Parents' Perception of Verbal Violence in Lolly Memes on Social Media

Nabila Frika Izza Sabrina [1,a)], Ade Kusuma [2,b)]

[1,2] Communication Science Dept, UPN Veteran Jawa Timur, Surabaya, Indonesia

[a)] Corresponding author: 21043010032@student.upnjatim.ac.id
[b)] ade_kusuma.ilkom@upnjatim.ac.id

Abstract. Social media plays a significant role in shaping new trends. One of them is memes that become popular in online media. Memes often appear as entertainment messages in edited content, such as images, videos, text, or other forms. One that went viral was a parody of a feud between a mother who is an Indonesian celebrity and a child, known as the Lolly meme. The Lolly meme often contains harsh and inappropriate words, so it can potentially have a negative impact, especially on children vulnerable to being exposed to such content. This study aims to identify the perceptions of parents who have children of the alpha generation towards verbal violence in the memes circulating on social media. This study is a qualitative descriptive study. Data was collected using documentation, literature studies, and in-depth interviews with informants consisting of parents with children of the alpha generation. This study uses the theory of social construction of reality and the theory of technological determinism. The results of the study show that parents tend to worry about their children being exposed to verbal violence in the Lolly meme. Children or the alpha generation are very susceptible to messages that are currently popular on social media, such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube shorts. Children also need to be able to get an adequate understanding of the content. Therefore, the role of parents in providing clear explanations and knowledge regarding this phenomenon is very important to reduce the potential negative impacts that can be caused by verbal violence content on social media. Parents need to pay more attention in supervising and accompanying children when accessing social media, as well as providing appropriate education regarding safe and appropriate content for their age.

Keywords: memes, social media, verbal violence

INTRODUCTION

Social media provides easy access to information quickly so that users can follow the latest information directly. Based on the 2024 Indonesian Digital Data from Hootsuite (We Are Social), of the population of 276.4 million, around 60.4% are active social media users to seek information (83.1%), communicating (70.9%), finding inspiration (70.6%), filling their free time (62.9%), following the news (61.1%), and watching entertainment content (60.6%) (Thompson, 2024). Social media has a significant role in forming and spreading trends through popular platforms in Indonesia, such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube. Creative content such as short videos, memes, music, and blogs are widely distributed on these platforms, supported by algorithms prioritizing popular content based on the number of likes, shares, and comments. This algorithm displays content according to user interests, accelerating the virality of a trend. In addition, trends are often influenced by public figures, such as celebrities and influencers, who have significant influence among their followers (Hoffman & Novak, 2018).

In September 2024, the feud between public figures Nikita Mirzani and her daughter, Lolly, became the focus of netizens and went viral on social media. The conflict that initially stemmed from family problems developed into a broad topic of discussion in the digital public space, covering issues such as Lolly's open endorsement while studying abroad and the conflict with her boyfriend. Both of them openly expressed their feelings and defenses on social media. At the end of September 2024, a video of Lolly getting angry and using harsh and inappropriate words again attracted the attention of netizens. The video sparked interactions and comments that showed bias towards Nikita and Lolly. The many spotlights made the video of Lolly getting angry, which was often watched and repeated many times to understand and follow the phenomenon on social media.

Freedom of expression on social media allows the public to interact and communicate actively and encourages the creation of innovative content based on video clips or statements that have been circulating. As is known, Indonesian people actively use social media to provide responses and comments, which increases this phenomenon (Devega, 2017). The video of Lolly getting angry gave rise to many parodies in the form of memes made by netizens. Richard Dawkins introduced the term "meme" in his book The Selfish Gene (1976), which derives from the Greek word "meme," meaning something that imitates. Memes are often images with humorous, satirical, or socially critical text relevant to a particular issue. A meme's humorous or satirical text helps make it go viral, as internet users find it amusing or relatable. Memes evolve according to social and cultural contexts, and their rapid spread on social media allows the message in the meme to have a broad impact. (Christiany Juditha, 2015).

Based on data from the Global Web Index, meme-based content is one of the types of content most often shared by social media users, especially among the 16-34 age group. The 2022 report shows that over 55% of social media users choose memes for fast and light entertainment (Smith, 2022). Research by Pew Research also shows that the younger generation, especially Gen Z and Millennials, often use memes to communicate. More than 70% of Gen Z users consider memes an effective way to convey emotions, ideas, or humor (Blazina, 2024). Researchers found that not only Lolly's videos or photos were adapted into memes, but Lolly's voice expressing anger was also used as a sound on the TikTok platform, which was then widely used by netizens.

Researchers also observed that verbal violence on social media, including hate speech, rude comments, harassment, and cyberbullying, was increasing. The Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo) noted that in 2020, there were more than 1.4 million reports of harmful content, of which hate speech and verbal violence were significant (Komdigi & Komdigi, 2020). In addition, data from SAFEnet (Southeast et al. of Expression Network) noted that in Indonesia, online verbal violence is often related to political, gender, and religious issues. More than 20% of social media users reported being victims of hate speech or online verbal violence. This form of verbal violence includes swear words, insults, and hate speech that can have significant psychological impacts, even if they do not cause physical injury (Juniarto & Juniarto, 2022).

Verbal violence in memes is often disguised through humor, so the audience often does not realize its negative impact. The social construction formed through social media can indirectly influence the character of users, especially minors who are more vulnerable to verbal violence content. Based on data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), there has been an increase in deviant behavior among children and adolescents, such as the use of harsh language and bullying. The 2020 KPAI report noted that more than 30% of Indonesian children aged 8 to 18 use social media intensively, which can have a negative impact on their behavior (KPAI, 2021). Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube often display inappropriate content, which children can readily imitate without parental supervision. The lack of filters for information on social media makes it easy for children to be exposed to things that are not based on the values they should learn. Children who cannot yet sort information tend to imitate the behavior they see, perhaps even considering it as something normal or cool. As a result, exposure to this harmful content can affect the way they think and act in everyday life.

Perception itself influences an individual's understanding and response to the social environment, including the use of social media. The recipient or communicant will see No single communication message similarly because many factors influence a person's perception. Perception is the core of communication, which involves the process of an individual's understanding of the surrounding environment, which is influenced by experiences and pre-existing concepts. This process includes the ability to recognize and understand stimuli that exist outside the individual. If the perception formed is accurate, effective communication will be maintained. Perception also plays a role in determining an individual's choice of messages that are considered relevant, while other messages can be ignored. Thus, perception significantly influences how a person understands and responds to their social environment, including in the use and consumption of content on social media. (Dikdayanto & Hariyanto, 2024).

This study seeks to explore parents' perceptions of verbal violence present in lolly memes, particularly concerning inappropriate speech that may adversely affect the development of minors. Lolly memes are typically shared in the context of confrontational or angry exchanges on social media and frequently include satirical humor that incorporates curses (verbal violence). While some of these memes are framed as jokes, this trend often serves as an excuse for social media users to express harsh language or promote hate speech, which can be perceived as "normal" or "not serious" simply because it is packaged as humor. This normalization of verbal violence poses a

significant risk, especially to children, who may struggle to differentiate between humor and inappropriate conduct. Given that many underage users are active on social media and frequently exposed to such content, this issue warrants attention. The study aims to examine how parents perceive the verbal violence in memes and how they engage in educating their children about the negative consequences of such content prevalent on social media.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at providing a comprehensive explanation of phenomena. As noted by Lapan, Quartaroli, and Riemer, qualitative research seeks to explore the social context in depth, highlighting interpretative and intricate analysis within a specific timeframe and setting. From this perspective, it is evident that qualitative research is a method that prioritizes naturalistic and thorough observation and understanding, presented descriptively and interpreted comprehensively (Waruwu, 2024).

The study adopts a constructive paradigm, which offers a distinct perspective on media and news texts. Constructionists argue that the reality of social life is not inherent but rather the outcome of social constructions. Consequently, the primary focus of analysis within this paradigm is to uncover how events or realities are constructed and the processes through which these constructions are formed (Marilang & Nurhaerat, 2024). Data sources for this study are categorized into primary and secondary types. Primary data is derived directly from field sources, including interviews conducted with informants. The informants for this study consist of parents with children belonging to the alpha generation. Secondary data encompasses information gathered through literature reviews and other forms of documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social media is a significant digital platform that contributes to the emergence of various trends, including memes. In his book, 'Memes in Digital Culture', Limor Shifman explains that internet memes are digital items, but not all digital items qualify as memes (Syarifa, 2022). Internet memes share similar form, content, and stance characteristics. They are created with mutual awareness and circulated, imitated, and modified by numerous users online. Memes are characterized by satire, simplicity, and humor, making them increasingly popular across various social media platforms. Over time, memes have become a common form of communication for today's younger generation.

The "Lolly meme" is a notable viral phenomenon on social media." Lolly is the child of a well-known Indonesian public figure, Nikita Mirzani, and she has been in the spotlight due to her family issues with her mother. The public has been particularly drawn to the heated and verbally charged statements between Lolly and her mother. These quarrels have been widely shared and adapted by netizens into memes in various formats, including videos, images, and audio for parody content. The virality of this meme raises concerns, especially given that social media users include adults, teenagers, and children. Exposure to verbal violence depicted in these memes can negatively influence young audiences, who may imitate or engage with trending content on social media.

TABLE 1. Informant Data

Number of Informan	Initial	Sex	Age
1	ESTF	Female	39
2	KAPR	Female	40
3	WIKT	Female	44
4	DYNI	Female	43
5	BNST	Male	44

LOLLY MEMES FEATURING VERBAL VIOLENCE

Memes have evolved into significant cultural artifacts frequently shared within online communities on social media. In today's digital era, memes represent more than just small cultural units that spread through copying or imitation. Now, the term "meme" describes the alteration of a photo or image of a person, combined with various forms of satire or humor created by internet users using different devices, such as Windows and other operating systems (Dewi et al., 2022). Verbal violence refers to abusive speech characterized by cursing, yelling, insulting, mocking, slandering, or publicly humiliating someone with harsh words (Erniwati & Fitriani, 2020). Memes containing verbal violence include text that expresses these forms of abusive language or narratives that describe a situation alongside background audio resembling curses or insults. As these memes have developed, many sentences depicting verbal violence have been incorporated into memes primarily for comedic purposes, exemplified by the Lolly meme. Researchers have identified various types of Lolly memes that have gone viral and are widely circulated on social media.

FIGURE 1. Lolly meme video screenshot, source: posted by @may.cici36 on Tiktok, 2024

In Figure 1.1, researchers found the Lolly meme through TikTok social media, and often, this type of Lolly meme is on FYP (for you page) on the TikTok social media homepage. The meme shown in that figure has the characteristics of a Point of View (POV) meme, which is a meme that uses a particular point of view with a text narrative intended to parody an ironic situation. This video uses a sound background that displays the angry expression of the Lolly character, which inserts sentences containing verbal violence, such as the phrases *'Gila lu!'* (expression of anger by saying 'you are crazy') and *'Anjing lu!'* (similar to the expression by saying 'bitch!'). These words reflect a form of verbal violence intended as an insult or offense to someone.

> "I know the Lolly meme; it appears on my FYP homepage at least once daily. At that time, the meme seemed to like calling people animals." [Informant 3]

> "I am familiar with the Lolly meme on TikTok. From what I heard, Lolly usually curses her parents with bad words. Even saying her parents are disobedient." [Informant 4]

> "I often see memes on my Tiktok homepage, where a girl gets angry and says you are crazy and other swear words with animal names such as dog. I just found out that her name is Lolly." [Informant 5]

Cursing is speaking badly about someone using harsh words that aim to offend or belittle them (Utoro et al., 2020). In the context of conversation, generally, someone tries to avoid using swear words because they are considered impolite. Cursing itself is a term that refers to harsh language designed to give a negative impression of others or express disappointment verbally. The word 'dog' has been expanded into a curse and other meanings in its

development (Sapanti & Suswandi, 2022) The word 'dog' is found in sentences to express curses and in the context of being annoyed, angry, surprised, cursing, amazed, unexpected, delicious, disappointed, and funny.

FIGURE 2. Lolly meme video screenshot, source: posted by @stevanusming_99 on Tiktok, 2024

In Figure 2, researchers found Lolly's meme content as a parody via the TikTok social media platform. This content displays a parody of Lolly's statement translated into Mandarin. The creator of the video tried to imitate aspects such as facial expressions, emotional expressions, and words that were made to resemble the original video. In the content, researchers also noted several expressions containing verbal violence, such as *'Setan lu!'* (in English, meaning you are such a devil), and several words delivered with an angry intonation. These expressions contain verbal violence as an insult or slur against the targeted party.

The use of coarse language in this meme parody shows the construction of verbal violence that is created to present an impression of humor or satire but, at the same time, reinforces the practice of using harsh words on social media. This kind of parody, with verbal violence wrapped in an entertainment context, has the potential to normalize cursing or insults. This raises the risk that verbal violence, even though it is delivered in a humorous context, can be considered normal and acceptable in conversations on social media.

> "For me, it is not entertainment because, for me, entertainment can make us better. The Lolly memes causes hatred, anger, and maybe a lack of empathy and feelings like that. For me, it is not worthy of being called entertainment." [Informant 2]

> "Even though he are creative in creating content, first look at the context. I know he is great at Mandarin but inappropriate translate into people's voices of anger and cursing." [Informant 5]

The increasingly apparent impact of the use of harsh or satirical language will endanger the quality of the nation's generation from how the ethics of social media users in the future if they have been educated through social media itself to get used to sarcasm and swearing (Dewi et al., 2022). Thus, it will slowly give rise to a new Indonesian culture. If allowed to continue, it will erode the original Indonesian culture as a nation known for its friendly, polite, and courteous character. Sometimes, content creators do not realize that what they have done contains elements of verbal violence because they consider it commonplace and merely a joke or a joke. Therefore, verbal violence is more difficult to recognize, among other things, because it is often in the name of a humorous context (Putra, 2015).
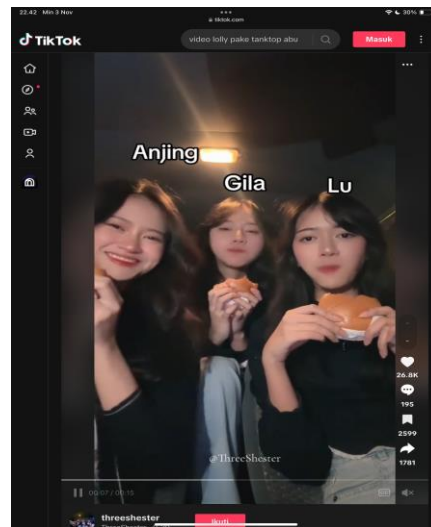
FIGURE 3. Lolly meme video screenshot, source: posted by @threeshester on Tiktok, 2024

In Figure 3, researchers found a Lolly meme video as a challenge made through sound (sound challenge) on TikTok social media. In a challenge inspired by the Lolly meme, participants engage in activities with rules that follow the verbal language patterns of the main character. In this challenge, every time sound of Lolly says words such as '*anjing*' (dog), '*gila*' (crazy), and '*lu*' (you - slang words in Bahasa), each individual in that video who has chosen the word is allowed to bite the burger in their hand. This activity is intended to follow the trend of the viral Lolly meme. It involves elements of verbal violence from the original sound of Lolly's statement containing curses.

The use of these harsh words, although in the context of games and entertainment, shows how verbal violence can be inserted into activities that are considered fun. This challenge also strengthens the virality of the content, making it more readily accepted and imitated by audiences who may not yet have a mature understanding of the impact of verbal violence. Challenges like this, which use harsh words in parody form, risk influencing social perception, especially among children who see this as a new trend.

> "I do not think it is entertaining. Some people think it is entertainment or a joke, and some like negative things. So if there are people who think it is funny, it means they have a mental disorder." [Informant 1]

> "Too directly and very transparently, the lolly meme is making verbal violence something very common and normal. Negative things conveyed continuously and repeatedly will be imprinted in children's minds who see this trend on social media." [Informant 3]

> "If it becomes a trend like that, I will be more worried about my child, about other small children. I am afraid they will follow suit, even though making funny content like that is inappropriate." [Informant 5]

In addition, researchers have identified a trend of Lolly memes, which are parodies that use the original voice of Lolly's statement and are adapted into dancing content with friends. The Lolly meme, originating from a viral video of a young girl named Lolly expressing her anger, has become popular on social media, especially TikTok, where many users have participated in creating similar content. Although this content displays a style and expression that seems exciting, funny, and happy, there is a mismatch between the cheerful visuals and the words in the original voice of Lolly, who is angry. This trend reflects how verbal violence can be disguised through humorous elements so that the negative impact is often not realized by the audience.

Using humor and cheerful expressions in a context that contains verbal violence creates a contrast that can reduce the audience's sensitivity to harsh language. As a result, social media users, especially those still young, can consider curses in parodies as normal and acceptable. In addition, this phenomenon shows that elements of verbal violence can be part of viral entertainment content without considering its long-term impact on behavior and social perception, especially among younger social media users. Parodies containing verbal violence have the potential to

normalize the use of harsh language, making it just a form of entertainment and not a form of communication that can hurt or offend others.

> "I feel that for adults, this doesn't have much impact. However, it is different for underage children. They can think of this as normal and become accustomed to it." [Informant 3]

> "I think with this meme, people can hide behind the words just kidding. The danger is if small children like my children watch it and do it because it is viral and their friends make it." [Informant 4]

Concerns among parents regarding the impact of memes featuring verbal violence are quite valid, as children often struggle to differentiate between right and wrong. They are likelier to imitate harmful behaviors that gain popularity on social media platforms like TikTok. Additionally, minors are particularly susceptible to exposure to verbal violence in memes because they frequently experience FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). FOMO makes people worry about being perceived as uncool or out of touch with their friends (Intania et al., 2022).

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MEMES TREND

Technological determinism Theory, presented by Marshall McLuhan, explains that technological developments that influence the way of communicating have an impact on the formation of mindsets and behaviors of individuals and groups in society (Falah H.I, Adhiasa, 2022). This technological development has given birth to new media that form trends and lifestyles that are different from before, both in terms of culture and communication (Munawarah, 2024). Social media has a significant role in the spread of trends, such as the Lolly meme, a popular and widely recognized internet phenomenon. Trends that emerge on social media are often influenced by public figures such as celebrities and influencers who have great appeal among their followers (Hoffman & Novak, 2018). The spread of this meme was strengthened by the involvement of Lolly, the daughter of the famous public figure Nikita Mirzani. Lolly's status as the daughter of a celebrity has attracted great attention from the public and invited various comments on digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube.

In addition to the fame factor possessed by the subject, social media algorithms also play an important role in the spread of the Lolly meme. The algorithms themselves on various social media platforms have different ways, one example is the TikTok algorithm which is famous for producing relevant and interesting content for its users. TikTok presents personalized videos based on user preferences and their activity history through the 'For You Page'. It is not the same as their FYP because content recommendations for each user have been carefully selected. Hashtags, recently followed user accounts, effects, sounds, and trending topics are some of the components that influence how the content on this page is displayed. Every video has an equal chance of going viral, a term used to describe when a piece of content spreads rapidly and widely across the platform, because the TikTok algorithm does not depend on how popular the content creator is. (Bishqemi & Crowley, 2022). In addition, the like and share features make Lolly meme content easy to share with various social media users. This makes Lolly memes appear more often on users' timelines, making them more viral and spread in various forms. With the combination of public interest in public figures and the support of social media algorithms, Lolly memes are able to achieve widespread popularity on various digital platforms.

> "The social media children often use is usually TikTok and Youtube short." [Informant 2]

> "The easiest to brainwash are the kids. Because the alpha generation follows trends, the language of alpha kids is also through trends, and if they know, they feel cool. However, not all trends are good, you know." [Informant 1]

In addition, the popularity of the Lolly meme is also influenced by the desire of many social media users to get similar attention. Many users want to go viral, gain followers, and be recognized as trendsetters. Social media allows anyone to be the center of attention, and the Lolly meme phenomenon is attractive to those who want to be involved in significant trends. Another supporting factor is the fear of missing out (FOMO) phenomenon. In social media, FOMO triggers users to continue following trends so as not to feel left behind by their environment. Users motivated by FOMO tend to be actively involved in the Lolly meme trend through creation, distribution, or comments to feel

relevant in the digital community. This makes the Lolly meme spread more widely and attracts more participation, strengthening its position as a popular trend on social media.

> "As a mother, I was also worried, especially since today's children like playing with gadgets. Sometimes, I am afraid my child will follow the wrong trend because I fear being called uncool if he does not." [Informant 4]

FOMO is characterized by feelings of fear or anxiety about missing out on a lot of information, which can be one of the reasons why people become addicted to TikTok. When individuals see other people having more exciting experiences, they want to stay connected with others. It can also be said that Fomo is anxious about being out of date in various types of information that can arise from a person's desire to stay up-to-date (Susanto et al., 2023).

The widespread distribution of Lolly memes containing verbal violence creates a social construction for its users, namely the normalization of the use of sentences containing verbal violence. This normalization strengthens the construction of verbal violence in Lolly memes because many users feel free to repeat or expand on the meme. In addition, anonymity on social media also increases users' confidence in spreading or even creating Lolly memes. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by the general assumption that 'it's just a joke,' which is often used as an excuse to justify the use of verbal violence in memes. By wrapping Lolly memes in the form of humor, harsh sentences that are demeaning or hurtful become easier to laugh at and are considered not serious. This complex interplay of humor and harmful content in the Lolly meme underscores the subtlety and nuance of digital culture.

> "As adults who can think critically, we may not be directly influenced by content on social media. However, not everyone has the same ability to understand messages on social media or digital literacy. Some people can filter information well, but some are easily influenced and believe anything conveyed." [Informant 2]

> "In my opinion, it is feared that children will imitate and normalize the statement. Usually, children follow meme trends to have fun without knowing the meaning of the sound used. If it is to form characteristics, it may not be directly. I believe memes with verbal sentences will harm many parties, including easily influenced minors." [Informant 4]

As Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann stated, reality is built through social interaction. The point of view is that the truth of a social reality is seen as the result of social construction, and the truth of a social reality is relative. Peter and Thomas interpreted that our understanding of something arises from communicating with others, and social reality results from social construction in certain communications (Hadiwijaya, 2023). The informant explained that the verbal violence displayed by the Lolly meme has the potential to form a social construction that normalizes swear words, especially among minors. This happens because of repeated exposure to verbal violence on social media, which forms the perception of reality in the minds of children. In addition, verbal violence in the Lolly meme is often presented as humor. Hence, children are increasingly unaware that using these harsh words is inappropriate behavior.

The construction of verbal violence in the Lolly meme is formed through the use of negative language, dark humor, stereotypes, stigma, and normalization by users. This makes verbal violence in the Lolly meme seem acceptable on social media. However, it can influence minors who see and are exposed to the Lolly meme trend. When a trend goes viral, many social media users compete to get involved in getting the same attention, including elementary school children, who are encouraged to follow the trend without understanding the impact or consequences of the content they consume and share.

> "As parents, we must be smart in communicating with children and providing understanding by analogizing us (parents) as children because it often happens when parents provide understanding with logic that we do not get through to children because our children do not understand what we are saying. For the Lolly meme itself, of course, we cannot do anything to control the spread of this meme, but what is certain is that we must protect our children from being exposed to negative content like that; the way to do this is by communicating and educating our children so that they are not affected by it." [Informant 1]

"As a mother, I let my child use a cellphone, but my role is to accompany and supervise what my child does using the cellphone. However, when it comes to the Lolly meme, I tell my child that what he or she hears is not good to imitate. Swearing is not right, even if it's just for fun." [Informant 4]

A similar thing was conveyed by informants 2, 3, and 5, who agreed to suggest that the best way is to maximize the role of parents and teachers to supervise the use of social media for underage children, as well as provide digital education and literacy.

Parents' perceptions of the verbal violence depicted in the Lolly meme vary significantly. Some parents choose to overlook this issue, believing they are already aware that such content is unsuitable for their children, even though they do not actively supervise or restrict their children's access to it. Others consider the phenomenon to be commonplace yet still make an effort to supervise and educate their children about the negative effects of verbal violence present in these memes. Additionally, some parents take a more stringent approach, outright prohibiting their children from accessing any content that contains verbal violence, even going as far as deleting or avoiding such material to protect their children. A more rigorous and educational strategy for monitoring and limiting exposure to potentially harmful content is crucial for mitigating the adverse effects of verbal violence on social media.

CONCLUSIONS

Social media has made it easier for users to access information. However, the speed of information dissemination on this platform has also accelerated the emergence of new trends, such as Lolly memes containing verbal violence. This study shows that verbal violence contained in Lolly memes circulating on social media has the potential to influence user behavior, especially children. Lolly memes often contain harsh expressions disguised as humor or satire, causing social media users, including children, to view verbal violence as normal and acceptable in everyday communication. Memes containing verbal violence often come in POV (point of view) memes, parodies, or challenges circulating on various social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. These formats facilitate the spread of memes, which other users often imitate. This further strengthens the social construction that the use of verbal violence, presented in the form of humor or jokes, is part of acceptable social interaction. The impact of repeated exposure to these kinds of memes is the formation of a permissive attitude towards using harsh words and curses in everyday communication, especially in children still in the development stage.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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