



Unveiling the Hidden Dimensions of Telegram: Exploring User Engagement with the Anonymous Chat Feature

Khoerunnisa Khoerunnisa, Lintang Muliawanti^(✉), and Fadhillah Sandy

Universitas Muhammadiyah Magelang, Magelang, Indonesia
lintang@unimma.ac.id

Abstract. In general, telegram is known as an application for exchanging messages. But on the other hand, telegram is also widely used because of bot features such as video and audio downloaders from other platforms, as a movie watching application with the channel feature, and there are also features that are currently busy, namely the anonymous chat feature. This anonymous chat allows users to interact with other users without knowing each other's name, gender or user goals in using the anonymous chat feature. There are many statements that the anonymous chat feature is a dangerous feature. This research aims to examine the extent to which the anonymous chat feature is used in Telegram using 5 indicators which include information search behavior, seeking entertainment to fill spare time, building and multiplying relationships and connections, online business and also meeting strangers. This research uses a quantitative approach with the type of data used is primary data. Primary data sources were obtained by distributing questionnaires online. The questionnaire was made in a google form which was then shared through social media such as WhatsApp and Instagram. A total of 54 respondents who are users of the Anonymous Chat feature were sampled in this study. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed using a single analysis with the Anonymous Chat feature as the object of research. Based on the 5 indicators given, it can be seen that there are 52% of respondents who disagree which means that people only access it, not with a planned purpose. This proves that the anonymous chat feature is not so dangerous despite meeting many strangers. Based on the 5 indicators of the questionnaire given, meeting strangers is the statement that most people agree with. When accessing the anonymous chat feature, people will meet and interact with people we don't know. It can be used as a place to tell random stories, fill spare time and can also fill boredom, choosing effective social media is very important to avoid mistakes in using social media. Finding out how the anonymous chat feature works can prove that anonymous chat is a feature that is worth using or not.

Keywords: Telegram, Anonymous Chat, Public

1 Introduction

Please The phenomenon of sending messages has undergone many changes and developments. Starting from sending messages offline to now developing into sending messages online. Although sending messages online is considered easy and practical, it will still have an impact. Sending messages online, or what we know as chatting can lead to fraud if users are not wise when using it. Plus, today's chat media is very varied. The most popular means in its day was SMS (Short Message Service), then switched to using other social media. Telegram is one of the new platforms that also provides chat features with other people. Not only that, but telegram also has many bots that can be accessed by all telegram users, such as downloading videos without watermarks, watching movies, joining educational groups, and so on.

Telegram is also one of the popular technologies that millennials use today. One of the features in the telegram application that is interesting to use is the chatbot. The chatbot feature can be set up in such a way by the admin so that the application can automatically send or reply to messages to other users according to the input given [1]. Telegram bots do have many uses. For example, bots help with work and daily activities, as entertainment and social media help find and gather information.

Of the many bots features that telegram has, anonymous chat is a feature that is currently being widely used. Anonymous chat is one of the telegram bot features to communicate online without having to reveal personal identity. This feature will randomly arrange a meeting of 2 users to greet each other without knowing their identity. This is a pro and con because this feature can bring good things but can also bring bad things. As its inventor often claims, the app is a place to channel expression without fear of judgment or recognition [2]. The rise of anonymous chat in Telegram means that many anonymous chat users meet strangers. A user of anonymous chat does not know who the other person is, and what their true intentions are when using the feature. Either to do business, just get acquainted, or it could be to do something negative. There are many more targets/victims of cyberbullying, and it can also be added that cyberbullies are not only schoolmates, even online acquaintances or anonymous chat users can be one of the perpetrators [3].

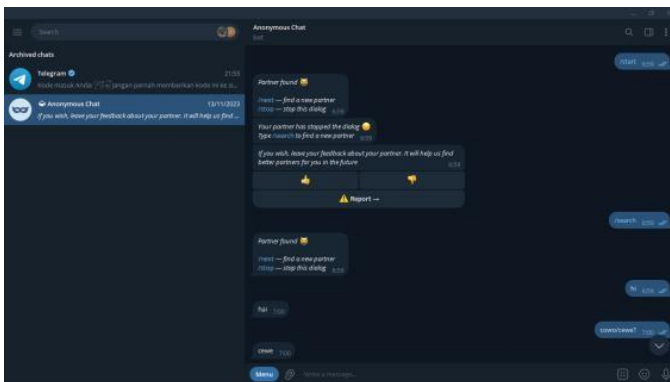


Fig. 1. First look at the anonymous chat

In the end, we realize that people can use one or more social media to be used as needed. The choice of social media to be used certainly has its own goals and reasons why people use it. When people have decided to use the social media appropriately, there will be a satisfaction in itself because what people need has been fulfilled. Uses and Gratification theory is one of the right theories for this research. This theory focuses on the reception process in communication and explains the use of media by individuals. Uses and Gratification assumes that users have alternative choices to satisfy their needs [4]. Use and gratification theory explains when and how audiences as media consumers become more or less active in using the media and the consequences of using the media.

When we attempt to communicate with strangers, our understanding of stranger interactions is limited by nonverbal behavior because the perception of nonverbal behavior is generally a conscious phenomenon [5]. Therefore, a sense of vigilance must always be attached to ourselves so that we are not easily tricked by strangers who try to do negative things to us. This research is interesting to raise because we will find out how far people access the Anonymous Chat Bot Feature on Telegram. In relation to the theory that researchers use, the purpose of uses and gratifications studies is to find out why someone uses or avoids a mass media, the benefits of using mass media; and what things they like among various choices from mass media. [6] said that uses and gratifications theory, rooted in communication literature, can be an integral part of developing better scales and measurement instruments for social media research. The principle is that individuals obtain the highest satisfaction in utilizing social media.

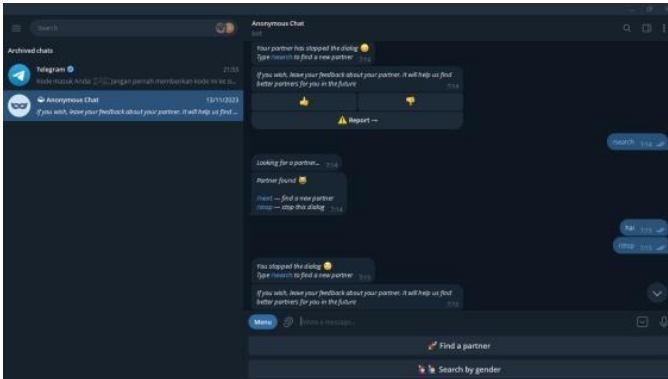


Fig. 2. Another look at anonymous chat

The development of communication technology that grew very rapidly resulted in the emergence of many social media and social networks with various benefits. This communication phenomenon is called Computer Mediated Communication or commonly abbreviated as CMC which in Indonesian can be translated into computer-mediated communication or communication mediated by computers [7]. Communicating using CMC can be said to be less socioemotional than face-to-face communication. However, it all comes back to the CMC user, each user of this pattern has different goals, some use it because they are seeking social relationships but some aim to minimize engagement with others.

This bot feature as well as anonymous chat (using a pseudonym) offers users the ability to exchange messages, communicate by hiding the user's identity and the identity of other users [8]. This can be done for users who intentionally hide their identity. Those who do not want their interlocutors to know about the user's true identity, then they use a virtual identity. Virtual identity is a new identity of a person who plays roleplay without using the player's real identity [9]. It is possible for users to use someone else's name to introduce themselves to their interlocutors in order to hide their true identity. Thus, anonymity can make cyberbullying more malicious, hurtful and inappropriate [10]. When cyberbullying is successful, the victim cannot sue because the perpetrator's real identity has been falsified.

There are many statements that the anonymous chat feature is a dangerous feature. This research aims to examine the extent to which the anonymous chat feature is used in Telegram.

2 Method

This research uses a quantitative approach. The type of data used in this study is primary data obtained by distributing questionnaires online. The questionnaire is made in a google form which is then shared through social media such as WhatsApp and Instagram and randomly people who access the anonymous chat feature will fill out the questionnaire. The questionnaire given to respondents has a statement and a value scale as an option. This Anonymous Chat user questionnaire is measured using five indicators that have been proven valid and reliable.

First, information search behavior; refers to proving whether anonymous chat can be a means of finding information. Second, looking for entertainment to fill spare time; refers to proving whether anonymous chat can be used as a place to entertain yourself when you feel bored or lonely. Third, building and multiplying relationships and connections; refers to proving whether people can add relationships and connections when using the anonymous chat feature. Fourth, online business; refers to proving whether anonymous chat can be used as a means of buying and selling online by the community. Fifth, meeting strangers; refers to managing relationships between anonymous chat users, such as knowing what steps to take after getting acquainted with strangers met on the anonymous chat feature.

The population in this study consisted of all Telegram users who had accessed the anonymous chat feature. Simple random sampling was used to determine the sample and 54 respondents were obtained who had accessed anonymous chat. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed using quantitative analysis to measure the extent to which people utilize the anonymous chat feature. The value scale of the questionnaire is between 1 to 5. The value is classified into five categories; strongly disagree at scale 1, disagree at scale 2, neutral at scale 3, agree at range 4, and strongly agree at range 5.

3 Result And Discussion

3.1 Results

Table 1. Respondent Classification

Classification	Number of respondents	Percentage
Male	20 people	37%
Female	34 people	63%
18 – 19 y.o	9 people	17%
20 – 22 y.o	40 people	74%
23 – 28 y.o	5 people	9%

In this study, researchers distributed questionnaires to 54 male and female respondents, including 37% men and 63% women. Based on age, the majority of respondents are at the age of 20-22 years, namely 40 respondents (74%), 18-19 years old, 9 respondents (17%), and 23-28 years old, 5 respondents (9%).

Based on this classification, the majority of users of the anonymous chat feature are teenagers aged 20-22 years. This happens because anonymous chat is a trend. Trend is social media that is favored by many teenagers as a medium for establishing foreign relationships [11]. Therefore, anonymous chat is a feature that is often used by teenagers. In addition, the majority of teenagers use features on social media is also a good thing because adolescence is a period that is considered to be able to establish relationships and interact well with others or what we often call self-disclosure. In essence, self-disclosure is important for individuals, especially those entering the early adolescent stage, because during this period individuals need a means to build social relationships with others [12].

Table 2 shows that all indicators are declared valid if $r_{count} > r_{table}$ at a significant value of 5% [13]. Conversely, an item is said to be invalid if $r_{count} > r_{table}$ at a significant value of 5%. After the Product Moment validity test is carried out, the validity test results presented in Table 3.

Table 2. SPSS 26 Reliability Test Results

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.906	22

The research obtained from the results of this questionnaire is relevant to Table 2 with the reliability test and obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.60, thus all questionnaire systems are declared valid. For this reason, the questionnaire used is suitable for processing as research data.

Table 3. Product Moment Validity Test Results

No item	r_{xy}	$r_{table} 5\%(52)$	Note
1	0,649	0,2681	Valid
2	0,502	0,2681	Valid
3	0,464	0,2681	Valid
4	0,553	0,2681	Valid
5	0,662	0,2681	Valid
6	0,675	0,2681	Valid
7	0,577	0,2681	Valid
8	0,697	0,2681	Valid
9	0,747	0,2681	Valid
10	0,765	0,2681	Valid
11	0,343	0,2681	Valid
12	0,432	0,2681	Valid
13	0,532	0,2681	Valid
14	0,524	0,2681	Valid
15	0,355	0,2681	Valid
16	0,520	0,2681	Valid
17	0,715	0,2681	Valid
18	0,602	0,2681	Valid
19	0,784	0,2681	Valid
20	0,717	0,2681	Valid
21	0,340	0,2681	Valid
22	0,448	0,2681	Valid

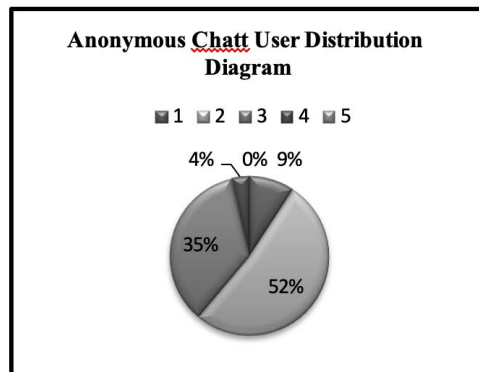


Fig. 3. Display individual data

Fig. 3 shows how many people respond from 54 respondents in accessing anonymous chat based on 5 indicators and with 5 scales that researchers have provided. Based on this diagram, it can be seen that some of the respondents strongly disagreed. With 5

indicators of statements provided by researchers, the majority of respondents disagreed with a value of 52%. Followed by neutral as much as 32%, strongly disagree 9%, agree 4% and also strongly agree with a value of 0%.

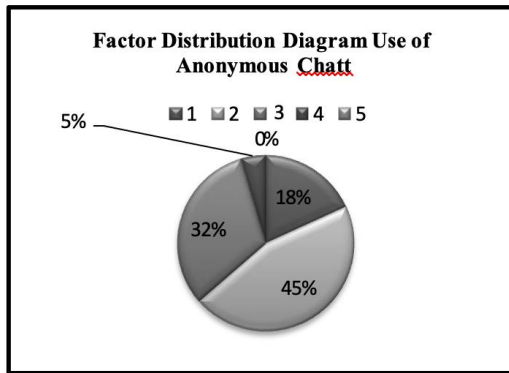


Fig. 4. Display Data Per Indicator Statement

Of the many statement indicators provided by the researcher, the scale most chosen by respondents was the disagree scale. Based on Diagram 2, the majority of respondents were in the disagree category with a value of 45%. Then followed by neutral 32%, strongly disagree 18%, agree 5% and strongly agree 0%.

3.2 Discussion

Table 2. Anonymous Chat Survey Respondent Indicator

No	Indicator	Percentage				
		SDA	DA	N	A	SA
1.	Information seeking behavior	19%	39%	31%	10%	2%
2.	Seeking entertainment for leisure	24%	26%	26%	19%	5%
3.	Build and maintain relationships and connections	19%	27%	35%	12%	7%
4.	Online Business	69%	16%	13%	2%	0%
5.	Meeting Strangers	19%	21%	31%	22%	8%

Based on Table 4, there are 5 indicators to find out how factors choose to access anonymous chat. There are 5 scales to measure each of these indicators, namely, strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. The five indicators already have their respective percentages so that researchers are able to analyze how respondents assess anonymous chat.

Anonymous chat as a platform for finding information gets the highest percentage of disagreement at 39%, followed by neutral with a value of 31%, strongly disagree at 19%, agree 10% and 2% strongly agree. This shows that using the anonymous chat

platform is not the main purpose for finding information. The information found when exchanging messages on this platform is only more dominant related to the personal information of the interlocutor. The initial attribution strategy is mostly done at the orientation (introduction) stage where their chat partners share general personal information such as gender, age, and domicile. One informant said that gender and age are the main considerations for him as a receiver to describe the figure or profile of his chat partner [14].

Anonymous chat as a platform to find entertainment for leisure time is apparently not the main reason for people. The percentage obtained is 26% for neutral and disagree, 24% strongly disagree, 19% agree and 5% strongly agree. With the similarity of values between neutral and disagree, it means that looking for entertainment to fill spare time can be obtained when accessing anonymous chat, but it is not the main goal because at present, the existence of social media is not only limited to means of communication and entertainment, but has developed far, one of which is a means of promotion and business transactions [6].

Anonymous chat is used to build and multiply relationships and connections, and it turned out to have the highest percentage of neutral responses, with 35%. This was followed by disagreeing as much as 27%, strongly disagreeing 19%, agreeing 12%, and strongly agreeing 7%. Even so, anonymous chat cannot be said to be a platform for increasing relationships and connections. This can be obtained when accessing anonymous chat, but it is not the main purpose of its use. In that channel, a person can be connected by anyone, anytime and anywhere. Interestingly, someone will be connected without having to follow or add them as friends because they will be connected by bots [15]. It makes for a short introduction and it's no wonder that the accesser immediately forgets the other person before even becoming a real friend.

Doing online business through anonymous chat platforms is not something that people do. This is evidenced by the highest percentage being in strongly disagree with a value of 69%. Then followed by disagree 16%, neutral 13%, agree 2% and strongly agree 0%. This shows that very few and almost no people utilize anonymous chat as a means of online business.

Anonymous Chat as a Meeting Place with Strangers. Some people admit that they will meet strangers when accessing anonymous chat. This is evidenced by the survey results from respondents who chose neutral with a value of 31%. Then followed by agree 22%, disagree 21%, strongly disagree 19% and strongly agree 8%. This shows that most people always communicate with people they don't know when accessing anonymous chat. With the presence of technology, now we don't need to greet other strangers directly, even to find strangers to get acquainted with. Because with today's technological advances, humans only need to download applications provided by developers or application developers [16], for example, like this anonymous chat feature in the telegram application.

Without realizing it, people are more likely to enjoy interacting with strangers. Confiding in strangers will be more open, because we won't feel burdened about being gossiped about because we only met once, and strangers will be more empathetic than people we know [17]. Some of the reasons people tend to prefer talking to strangers

involve a sense of anonymity and freedom of expression without the risk of judgment or claims. Interactions with strangers can provide a feeling of protection from prejudice or social expectations that may exist in interactions with more familiar people. By communicating to strangers, individuals can feel freer to express themselves without worrying about the social consequences that may arise. No matter what the curhater does wrong, followers should still provide support and not give negative comments.

According to [18], Instant messaging applications also have a negative side, namely the increasing cases of "Cybersex" through Anonymous Chat in instant messaging applications, one of which is the Anonymous Chat feature in the Telegram application. This statement cannot be used as a benchmark because, basically, a person's need to use anonymity is seen as an expression of one's right to privacy, and not always a person using anonymity will have a tendency to become cybersex. The results of this study also found that anonymous chats are only used to meet strangers for leisure, not with any malicious intent. When accessing anonymous chat, users can add relationships because what we meet in the anonymous chat feature are people, we don't know at all.

Meeting strangers also serves a good purpose. As human beings who already occupy the position of adolescents, they are required to self-disclose. The basis for being able to achieve effective communication with strangers or culturally different people is the ability to control feelings of discomfort and uncertainty. Uncertainty will be felt to a greater extent when communicating with strangers than with members of our own in-group [19]. If teenagers are able to control these feelings, they will easily socialize with anyone in public places. Instead, if they do not have self-disclosure, then they will find it difficult to establish relationships with other people they do not know at all.

The utilization of meeting strangers does not only apply to the anonymous chat feature. Meeting strangers also happens when playing online games. When playing online games, we will find playmates and opponents that we do not know. Not a few players who say harsh words when playing online games. The influence of online gaming media, meeting unknown players, being triggered by players who behave trash-talk towards him, and games that do not match expectations [20]. Player's trash-talk easily because they feel that no one will judge them because in general, they will only meet once when playing. After the game is over, there will be no follow-up regarding the trash talk that has been done.

4 Conclusion

The analysis found that the majority of people access anonymous chats only to meet strangers, which is done for positive things such as telling stories without being judged, fostering self-disclosure, and other positive things. Although anonymous chat is a feature in the telegram platform that allows users to communicate without revealing their real identities which can open up opportunities for fraud, spreading false information, or other harmful behaviors, it turns out that anonymous chats are not that bad. There are many positives that can be taken if users are wise in using it. It is important to remember that anonymity in online communication can provide freedom but also carries risks. It is important to always exercise caution, use your account wisely, and not

engage in harmful or illegal behavior. If you encounter an unsafe or unlawful situation in anonymous chat, it is best to report it to the authorities or stop the harmful interaction. The author's suggestion for further development is that researchers conduct a more in-depth analysis of how the anonymous chat feature works in order to convince the public that not always accessing the anonymous chat feature is an action that leads to negative things.

References

1. M. S. U. Kurnia Widi Sutisna, "SISTEM REKOMENDASI MAKANAN KHAS JAWA TENGAH BERBASIS APLIKASI TELEGRAM," *J. Inform. Rekayasa Elektron.*, vol. Volume 4, 2021, [Online]. Available: file:///C:/Users/DELL/Downloads/419-Article Text-2275-2351-10- 20211130.pdf
2. A. N. F. H. Holle, "Anonymous Chat sebagai Dampak Maraknya Cyberbully," *J. Spektrum Komun.*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 51–61, 2019, doi: 10.37826/spektrum.v7i1.25.
3. F. Sulianta, "cyberbullying - pelaku tradisional yang merambah dunia maya," *Media Inform.*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 104–114, 2005.
4. H. Karunia H, N. Ashri, and I. Irwansyah, "Fenomena Penggunaan Media Sosial : Studi Pada Teori Uses and Gratification," *J. Teknol. Dan Sist. Inf. Bisnis*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 92–104, 2021, doi: 10.47233/jteksis.v3i1.187.
5. Mardolina Yiska, "Pola Komunikasi Lintas Budaya Mahasiswa Asing Dengan Mahasiswa Lokal Di Universitas Hasanuddin Oleh : Yiska Mardolina E311 11 105 Skripsi Sebagai Salah Satu Syarat Memperoleh Gelar Sarjana Pada," 2015.
6. A. Saputra, "Survei Penggunaan Media Sosial Di Kalangan Mahasiswa Kota Padang Menggunakan Teori Uses and Gratifications," *Baca J. Dokumentasi Dan Inf.*, vol. 40, no. 2, p. 207, 2019, doi: 10.14203/j.baca.v40i2.476.
7. A. Hadjah, "Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), Pola Baru Berkomunikasi," *Al-Munzir*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 275–289, 2015.
8. M. H. Permana and S. Koesanto, "Analisis Media Komunikasi Online terkait Pelecehan Seksual dalam Chatbot di Telegram," *IKOMIK J. Ilmu Komun. dan Inf.*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 38–44, 2023, doi: 10.33830/ikomik.v3i1.5447.
9. A. P. Pratiwi, "Identitas Virtual Pada Roleplayer Di Twitter," *Pros. Konf. Nas. Sos. dan Polit.*, vol. 1, p. 215, 2023, doi: 10.32897/konaspol.2023.1.0.2372.
10. I. Tazkiyah, A. R. Fadillah, F. W. Kusuma, M. F. Siswantoro, and S. A. Cahyono, "Peran Anonimitas Terhadap Cyberbullying Pada Media Sosial the Role of Anonymity To Cyberbullying on Social," *Pros. Semin. SITASI*, no. November, pp. 77–83, 2021.
11. D. Faizal, "Trend Ome Tv Di Kalangan Remaja Sebagai Sarana Komunikasi Untuk Menjalin Pertemanan Asing," *Univ. Islam Riau Fak. Ilmu Komun.*, pp. 1–99, 2022.
12. A. Z. Fauzia, S. Maslihah, and H. Ihsan, "Pengaruh Tipe Kepribadian Terhadap Self-Disclosure Pada Dewasa Awal Pengguna Media Sosial Instagram Di Kota Bandung," *J. Psychol. Sci. Prof.*, vol. 3, no. 3, p. 151, 2019, doi: 10.24198/jpsp.v3i3.23434.
13. D. A. N. N. Dewi, "Modul Uji Validitas Dan Hormonal," *Univ. diponegoro*, no. October, p. 14, 2018.
14. N. D. Nisaulfitri and S. S. Alamiyah, "Komunikasi Hyperpersonal dalam Chating Anonim Pengguna Bot Anonymous Chat di Telegram," *JIIP - J. Ilm. Ilmu Pendidik.*, vol. 6, no. 11, pp. 8654–8662, 2023, doi: 10.54371/jiip.v6i11.3182.
15. B. R. Hidayat, "Kebijakan Legislasi ,, Cyber Sex " Pada Forum Anonymous Chatbot Telegram Menurut Undang-Undang ITE," no. December, 2022.

16. A. Xiao, "Konsep Interaksi Sosial Dalam Komunikasi, Teknologi, Masyarakat," *J. Komunika J. Komunikasi, Media dan Inform.*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2018, doi: 10.31504/komunika.v7i2.1486.
17. B. Thiodanu and W. P. Sari, "Fenomena Curhat Online pada @Cerminlelaki di Instagram," *Koneksi*, vol. 3, no. 2, p. 435, 2020, doi: 10.24912/kn.v3i2.6445.
18. A. Mahdiani and S. Thalib, "Dampak Anonymous Chat Telegram Terhadap Penyebaran Media Cybersex Di Kalangan Mahasiswa Uin Antasari," *Tashwir*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 17–29, 2023, doi: 10.18592/jt.v11i1.9423.
19. L. S. S. Utami, "Teori-Teori Adaptasi Antar Budaya," *J. Komun.*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 180–197, 2015.
20. J. P. Malahayati *et al.*, "Dampak Game Online : Studi Fenomena Perilaku Trash-Talk Pada Remaja," *J. Psikol. Malahayati*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 72–85, 2020, [Online]. Available: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/353678409.pdf>

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

