



The Effect of Schadenfreude on Verbal Aggressiveness in Rival Manchester United Fans on Social Media Twitter

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Keywords

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Abstract

Verbal aggression often arises when football fans witness the downfall of rival teams. A frequent phenomenon associated with verbal aggression is the relationship between Manchester United supporters and the fans of rival English Premier League clubs. This phenomenon is driven by feelings of schadenfreude, which can motivate football fans to express verbal aggression toward Manchester United fans. The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of schadenfreude on verbal aggression among rival fans of Manchester United on Twitter. The research adopts a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The sampling technique employed is non-probability sampling using convenience sampling. The study utilizes the schadenfreude scale and the verbal aggressiveness scale as instruments. The sample consists of 363 respondents, all of whom are Manchester United's rival fans on Twitter. Data analysis was performed using simple linear regression, which resulted in an F value of 449.978 and a significance level of 0.000. Based on these findings, the hypothesis, "There is an influence of schadenfreude on verbal aggression among Manchester United's rival fans on Twitter," is accepted.

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INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the most popular sports in Indonesia. According to Data Indoneisa (2014), out of 1847 respondents, 74% have watched football, where football is mostly watched by men with a percentage of 83% and female audiences as much as 63%. The data above illustrate the enthusiasm of the Indonesian people for watching football matches. Football sports usually have a fan base that will usually do anything to support their favorite football club, therefore there is a term that football fans are the 12th player for a football club. Big European clubs have fanatical fan groups spread worldwide (Nasution, 2017), including Manchester United. Manchester United club is one of the clubs that have the most football fans in the world, with 30 million followers on the international Twitter official account and as many as one million followers on the Indonesian Twitter official account, manchester united is the most discussed club on social media Twitter (2020). Manchester United has this much popularity due to the achievements made by the team based at Old Trafford, since the Premier League League rolled out in 1992, Manchester United became the team that won the most English Premier League trophies with 13 trophies (Premier League, 2024).

Manchester United's success can be a good identity for Manchester United fans, but rival Manchester United fans are not happy with the success achieved by the club and Manchester United fans. According to Dalakas, Malcom, and Sreboth (2015), fans of a sports team or club will provide support to their favorite club through socially acceptable behavior, but in some conditions, extreme fanaticism can lead to dangerous behavior. Inappropriate or dangerous behavior in football fan groups arises because of the desire to see their favorite club win a match. Dalakas and Melancon (2012), said that fans will be happy to watch their favorite club win and see rival clubs lose, this condition is similar to the concept of *schadenfreude*. *Schadenfreude* is a form of emotion or feeling of pleasure when seeing others experience a fall or misfortune (Van Dijk & ouwerkerk, 2014). *Schadenfreude* in the context of sport arises because of the competition and also the long rivalry between football clubs. This condition can create a group identity of fans to distinguish which groups are outsiders and which groups are their own. This group identification can also lead to hostility between groups so that *schadenfreude* can arise. Smith, Powell, Combs, and Schurtz (2009), say that *schadenfreude* can arise due to 3 things including; 1) *Schadenfreude* arises because it benefits from the misfortune of the outgroup; 2) *Schadenfreude* arises because there is a feeling of entitlement or fairness; 3) *Schadenfreude* arises because of a feeling of envy.

Schadenfreude in intergroup relationships can further motivate a person to commit aggressiveness. Cikara and Fiske (2011) examined how fans of two competing baseball clubs responded, the results showed that fans of baseball clubs who experienced defeat felt pain with increased activity in the anterior cingulate cortex, a part of the brain related to physical and social pain. The opposite occurred when seeing the rival team lose, there was a feeling of pleasure with increased activity in the ventral striatum. Further research suggests that the pleasure of seeing a rival team lose correlates with aggressiveness. Buss & Perry (1992) classify aggressiveness as physical and verbal, active and passive, direct and indirect. The three classifications each interact with each other, resulting in other forms of aggressiveness.

Verbal aggressiveness is an activity carried out to hurt or injure other living things driven to avoid treatment (Baron and Byrne, 2005; Berkowitz, 2009). Forms of verbal aggressiveness behavior are swearing, reproaches, insults, and threats from words (Berkowitz, 2009). Verbal aggressiveness according to Bandura (2011), is a behavior influenced by the social learning process, which means that someone can bring up verbal aggressiveness behavior due to the influence of their environment. One of the phenomena regarding verbal aggressiveness in football fans occurs in Manchester United. Rival fans are against Manchester United fans on Twitter and social media. In 2020, Manchester United became the most frequently discussed club on the Twitter social media platform. Manchester United's success in winning 13 English league cups puts Manchester United fans in a superior position compared to fans of other Premier

League clubs. Manchester United's success began to decline since they last won the English League Cup in the 2012/2013 season and since then Manchester United has experienced misfortune. Rival fans who see Manchester United's downfall see this feeling of *schadenfreude* because rival fans see this as an advantage to increase their self-assessment so that they become a superior group by committing verbal aggressiveness (Smith et al., 2009).

An example of a case in this situation is when one football fan's Twitter account created a meme that could provoke Premier League club fans to mock and make fun of Manchester United fans, then there was a Liverpool fanbase club account that popularized the term *Munyuk* to mock Manchester United fans. The verbal aggressiveness that occurred between Manchester United fans and rival Manchester United fans was exacerbated by the anonymous nature of Twitter's social media. Watiningsih (2020) explains that social media provides anonymity to a person so that he can express the contents of his head without social control so that football fans are easier to carry out verbal aggressiveness. Football fans who experience fanaticism tend not to be balanced by good self-control (Ro'uf & Nurwadana, 2023).

Poor self-control makes football fans easy to provoke. It is not surprising that a fan will experience the emotion of *schadenfreude* and be motivated to commit verbal aggressiveness. Shah and Tee (2019), revealed that group identification will form a competition to defend the group, when the inferior group of football fans sees the misfortune of the superior group of fans experiencing a fall, then the person will experience *schadenfreude* and the emotion of *schadenfreude* can motivate someone to commit verbal aggressiveness (Cikara, 2015). Based on the description above, researchers are interested in researching the influence of *schadenfreude* on verbal aggressiveness in Manchester United fans. Researchers suspect that *schadenfreude* can motivate a rival Manchester United fan to commit verbal aggressiveness against Manchester United fans. The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is an effect of *schadenfreude* on verbal aggressiveness in Manchester United's rival fans on Twitter social media.

METHOD

This study uses quantitative research with a correlational research design (Sugiyono, 2013). This study had 363 subjects as respondents. The criteria in this study are someone with a minimum age of 18 years, Twitter social media users, fans of the English League soccer team or EPL, and fans of Manchester United rivals. The sampling approach in this study is non-probability sampling with a convenient sampling technique. Verbal Aggression is an action or behavior carried out to mentally injure others and is usually carried out with sound, writing, and image media (Straus & Sweet, 1992). Verbal aggressiveness is measured using the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale (VAS) measuring instrument using aspects from Infante and Wigle (1986) which have been translated by Bimantara (2018).

This scale uses a Likert scale with 4 answer options. *Schadenfreude* is a form of emotion in the form of feeling happy or happy seeing the misfortune of other people, or other groups. *Schadenfreude* is a condition where a person does not have empathy when seeing other people's misfortunes. *Schadenfreude* is measured using a measuring instrument developed by Alison Baren (2017) using aspects from Wang (2019) such as Deservingness (concern for justice), Envy (concern for self-evaluation), and Intergroup (concern for group identity). This measuring instrument uses a Likert scale with 4 answer options. This research scale is tested for validity and reliability through a measuring instrument tryout. The validity test on both scales uses the Pearson Product Moment item difference test, where the correlation value of the item difference $r_{count} > 0.279$ is obtained. for the *schadenfreude* measuring instrument there are 28 valid question items and the verbal aggressiveness measuring instrument is 34 valid question items.

The reliability test on the *schadenfreude* measuring instrument and the verbal aggressiveness measuring instrument is seen from the alpha Chronbach value with the *schadenfreude* scale getting a value of 0.911 and a verbal aggressiveness scale of 0.906. The data analysis technique used in this study is simple linear regression analysis technique In simple linear regression analysis technique, 3 assumption

tests are needed including normality test, linearity test, and heteroscedasticity test. The simple linear regression analysis technique is used to measure the amount of influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the field findings, respondents were divided into several categories based on gender, age, and favorite English league football club. The following data is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Description of research subjects based on categorization (N=363)

Classification	Amount	Percentage
Gender		
Male	313	86 %
Female	50	14 %
Age (Year)		
18-25	242	67 %
26-33	97	27 %
34-41	18	18 %
42-50	6	2 %
Favourite Club		
Arsenal	146	40 %
Chelsea	35	10 %
Liverpool	77	21 %
Manchester City	97	27 %
Tottenham Hotspurs	8	2 %

Before testing the hypothesis, an assumption test is carried out where in simple linear regression analysis 3 assumption tests are carried out, namely normality test, linearity test, and heteroscedasticity test. A normality test is an assumption test conducted to determine whether the data is normally distributed or not. Research data is said to be normally distributed if the sig value > 0.005. The normality test in this study used the Kolmogrov-Smirnov test. The normality test results can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Kolmogrov-Smirnov normality test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		363
Normal Parameters	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	10.41323713
Most Extreme Differences	Absoulte	.038
	Positive	.038
	Negative	-.037
Test Statistic		.038
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0.200

From the table above, the significance value is $0.200 > 0.05$, so it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed. The next assumption test is the linearity test. This test is conducted to determine whether the relationship between variables is linear. A data is said to be linear if the deviation of linearity value > 0.05 . The results of the linearity test can be seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Linearity Test

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Agresivitas Verbal Schadenfreude	Between Groups	(Combined) Linearity	55839.166	59	946.427	8.866	.000
		Deviation from Liniearity	48928.798	1	48928.798	458.377	.000
			6910.368	58	119.144	1.116	.276
	Within Groups		32343.286	303	106.744		
	Total		88182.452	362			

From the table above, the Deviation from the Linearity value is $0.276 > 0.05$, so it can be concluded that the data is linear. The last assumption test for simple linear regression analysis is the heteroscedasticity test. Good data is data that does not experience symptoms of heteroscedasticity. Data that does not experience symptoms of heteroscedasticity if the significance value > 0.05 . The results of the heteroscedasticity test can be seen in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Heteroscedasticity Test

Unstandardized Coefficient			Standardized Coefficient		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.913	2.011		2.443	.015
Schadenfreude	.044	.029	.080	1.516	.130

From the table above, the significance value is $0.130 > 0.05$, so it can be concluded that the data does not show symptoms of heteroscedasticity. After all assumption tests are met, then enter the hypothesis test. This study in testing the hypothesis uses simple linear regression analysis techniques, in this technique several statistical calculation results appear in the form of regression coefficient determination tests, regression equations, and hypothesis testing. The first statistical result that appears in the hypothesis test is the linear regression equation. This equation describes the relationship model of the independent variable to the dependent variable. The linear regression equation can be formulated as follows:

$$Y = a + bX$$

Y = dependent variable X = independent variable

a = constant intercept

b = regression coefficient

This linear regression equation describes the relationship between schadenfreude as a predictor variable to verbal aggressiveness as the dependent variable. The results of the simple linear regression equation in table

Table 5. Simple linear regression equation

Unstandardized Coefficient			Standardized Coefficient		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	12.793	3.110		4.114	.000
Schadenfreude	.951	.045	.745	21.213	.000

The results of the data processing above obtained a linear regression equation formula, from the equation can be translated as follows:

$$Y = 12.793 + 0.951X$$

- The constant of 12.793 means that the consistent value of the participation variable is 12.793.
- The regression coefficient X is 0.951, stating that for every 1% increase in the value of schadenfreude, the participation value increases by 0.951. The regression coefficient is positive, so it can be said that the direction of the influence of variable X on variable Y is positive.

The second statistical result obtained in hypothesis testing is the regression coefficient determination test. This determination test aims to determine the amount of influence of the predictor variable on the dependent variable. The results of the regression coefficient determination test can be seen in Table 6 below:

Table 6. Regression coefficient determination test results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of The Estimate
1	.745	.555	.554	10.428

The results of data processing show the coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.555 or 55.5%, meaning that the amount of influence of schadenfreude on verbal aggressiveness in this study is 55.5%, while 44.5% is influenced by other variables not included in the study. The last statistical result is hypothesis testing, where this test aims to determine whether the research hypothesis is accepted or rejected. The hypothesis in this study is that there is an effect of schadenfreude on verbal aggressiveness in Manchester United's rival fans on Twitter social media. The hypothesis is accepted if the significance value is <0.05 . The results of hypothesis testing can be seen in Table 7 below:

Table 7. Regression coefficient determination test results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	48928.798	1	48928.798	449.978	.000 ^b
	Residual	39253.654	361	108.736		
	Total	88182.452	362			

From the table above, the F value is 449.978 and the significance value is $0.000 < 0.005$, it can be concluded that the hypothesis “the effect of schadenfreude on verbal aggressiveness in Manchester United rival fans on Twitter social media” is accepted. This study not only conducts inferential tests but also descriptive tests, where this test aims to describe the phenomena that occur in research subjects. The descriptive test in this study tries to describe the phenomenon of schadenfreude and verbal aggressiveness in Manchester United's rival fans. The results of the descriptive test of the two variables will be described in table 8 and in table 9 below:

Table 8. Descriptive test results of schadenfreude

Interval Score	Interval	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
$X < (\mu - 1,0 \sigma)$	$X < 56$	Low	49	13.5%
$(\mu - 1,0 \sigma) < X \leq (\mu + 1,0 \sigma)$	$56 < X \leq 81$	Moderate	266	73.3%
$(\mu + 1,0 \sigma) < X$	$81 < X$	High	48	13.2%
Total			363	100%

Table 9. Descriptive test results of verbal aggressiveness

Interval Score	Interval	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
$X < (\mu - 1,0 \sigma)$	$X < 62$	Low	54	14.9%
$(\mu - 1,0 \sigma) < X \leq (\mu + 1,0 \sigma)$	$62 < X \leq 93$	Moderate	250	68.9%
$(\mu + 1,0 \sigma) < X$	$93 < X$	High	59	16.3%
Total			363	100%

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of schadenfreude on verbal aggressiveness in rival Manchester United fans on social media Twitter. The results of this study indicate that the hypothesis “the effect of schadenfreude on verbal aggressiveness in Manchester United rival fans on Twitter social media is accepted. The descriptive test results in Table 8 and Table 9 show the average level of schadenfreude and verbal aggressiveness in respondents at a moderate level with schadenfreude of 73.3% and verbal aggressiveness of 68.9%. The results of this descriptive test indicate that the feelings of schadenfreude experienced by Manchester United's rival fans and the verbal aggressiveness of Manchester United's rival fans are dynamic. The results of this study are in line with a statement that schadenfreude affects the emergence of verbal aggressiveness behavior at the intergroup relationship level (Cikara, 2015). Individuals who join a group will identify themselves as part of the group so that one's self-identity will be mixed with group identity. Everyone who is part of a group will try to maintain their group identity to be superior to outside groups, therefore competition arises.

Groups that are competing with other groups will automatically give rise to feelings of schadenfreude. An emotion, such as schadenfreude, can stimulate the emergence of group behavior, so schadenfreude can be one of the motivations for a group to carry out verbal aggressiveness against the outgroup if it can be done to defend. The competition factor is not only the only factor that can make schadenfreude a motivation for verbal aggressiveness behavior but also the self-esteem of a football fan. Someone will feel inferior when his favorite team does not have a better achievement than the rival team, and someone who experiences feelings of inferiority usually has low self-esteem and will tend to commit verbal aggressiveness in order to maintain his fragile self-esteem caused by feelings of inferiority (Istanti and Yuniardi, 2018). Lange et al (2018), explain that someone who feels inferior will show the emotion of schadenfreude when watching others experience misfortune

When someone experiences *schadenfreude* they see an opportunity to protect their fragile self-esteem by committing verbal aggressiveness. *Schadenfreude* not only motivates the emergence of verbal aggressiveness behavior as a form of maintaining group pride but also as a way to improve the evaluation of group identity. The football fan group will feel inferior when their favorite team does not have a brilliant achievement than Manchester United. When they see Manchester United fall, the emotion of *schadenfreude* will appear. Those who witnessed Manchester United's downfall see this as an opportunity to increase their group identity evaluation by verbally attacking Manchester United fans (van Dijk et al., 2015).

The results of this study show that although *schadenfreude* is considered a passive form of emotion, this emotion can provide motivation to carry out verbal aggressiveness attacks. The results of this study contradict the results of research such as Leach (2015) and Roseman and Steele (2018), which state that *schadenfreude* does not influence the emergence of aggressiveness due to the passive nature of *schadenfreude* feelings so that the possibility of verbal aggressiveness does not occur. Both studies did not look at factors of verbal aggressiveness such as self-esteem or self-control that could connect the *schadenfreude* variable with the verbal aggressiveness variable.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been done, it can be concluded that a soccer fan who commits verbal aggressiveness against his rival has a feeling of *schadenfreude* when he sees the downfall or misfortune of his team and rival fans. *Schadenfreude* which motivates a person to commit verbal aggressiveness is influenced by self-esteem factors due to inferior social status. The direction of the influence of the *schadenfreude* variable on verbal aggressiveness is positive, which means that the greater a person experiences the emotion of *schadenfreude*, the person's chance of committing verbal aggressiveness. Future research is expected to develop research themes by adding several mediating variables or measuring several *schadenfreude* motivations such as self-identity, as well as providing variation in the type of this research, this research design, population and subject for this research.

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