

The Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Aggressive Behavior Among Metal Music Fans in Jakarta

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Abstract

The development of metal music in Jakarta has occurred since the early 1990s and has grown rapidly to date. With the increasing popularity of metal music, many metal concerts are held in this city, causing chaos and violence. Occurring cases of violence are a manifestation of aggressive behaviour. The aggressive behaviour that occurs may be caused by the relatively low emotional intelligence of metal music fans. Emotional intelligence must be controlled in order to be able to directly translate these feelings or thoughts into action when dealing with problems.

This research aims to test whether there is an influence of emotional intelligence on the emergence of aggressive behaviour among metal music fans in Jakarta. This research uses a quantitative approach. The respondents for this research consisted of 103 metal music fans aged 20 to 35 with the criteria of having attended or seen a live metal concert and being involved in the metal music community.

This research data was measured using the Aggressive Behaviour Scale compiled by Buss and Perry (1992) and the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) developed by Pacheco, Rey, and Alvarez (2019). The sampling technique for this research uses a non-probability sampling technique, namely snowball sampling, and the data analysis technique used is a simple regression technique. Based on the results of the analysis, there is a very significant influence between emotional intelligence on the emergence of aggressive behaviour among metal music fans in Jakarta with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$). These results show that the existing hypothesis is accepted, namely that there is an influence between emotional intelligence on the emergence of aggressive behaviour among metal music fans in Jakarta.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Aggressive Behavior, Metal Music Fans

1. Introduction

Music is a fundamental aspect of human culture and an integral part of everyday life. As an art form, music organizes sounds into structured patterns that can be perceived, interpreted, and emotionally experienced by humans (Banoe, 2003). Contemporary data indicate that music consumption continues to increase globally. An analysis by Prasetyo (2022) showed that average listening time reached 20.1 hours per week in 2022, rising from 18.4 hours per week in 2021, suggesting that music plays an increasingly central role in individuals' daily experiences. Music encompasses diverse genres, including pop, rock, jazz, R&B, and metal. In Jakarta, the metal music scene has developed since the early 1990s and has grown substantially, marked by large-scale events such as the Hammer sonic Festival, which reportedly attracted approximately 25,000 attendees in 2023 (Faishal, 2023).

Despite its popularity, metal music is often stigmatized by those outside the genre as being associated with violence and criminality. Media reports describing unrest at certain metal concerts, such as an incident in Jakarta involving approximately 10,000 spectators (Liputan6.com, 2023), may reinforce such perceptions. However, attributing aggressive incidents solely to music preference risks oversimplification. Music is a cultural stimulus that interacts with listeners' cognitive and affective processes rather than acting as a direct determinant of behavior (Iswandi, 2015). Research has demonstrated that auditory stimuli, including music, can influence emotional states and psychological responses (King, 1996), and emotionally arousing stimuli may increase aggressive tendencies under certain conditions (Dayakisni & Hudaniah, 2009).

Aggressive behavior is generally understood as intentional actions aimed at causing harm to others or objects, expressed verbally or non-verbally, often emerging from emotional arousal such as anger or frustration (Siregar, 2020; Taradiba, Masada, & Mulyadi, 2023). Difficulties in emotional regulation have been linked to higher levels of aggression and may reflect lower emotional intelligence (Wijaya & Sitasari, 2021). Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others (Labaf et al, 2012). Music, including heavy metal, can evoke intense emotional experiences (Novdaly & Mohammad, 2020), making emotional regulation a crucial factor in determining whether such arousal leads to adaptive or maladaptive behavioral outcomes.

Empirical findings consistently indicate a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and aggressive behavior. Studies have shown that higher emotional intelligence is associated with lower levels of aggression among students, adolescents, and university populations (Hayati, Harahap, & Sari, 2022; Maditia & Sakti, 2021; Wijaya, Sitasari, & Safitri, 2021; Zamani, Asrori, & Mulyono, 2022). Similar results were reported in cross-cultural adolescent samples, where individuals with higher emotional intelligence were less likely to

engage in physical or verbal aggression (Wandile, Lawal, & Refilwe, 2019).

However, several gaps remain in the literature. First, most previous studies have examined emotional intelligence and aggression in general educational or adolescent populations, with limited attention to specific subcultural contexts such as music fandoms. Second, metal music communities are frequently discussed in public discourse through a lens of moral panic rather than empirical psychological investigation. Third, few studies have explored how emotional intelligence may function as a psychological protective factor within emotionally intense entertainment settings, such as live metal concerts. Consequently, the mechanisms through which emotional intelligence may buffer aggressive tendencies among metal music fans remain underexplored.

The present study addresses these gaps by focusing specifically on metal music fans as a distinct sociocultural group and examining the role of emotional intelligence in relation to aggressive behavior within this context. By shifting the perspective from music as a presumed cause of aggression to individual emotional regulation capacities, this study offers a more nuanced psychological explanation of concert-related unrest. Furthermore, the findings are expected to contribute to the development of emotional intelligence-based intervention strategies aimed at reducing aggressive behavior in high-arousal social environments.

2. Methodology

This study involved 103 respondent who met the following criteria: having attended or watched a live metal concert and being involved in a metal music community. The sampling technique used was snowball sampling, which is a method that begins with a limited number of initial respondents and gradually expands by recruiting new participants through referrals. This technique was chosen due to the initial difficulty in accessing enough qualified participants (Sugiyono, 2017).

Data were collected using an online structured questionnaire designed with a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The collected data were analyzed using simple linear regression.

Aggressive behavior was measured using a scale developed based on the dimensions proposed by Buss and Perry (1992), which include physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. This instrument demonstrated good internal consistency, with a reliability coefficient of 0.89.

Emotional intelligence in this study was assessed using an emotional intelligence scale derived from established theoretical dimensions of emotional intelligence. The instrument employed was the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), developed by Pacheco, Rey, and Alvarez (2019) based on the emotional intelligence dimensions introduced by Wong and Law (2002). The scale consists of 16 items and showed high reliability, with a coefficient of 0.91.

3. Result and Discussion

The results of hypothesis testing indicated that emotional intelligence had a highly significant effect on aggressive behavior among metal music fans in Jakarta ($p < .01$). The regression analysis produced a correlation coefficient of $R = .517$ and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of .267, meaning that emotional intelligence contributed 26.7% to the variance in aggressive behavior, while 73.3% was influenced by other variables outside this study. The relationship was negative, indicating that higher emotional intelligence was associated with lower aggressive behavior. This finding is consistent with Wijaya, Sitasari, and Safitri (2021), who reported a significant influence of emotional intelligence on aggressive behavior. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better able to understand and manage their emotions and respond appropriately to others' emotional states, which reduces the likelihood of maladaptive behavioral expressions (Taradiba, Masada, & Mulyadi, 2023).

Descriptively, aggressive behavior among participants was categorized as high ($M = 107.33$), exceeding the hypothetical mean ($MH = 84$). This supports Mei and Arif's (2020) view that aggression can emerge as an emotional expression resulting from frustration or unmet expectations. Sarwono and Meinarno (2006) also emphasized that poor emotional control and emotional immaturity may increase susceptibility to group influence and aggressive conduct. In contrast, emotional intelligence levels were found to be moderate ($M = 47.49$), suggesting that participants' emotional regulation capacity may not have been sufficiently strong to buffer intense emotional stimulation in concert environments. As noted by Taradiba et al. (2023) and Kardiawan, Nitiasih, and Riastini (2023), individuals with lower emotional intelligence tend to express emotions impulsively, struggle with mood regulation, and have difficulty managing interpersonal conflict, which may manifest as aggressive behavior.

Age differences also supported developmental explanations. Participants aged 20–25 showed the highest aggression scores, whereas those aged 31–35 demonstrated lower aggression and relatively higher emotional intelligence. This pattern aligns with Fasilita (2012), who found that increasing age is associated with better self-control and reduced aggressive behavior. Gao et al. (2023) similarly reported that individuals who engage in aggressive behavior tend to be younger. Higher emotional intelligence among older participants is consistent with Mulati (2017) and Werdhiatmi, Diniari, and Ariani (2019), who argued that emotional awareness and regulation improve with maturity.

Gender analysis showed that male participants exhibited higher aggression levels, consistent with findings

by Aulya, Ilyas, and Ifdil (2016). Evolutionary perspectives (Febrida, 2021) suggest that male aggression may be linked to intraseksual competition and status-seeking behavior. Conversely, female participants demonstrated higher emotional intelligence, aligning with Hastuti and Baiti (2019), Fida and Ghaffar (2018), and Siwi, Luthfi, and Nasrul (2011), who reported higher emotional intelligence scores among women.

Motivational factors for concert attendance were also relevant. Participants attending concerts for direct physical engagement (e.g., moshing, intense sensory experiences) showed the highest aggression scores. This aligns with Milsten, Tennyson, and Weisberg (2017) and Syawahidul (2019), who described moshing as a physically intense and chaotic form of collective expression. Pandhita (2023) further noted that moshing environments involve high physical contact and arousal, which may increase the risk of aggressive incidents. In contrast, participants attending primarily for entertainment demonstrated relatively higher emotional intelligence, consistent with Basri (2018) and Subagio (2015), who emphasized that emotional intelligence supports adaptive enjoyment and emotional balance.

Similarly, participants involved in metal communities to expand social relationships showed slightly higher emotional intelligence. Misriati (2016) and Fundrika (2022) highlighted that community involvement fosters shared identity, social bonding, and mutual support, which may enhance emotional competence. However, those motivated by information-seeking showed higher aggression levels, suggesting that engagement intensity and identity investment may interact with emotional regulation processes.

Overall, these findings support the argument that aggressive behavior in metal music contexts is not solely a function of musical genre but is closely linked to individual differences in emotional intelligence, as also suggested by Zamani, Asrori, and Mulyono (2022). Emotional intelligence appears to function as a psychological buffer that determines whether heightened emotional arousal leads to constructive social participation or aggressive expression.

4. Practical Implications

The findings of this study highlight emotional intelligence as an important psychological resource in reducing aggressive tendencies within high-arousal social environments such as metal music concerts. Practically, this suggests that preventive efforts aimed at minimizing concert-related unrest should not focus solely on external control measures (e.g., security enforcement), but also on strengthening attendees' emotional regulation capacities. Emotional intelligence-based training programs—covering emotional awareness, impulse control, empathy development, and adaptive coping strategies—could be integrated into youth development programs, campus counseling services, and community-based workshops, particularly for young adults who constitute the largest demographic of metal music audiences.

Event organizers may also benefit from these findings by incorporating psychosocial considerations into event management. For example, providing structured crowd-flow systems, safe zones, and clear communication regarding acceptable behaviors may help reduce emotional escalation. Collaboration between organizers and community leaders within metal subcultures could promote norms emphasizing mutual respect and safety during high-energy activities such as moshing. Rather than framing metal music communities as inherently problematic, these results support a strengths-based approach that recognizes the role of emotional skills in shaping behavioral outcomes.

At the policy level, the study underscores the importance of socio-emotional competence as part of broader violence-prevention strategies. Programs designed to enhance emotional intelligence among young adults may have spillover effects beyond entertainment contexts, contributing to improved interpersonal functioning and reduced aggressive behavior in daily life.

5. Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits causal inference. Although emotional intelligence significantly predicted aggressive behavior, the directionality of this relationship cannot be definitively established. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine how emotional intelligence and aggression influence one another over time.

Second, the sample was highly gender-imbalanced, with male participants representing nearly the entire sample. This limits the generalizability of gender-related interpretations and calls for future studies with more balanced representation. Third, emotional intelligence explained 26.7% of the variance in aggressive behavior, indicating that a substantial proportion of influencing factors remains unexamined. Variables such as personality traits, group dynamics, substance use, situational provocation, crowd density, and environmental stressors may also play significant roles and should be incorporated into future multivariate models.

Additionally, the use of self-report measures may introduce response bias, particularly for socially sensitive constructs such as aggression. Future research could employ behavioral observations, peer reports, or physiological indicators of emotional arousal to obtain more comprehensive data. Expanding the research to different musical genres or cultural contexts would also clarify whether the observed patterns are specific to metal music settings or generalizable to other high-intensity collective experiences.

6. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study demonstrates that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in predicting aggressive behavior among metal music fans in Jakarta. The findings confirm a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and aggression, indicating that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit lower aggressive tendencies. Although emotional intelligence accounted for 26.7% of the variance in aggressive behavior, the results suggest that it functions as an important psychological protective factor, particularly in emotionally intense and high-arousal social environments such as live metal music concerts. Descriptive findings further revealed that participants generally displayed high levels of aggression and moderate levels of emotional intelligence, highlighting a potential imbalance between emotional stimulation and regulation capacity.

The study also emphasizes that aggressive behavior in metal music contexts should not be attributed solely to the musical genre itself, but rather to the interaction between situational arousal and individual emotional regulation abilities. Age, gender, and motivational factors for concert participation were shown to be associated with variations in aggression and emotional intelligence, supporting developmental and psychosocial explanations proposed in previous research. Overall, these findings contribute to the psychological understanding of aggression in subcultural entertainment settings and underscore the importance of emotional intelligence development as a preventive strategy for reducing aggressive behavior in collective, high-energy environments.

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