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The Relationship Between Dominance and Cyber Dating Abuse in Dating as Early Adults

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Keywords

Abstract

Keywords: Cyber dating abuse, Dominance, Emerging Adulthood, Romantic Relationship Technology has various applications, including communication with partners. However, cyber dating abuse can negatively impact relationships. This behavior victimizes partners through online media and can stem from dominance in the relationship. Early adulthood is a time when individuals begin to engage in more intimate romantic relationships, which may increase the risk of cyber dating abuse. This correlational quantitative study aims to determine the relationship between dominance and cyber dating abuse in early adults who are dating. The sample consisted of 255 early adults who are dating and was selected using accidental sampling. The study employed the dominance and cyber dating abuse scale instruments for data collection, each comprising of 27 valid items. The reliability coefficient values for the dominance and cyber dating abuse scales were 0.913 and 0.970, respectively. The data was analyzed using Spearman Rho with a significance value (p) of 0.000 and a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.709. The analysis results indicate that dominance falls within the moderate category, while cyber dating abuse falls within the low category. Therefore, we can conclude that the hypothesis stating "There is a relationship between dominance and cyber dating abuse in early adults who are dating" is accepted. In other words, the higher the dominance in the relationship, the higher the cyber dating abuse in early adults who are dating, and vice versa.

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing prevalence of technology has had a profound impact on the widespread use of the internet in society. Technological advancements have enabled people to easily access information, engage in trade, acquire knowledge and entertainment, communicate more efficiently, and interact socially with others in their daily lives (Machimbarrena et al., 2018; Prabowo et al., 2021). The ease of communication enables individuals to exchange news and ideas without being hindered by distance or time (Paramesti & Nurdiarti, 2022). Communication is not limited to traditional methods such as telephone or SMS (Short Message Service), but also includes online social media. This freedom to express and share information allows for the sharing of data, photos, videos, and messages with others anytime and anywhere (Flach & Deslandes, 2017).

Couples in dating relationships utilize the ease of communication and interaction in the current era of technological development to maintain contact, express mutual feelings and affection, and improve intimacy (Coyne et al., 2011; Hertlein & Ancheta, 2014; Winata & Sanjaya, 2020). According to Lenhart, et al. (2015), online social media can foster a sense of connection between partners in a romantic relationship by allowing them to share daily activities and emotions. This is achieved through the use of technology.

However, behind these benefits and positives, the use of information and communication technology can also cause negative things that can affect and even endanger the relationship of dating couples. Information and communication technology can be a new medium for someone to be directly involved or even experience violent behavior in a dating relationship (Rodríguez-deArriba et al., 2021). Dating violence perpetrated through the medium of information and communication technology can be referred to as cyber dating abuse.

Cyber dating abuse is the behavior of controlling, harassing, stalking, and tormenting a partner through the help of technology and social media (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016). Celsi, et al. (2021) also defines cyber dating abuse as a form of abuse that occurs through the use of digital social networks and mobile phones with the aim of controlling partners, reducing their freedom, ridiculing them, defaming them, threatening them, or forcing them to engage in unwanted sexual activities.

Cyber dating abuse has unique characteristics when compared to face-to-face dating violence. Firstly, the perpetrator can easily abuse the victim in a public context, unlike face-to-face violence which is done in private. Secondly, victims of cyber dating abuse can feel embarrassed as the abuse can be done in public. Third, cyber dating abuse can occur easily, quickly, and continuously, even after the relationship has ended. Fourth, digital traces of cyber dating abuse can still be harmful to victims, who may feel the impact of the abuse again. Fifth, perpetrators can gain access to victims through social media or other technology at any time, even without physical or direct presence. Sixth, cyber dating abuse can occur anytime and anywhere, making it difficult for victims to leave or avoid it (Dannisworo et al., 2022; Peskin et al., 2017; Prabowo et al., 2021; Van Ouytsel et al., 2017; Zweig et al., 2014).

According to the 2022 Annual Record (CATAHU) data from Komnas Perempuan, it was found that throughout 2021, Komnas Perempuan received complaints of cases. Gender-based cyber violence (KSBG) against women in the personal sphere totaled 855 cases. The majority of these were dominated by cases of sexualized violence, where the second most common perpetrator was boyfriends (218 cases). In 2022, there were three types of cases: first, cyber harassment, which is the act of disturbing and humiliating the victim through technological intermediaries; second, malicious distribution, which is the act of spreading content that can damage the victim's good name; and third, sextortion, which is the act of forcibly extorting the victim by misusing the victim's intimate content (Komnas Perempuan, 2022).

Meanwhile, for the cases during 2022 in the annual report (CATAHU) published in 2023, it was stated that Komnas Perempuan received complaints of KSBG cases in the personal sphere as

many as 821 cases. The majority of these cases were also dominated by sexual violence with most perpetrators being ex-boyfriends (549 cases) and boyfriends (230 cases) (Komnas Perempuan, 2023).

Based on the data obtained, technology and online social media can be used to perpetrate violence against a partner. Furthermore, increased interaction in the digital world has led to the emergence of KSBG. KSBG by a romantic partner is often used as a means of control to dictate the actions of the victim. If the partner does not comply with the perpetrator's wishes, they may face threats, humiliation, and intimidation (Komnas Perempuan, 2022).

However, some individuals may commit aggressive and violent acts in dating relationships directly under the guise of humor or joke (Muñoz-Rivas et al., 2007). This justification is also used by the perpetrator of cyber dating abuse (Borrajo et al., 2015a), who may view their actions as trivial or normal behavior within a dating relationship. It is important to recognize that such behavior is not acceptable and can have serious consequences. Additionally, individuals may not always recognize when their actions towards their partner constitute violence (Ohnishi et al., 2011). This lack of awareness can also be present in cases of cyber dating abuse, where the perpetrator may not realize that their actions constitute abuse. Similarly, victims may not understand what cyber dating abuse entails, leading them to not recognize that they are being victimized.

The perpetrator's reasoning, followed by the ignorance and unawareness of both the perpetrator and victim regarding cyber dating abuse, is disheartening. This is because the impact on victims can be quite varied. Victims of cyber dating abuse may experience a range of negative emotions and behaviors, including worried, depression, feeling embarrassed, anxiety disorders, anger, low self-esteem, self-isolation, PTSD, and can even lead to suicidal behavior (Hikmatunnazah et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2021; Winata & Sanjaya, 2020).

The various impacts that can be caused along with the case data described above, it can be seen that the problem of cyber dating abuse in society is indeed a real and widespread phenomenon. The impacts of this issue are significant, and with the continuous development of information and communication technology, it is likely to increase. Therefore, further research on cyber dating abuse is crucial. Neglecting this issue may lead to an increase in cyber dating abuse in the future.

Upon further examination, it appears that cyber dating abuse is related to dominance. This is due to the fact that dominance in a romantic relationship can affect the dynamics of how the interactionel relationship between the two individuals. Additionally, individuals with high levels of dominance may experience lower levels of satisfaction in their romantic relationships (Choudhury & Minhaz, 2021).

Dominance is the exercise of control by one partner over the partner regarding decision-making, with the belief that they have the right to control their partner's life, and underestimating their partner's value (Luo, 2018). Research conducted by Esquivel-Santoveña et al. (2021) shows that high levels of dominance in romantic relationships may be associated with violent behavior. Dominance that exercised by someone in a romantic relationship can also make the partner feel that they have lack of autonomy over themselves and can lead to negative consequences in a relationship (Sadikaj et al., 2017), including violence between partners (Sugihara & Warner, 2002). Dominance in a relationship can also elad to physical and psychological violence by the dominant individual (Schnurr et al., 2013). According to Schnurr et al. (2013). individuals who exert dominance in a relationship can demand and threaten their partner in order to mainain the romantic relationship.

According to Linares et al. (2021), the risk of cyber dating abuse may increase during early adulthood due to the more intimate and serious nature of romantic relationships at this age, as well as the increased use of technology for communication with partners. Additionally, early adulthood is often characterized as a period of search, discovery, stabilization, and reproduction. During early adulthood, individuals may experience various problems and emotional tensions and is in a period of commitment (Putri, 2019), while also taking on heavier responsibilities, such as establishing more intimate romantic relationships.

Previous studies have explored the connection between dominance and violent behavior in dating relationships. Straus (2008) conducted research indicating that dominance in a relationship increases the risk of violence committed by the dominant individual to maintain their dominant position. Research by Lasley dan Durtschi (2017) found that dominance and jealousy are factors that can cause physical attacks in dating relationships in China and Taiwan. According to Lasley dan Durtschi (2017), individuals who exhibit dominant beliefs and behavior in a relationship may engage in minor or even severe attacks on their partners.

Considering the discussion of cyber dating abuse above, it is crucial to examine further about the correlation between dominance and cyber dating abuse behavior in young adults who are dating. This is due to the increasing use of information and communication technology, which leads to more frequent interactions and communication in cyberspace, including staying connected with one's partner. In addition, there are still many cases of violence against partners in Indonesia that occur in cyberspace, which is another reason for this research.

Furthermore, this research was conducted with the aim of finding out whether or not there is a correlation between dominance and cyber dating abuse among young adults who are dating. This study differs from previous research in its focus on the relationship between dominance and cyber dating abuse. The study is expected to contribute to the field of psychology by examining the relationship between dominance and cyber dating abuse in young adults who are dating. It can also be used as a reference for future research on similar topics. This research aims to provide information on dominance and cyber dating abuse for couples in dating relationships, particularly early adults, so hopefully cyber dating abuse can be anticipated.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational research design. There are two variables that are examined: dominance and cyber dating abuse. Dominance is defined as the tendency to exert control over others in all aspects. To measure the dominance variable, researchers used a measuring instrument based on Hamby's (1996) theory. The measuring instrument comprises of 27 items and three subscales: authority, restrictiveness, and disparagement. It uses a Likert-type scale with a score range of 1-4, where 1) Strongly Agree, 2) Agree, 3) Disagree, and 4) Strongly Disagree. Cyber dating abuse refers to the behavior of controlling and hurting partners through online social media intermediaries. The researchers developed a scale to measure cyber dating abuse based on Borrajo et al.'s (2015) theory. The scale has two dimensions: direct aggression and controlling/monitoring. It consists of 27 items and uses a Likert-type scale with a score range of 1-5 (1 = always, 2 = often, 3 = sometimes, 4 = rarely, and 5 = never). Content validity was used to test the validity of both scales, with two expert judgments for each scale. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability of the scale. The results indicate a reliability of 0.913 for the dominance scale and 0.970 for the cyber dating abuse scale.

The study included a sample of 255 young adults who were selected using the accidental sampling method. Sampling criteria required participants to be aged 18-25, have online social medias account, be in a romantic relationship, and actively use online social media to communicate with their partner. The study used Spearman Rho nonparametric correlation for data analysis using data processing software.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that there were 255 respondents in the study. The majority of respondents were women, accounting for 74.5% (190 people). In terms of age, the largest group of respondents were 22 years old, which accounted 28.2% (72 respondents). Finally, the highest number of

respondents had a high school or equivalent, with 64.7% (165 respondents). Most respondents (43.1%) have been in a relationship for 1-3 years.

Table 1. Research demographic data

Description	Category	Total	Percentage
Sex	Man	65	25,5%
	Woman	190	74,5%
Age	18 years old	11	4,3%
	19 years old	28	11%
	20 years old	41	16,1%
	21 years old	51	20%
	22 years old	72	28,2%
	23 years old	32	12,5%
	24 years old	11	4,3%
	25 years old	9	3,5%
Last education	High school	165	64,7%
	D3	8	3,1%
	D4	9	3,5%
	S1	73	28,6%
Length of dating	<1 year	92	36,1%
	1-3 year	110	43,1%
	3-5 year	39	15,3%
	>5 year	14	5,5%

Additionally, a normality test was performed using the One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov method. Data is considered normally distributed if the significance value is greater than 0.05 (Nuryadi, et al. 2017). The results of the normality test with One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov indicating that the dominance scale and cyber dating abuse both resulted in a normality test score of 0.000. The data distribution on both variables is not normally distributed, as the significance value (p) is less than 0.05 (p < 0.05).

The next stage is hypothesis testing using the Spearman's Rho method to determine if there is a relationship between dominance and cyber dating abuse in early adults who are dating. If the significance value is less than 0.05 (p < 0.05), it can be said that there is a relationship between these variables. The results of hypothesis testing in this study are presented below.

Table 2. Spearman's Rho hypothesis test results

		Correlations		
			Dominance	Cyber dating abuse
Spearman's	Dominance	Correlation	1.000	.709**
rho		Coefficient		
	-	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	-	N	255	255
	Cyber dating	Correlation	.709**	1.000
	abuse	Coefficient		
	-	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	-	N	255	255

Based on table 2 above, it can be seen that the significance value or sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000. Because the sig value. (2-tailed) 0.000 < 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the dominance variable and the cyber dating abuse variable.

Furthermore, the correlation coefficient between the dominance variable and the cyber dating abuse variable is 0.709. The correlation coefficient between the dominance variable and the cyber dating abuse variable is 0.709, indicating a strong positive correlation.

The correlation coefficient number in the above is positive (0.709), so that the relationship between the two variables is unidirectional. This suggests that as dominance increases, so does cyber dating abuse, and vice versa. Thus, the hypothesis stating that "there is a relationship between dominance and cyber dating abuse in early adults who are dating" is accepted.

Additionally, the study categorized data into high, moderate, and low for each variable. Data was also categorized for each variable dimension and subscale, in addition to general data categorization. The empirical mean calculation was performed for each variable, as well as for each variable dimension and subscale.

Table 3. Res	ults of data o	categorization	analysis of cy	vber dating	abuse variable

Variable and	Category	Interval Scor	Interval	Frequency	Percentage
Dimension					
Cyber dating abuse	High	$(\mu + \sigma) \leq X$	99 ≤ X	14	5,5%
	Moderate	$(\mu - \sigma) \le X < (\mu +$	63 ≤ X < 99	43	16,9%
		σ)			
	Low	Χ < (μ - σ)	X < 63	198	77,6%
Direct Aggression	High	$(\mu + \sigma) \leq X$	58,67 ≤ X	9	3,5%
	Moderate	$(\mu - \sigma) \le X < (\mu +$	37,33 ≤ X <	41	16,1%
		σ)	58,67		
	Low	Χ < (μ - σ)	X < 37,33	205	80,4%
Controlling/	High	$(\mu + \sigma) \leq X$	$40,33 \le X$	18	7,1%
monitoring	Moderate	$(\mu - \sigma) \le X < (\mu +$	25,67 ≤ X <	61	23,9%
		σ)	40,33		
	Low	Χ < (μ - σ)	X < 25,67	176	69%

Table 4. The results of the empirical mean of the cyber dating abuse variable

Variable and Dimension	Empirical Mean
Cyber dating abuse	50,79
Direct Aggression	27,71
Controlling/ monitoring	23,07

Based on the results of data categorization (Table 3) and the empirical mean (Table 4) of the cyber dating abuse variable, it is evident that the empirical mean of cyber dating abuse is 50.79, indicating that it falls within the low category (X < 63). Therefore, it can be concluded that 255 early adult respondents who are dating have committed cyber dating abuse in the low category.

In the direct aggression dimension, the empirical mean result is 27.71, which falls within the low category (X < 37.33). Similarly, in the controlling/monitoring dimension, the empirical mean result is 23.07, which also falls within the low category (X < 25.67).

The analysis of the cyber dating abuse variable indicates that the direct aggression dimension among young adults is low. These findings are consistent with Winata dan Sanjaya (2020) study on young adults in long-distance relationships, where the direct aggression dimension was also very low. The low direct aggression dimension indicates that early adults are capable of controlling their anger towards their partners on online social media. Romantic relationships among early adult couples tend to be more intimate and serious compared to those in adolescence. Upon entering early adulthood,

individuals tend to focus more on exploring their potential and affection within the relationship (Arnett, 2000).

According to Putri (2019), here are various developmental tasks and life problems experienced when entering early adulthood, but there is something that plays an important role in early adulthood, namely emotion regulation. Good emotional regulation enables early adults to control themselves when facing various problems related to developmental tasks, life demands, or romantic relationships. They will also be able to control their behavior and avoid acting aggressively towards their partners. This is consistent with Goldstein (2011) assertion that problems with emotion regulation in early adulthood can lead to aggressive behavior in romantic relationships.

Furthermore, the study found that the controlling/monitoring dimension also in the low category. This means that the controlling and privacy-infringing behaviors carried out by early adults in Indonesia towards their partners on online social media and communication devices (such as mobile phones) are in the low category. This low level of control may be due to a high level of trust or mutual trust in the partner. According to Ndombele (2017), trust is an important factor in romantic relationships. When trust is low in a relationship and partners suspect each other, there may be a desire to violate the other's privacy. This can include accessing their online social media accounts or communication devices.

Table 5. Results of data categorization analysis of dominance variable

Variable and Subscale	Category	Interval Scor	Interval	Frequency	Percentage
Dominance	High	$(\mu + \sigma) \leq X$	81 ≤ X	14	5,5%
	Moderate	$(\mu - \sigma) \le X < (\mu + \sigma)$	$54 \le X < 81$	140	54,9%
	Low	Χ < (μ - σ)	X < 54	101	39,6%
Authority	High	$(\mu + \sigma) \leq X$	24 ≤ X	16	6,3%
	Moderate	$(\mu - \sigma) \le X < (\mu + \sigma)$	$16 \le X < 24$	104	40,8%
	Low	Χ < (μ - σ)	X < 16	135	52,9%
Restrictiveness	High	$(\mu + \sigma) \leq X$	33 ≤ X	31	12,2%
	Moderate	$(\mu - \sigma) \le X < (\mu + \sigma)$	$22 \le X < 33$	154	60,4%
	Low	Χ < (μ - σ)	X < 22	70	27,5%
Disparagement	High	$(\mu + \sigma) \leq X$	$24 \leq X$	19	7,5%
	Moderate	$(\mu - \sigma) \le X < (\mu + \sigma)$	$16 \le X < 24$	118	46,3%
	Low	Χ < (μ - σ)	X < 16	118	46,3%

Table 6. The results of the empirical mean of dominance variable

Variable and Subscale	Empirical Mean
	-
Dominance	57,27
Authority	15 60
Authority	15,69
Restrictiveness	25,26
Disparagement	16,33

Based on the results of data categorization in table 5 and the empirical mean in table 6 for the dominance variable, it is evident that the empirical mean result for dominance is 57.27. This result indicates that the empirical mean in the moderate category, which ranges within the interval of $54 \le X < 81$. Therefore, it can be concluded that dominance among the 255 early adult respondents who are dating is moderate.

The results show that the empirical mean score for the authority subscale is 15.69, indicating a low category within the interval X < 16. The empirical mean score for the restrictiveness subscale is 25.26, indicating a moderate category within the interval $22 \le X < 33$. Lastly, the disparagement

subscale obtained an empirical mean score of 16.33. The results suggest that the mean score on the disparagement subscale is in the moderate category, with a range of $16 \le X < 24$.

The descriptive analysis of the dominance variable indicates that the authority subscale for young adults in dating relationships is low. Athority is related to how decisions are made in a relationship (Hamby, 2000). The study indicates that young adults who are dating believe in making joint decisions and having the right to express their opinions. Neither partner assumes the role of the ultimate decision-maker.

Additionally, the restrictiveness subscale in early adult dating falls is in the moderate category. The results indicate that many respondents believe they have the authority to restrict and limit their partner's actions, both in daily life and on social media platforms. This controlling behavior can take the form of forbidding partners from engaging in certain activities or communicating with specific individuals. Jealousy is often the underlying reason for this behavior (Hamby, 2000). Excessive jealousy in a partner can lead to restrictive behavior because they may disapprove of their partner's actions. This is supported by research Arifin dan Nurcahyanti (2023), which suggests that overly possessive and jealous individuals may limit their partner's activities and isolate them from their social circle.

The last subscale is disparagement. According to the data analysis results, the level of disparagement among young adults who are dating is also in the moderate category. This indicates that most respondents feel superior to their partners and often belittle or insult them, resulting in a negative view and assessment of their partners. Disparagement is a sign of an unhealthy relationship because couples should be able to grow and love each other instead of demeaning their partners (Arifin & Nurcahyanti, 2023). According to McKibbin et al. (2007), a person may belittle and demean their partner to keep them in the relationship. Continuous disparagement can lead to negative impacts, such as feelings of low self-esteem. When a partner develops feelings of low self-esteem and lack of self-worth, they may feel dependent on the dominating party and choose to remain in the relationship.

The correlation coefficient value in the hypothesis test is positive. The study found a direct proportional relationship between variable X and variable Y. Specifically, a higher dominance in the dating relationship was associated with a higher appearance of cyber dating abuse behavior, while a lower dominance was associated with a lower appearance of cyber dating abuse.

These results are consistent with previous research conducted by Schnurr et al., (2013), which also found a relationship between dominance and cyber aggression. To maintain power in the relationship, the dominant party may attempt to dominate their partner by attacking them online through online social media intermediaries or by using communication tools such as cell phones. This aggression is often a result of the partner's refusal to comply with the dominant party's demands. The dominant party may take various actions against their partner in cyberspace, such as blocking their partner's relationship with their friends on social media (by unfollowing or blocking certain individuals) and restricting their partner's interactions and posts on social media.

Furthermore, the dominant party may use threats to intimidate their partner, leading them to remain silent and comply with their demands (Ola et al., 2023). As a result, victims of cyber dating abuse often choose not to disclose the actions of their partners. Mas'udah et al. (2023) also noted that individuals who are dominating in a dating relationship will always try to keep their partner organized and under control. Additionally, individuals may become blinded by love in a romantic relationship, commonly referred to as being a "love slave" or "bucin". This can lead to a willingness to comply with their partner's desires and demands, even if they are domineering. Mas'udah et al. (2023) stated that in a dominant relationship, one party may have a desire to control the other, leading to the possibility of manipulation and obedience to orders and desires.

The person who is dominant in the relationship may display possessive behaviors toward their partner, such as constantly demanding attention, checking their partner's phone or social media, sending frequent messages and calls to know their whereabouts, becoming emotional, violating their

partner's privacy, making assumptions about their partner, and imposing restrictions on their partner's activities or communication with others (Ola et al., 2023).

The prevalence of cyber dating abuse in romantic relationships is not solely influenced by dominance. Yanti et al. (2023) stated that other factors, such as ethics in social media and digital literacy, can also contribute to the emergence of cyber dating abuse. While technology and the internet offer many benefits for humans, including in terms of establishing romantic relationships with partner. However, it is important to be aware and acknowledge the potential negative impacts that can arise. To minimize cyber dating abuse behavior, it is crucial for individuals to understand how to behave ethically on online social media. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider additional factors that may predict cyber dating abuse behavior in Indonesia, including the duration of the relationship (Guedes et al., 2022), problematic smartphone usage (Linares et al., 2021), parenting (Tussey et al., 2021), and the amount of time spent on social media platforms (Van Ouytsel et al., 2018).

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that dominance is a predictor of cyber dating abuse behavior. The relationship between dominance and cyber dating abuse is positive, meaning that higher dominance in a relationship is associated with higher levels of cyber dating abuse. And vice versa. In Indonesia, cyber dating abuse among young adults is categorized as low, but the level of dominance in relationships is moderate. This indicates that the existence of dominance in a romantic relationship can create a vulnerability for cyber dating abuse to occur. As a result, future research could explore this topic further.

It is important to note that this study has limitations, such as the lack of references to previous research on the relationship between dominance and cyber dating abuse, particularly for research conducted in Indonesian. This study can provide references for future researchers who are interested in similar topics in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Based on the descriptive analysis of each variable, the results indicate that cyber dating abuse is generally in the low category. This may be due to early adult awareness or knowledge related to cyber dating abuse behavior. Meanwhile, the descriptive analysis of the dominance variable shows a moderate level. The hypothesis analysis results indicate a correlation between dominance and cyber dating abuse in early adults who are dating. Conversely, lower levels of dominance correspond to lower levels of cyber dating abuse. Specifically, higher levels of dominance in the relationship correspond to higher levels of cyber dating abuse.

Cyber dating abuse in early adults in Indonesia is indeed in the low category. However, the level of dominance in the relationship is in the moderate category. This shows that the presence of dominance in a relationship may create a vulnerability for cyber dating abuse to occur. As a result, future researchers may wish to explore this further by examining its relationship with other variables.

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