

## **Preventing Cyberbullying In Private Spaces: The Role Of Communication Ethics In Maintaining Courtesy, Self-Control, And Harmony Of Interactions In Whatsapp Groups: Approaches To Privacy, Trust, Tolerance, Digital Compliance, And Social Impact**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study aims to analyze the role of communication ethics in preventing cyberbullying in digital private spaces, especially WhatsApp groups. The approaches used include privacy, trust, tolerance, digital compliance, and social impacts on interaction harmony. The phenomenon of cyberbullying, which often occurs in the form of teasing, sarcasm, and the spread of personal information, can trigger serious psychological impacts such as anxiety, stress, and social isolation. This research method is qualitative descriptive with limited experiments. Data were obtained through surveys, observations, and in-depth interviews with 109 respondents at the Medan Aviation Polytechnic, 62 of whom were on campus, and 47 of whom were undergoing on-the-job training. Interventions in the form of digital literacy education, strengthening privacy policies, tolerance campaigns, and active moderation were carried out to reduce the potential for conflict and improve communication ethics. The results showed a decrease in cyberbullying by 20%, a decrease in emotional conflict by 40%, and an increase in awareness of communication ethics by 35%. In addition, trust between members increased significantly, creating a safer, more conducive, and more harmonious communication space.*

**Keywords:** Cyberbullying, Communication Ethics, Privacy, Tolerance

### **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid development of communication technology has facilitated interaction through platforms such as WhatsApp. WhatsApp's group feature allows communication in groups, whether for academic, professional, or social purposes. However, unwise use can trigger cyberbullying that threatens privacy, trust, and communication harmony. Cyberbullying is an act of intimidation or bullying carried out in digital space, such as rude taunts, taunts, insults, and the unauthorized dissemination of personal information. In an academic context, this phenomenon can have an impact on:

- Psychological: Increases anxiety, depression, and loss of self-confidence.
- Social: Causes isolation and conflict in social circles.
- Academic: Reduces concentration in learning and productivity.

This study proposes the application of communication ethics as a solution. Principles such as politeness, self-control, and tolerance are expected to create a safe, productive, and harmonious communication space. The approach of privacy, trust, and digital compliance is an important element in suppressing the potential for cyberbullying.

### **METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach complemented by limited experiments. This approach was chosen to explore in depth the phenomena that occur while providing a

comprehensive understanding of the application of communication ethics in efforts to prevent cyberbullying in private digital spaces, such as WhatsApp groups. The research process includes observation, in-depth interviews, and controlled experiments to evaluate changes that occur after the implementation of the intervention.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of communication ethics in preventing cyberbullying in WhatsApp groups through the approaches of privacy, trust, tolerance, digital compliance, and social impact. Data were obtained through surveys, observations, in-depth interviews, and limited experiments over a period of 2 weeks.

### Survey Results

The survey was conducted on 109 respondents consisting of 62 students who were on campus, and 47 students who were undergoing on the job training. The survey results can be seen in the following table:

**Table 1. Results of the Survey of Awareness and Communication Behavior in WhatsApp Groups**

Indicator	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Change (%)
Cyberbullying (Sarcastic, Taunting)	35%	15%	-20%
Emotional Conflict	50%	10%	-40%
Unauthorized Disclosure of Personal Information	25%	5%	-20%
Digital Communication Ethics Awareness	45%	80%	+35%
Trust Between Members	30%	70%	+40%

### Table Explanation:

- Cyberbullying decreased by 20% after the introduction of communication ethics rules and digital literacy education.
- Emotional conflicts decreased drastically by 40% due to the implementation of active moderation and communication control.
- The spread of personal information was reduced from 25% to 5% due to the implementation of privacy policies.
- Awareness of communication ethics increased significantly by 35% through digital literacy workshops and socialization.
- Trust between group members increased from 30% to 70% after the privacy policy was implemented.

### Observation Results

Observations were conducted for 2 weeks by monitoring communication patterns in student WhatsApp groups. The results of the observations were divided into two stages:

#### Pre-Intervention Stage:

- **Free Communication:** The majority of group members tend to ignore communication ethics, such as the use of harsh words, sarcasm, and teasing.
- **Conflict:** Academic discussions often turn into emotional debates.
- **Disclosure of Personal Information:** As many as 25% of group members reported that their personal information was shared without permission.

#### **Post-Intervention Phase:**

- **Ethical Compliance:** Communication in the group becomes more polite and controlled. Members avoid using provocative language.
- **Respect for Privacy:** Members are more careful about sharing other people's personal information.
- **Harmony of Interaction:** Academic discussions become more productive with up to 40% reduction in conflict.

#### **In-depth Interview Results**

Interviews were conducted with 10 key respondents who experienced significant changes after the intervention. Some interview excerpts are as follows:

1. **Respect for Privacy:**  
*"In the past, my personal information was often shared without permission. Now, the group rules prohibit that, and everything is much more comfortable."*(Respondent 3)
2. **Emotional Control:**  
*"At first I often argued without thinking. After there was education about communication ethics, I controlled my emotions better."*(Respondent 7)
3. **Trust and Harmony:**  
*"I feel like the group is safer now. Discussions are more productive without the fear of being embarrassed."*(Respondent 9)

#### **Effectiveness of Communication Ethics in Preventing Cyberbullying**

A 20% decrease in cyberbullying incidents shows that the application of communication ethics is effective in creating a healthy digital space. The principles of politeness, self-control, and tolerance change the mindset of group members so that they are more careful in communicating. Poltekbang Medan with a parenting pattern with the values of *Silih Asah*, *Silih Asih*, *Silih Asuh* which have the following meanings: *Silih Asah* is mutually enlightening knowledge, sharing information and sharing knowledge, *Silih Asih* is an attitude of mutual affection, *Silih Asuh* is mutually guiding and protecting each other. These values are applied by the academic community to build an academic atmosphere that can foster and develop collaboration, communication, creativity, innovation, digital literacy, concern for the environment, integrity, honesty, discipline and ethics for Medan Aviation Polytechnic Cadets (Donna, Caesar Akbar, Erwin Lumban Gaol, 2023). Preventing cyberbullying is in line with the parenting pattern at Poltekbang Medan

In addition, previous studies have shown that developing creativity through extracurricular activities in civil service schools can contribute to increasing awareness of communication ethics and the formation of more disciplined and responsible characters. In this context, strengthening communication ethics not only serves to prevent cyberbullying, but also creates a healthier and more harmonious digital environment. Extracurricular activities based on

collaboration and social learning have been shown to improve interpersonal skills and strengthen individual awareness in interacting more ethically in the digital space.

### **Causes of Cyberbullying in Whatsapp Groups**

Based on Wulandah (2023) and research from Patchin & Hinduja (2012), cyberbullying occurs due to several factors:

1. Lack of Digital Ethics Awareness: Students do not understand basic netiquette in communicating.
2. Dominance of Certain Groups: When certain individuals or groups force their opinions or ridicule minority groups.
3. Anonymity: Even though WhatsApp has user identities, individuals often feel “brave” when typing without direct interaction (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).
4. Unfiltered Communication: Uncontrolled emotions often pour out spontaneously in group chat rooms.

### **The Role of Privacy and Trust in Building Harmony**

Strengthening privacy policies plays a big role in building trust between members. Data shows an increase in trust from 30% to 70% after privacy is well maintained.

#### **Explanation:**

- When privacy is respected, members feel safer to participate in discussions.
- The “No Sharing Without Consent” policy effectively prevents the spread of personal information.

Trust and privacy are the basis for building harmonious social interactions.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study aims to analyze the role of communication ethics in preventing cyberbullying in digital private spaces, especially in WhatsApp groups. Based on the results of research that has been conducted through surveys, observations, interviews, and limited interventions, it can be concluded that:

1. The implementation of communication ethics that include politeness, self-control, and tolerance has proven effective in reducing cyberbullying incidents in WhatsApp groups. A 20% decrease in cyberbullying cases shows that the implementation of strict communication ethics principles can create a healthier and safer digital environment. Education on communication ethics, strengthening privacy policies, and active moderation by group admins play a major role in reducing conflict and the spread of personal information without permission.
2. Before the intervention, the level of awareness of communication ethics was at 45%, but increased significantly to 80% after the intervention. This shows the importance of digital literacy education and the implementation of privacy policies in increasing group members' compliance with healthy communication ethics. Trust between members also increased significantly, from 30% to 70%, creating a more harmonious communication atmosphere. The factors of togetherness and kinship have the potential to create an environment conducive to growth and development (Sukarwoto and M Caesar Akbar, 2023). Togetherness can strengthen the sense of solidarity and cohesion between cadets, so that

they can work together in facing academic and non-academic challenges (Sukarwoto and M Caesar Akbar, 2023).

3. The privacy policies implemented in WhatsApp groups, such as the prohibition of sharing personal information without permission, have succeeded in reducing the incidence of sharing personal information from 25% to 5%. In addition, active moderation carried out by group admins in monitoring communication behavior also contributes to creating more productive and controlled communication.
4. The decrease in cyberbullying cases has a positive impact on the mental health of group members, reducing anxiety and stress that often arise from digital conflict. Socially, this creates a more harmonious interaction space and improves the quality of more productive discussions, especially in academic contexts. A 40% decrease in emotional conflict shows that communication ethics can facilitate more constructive discussions. In addition, a positive environment can have a positive impact on cadets so that they can increase their creativity. The importance of creativity in learning or the cadet system includes: Creativity is useful in transferring more specific information. Creativity is useful in stimulating more scientific thinking in observing and imagining which will later become the object of study in learning, Creative products between cadets will stimulate the creativity of other colleagues, so that they can innovate together. Factors that influence creativity are internal factors (emotional and psychological factors) and external factors (social and cultural environment).

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