



GENDER DIFFERENCES IN MORAL DEVELOPMENT IN ONLINE COMMENTS ABOUT INFIDELITY ON TIKTOK

Irfan Zalukhu¹, Hamzah Hamzah²

English Department

Faculty of Languages and Arts

Universitas Negeri Padang

email: irfanzalukhu44@gmail.com

Abstract

The research analyzed whether there were differences in the level of moral development of TikTok users when infidelity occurred based on commenter gender. The method for this research was descriptive-qualitative. This research used this method to analyze moral development based on gender's comments on TikTok about infidelity. The source of data for this research was the comments that had been taken from several videos of infidelity on TikTok. The data for the research problem were comments containing moral development. The findings reveal that male and female commenters participate in conventional moral development with comparable tendencies.

Key words: *Gender, Infidelity, Moral Development*

A. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, social media becomes a place for people to get entertain, information, and do communication. The distribution of these contents received various kinds of comments in the comment column. People's reactions can be sad, happy, angry, positive, negative or even do not care. However, these differences in comments are not only influenced by the content that people view. These differences in comments also can be influenced by people status, education, religion, occupation, age, gender, and so on.

Gender is one of the factors that influences the way people comment. Moreover, comments between genders can be distinguished. Gilligan, (1982), says that men think about justice and women think about care. Different expressions of each gender are not only influenced by the nature of the individual itself, the expression of gender is also impacted by both the user's personal social environment and the broader context in which the technology is developed (Marwick, 2013).

There are various previous research about comments based on gender on social media. On Facebook, males tend to give more compliments compared to females (Miranda & Hamzah, 2018). This indicates that men are more open and respectful of others. However, (Bamman et al., 2014), say on Twitter males use swear words more often in expressing themselves. This is due to social norms

¹ English ELLSP of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang graduated on December 2023

² Lecturer of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang



that restrict females from using swear words. On Youtube, females get positive nuanced expressions, while males get negative nuanced expressions (Thelwall, 2017).

Every social media platform does not elicit the same comment for all types of content. Based on (Aldous et al., 2019), after evaluating a topic from five social media platforms, it indicates that the distribution of topics differs across various platforms, although certain subjects exhibit popularity across most platforms. Politic topic for instance, on Youtube and Twitter by (Mejova & Srinivasan, 2012), result reveals various noteworthy distinctions across different media platforms. These include variations in the volume of discussions, the quantity of expressed sentiment, and the nature of agreement regarding sentiment expressions. Although research on gender and social media seems to have been carried out a lot, it still rarely observes how moral developments are made by each gender. This research will look at how moral developments are made by each gender through the comments of TikTok users on infidelity.

Infidelity in society is often discussed in gendered terms, with different expectations and standards for men and women. The impact of gender on perceptions of infidelity remains relatively underexplored in the TikTok context. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the discourse surrounding infidelity on TikTok, focusing on how users respond to cheating husband vs cheating wife.

Furthermore, the reason why this topic is important to research is because people must realize that there is an imbalance in commenting when there is an infidelity between husband or wife and society must maintain ethics in social media. This research aims to analyze how genders' comments to narratives of infidelity may differ based on (Kohlberg, 1981), about stages of moral development.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The method for this research was descriptive qualitative. Based on (Creswell, 2014), qualitative methods rely on text and visual data, involve distinct data processing procedures, and employ a variety of designs. Therefore, this research used this methods to analyze the moral development based on gender's comment on tiktok about infidelity.

The source of data for research problem was the comments that had been taken from several videos of infidelity on TikTok. The data for research problem were comments containing moral development. To conduct the research, there were two instruments to obtain the data. This research was content analysis. Then, the researcher used *Table of Indicators* to make figures of moral development on TikTok comments of infidelity.

This research was to look for videos on the topic of infidelity. The second step was to view the chosen videos to obtain a better grasp of their content and context. The next step was to read the comments area after watching the videos. This was where genders may share their ideas and comments. After that, researcher was gathering these comments and taking into account the level of each comment. Finally, an analysis of the gathered comments was performed, taking into consideration the levels they were classified under.

The researcher used content analysis for this research to collect the data. The researcher collected videos on infidelity. Then, the researcher identified infidelity videos as husband and wife. After identifying the data, the researcher will classify the data based on moral development according to (Kohlberg, 1981) theory. The researcher analyzed the level of moral development by gender on infidelity on TikTok. After identifying, classifying, and analyzing the data, the researcher found the result of the research. Then, in conclusion, the researcher explained and gave an argument for the result.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

Researcher obtained data from four videos about infidelity. From the first video, husband - moral agent, a total of 116 comment data was obtained. From the second video, husband - non moral agent, a total of 100 comment data was obtained. From the third video, wife - moral agent, a total of 132 comment data was obtained. From the fourth video, wife - non moral agent, a total of 100 comment data was obtained. The total comment data was 448 comments. The research findings in this study provide the difference in the level of moral development between male and female when it comes to judging infidelity.

1.1. The difference in the level of moral development between male and female commenters to moral agent

Table 1. Moral Agent

Level	Stage	Male comment		Female comment	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Preconventional	The Stage of Punishment and Obedience	16	11%	10	10%
	The Stage of Individual Instrumental Purpose and Exchange	27	18%	17	17%
Conventional	The Stage of Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Conformity	58	40%	48	47%
	The Stage of Social System and Conscience Maintenance	36	25%	22	21%
Postconventional	The Stage of Prior Rights and Social Contract or Utility	7	5%	5	5%
	The Stage of Universal Ethical Principles	2	1%	0	0%
Total		146	100%	102	100%

The data for the table above was collected from two videos: husband-moral agent and wife-moral agent. From the results above, most of the male and female comments were both at the conventional level, with a total of 65% male comments and 68% female comments. The Stage of Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Conformity became the most common stage of gender employed at this level, with 40% male comments and 47% female comments.

The preconventional level became the second level employed by genders, with 29% male comments and 27% female comments. Both genders mostly used The Stage of Individual Instrumental Purpose and Exchange at this level, with 18% male comments and 17% female comments. The lowest level was the postconventional level, with only 6% of males and 5% of females. The Stage of Prior Rights and Social Contract or Utility became the most employed at this level, with 5% male comments and 5% female comments.

According to the table, the lowest level of gender moral development was the postconventional level, with 6% male and 5% female. The Stage of Universal Ethical Principles was the lowest stage employed by genders, with 1% male comments and 0% female comments. The difference in the level of moral development between male and female commenters to non-moral agent.

Table 2. Non Moral Agent

Level	Stage	Male comment		Female comment	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Preconventional	The Stage of Punishment and Obedience	3	3%	7	8%
	The Stage of Individual Instrumental Purpose and Exchange	13	12%	17	18,5%
Conventional	The Stage of Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Conformity	25	23%	24	26%
	The Stage of Social System and Conscience Maintenance	47	43%	38	41%
Postconventional	The Stage of Prior Rights and Social Contract or Utility	16	15%	5	5,5%
	The Stage of Universal Ethical Principles	4	4%	1	1%
Total		108	100%	92	100%

The data for the table above was collected from two videos: husband non-moral agent and wife – non-moral agent. From the results above, most of the male and female comments were both at the conventional level, with a total of 66% male comments and 67% female comments. The Stage of Social System and Conscience Maintenance became the most common stage of gender employed at this level, with 43% male comments and 41% female comments.

Postconventional level become the second level mostly employed by male with 19%, while female only 6.5% in total. At this level, The Stage of Prior Rights and Social Contract or Utility was mostly used by 15% males and 5.5% females. In contrast, the second level female mostly used at the preconventional level by 26.5%, while the male was 15%. At this level, The Stage of Individual Instrumental Purpose and Exchange was mostly used by 18.5% females and 12% males.

There was a significant difference in the lowest level of moral development between males and females. The lowest level for males was the preconventional level at The Stage of Punishment and Obedience by 3% of comments, while for females it was the postconventional level at The Stage of Universal Ethical Principles by 1% of comments.

After analyzing the level of moral development employed by each gender in the context of infidelity from table 6 and table 7, it was found that both genders were generally at the conventional level. However, there was difference in the stage of moral development between genders even though they were at the same level. For moral agents, the stage of moral development of both genders was The Stage of Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Conformity. Meanwhile, for non-moral agents, the stage of moral development of both genders was The Stage of Social System and Conscience Maintenance.

2. Discussion

According to the results obtained from the tables in the findings, the results presented a pattern in how male and female participate in moral development when exposed to videos depicting husbands and wives as either moral agents or non-moral agents in cases of infidelity. There were no differences found in either the level or stage of moral development between males and females in cases of infidelity on TikTok. This result differs from (Bamman et al., 2014), findings on twitter which show that males use swear words more often than females. This research calls into question the long-held belief that women have a higher moral standard in such cases than males. It emphasizes the importance of moving beyond gender stereotypes when evaluating moral judgment.

It is worth noting that the majority of both male and female comments in all four videos (husband-moral agent, wife-moral agent, husband-non moral agent, wife-non moral agent) display conventional moral development. According to (Kohlberg, 1981), the age of people at this level is early to late adolescence. This

is indeed in line with the number of teenagers who use TikTok by as much as 41% of the total user base (Siahaan et al., 2022).

The major stage of conventional moral development does not appear to differ much across male and female commenters, according to these data. Male and female commenters regard moral debates equally in all circumstances (husband-moral agent, wife-moral agent, husband – non-moral agent, wife – non-moral agent). This imply that gender has no significant influence on moral development in these situations.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research delved into moral development, particularly in the context of infidelity judgments on TikTok. The research investigates the level of moral development between genders. Lawrence Kohlberg's theory was used to determine the level of gender moral development in this research.

From the findings obtained, research concludes that there is no difference in moral development between genders, especially in the context of assessing infidelity on TikTok. Both genders are at the same level and stage of moral development, which is the conventional level. However, there is difference in the stage of moral development between genders even though they are at the same level. For moral agents, the stage of moral development of both genders is The Stage of Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Relationships, and Conformity. Meanwhile, for non-moral agents, the stage of moral development of both genders is The Stage of Social System and Conscience Maintenance.

The conventional level is the highest level of moral development for TikTok users on the topic of infidelity. That is, individuals demonstrate the ability to use deductive logic to solve moral dilemmas, distinguish between morality and law, and identify potential weaknesses in society's laws, which shows a tendency towards a conception of principles of justice related to moral maturity.

Finally, this research takes data from online texts. This data is indeed easier to collect, but quite difficult to process. For further research, it is better to take data from direct interactions to produce data that is easier to process, even though it is more difficult to collect. The topic can be varied by paying attention to the phenomena in the community. Furthermore, readers are advised not to judge someone based on their gender. Judging others based on gender is not only unfair and discriminatory but also goes against the principles of equality, respect, and empathy.

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