct interactions.

Aggressive statements are strong enough to incite mass violence, cause mental health problems, or even lead to suicide (Bannink, 2014). The internet has proven to be an excellent tool for public participation. Many meaningful conversations take place on social media. Furthermore, people rely on social media to communicate; social media has essentially turned the entire world into a global village. However, this rapid shift towards digitalization is accompanied by one such concern: cyberbullying. Cyberbullying involves harassing, insulting, threatening, or harassing others using social media platforms. It is challenging to reduce cyberbullying due to the anonymity of profiles. Because cyberbullying causes psychological and emotional harm, online bullying is more harmful than physical bullying. Online violence, including hate speech, personal attacks, and bullying, is a growing social problem. Online violence often accompanies, precedes, or escalates into real-

world violence, both physical and psychological (Anderson et al., 2017; Holtz & Appel, 2011; Ybarra et al., 2008).

A growing body of literature has begun to examine antisocial behaviors such as cyberbullying (i.e., repeated online victimization; Stockdale, Coyne, Nelson, & Erickson, 2015) and trolling (i.e., online harassment; Buckels, Trapnell, & Paulhus, 2014) among online technology users. These aggressive acts are quite common; according to the Pew Research Center (2014), 73% of adult internet users have witnessed online harassment and 40% have experienced it personally. These high levels of online aggression may be due to the computer-mediated nature of social media, which provides individuals with opportunities to become morally disconnected due to the lack of socio-emotional cues (Runions & Bak, 2015) and/or due to the protective effects of anonymity in social interactions (Christopherson, 2007; Zimmerman & Ybarra, 2016). Aggressive behavior can take many forms, and can be expressed physically, communicated verbally, or nonverbally. Verbal aggression typically exists as a communication style. Infante and Wrigley (1986) argue that “verbal aggression is a person’s tendency to attack another person’s self-concept instead of attacking that person’s opinions or arguments. Verbal aggression is a personality trait that makes a person tend to attack another person’s self-concept instead of, or in addition to, their position on the topic of communication.”

In general, verbal aggression is a functionally ambiguous phenomenon. According to Brynielsson & Horndahl (2012), both at the group and individual levels, aggression can have opposing consequences—destructive and constructive. In the first case, we are talking about the general nature of aggression, such as a boundary violation by the subject of aggression, an unauthorized invasion of the territory belonging to the object of aggression. At the same time, boundaries can be completely real: physical, territorial, or metaphorical, for example, personal boundaries (Ravndal, 2013). Its creative function lies in the fact that under certain conditions and at certain stages of development, aggression is a factor of internal integration, defining and maintaining boundaries, and thus contributing to the preservation of individuality and identity – both at the social and individual levels. In several ways, this study differs from previous studies examining verbal aggression in social media interactions. First, it focuses on all articles published from 2015 to 2025. Second, it specifically analyzes a limited number of articles addressing verbal aggression in social media interactions. Third, various parameters serve as the basis for this study.

METHOD

A study requires findings from previous research intended to test the objectivity of the science under consideration. The results of several previous studies can be considered. This literature review was reviewed according to writing criteria, namely author's name, year of publication, research objectives, research background, literature review, research methods, research subjects, and research results related to the variable of verbal aggression in social media users. The following are several studies that have been reviewed using the literature review method, namely:

Table 1. Article 1

Title	Aggression Detection in Social Media from Textual Data Using Deep Learning Models
Author's Name	Umair Khan, Salabat Khan, Atif Rizwan , Ghada Atteia and NagwanAbdel Samee, Mona.Jamjo om
Year of Publication	2022

Research purposes	develop and test an effective deep learning model in detecting aggressiveness (cyber aggression) in social media text, by combining Word2Vec features and emotional features,
Methods	Quantitative Approach
Subjects	Twitter social media user
Results	This study found that the use of a Deep Neural Network model with a combination of Word2Vec and emotional features was able to detect the aggressiveness of social media texts very accurately, with an F1-score reaching 97%, and proved that the emotional aspect plays an important role in identifying verbal aggressiveness.

Table 2. Article 2

Title	Artificial intelligence against hate: Intervention reducing verbal aggression in the social network environment
Author's Name	Michał Bilewicz, Patrycja Tempka, Gniewosz Leliwa, Maria Dowgiałło, Michalina Tańska, Rafał Urbaniak,
Year of Publication	2017
Research purposes	This study aims to test the effectiveness of artificial intelligence (AI)-based interventions in reducing verbal aggressiveness on social media, specifically on the Reddit platform.
Methods	This study uses a quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest approach and a control group.
Subjects	Active Reddit user
Results	The research results from the article show that artificial intelligence (AI)-based interventions delivered through bots can significantly reduce levels of verbal aggression on social media.

Table 3. Article 3

Title	Social relations in virtual world and social media aggression
Author's Name	Levent Eraslan, Ahmet Kukuoglu
Year of Publication	2019
Research purposes	This study aims to analyze the role of social relationships in the virtual world in transferring and shaping aggressive behavior in the context of social media.
Methods	Quantitative approach with survey method
Subjects	University students aged 18-24 years
Results	This study highlights a significant lack of awareness among young adults regarding their legal rights against aggression on social media. It also shows that negative comments targeting personal values can trigger aggressive tendencies, and individuals

commonly react with anger, rage, or depression when exposed to aggression on social media.

Table 4. Article 4

Title	Online Verbal Aggression on Social Media During Times of Political Turmoil: Discursive Patterns from Poland's 2020 Protests and Election
Author's Name	Dorota Domalewska
Year of Publication	2025
Research purposes	The main aim of this study is to analyze the influence of social relationships, as they transition to cyberspace, and the aggressive behaviors that emerge in this new social context.
Methods	Quantitative approach
Subjects	Student
Results	This research highlights that critical comments about personal values can trigger aggressive reactions, and that a significant number of social media users are unaware of their rights when experiencing online aggression. The immediate emotional impact of social media harassment often includes anger, rage, and depression, underscoring the psychological burden of these online interactions.

Table 5. Article 5

Title	Discourse analytic approach to verbal aggression in social media texts
Author's Name	Deeney I, Belova L.
Year of Publication	2020
Research purposes	The aim of this study is to investigate the underlying patterns and functions of verbal aggression in social media discourse,

	particularly during two important socio-political events in Poland: the 2020 presidential election and the Women's Strike.
Methods	Mix-methods
Subjects	Pengguna media sosial Facebook
Results	The research results highlight that online aggression in Poland in 2020 was a complex phenomenon that served strategic political purposes during the general elections and expressive functions and strengthened identity.

Table 6. Article 6

Title	Online verbal aggression, social relationships, and self efficacy beliefs
Author's Name	Paula da Costa Ferreira, Ana Margarida Veiga Simão Nadia Salgado Pereira, Paula Paulino, Sofia Oliveira
Year of Publication	2020
Research purposes	The aim of this research is that online aggression is a fairly complex phenomenon compared to previous years.
Methods	Mixed-methods
Subjects	Quantitative approach
Results	This study highlights that while neutral discourse is common, emotionally charged events such as the Women's Strike significantly amplify both negative and positive expressions. Verbal aggression, often vitriolic and personal, serves a different function:

Table 7. Article 7

Title	Toxicity and verbal aggression on social media: Polarized discourse on wearing face masks during the COVID 19 pandemic
Author's Name	Paola Pascual Ferra ¹ , Neil Alperstein ¹ , Daniel J Barnett ² and Rajiv N Rimal

Year of Publication	2021
Research purposes	The aim of this study is to understand how verbal aggression and toxic language contribute to polarized discussions on social media.
Methods	Quantitative approach
Subjects	Social media users
Results	This study found that anti-mask discourse on Twitter was generally more toxic than pro-mask discourse, with specific hashtags like #MasksDontWork and #WearADamnMask driving higher toxicity scores. This increased toxicity contributed to public outrage and posed significant challenges to effective public health communication during the pandemic.

Table 8. Article 8

Title	How the human is the catalyst: Personality, aggressive fantasy, and proactive-reactive aggression among users of social media
Author's Name	Michael P. McCreery*, S. Kathleen Krachb
Year of Publication	2016
Research purposes	The purpose of this study was to explore the interactions between personality, aggressive fantasies and specific types of aggression and the human factors that drive aggressive behavior in social media environments.
Methods	Quantitative Approach
Subjects	Student
Results	The results of the study found that personality traits such as extroversion, agreeableness, emotional and intellectual stability significantly influence both aggressive fantasies and tendencies towards proactive and reactive aggression among social media users.

Table 9. Article 9

Title	Verbal Aggression as a Communication Strategy in Digital Society
Author's Name	Il'ia A. Bykov, Liudmila V. Balakhonskaya, Irina A. Gladchenko, Vitaly V. Balakhonsky

Year of Publication	2018
Research purposes	The aim of this study is to empirically analyze verbal aggression as a common communication strategy in Russian online media.
Methods	Empirical study
Subjects	Social media users
Results	This study highlights the pervasive nature of verbal aggression in Russian online political discourse, demonstrating its role as a dominant communication strategy that, while attracting comments, does not show a statistically significant correlation with audience response.

Table 10. Article 10

Title	Aggressive complaining on Social Media: The case of
Author's Name	Dimitra Vladimirova a,*, Juliane House b,c,Daniel Z. Kadar
Year of Publication	2021
Research purposes	The aim of this research is to analyze the dynamics of complaints and aggression on social media, highlighting how technological capabilities shape interactions and contribute to escalating behaviors particularly in online contexts.
Methods	Quantitative Approach
Subjects	Social media users
Results	This study concludes that online complaints on social media, especially Twitter, can be very aggressive due to the complexity of their delivery and diachronicity.

Table 11. Article 11

Title	Fewer people, more flames: How pre existing beliefs and volume of negative comments impact online news readers' verbal aggression
Author's Name	John Petita,Cong Lia, Khudejah Ali
Year of Publication	2020

Research purposes	This study aims to understand the psychological triggers and processes underlying online verbal aggression, particularly “flaming,” by examining the interaction between pre-existing beliefs, the volume of negative comments, and emotional contagion in online news discussions.
Methods	Experimental approach
Subjects	Social media users
Results	This study highlights that negative emotional valence is an important mediator in aggressive online debates, which is particularly salient when readers encounter content that contradicts their prior beliefs, especially with a limited number of negative comments.

Table 12. Article 12

Title	Tackling cyber aggression: Identification and fine grained categorization of aggressive texts on social media using weighted ensemble of transformers
Author's Name	Omar Sharif, Mohammed Moshiul Hoque
Year of Publication	2022
Research purposes	The aim of this research is to develop an effective automated system for identifying and categorizing aggressive content on Bengali language social media,
Methods	Multifaceted approach
Subjects	Social media users
Results	The results show that the ensemble of weighted transformer models is highly effective for cyber aggression detection in Bengali-language social media, providing a robust solution for

resource-constrained languages, despite challenges with implicitly aggressive content and class imbalance.

Table 13. Article 13

Title	Automatic analysis and identification of verbal aggression and abusive behaviors for online social games
Author's Name	Koray Balciŕ, Albert Ali Salah
Year of Publication	2015
Research purposes	This research aims to automate the verbal aggression detection scan in online social games to improve the player experience,
Methods	Approach systematically
Subjects	Social media users
Results	This research successfully demonstrates that a well-prepared system with a distinctive set of features can effectively identify players who commit violations, especially serious cases, and assist human moderators in managing online social gaming communities.

Table 14. Article 14

Title	Analysis of Verbal Violence on Jktinfo Accounts on Instagram
Author's Name	Suci Ramadonaa, Alias anb, Jawasic
Year of Publication	2025
Research purposes	This study aims to thoroughly investigate verbal violence on Instagram accounts.
Methods	Qualitative descriptive approach
Subjects	Social media users
Results	The results of the study indicate that the Jktinfo Instagram account is categorized into direct and indirect speech acts. This study identified significant intensity in 31 sample comments

analyzed using speech act theory, with 12 direct speech acts and 19 indirect speech acts identified.

Table 15. Article 15

Title	VERBAL VIOLENCE IN FACEBOOK SOCIAL MEDIA
Author's Name	Dwi Yuliantoro Seno Utoro*1, Susetyo2, Ria Ariesta
Year of Publication	2020
Research purposes	This study aims to describe and analyze specific forms of verbal harassment found in language and comments on Facebook.
Methods	Quantitative approach
Subjects	social media users
Results	The results of the study indicate that while the language used in Facebook comments aims for effectiveness in terms of directness, accuracy, and clarity, verbal harassment remains prevalent. Forms of verbal harassment identified include swearing, hyperbole, stigmatization, and animal associations. This indicates that Indonesian society still lacks etiquette on social media.

Table 16. Article 16

Title	The Role of Loneliness on Cyberbullying Behavior in Early Adult Social Media Users: Aggressiveness as a Mediator
Author's Name	Kayla Nurisa , Rostiana
Year of Publication	2024
Research purposes	This study aims to show that there is a significant positive relationship between loneliness and cyberbullying.
Methods	quantitative correlation method with non-experimental al
Subjects	Individuals in young adulthood

Results	This study highlights that cyberbullying is prevalent among young adults, with a strong positive correlation to loneliness and aggressiveness. Aggression acts as a partial mediator, strengthening the relationship between loneliness and cyberbullying.
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Table 17. Article 17

Title	Fanaticism and Verbally Aggressive Behavior on Social Media among K-Pop Idol Fans
Author's Name	Jenni Eliani, ¹ M. Salis Yuniardi, ² Alifah Nabilah Masturah
Year of Publication	2018
Research purposes	This study aims to establish a positive correlation between fanaticism and verbal aggressive behavior among K-pop idol fans on social media,
Methods	Correlational quantitative approach
Subjects	K-pop idol fans
Results	This study convincingly demonstrates a positive and significant relationship between fanaticism and verbally aggressive behavior among K-pop idol fans on social media. Fanaticism significantly contributes to this behavior, driven by extreme enthusiasm and strong conviction in their beliefs. The study's demographic profile highlights that K-pop fans exhibiting this behavior are predominantly young females from Java, actively engaged on various social media platforms.

Table 18. Article 18

Title	Verbal aggression on Instagram social media
Author's Name	Fina Afriany ¹ , Ikhsan, Ade Sofa
Year of Publication	2019

Research purposes	This study aims to explain the characteristics and incidence of verbal aggression observed on Instagram, identifying it as an important aspect of social media interactions.
Methods	Qualitative analysis approach
Subjects	Social media users
Results	This research shows that verbal aggression on Instagram is largely driven by users' emotional responses to content, leading to insults and curses that can negatively impact both the perpetrator and the victim.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study examined 18 scientific articles discussing verbal aggression in social media interactions published between 2015 and 2025. The results showed that all analyzed articles reported the presence of verbal aggression in social media interactions. Verbal aggression is found on various social media platforms and occurs in a variety of online interaction contexts, including social discussions, politics, entertainment, public health, and general interpersonal interactions.

Based on the distribution of publication years, articles on verbal aggression in social media have been consistently distributed over the past ten years, with a higher number of publications found between 2018 and 2023 than in previous periods. This indicates that the topic of verbal aggression in social media has been a focus of ongoing research in the scientific literature over the past decade.

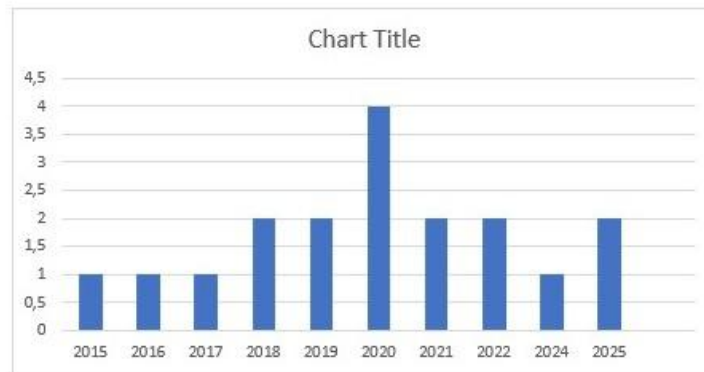
In terms of research type, the results indicate that the majority of articles used a quantitative approach. Furthermore, there were also studies using qualitative and mixed-methods approaches, although these were fewer in number than quantitative studies. The types of research designs used included correlational studies, surveys, quasi-experimental studies, empirical studies, and systematic approaches based on computational modeling.

The research subjects in the articles analyzed covered various social media user groups. The most frequently studied subjects were social media users in general, followed by college students and individuals in the young adult age range. Furthermore, several studies specifically involved students, fans of specific communities, and users of specific social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Reddit. Based on the data analysis methods, the study results indicate that correlational analysis is the most commonly used method in research on verbal aggression on social media. Furthermore, thematic analysis and discourse analysis were also used to examine the forms and patterns of verbal aggression in digital texts. Some articles used descriptive and inferential statistical

tests, while others applied a systematic approach based on artificial intelligence to identify and classify verbal aggression in social media content.

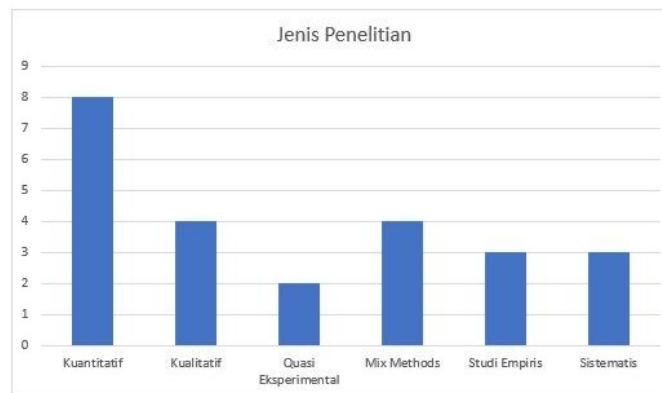
Overall, the results of this study present a factual overview of the characteristics of research on verbal aggression in social media interactions based on the type of research, research subjects, data analysis methods, and distribution of publications between 2015 and 2025, as recorded in the articles analyzed.

Table 19



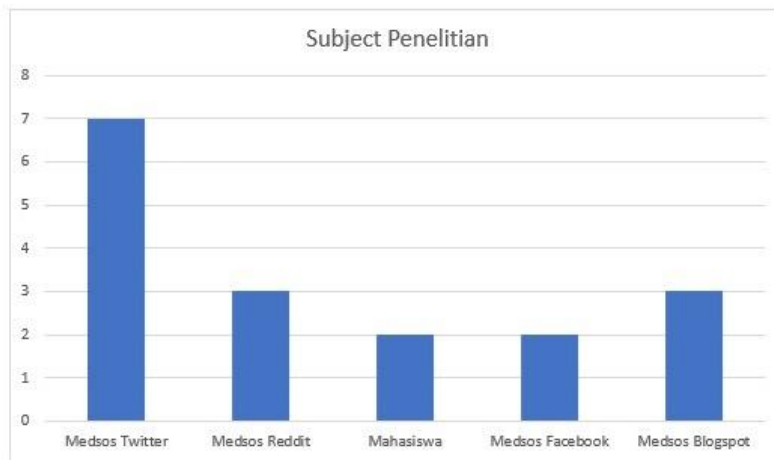
From several articles that researchers have sorted, referring to the graph in table 2, the following is an explanation of the data from 2015 to 2025, which experienced a higher increase compared to previous years.

Tabel 20



The type and design of research determine the focus of a study. Based on Table 3, quantitative research is the design most commonly used by researchers.

Tabel 21



In this study, it is dominated by social media users, as shown in quantitative research based on conclusions from several articles, verbal aggression among social media users is a trending topic in the last 10 years.

DISCUSSION

In general, this literature review found that previous research conducted both globally and in Indonesia that examined the variable of verbal aggression on social media showed a positive relationship where it was largely driven by the user's emotional response to the content, which led to insults and curses that could have a negative impact on both the perpetrator and the victim. Verbal aggression behavior in social media interactions is a complex phenomenon that cannot be separated from the characteristics of digital communication which is fast, anonymous, and minimal social control. Based on the literature review analyzed in this article, verbal aggression arises as a consequence of the increasing intensity of social media use which makes online space the main arena for the expression of emotions, opinions, and social conflict. In line with the views of Infante and Wigley (1986), verbal aggression is not directed at arguments, but rather at the self-concept of other individuals, so that its impact is psychological and relational.

In the context of social media, verbal aggression manifests itself in the form of harsh comments, insults, hate speech, sarcasm, and even threats, often triggered by differences in views, personal values, or group identity. The study's results indicate that emotional factors are the primary trigger for online verbal aggression. This research aligns with research by Afriany et al. (2019) which states that verbal aggression on Instagram is largely triggered by spontaneous emotional responses to certain content. Negative emotions such as anger, disappointment, and frustration drive individuals to express aggression verbally without considering long-term consequences. This is reinforced by Petita et al. (2020) who found that negative emotional valence plays a key mediator in the emergence of "flaming" behavior, especially when individuals are confronted with

information that contradicts their previous beliefs. Thus, verbal aggression does not stand alone but is the result of an interaction between content stimuli, emotional states, and the user's cognitive framework.

From a personality perspective, McCreery and Krach (2016) asserted that certain personality traits, such as low emotional stability and high levels of aggressive fantasies, significantly contribute to the tendency toward proactive and reactive aggression on social media. These findings broaden the understanding that verbal aggression is influenced not only by external circumstances but also by an individual's dispositional traits. In this context, verbal aggression can function as a maladaptive emotion regulation mechanism, where individuals vent psychological tension through verbal attacks on others in digital spaces that are relatively safe from direct social sanctions. In addition to individual factors, social and cultural contexts also play a significant role in shaping online verbal aggression. A study by Eraslan and Kukuoglu (2019) showed that university students aged 18–24 have low legal awareness regarding aggression on social media, resulting in aggressive behavior often being considered normal or commonplace. Similar findings were also revealed by Domalewska (2025), who found that in tense socio-political situations, verbal aggression increases significantly and serves as a means of expressing collective anger. This suggests that verbal aggression can be a reflection of broader social dynamics, particularly in the context of ideological and political conflict.

CONCLUSION

Based on a systematic literature review of research published between 2015 and 2025, it can be concluded that verbal aggression in social media interactions is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon influenced by individual psychological factors, social dynamics, and the structural characteristics of digital media. Verbal aggression emerges as a form of expression of negative emotions, value conflicts, fanaticism, or a response to discourse polarization, which is reinforced by anonymity and minimal social control in online communication.

This research confirms that verbal aggression not only impacts the quality of social media interactions but also has serious implications for individual psychological well-being and broader social harmony. Furthermore, this research demonstrates the importance of strengthening digital literacy, focusing not only on technical skills in social media use but also on aspects of communication ethics, emotional regulation, and digital empathy. Educational institutions, particularly those targeting adolescents and young adults as social media users, need to integrate education on healthy communication and online conflict management into their curricula and character development programs. Furthermore, policymakers and social media platform managers are expected to develop more effective and equitable regulations and content moderation mechanisms to minimize the spread of verbal aggression without hindering freedom of expression.

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