

Hate Speech by JKT48 Fans Against the @IDOLPOLICE_ Account on Twitter

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The phenomenon of fandom on social media demonstrates that fans not only support their idols but also actively respond to narratives perceived as detrimental to their idols’ public image. Within the JKT48 fan community on Twitter, such responses may escalate into hate speech when certain accounts are perceived as attacking, belittling, or negatively portraying the members. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the forms of hate speech expressed by JKT48 fans toward the @idolpolice_ account on Twitter and to explain the factors underlying the emergence of such expressions.

Method – This study employed a qualitative research method with a netnographic approach. Data were collected from comments on posts published by the @idolpolice_ account and through semi-structured interviews with seven JKT48 fans. The data were analyzed using thematic coding to categorize forms of hate speech and interpret the social and emotional motives underlying fans’ responses.

Findings – The findings reveal five forms of hate speech: insults, defamation, offensive conduct, provocation or incitement, and sarcastic remarks. The underlying factors include perceptions of negative framing, emotional attachment to one’s *osbi* (favorite idol), empathy toward the members, differing perceptions of the boundaries between criticism and personal attacks, accumulated frustration, emotional venting, and the desire to exert social pressure. Fanaticism in defending idols is not inherently negative; however, it becomes problematic when it crosses the boundaries of ethical communication.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has transformed the position of fans from passive audiences into active communication actors. Fans not only receive messages from the entertainment industry, but also interpret, disseminate, defend, and negotiate meanings about the idols they support. Digital fan culture makes fandom activities fast-paced, open, and participatory. Twitter has become one of the important spaces for such dynamics because it allows public conversations to take place briefly,

emotionally, and to be easily replicated by other users. In this situation, expressions of support can turn into heated debates when fans feel that their idols are being belittled or negatively positioned by other users (Dewi et al., 2022).

Fandom cannot be understood merely as an entertainment community. Relationships between fans and idols often involve bonds of identity, affection, and solidarity. Fans can produce content, conduct support campaigns, archive moments involving their idols, and build communication spaces based on shared interests (Saraswati & Nurbaiti, 2020). These activities demonstrate that fans act as producers of meaning as well as guardians of their idols' images. When that image is perceived as being attacked, fans' responses may shift from support to more aggressive forms of defense. This shift is important to examine because it demonstrates the relationship between fandom loyalty and communication practices that risk becoming hate speech. In digital fandom studies, fan-produced content functions not only as entertainment but also as a means of affirming identity, managing closeness with idols, and maintaining the community's position when narratives perceived as threatening emerge (Hermawan, 2024).

JKT48 is an example of a local fandom with strong digital dynamics in Indonesia. JKT48 fans actively use Twitter to share information, debate member performances, express support for their *osbi*, and build solidarity among fans. The communication patterns of JKT48 fans demonstrate not only participation but also the formation of group identity through distinctive language, humor, symbols, and support practices (Ramadhan & Yuliana, 2023). These relationships become increasingly complex because the concept of *osbi* means that members are positioned not merely as public figures but also as individuals who hold personal significance for fans. This emotional closeness can strengthen the motivation to defend members when narratives perceived as cornering them emerge. The communication identity of fanatical fans within idol communities is also often constructed through internal language, symbols of support, and a sense of belonging that distinguishes community members from outsiders (Haq & Pamungkas, 2025).

Several studies have examined the emotional relationships between fans and idols. Parasocial interactions among JKT48 fans indicate that closeness with idols can form feelings of attachment and belonging (Mulya & Mulyana, 2022). Another study shows that *idol worship* can emerge within the JKT48 fan community, particularly when idols become the center of emotional and symbolic attention (Rumbi et al., 2024). Fanaticism can also encourage consumptive behavior and high levels of loyalty among JKT48 fans (Farij & Nio, 2025). These findings explain the strong relationship between fandom, emotions, identity, and fans' communication practices.

Studies on digital fandom also show that fanaticism does not always produce positive actions. Conflicts among fans or *fanwars* may emerge when fan groups feel the need to defend their idols, attack parties perceived as opponents, or maintain their collective identity. The phenomenon of *fanwar* within K-Pop fandoms on Twitter demonstrates that group loyalty can develop into comment wars, negative labeling, and personal attacks (Sahara et al., 2022; Salsabila & Banowo, 2024). Similar phenomena also occur in other fandoms when group solidarity confronts criticism perceived as unfair toward idols. The relationship between fanaticism and *cyberbullying* among adolescent fans indicates that empathy can moderate aggressive responses, but fanaticism can still become a trigger when self-control and communication norms weaken (Ameliani & Safari, 2025).

Hate speech on social media does not only take the form of vulgar insults. Hate speech can appear as defamation, provocation, threats, sarcasm, and expressions that demean the dignity of others. Studies on *hate speech* on Twitter indicate that the meaning of an utterance must be understood through its pragmatic context, intention, target, and social impact (Widyatnyana et al., 2023). Studies of hate speech in digital spaces emphasize that social media accelerates the spread of aggressive comments because users feel psychologically distant from the target of communication (Sa'idah et al., 2021). Therefore, hate speech by JKT48 fans toward the @idolpolice_ account needs

to be understood as a communication practice arising from the intersection of emotions, fandom identity, and the rapid nature of interactions on Twitter.

Communication studies demonstrate that social media has a dual role. Social media can strengthen public participation and solidarity, while simultaneously creating opportunities for the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, and social fragmentation. This dual position is relevant to this study because Twitter serves as a space for fan support as well as an arena of conflict when narratives concerning JKT48 members are debated (Muhammad Ihsan et al., 2026). In addition, the effectiveness of digital communication is strongly influenced by message quality, platform suitability, interactivity, and ethical orientation in its management (Rachmah, 2026).

The @idolpolice_ account is perceived by some fans as an account that frequently posts negative narratives about JKT48 members. Posts concerning members' performances, personal lives, or positions may be interpreted by fans as attacks against their idols. Consequently, the comment sections of @idolpolice_ posts become spaces of conflict between an account perceived as criticizing or attacking members and fans who feel the need to defend their idols. Fans' responses do not always take the form of argumentative rebuttals. Many comments appear in the form of insults, sarcasm, calls to ignore the account, accusations of spreading hoaxes, threats, and delegitimization of the account.

The *state of the art* of research indicates that studies on JKT48 have extensively examined fan communication patterns, digital activities, parasocial interactions, fanaticism, and consumptive behavior. Studies of JKT48 fans' communication patterns on Twitter explain how fans construct group identities through digital interactions (Ramadhan & Yuliana, 2023). The digital activities of JKT48 fans on other platforms also demonstrate fans' participation in maintaining relationships with idols (Raharjo & Kusuma, 2024). Studies of *fanwar* explain that conflicts among fans on social media can develop through group loyalty and the defense of idols (Salsabila & Banowo, 2024). Studies of hate speech have provided mappings of its forms and impacts in digital spaces (Widyatnyana et al., 2023). However, research specifically connecting hate speech, fanaticism, and JKT48 fans' defense of the @idolpolice_ account remains limited. In another context, communication among K-Pop fan groups on Twitter demonstrates that *fanwar* is triggered not only by differences in idol preferences but also by processes of group positioning, symbolic defense, and the struggle for legitimacy within comment sections (Jesica & Utami, 2025)

The research gap lies in the lack of studies that examine hate speech as a defensive response by fans toward an account perceived as detrimental to their idols. Research on JKT48 fandom generally still positions fans as supporting communities, consumers, or participants in digital interactions. The negative aspect in the form of hate speech toward a particular account has not been widely explained through comment data and interviews with fans. This article contributes by demonstrating that hate speech does not stand alone as aggressive behavior but is related to fans' interpretations of negative framing, emotional closeness to their *oshi*, empathy toward members, and the ethical boundaries of defending idols. The objective of this study is to analyze the forms of hate speech expressed by JKT48 fans toward the @idolpolice_ account on Twitter and to explain the causes of such expressions through a netnographic approach.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a netnographic method. This approach was chosen because the phenomenon under study occurs in the digital space, particularly in the comments of JKT48 *fans* on posts from the @idolpolice_ account on Twitter. Netnography is used to understand communication practices, meanings, and interaction

patterns within *online* communities based on digital traces and participants' interpretations. This method is relevant because it allows the study to read comments as cultural data, rather than merely as texts separated from the social context of *fandom* (Tjahyana, 2021). Recent developments in netnography also emphasize the need for sensitivity to context, public-private boundaries, and procedures that adapt to the characteristics of the *online* community being observed (Kozinets & Gretzel, 2023).

The research data were sourced from comments on posts from the @idolpolice_ account and the results of semi-structured interviews with seven JKT48 *fans* informants. Comments were selected from @idolpolice_ posts containing issues concerning JKT48 *members* and generating hateful responses in the comment section. The comments were selected purposively by considering the relevance of the data to five categories of hate speech, namely insults, defamation, offensive conduct, provocation or incitement, and sarcasm. Interviews were conducted with informants who understood the dynamics of conversations concerning @idolpolice_ and had participated in debates related to the account on Twitter.

Data collection was conducted through comment documentation and virtual interviews. Comment documentation was used to map the forms of hate speech that emerged, while interviews were used to interpret the causes, motives, and meanings that *fans* attributed to the @idolpolice_ account. The interview data provided context on how *fans* distinguish criticism from personal attacks, how they interpret *oshi*, and how fanaticism operates in the process of defending idols. Data analysis was conducted through thematic coding by repeatedly reading the comment data and interview transcripts, assigning codes to relevant data units, grouping the codes into themes, and then interpreting the relationships between the themes and the theories of *fandom*, fanaticism, and hate speech. In qualitative research, repeated reading, grouping of evidence, and the construction of interpretations must be conducted transparently so that the results of the analysis do not stop at the researcher's subjective impressions (Gofe et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings show that JKT48 *fans*' comments toward the @idolpolice_ account cannot be understood merely as a single emotional reaction. These comments have variations in form, levels of aggressiveness, and different communication functions. Some comments function as direct insults, some construct accusations against the account's reputation, some contain threats or confrontational calls, some encourage other users not to give space to the account, and others use sarcasm as a way of humiliating. The categorization of the findings can be seen in Table 1.

Category	Speech Characteristics	Sample Comment	Communicative Meaning
Insults	Profanity or derogatory terms that attack the dignity of the target.	“bacot poldol anj**g”	Fans attempt to silence and demean the account considered to be disturbing the idol.
Defamation	Labeling and accusations that undermine the reputation of @idolpolice_.	“irfan b**i berulah lagi..... berita yg berujung hoax/fitnah...”	Fans construct a narrative that the account is not credible and repeatedly harms the members.
Offensive conduct	Threats, intimidation, or confrontational invitations.	“Anj**g anj**g ketemuan aja yok kata gw maah. Mulut benc**g ngent*d”	The comment moves from profanity toward pressure that opens the possibility of confrontation.
Provocation or incitement	Encouragement for other users to pressure or ignore the target.	“Orang kaya gini mah jangan kasih panggung Nanti tambah jadi CAPERNYAAA”	Fans direct the community to reduce the social legitimacy of the account.
Sarcasm	Indirect mockery, cynical humor, or role reversal.	“coba bang lu yg jadi center pengen liat lu pake baju pink pink”	Fans challenge and humiliate the account through role reversal as the object of judgment.

Table 1. Forms of Hate Speech by JKT48 Fans toward @idolpolice_

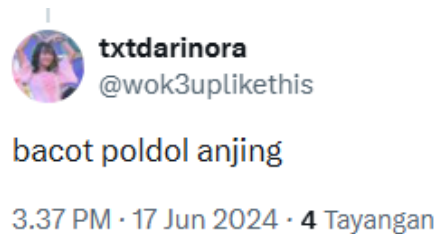


Figure 1. Hate Speech in the Form of Insults by JKT48 Fans toward @idolpolice_

The first category is insults. Insults appear through harsh words and derogatory terms directed at @idolpolice_. The comment “*bacot poldol anj**g*” is a brief but strong example because it does not contain a rebuttal to the substance of the post, but rather a demeaning command to silence. The word “*bacot*” indicates that the voice or opinion of @idolpolice_ is considered unworthy of being heard. In the Twitter comment space, such short forms are particularly effective because they are easy to replicate, easy to understand, and can become spontaneous collective responses. Other patterns of insults in the data are also evident

through vulgar profanity, degradation of social status, and attacks on personal character. Overall, these patterns demonstrate that *fans* position @idolpolice_ not as a discussion opponent, but rather as a party that needs to be degraded because it is perceived as attacking their idols.

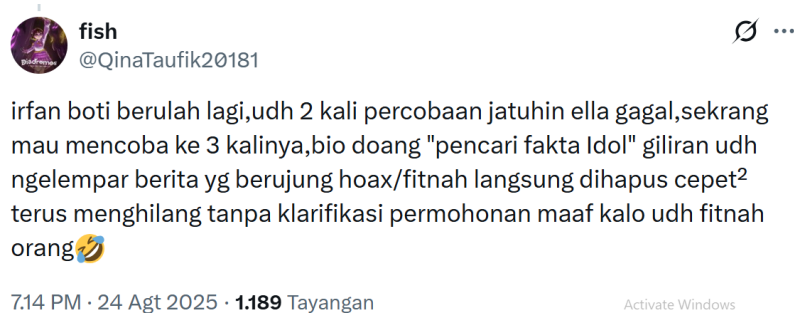


Figure 2. Hate Speech in the Form of Defamation by JKT48 *Fans* toward @idolpolice_

The second category is defamation. The comment “*irfan b**i berulah lagi, udh 2 kali percobaan jatuhin Ella gagal, sekarang mau mencoba ke-3 kalinya, bio doang ‘pencari fakta Idol’, giliran udh ngelempar berita yg berujung hoax/fitnah langsung dihapus cepet-cepet terus menghilang tanpa klarifikasi permohonan maaf kalo udh fitnah orang*” demonstrates a more complex strategy. The comment does not merely contain insults, but also constructs a narrative about the track record of @idolpolice_. The phrases “*berulah lagi*,” “*2 kali*,” and “*ke-3 kalinya*” create the impression that the account has repeatedly engaged in problematic actions. The accusation of “*hoax/fitnah*” also undermines the account’s identity claim as a fact seeker. Defamation in this category operates through the delegitimization of reputation, rather than merely through an emotional outburst.



Figure 3. Hate Speech in the Form of Offensive Conduct by JKT48 *Fans* toward @idolpolice_

The third category is offensive conduct. The comment “*Anj**g anj**g ketemuan aja yok kata gw maah. Mulut benc**g ngent*d*” demonstrates an escalation from insults toward a confrontational invitation. The invitation “*ketemuan aja*” brings the conflict from the digital space to the possibility of a direct encounter. The comment demonstrates pressure toward the target of communication, because the party being attacked is not only insulted but also physically challenged. This form is more serious than ordinary insults because the element

of intimidation can make the digital space feel unsafe. In the context of *fandom*, offensive conduct emerges when defending an idol turns into a desire to punish a party perceived as threatening the idol.

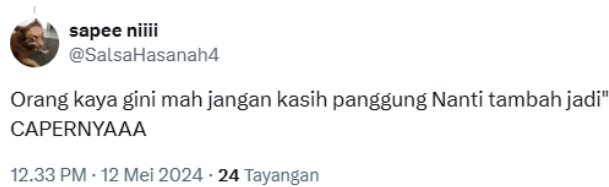


Figure 4. Hate Speech in the Form of Provocation or Incitement by JKT48 *Fans* toward @idolpolice_

The fourth category is provocation or incitement. The comment “*Orang kaya gini mah jangan kasih panggung Nanti tambah jadi CAPERNYAAA*” does not contain a direct call to attack, but it still functions as a form of social instruction. The phrase “*jangan kasih panggung*” directs other users not to give space, attention, or legitimacy to @idolpolice_. The label “*CAPER*” positions the account as a party that deliberately seeks attention. Provocation in this data does not always take the form of a call to attack, but may also emerge as a collective invitation to isolate, silence, or reject the presence of a particular account. This pattern demonstrates that hate speech can operate through the mobilization of group attitudes.



Figure 5. Hate Speech in the Form of Sarcasm by JKT48 *Fans* toward @idolpolice_

The fifth category is sarcasm. The comment “*coba bang lu yg jadi center pengen liat lu pake baju pink pink*” appears as a reversal of roles toward @idolpolice_. The account that initially assessed the suitability of a *member* as *center* is instead positioned as the party being challenged to occupy that position. The phrase “*baju pink pink*” creates a mocking visual image, because @idolpolice_ is imagined as being in a position that does not correspond to its identity. This sarcasm does not use direct profanity, but still demeans through cynical humor and the reversal of social position. This finding shows that hate speech is not always explicit; language that appears to be joking can also have a strong offensive force.

In addition to the five main comments, the data also reveal additional variations. Accusations such as “*bikin hoax mulu*” and “*udh brp kali bikin hoax*” reinforce the category of defamation because they construct an image that @idolpolice_ cannot be trusted. Sarcasm such as “*Beras habis hina member JKT48 solusinya ya kan poldoll*” shows that *fans* also use economic conditions as material for ridicule. Comments of this kind demonstrate that *fans*

attacks are directed not only at the content of the posts, but also at the identity, motives, and personal circumstances of the party associated with the account.

The pattern of these findings shows that the categories of hate speech do not always stand rigidly on their own. A single comment may contain more than one tendency, for example, profanity that simultaneously contains a threat or an accusation that simultaneously constitutes an attempt to damage the account's reputation. However, the grouping is still conducted based on the most dominant element in the comment. This distinction is important so that the analysis does not stop at the impression that *fans'* comments are merely harsh, but can demonstrate more specific forms of communicative aggression. Thus, insults are distinguished from defamation, provocation is distinguished from sarcasm, and offensive conduct is distinguished from ordinary profanity.

The comment data also show that the intensity of attacks changes according to the issues posted by @idolpolice_. Posts concerning a *member's* position as *center*, alleged violations, or narratives considered to demean a *member's* performance tend to trigger more emotional responses. *Fans* do not only read the posts as personal opinions, but as actions that may influence public perceptions of the *member*. Therefore, the comments that emerge often do not aim to debate the content of the posts rationally, but rather immediately reject the position of @idolpolice_ as a party considered unfit to judge JKT48 *members*.

This change in intensity also shows that *fans'* comments are influenced by the way issues are framed. When posts highlight certain aspects of a *member*, *fans* may interpret the emphasis as an attempt to shape negative public perceptions. Studies of media *framing* show that the selection of issues and emphasis on certain aspects can build *audience* emotional involvement before directing them toward certain judgments (Shofa Zahrani et al., 2026). In the case of @idolpolice_, it is the perception of this emphasis on issues that causes some *fans* not only to view the posts as information, but as actions considered detrimental to the *member*.

The second finding relates to the causes of hate speech. Interviews with seven informants show that harsh comments do not emerge in a vacuum. *Fans* interpret @idolpolice_ posts as repeated negative *framing*. One informant stated, “*Akun tersebut memang sering kali membongkar skandal member, ibaratnya akun dispatch pada lingkup dunia K-Pop, tapi akun tersebut lebih sering melontarkan berita-berita yang tidak berdasar yang menggiring fans untuk menyerang member walaupun kebenarannya belum dipastikan*” (interview with NA, June 5, 2026). This statement shows that *fans* are concerned not only with the content of the posts, but also with the social consequences of those posts.

Another informant viewed @idolpolice_ as an account that frequently engages in negative *framing*. AM stated that “*Poldol tuh suka sekali melakukan framing negatif entah demi engagementnya atau justru karena informasi yang dia dapat justru kejadian*” (interview with AM, June 9, 2026). ID also viewed the account as “*selalu menggoreng apapun untuk menjatuhkan salah satu member*” (interview with ID, June 7, 2026). These two quotations show that the causes of

hate speech are related to perceptions of the account's communication patterns, not merely to a single post. *Fans* feel that @idolpolice_ has a tendency to repeatedly corner *members*, causing frustration to accumulate and turn into aggressive comments.

The next cause is emotional attachment to the *oshi*. SD stated that she had followed her *oshi* “*sejak dia trainee*” and had followed the *member*'s development until reaching her current position. Attacks from people considered “*random di sosial media*” made her feel emotionally “*kesentil*” (interview with SD, June 1, 2026). ID also stated that she began responding when @idolpolice_'s statements “*sudah mulai ke arah penghinaan terhadap oshi*” and encouraged others to hate Ella (interview with ID, June 7, 2026). This quotation shows that the *oshi* is not merely an entertainment figure, but part of *fans*' emotional experiences. Attacks against the *oshi* may be interpreted as attacks against the symbolic relationship built by *fans* with their idols.

Empathy toward the *member* is also an important cause. NA stated that the *member* she defended was a minor *member* and, in her view, the criticism directed at her had already gone too far (interview with NA, June 5, 2026). SD stated that many JKT48 *members* are women and some are still underage, so they “*tidak layak*” to receive attacks from people behind the screen (interview with SD, June 1, 2026). AN added that *members* are also human beings who have personal lives and the right to socialize (interview with AN, June 21, 2026). These statements show that *fans*' defense does not always stem from hatred, but also from empathy toward the position of *members* who are considered vulnerable.

Fans do not actually always reject criticism. NA stated that criticism of an idol is not a problem if the *member* has indeed made a mistake, but unsupported hate speech is often considered criticism by some parties (interview with NA, June 5, 2026). SI also distinguishes constructive criticism from criticism intended to bring someone down (interview with SI, June 18, 2026). AN stated that constructive criticism can be supported, but criticism that judges or hurts *members* needs to be opposed (interview with AN, June 21, 2026). This demonstrates that conflict emerges because of differing boundaries between criticism, gossip, *framing*, and hate speech.

Accumulated frustration strengthens aggressive responses. NA stated that she was already quite tired of reading posts and comments on the account because, in her view, they increasingly tended toward hate speech against *members* (interview with NA, June 5, 2026). AM stated that her comments emerged as a reaction of disgust after repeatedly criticizing the account without any change (interview with AM, June 9, 2026). MV stated that her response emerged spontaneously and out of frustration with the pattern of posts using hints or *clues* that made *fans* speculate (interview with MV, June 12, 2026). This frustration shows that hate speech often begins with an accumulation of experiences, rather than only a single event.

Another cause is emotional venting. SD explained that she used expressions such as “*mending lu diem*” because she could not find other words to express her frustration. She also mentioned feeling a sense of satisfaction when burdens in real life could not be expressed to others, and then a case emerged involving her *osbi* being subjected to *hate* on Twitter (interview with SD, June 1, 2026). MV stated that there was “sedikit rasa puas” because @idolpolice_ remained unchanged despite being *judged* (interview with MV, June 12, 2026). These data show that Twitter becomes a space for emotional release, but such release can produce comments that cross boundaries.

The hope of exerting social pressure also emerges in the data. AM hoped that @idolpolice_ would stop creating *framing* that harmed *members*, *osbi*, or former *members* (interview with AM, June 9, 2026). ID stated that an account such as @idolpolice_ could be positive if used to remind people of the *golden rules*, but it must be based on strong evidence (interview with ID, June 7, 2026). AN hoped that the account would realize that its views are not absolute and seek concrete evidence before *posting* (interview with AN, June 21, 2026). SI emphasized that criticism should be delivered constructively and should not bring up issues that have already been resolved (interview with SI, June 18, 2026). The harsh responses of *fans* are understood by some informants as a way of pressuring the account to stop harming *members*, although the methods used remain problematic from the perspective of communication ethics.

The research findings also show that fanaticism has two sides. NA described JKT48 as entertainment that provided positive energy while she was going through a difficult period of conducting research and writing her thesis (interview with NA, June 5, 2026). MV stated that *idols* are also human beings, so when they can be defended, in her view, they deserve to be defended, but if they are indeed wrong, it must still be acknowledged that they are wrong (interview with MV, June 12, 2026). SI stated that constructive criticism can be accepted, but criticism that brings down and insults an *idol* creates an unhealthy condition for the *idol* (interview with SI, June 18, 2026). This finding shows that fanaticism is not automatically negative; the problem emerges when defense turns into attacks that demean others. This finding is consistent with a study of JKT48 fan *brand attachment*, which shows that fanaticism can manifest as positive support when expressed through content production and emotional attachment that supports the idol’s career (Cindrakasih et al., 2024).

A summary of the causes of hate speech based on interviews with seven informants is presented in Table 2. This table shows that *fans’* responses do not arise from a single factor, but are formed through a combination of perceptions of the account, emotional closeness to the *member*, and the fast-paced communication situation on Twitter.

Cause	Interview Quote	Interpretation
Negative framing perception	“Poldol really likes to do negative framing...” (AM, June	Fans perceive the posts as a communication pattern that corners the

	9, 2026)	members, rather than as a single criticism.
Attachment to oshi	“I started responding... when ... it moved toward insulting my oshi...” (ID, June 7, 2026)	The oshi is positioned as a personal figure, so attacks against the oshi trigger an emotional response.
Empathy toward members	“The member I defended was a minor...” (NA, June 5, 2026)	Defense emerges because fans see the member as a vulnerable party who needs to be protected.
Boundaries between criticism and attack	“Some criticism is constructive, some is insulting...” (SI, June 18, 2026)	Fans distinguish constructive performative criticism from speech intended to bring someone down.
Accumulated frustration	“I have become quite fed up with reading the posts...” (NA, June 5, 2026)	Harsh comments emerge after fans feel that they have repeatedly seen a pattern of negative posts.
Emotional venting	“If it’s about feelings, maybe I was satisfied, yeah...” (SD, June 1, 2026)	Twitter becomes a space for releasing anger and emotional pressure that is not always controlled.
Social pressure	“What I hope for is that they stop creating harmful framing...” (AM, June 9, 2026)	Some fans hope that strong responses can stop the pattern of posts considered harmful to the members.

Table 2. Causes of Hate Speech Based on Informant Interviews

The interview quotations show that fans’ defense is not always directed toward only one *oshi*. SI stated, “*Itu baik siapapun, gak di oshi aku aja sih. Di semua member juga, kalo pun dia tujuannya untuk menyerang, itu pasti aku komentarin sih*” (interview with SI, June 18, 2026). This statement shows that *fans*’ responses can develop from personal loyalty into *fandom* solidarity. *Fans* feel that an attack against one *member* can be understood as part of an attack against the JKT48 community more broadly, especially when a post is considered to have the purpose of attacking, rather than merely criticizing.

The interview findings also reveal ambivalence in the way *fans* understand their actions. On the one hand, informants realize that harsh comments are not an ideal form of communication. On the other hand, they feel that such comments emerge because of accumulated disappointment with the pattern of @idolpolice_ posts. This ambivalence is important because it shows that hate speech does not always arise from an initial intention to hurt, but can be formed from a defense that loses control over language. *Fans* feel that they are defending, but the form of their speech can turn into attacks that demean others.

The interview findings reinforce that the causes of hate speech are multilayered. Negative *framing* becomes the initial trigger, attachment to the *oshi* strengthens emotional sensitivity, empathy toward the *member* provides moral legitimacy, while frustration and emotional venting encourage comments to become more aggressive. These layers explain

why *fans*' comments toward @idolpolice_ cannot simply be read as spontaneous reactions. These comments are the result of the intersection of meaning-making, emotions, *fandom* solidarity, and the characteristics of Twitter as a space for rapid responses.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that hate speech by JKT48 *fans* toward @idolpolice_ is the result of a process of social meaning-making within digital *fandom*. Harsh comments do not emerge merely because *fans* dislike criticism, but because @idolpolice_ posts are interpreted as symbols of attacks against *members*. The perspective of symbolic interactionism helps explain that people act based on the meanings they assign to objects, events, or social actions (Syamsudin et al., 2022). For *fans*, @idolpolice_ is not understood as an ordinary account, but as a symbol of a party that disturbs, corners, and threatens the reputation of *members*. This meaning then influences how *fans* act in the comment section.

Digital fan culture explains why *fans* feel that they have a role in maintaining the image of their idols. Fans do not merely watch performances or follow information, but also participate in producing narratives about idols through content, comments, and collective support (Dewi et al., 2022). Within the JKT48 community, the digital activities of *fans* can be seen in efforts to share information, build closeness, and negotiate the position of *members* before the public (Raharjo & Kusuma, 2024). This study expands this discussion by showing that *fans*' participation can also take the form of aggressive defense when the digital space is filled with narratives considered to attack *members*.

Insults as the first category show that *fans* often use language as a tool of delegitimization. The comment “*bacot mulu*” functions to silence rather than to engage in discussion. This pattern is consistent with studies of hate speech that view the use of derogatory words as an attack on the dignity of the target (Widyatnyana et al., 2023). In the context of social media, insults often emerge because the psychological distance between the speaker and the target makes users feel freer to express verbal aggression (Abdillah et al., 2023; Sa'idah et al., 2021). Twitter accelerates this process because the comment section provides space for brief, spontaneous, and easily imitated responses.

Defamation reveals another dimension of hate speech. *Fans* not only insult but also construct a narrative that @idolpolice_ is an unreliable account, spreads *boaxes*, and engages in slander. Such delegitimization can be understood as a reputational conflict. @idolpolice_ claims a position as an account that seeks facts, while *fans* attempt to undermine that claim through negative labeling. This contest shows that *fandom* conflict is not merely a matter of emotion, but also a struggle for authority to determine who is considered right, who is considered harmful, and who has the right to speak about *members*. In the context of social media comments, *netizens*' debates can develop into pro-and-contra discussions that emphasize the reputation of digital actors, causing the focus of discussion to shift from the

initial issue toward an assessment of the credibility of the message source (Juliansyah & Achmad, 2023).

Offensive conduct demonstrates a more dangerous escalation. The invitation “*ketemuan aja*” moves the conflict from a digital debate toward the possibility of direct confrontation. This phenomenon is consistent with studies of *fanwar*, which show that online conflicts can produce strong social pressure and potentially spill over into relationships outside the platform (Sahara et al., 2022). In this case, *fanwar* does not occur between two different idol *fandoms*, but between JKT48 *fans* and an account perceived as an antagonist within the community. This expands the understanding of *fanwar* as a conflict that can occur between a *fandom* and a digital actor considered to threaten an idol.

Provocation or incitement in the data does not always take the form of calls to attack. The comment “*jangan kasih panggung*” demonstrates a mechanism of social control within the community. *Fans* direct other members not to give attention to @idolpolice_, but at the same time, the comment still assigns a negative label and reinforces the position of @idolpolice_ as a common enemy. This finding is important because it demonstrates a paradox of algorithms on social media. Calls not to give the account a platform may actually increase conversation about the account. Controversy becomes increasingly visible when many *fans* comment on and discuss it. This pattern is also related to the logic of social media visibility, in which the more an account is discussed, the greater the likelihood that its content will receive new attention. Digital communication strategies need to consider the relationship between attention, *engagement*, and account image because user responses also shape the public meaning of a post (Firdausy & Achmad, 2025).

Sarcasm shows that hate speech can appear in forms that seem light. The comment about “*pake baju pink pink*” uses humor and role reversal to embarrass @idolpolice_. Such sarcasm may appear as a *joke*, but it still contains a demeaning function. Pragmatic studies of hate speech emphasize that the meaning of an utterance is determined not only by harsh words, but also by its context, target, *implicature*, and social impact (Widyatnyana et al., 2023). Therefore, cynical humor in *fandom* conflicts needs to be understood as part of symbolic aggression, particularly when it aims to diminish the dignity of another party before the community.

The most prominent cause of hate speech is the perception of negative *framing*. Informants do not reject criticism absolutely, but reject criticism that they consider to steer opinions, corner *members*, or create opportunities for attacks against *members*. This finding is consistent with studies of *fandom* conflict showing that *fanwar* is often triggered by differences in how criticism of idols is interpreted (Salsabila & Banowo, 2024). When criticism is understood as an attack, *fans* feel that they have a moral reason to respond. The problem is that this moral justification can lose its legitimacy when expressed through insults and threats.

Attachment to the *osbi* is an important factor. An *osbi* is not merely a favorite *member*, but the center of affection that shapes *fans*' experiences. Parasocial relationships make *fans* feel close to, familiar with the journey of, and emotionally responsible for supporting their idols (Pratama & Winduwati, 2021). In this study, *fans* who had followed their *osbi* since the *trainee* period felt that attacks against their *osbi* touched their personal experiences. This explains why comments toward @idolpolice_ can become highly emotional even though the conflict occurs in a digital space. The hyperreality of idol worship also shows that symbolic closeness with idols can lead fans to construct experiences of consumption and support as part of their everyday emotional lives (Kamalia, 2024).

Empathy toward *members* demonstrates the positive side of fanaticism. Informants emphasized that *members* are human beings, some are still young, and they have the right to develop in a healthy environment. This finding is consistent with studies that view *fandom* as a space for solidarity and emotional support (Rahman & Achmad, 2024). *Fans* do not merely want to attack @idolpolice_, but also want to protect *members* from public pressure. However, empathy can turn into aggression if *fans* use the idol's suffering as justification for demeaning others.

The differing boundaries between criticism and hate speech constitute a central point of conflict. Informants accept criticism of performances, but reject criticism that is considered insulting, cornering, or attacking personal life. This shows that conflict arises not only because of the content of a message, but also because of *fans*' assessments of intention, context, and manner of delivery. Studies of hate speech on social media emphasize that aggressive comments often emerge when users feel that another party has violated the moral norms of the group (Hidayat et al., 2021). In this case, the *fandom*'s group norms position *members* as parties who need to be protected from narratives considered unfair.

Accumulated frustration shows that hate speech often emerges from repetition. *Fans* feel that @idolpolice_ posts are not isolated incidents, but rather a recurring pattern. Frustration causes comments that initially could have taken the form of criticism to turn into attacks. This pattern can be understood through the logic of collective emotions on social media. When many users share the same frustrating experience, one person's comment can reinforce another user's comment. This emotional solidarity makes aggression more easily accepted within the group.

Emotional venting shows that Twitter becomes a space for releasing pressure. Several informants acknowledged feeling satisfaction or relief after writing harsh comments. This finding demonstrates the relationship between social media and affective expression. Studies in cyberpsychology state that users can channel anger and frustration through online comments, particularly when they feel that they have group support or relative anonymity (Sa'idah et al., 2021). However, such temporary satisfaction can produce greater social impacts, such as the normalization of profanity and prolonged conflict. The affective

responses of social media users are shaped not only by the information they receive, but also by emotional experiences, imagination, and evaluations that emerge when users interact with digital representations (Diva & Khatibah, 2026).

The desire to exert social pressure shows that *fans* view harsh speech as a control strategy. They hope that @idolpolice_ will stop creating *framing*, become more prudent, and use strong evidence before posting. This means that *fans* do not merely want to vent their emotions, but also want to change the account's behavior. The problem is that control strategies using insults and threats have the potential to intensify conflict rather than resolve it. Criticism of a *problematic* account remains necessary, but it must be separated from speech that demeans dignity. This finding is relevant to discussions of digital communication ethics because *online* public spaces require social control that does not turn into verbal violence.

Fanaticism is a key concept for understanding the overall findings. *Fandom* literature shows that fanaticism is not always synonymous with irrational or negative behavior. Fanaticism can mean passion, closeness, commitment, and loyalty toward an object of affection (Brooks, 2021; Fuschillo, 2020). In JKT48 *fandom*, fanaticism can generate support, purchases of official products, attendance at events, content production, and solidarity toward *members* (Farij & Nio, 2025). This study finds the same, namely that *fans* defend idols because they feel that they care, not merely because they want to attack. On the other hand, fanatical attachment to an idol community can strengthen group identity and make *fans* more sensitive to narratives considered to threaten the idol's reputation (Haq & Pamungkas, 2025).

The negative side of fanaticism emerges when loyalty eliminates ethical boundaries in communication. Fanaticism can cause *fans* to interpret criticism of an idol as a threat to their personal and group identity. At this point, defense becomes highly emotional and difficult to control. Studies of fanaticism and *fanwar* show that conflicts among fans often emerge when group identity is at stake (Pohan & Gustiana, 2023). This study shows that a similar mechanism occurs when the opponent of the *fandom* is not another fan group, but an account considered to attack *members*.

This finding also emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between defending an idol and hate speech. Defending an idol can be a positive action when carried out through clarification, evidence-based criticism, reporting content that violates rules, or public education. Defense becomes *problematic* when it is carried out through insults, defamation, threats, provocation, or demeaning sarcasm. This boundary is important because *fans* often feel that their actions are justified by the goal of protecting an idol. However, a goal considered good does not automatically justify communication methods that cause harm.

The boundary between defense and hate speech can be seen from the orientation of the message. Healthy defense is oriented toward clarification, fact-checking, and protecting the dignity of *members* without demeaning other parties. In contrast, hate speech is oriented

toward bringing down the target through profanity, accusations, pressure, and calls to humiliate. This difference in orientation is important because *fans* often feel that they have a moral reason to defend their idols, but a moral reason does not automatically justify every form of expression. Digital communication ethics remains necessary so that *fandom* solidarity does not turn into practices of verbal violence.

The research findings also illustrate that the Twitter comment space functions as an arena for group validation. When one harsh comment receives support, similar comments may be considered acceptable and then *replicated* by other users. This process explains why a single post can develop into a series of increasingly aggressive comments. At that point, hate speech is no longer merely an individual act, but becomes a collective practice supported by the atmosphere of the conversation. This makes emotional management within *fandom* as important as the ability to distinguish criticism, gossip, slander, and hate speech. Social media is understood as a space that can shift the center of communication power from formal institutions toward informal actors such as online communities, content creators, and popular accounts (Ihsan et al., 2026). This explains why an account such as @idolpolice_ can obtain an important position in *fandom* conversations despite not being part of JKT48's official structure.

The practical implication of these findings is the need for stronger *fandom* communication *literacy*. *Fans* can still criticize accounts considered detrimental to *members*, but criticism should be directed at the content of the posts, rather than at the body, identity, personal life, or threats against the account administrator. Fan communities can establish internal norms that encourage evidence-based clarification, reporting problematic content through platform mechanisms, and rejection of comments containing threats and insults. In this way, concern for *members* can be maintained without reproducing new hate speech. Digital public relations principles emphasizing honesty, responsibility, transparency, and accountability are also relevant to directing community communication practices so that they do not turn into destructive mass pressure (Setiadi et al., 2025).

The academic implication of this study lies in expanding the study of local *fandom*. JKT48 *fandom* can be understood not only through participation, consumption, or parasocial closeness, but also through digital conflicts that reveal the ambivalent side of fanaticism. This study demonstrates that hate speech by *fans* is not merely an individual phenomenon, but a social practice influenced by group norms, collective emotions, and interpretations of social media narratives. Practically, *fans* communities need to develop communication norms that distinguish criticism of *problematic* accounts from personal attacks that violate ethical principles.

The limitation of this study lies in the scope of the data, which focuses on comments on @idolpolice_ posts and interviews with seven informants. The data do not cover all JKT48 *fandom* conversations on Twitter, so the findings are not intended to be generalized

to all JKT48 *fans*. Future research can compare *fans*' responses to other accounts, analyze the role of Twitter's algorithms in expanding conflicts, or examine conflict resolution strategies within *fandom* communities. Further studies can also deepen the relationship between positive fanaticism, empathy, self-control, and digital communication ethics. This limitation is consistent with recent ethical considerations in netnography, which emphasize that research on digital communities must consider data visibility boundaries, the researcher's position, and the context of online behavior, which is not always completely open (Demant & Moretti, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that hate speech by JKT48 *fans* toward the @idolpolice_ account on Twitter is a response to posts perceived as attacking, degrading, or directing negative opinions toward JKT48 *members*. Such hate speech does not emerge suddenly, but rather develops through the *fans*' interpretation of @idolpolice_'s communication patterns, which are considered to have crossed the boundaries of criticism. *Fans* do not merely read the content of the posts *literally*, but also interpret the motives, impacts, and reputation of the account within the *fandom* community.

The forms of hate speech identified consist of insults, defamation, offensive conduct, provocation or incitement, and sarcasm. Insults appear through profanity and derogatory words. Defamation appears through accusations of *hoaxes*, slander, and negative labeling of the account. Offensive conduct is reflected in threats and confrontational invitations. Provocation appears through directions to other users not to give space or legitimacy to @idolpolice_. Sarcasm appears through cynical humor, role reversal, and indirect mockery that nevertheless aims to demean.

The causes of hate speech include perceptions of negative *framing*, emotional attachment to the *oshi*, empathy toward *members*, differences in the boundaries between criticism and personal attacks, accumulated frustration, emotional venting, and the motivation to exert social pressure. These factors demonstrate that hate speech within the JKT48 *fandom* is closely related to loyalty, emotional meaning, solidarity, and the dynamics of digital conflict. *Fans* do not necessarily reject criticism of *members*, but reject criticism considered unfounded, cornering, or transformed into insults.

Fanaticism in defending idols is not entirely negative. Fanaticism can be a form of loyalty, empathy, solidarity, and concern for idols as long as it is practiced appropriately. Defending idols can still be understood as a positive action when carried out proportionally, based on arguments, and without degrading other parties. Fanaticism becomes negative when defense crosses the boundaries of communication ethics and takes the form of insults, provocation, threats, personal attacks, or social pressure. Thus, the main issue is not the act of defending idols, but rather how such defense is communicated in the public digital space.

This study recommends that fan communities strengthen digital communication ethics literacy. Criticism of accounts considered harmful to *members* can still be expressed through clarification, reporting, and evidence-based arguments. Community managers can also promote communication norms that avoid profanity, threats, and *doxing*. Further research can examine *fandom* conflict *moderation* strategies, the role of algorithms in expanding *fanwars*, and the relationship between positive fanaticism and *fans'* ability to control aggressive responses on social media.

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