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The Effect of Conformity and Emotional Intelligence on the Aggressiveness of Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP) Members in Padang City

Genta Prasetya & Mario Pratama
Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia
gentaprasetya9@gmail.com; mario.pratama@fip.unp.ac.id

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Abstract

Although aggressive behavior among law enforcement personnel has received considerable scholarly attention, limited research has examined the combined influence of conformity and emotional intelligence on members of Indonesia's Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP). This study analyzes the effects of conformity and emotional intelligence on aggressive behavior among Satpol PP members in Padang City. A quantitative correlational design was employed, involving 186 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using the Conformity Scale, the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale, and the Aggression Questionnaire and analyzed through multiple linear regression. The findings demonstrate that emotional intelligence has a significant negative effect on aggressive behavior, whereas conformity has a significant positive effect. Collectively, the two predictors explain 28.9% of the variance in aggressive behavior. These results indicate that stronger emotional intelligence may reduce aggressive responses, while conformity to group norms may increase such behavior during public-order enforcement. The study concludes that cultivating constructive group solidarity and strengthening emotional

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intelligence are essential for mitigating aggressive responses in high-pressure field operations. The findings extend social psychological understanding of emotion regulation and group dynamics among law enforcement personnel and provide practical implications for government institutions seeking to develop more humane standard operating procedures and implement emotional intelligence training. Further research may employ qualitative approaches or examine mediating variables to provide a more comprehensive explanation of aggressive behavior among law enforcement officers.

Keywords: Aggressive Behavior; Conformity; Emotional Intelligence; Law Enforcement Personnel; Satpol PP

INTRODUCTION

The Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP) functions as a crucial regional apparatus in maintaining public order, ensuring community tranquility, and enforcing local regulations across Indonesia. During field operations, particularly in regulating street vendors in public spaces, Satpol PP members frequently operate in highly unpredictable environments. These situations are often fraught with intense social conflict, as highlighted by Maileni et al., (2026) in their study on public order enforcement. The complexity of maintaining general involvement further adds to this operational burden Suhartanto & Perwira, (2020). The tension inherent in these enforcement duties often culminates in economic and political friction between officers and the public, creating severe emotional pressure Husen, (2024). As witnessed in recent clashes in Padang City, these demanding interactions frequently provoke aggressive responses from the personnel, compromising the integrity of the institution.

Aggression in this law enforcement context is not merely accidental. (Allen et al., 2018) define it as intentional behaviors directed toward harming others who explicitly wish to avoid such treatment. Buss & Perry 1992 further elaborate that this aggression manifests in four distinct dimensions: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility, an instrument framework that remains widely acknowledged and applied in contemporary psychological assessment Fernández-Ballesteros, (2019). According to social learning theory, such confrontational behaviors can be rapidly acquired and reinforced through the observation and imitation of peers within a tense social setting Bandura 1973 in Chetan Khadka, (2025). If left unmanaged, these aggressive actions severely undermine the

persuasive and humane approach legally expected of law enforcement, thereby escalating conflicts rather than resolving them.

However, the aggressive behavior exhibited by Satpol PP members cannot be solely attributed to external civilian provocations; it is significantly shaped by the internal social dynamics of the enforcement units. Operating in highly cohesive squads, officers are deeply subjected to conformity, which acts as a powerful catalyst for collective behavior Myers, (2012). Conformity refers to an individual's psychological tendency to adjust their attitudes, responses, and behaviors to align with group norms. This adjustment is often driven by the innate desire to avoid social rejection or to maintain robust group solidarity Toelch & Dolan, (2016)

Toelch & Dolan, (2016) distinguish this group pressure into normative and informational influences, suggesting that officers may act aggressively simply because it represents the dominant, accepted response of their unit in the heat of the moment. Yet, the manifestation of this intense group pressure is heavily moderated by an individual's internal traits, particularly their level of emotional intelligence. Toelch & Dolan, (2016) introduced emotional intelligence as the complex cognitive ability to accurately perceive, evaluate, and manage one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others. Mayer et al., (2016) further updated this ability model to emphasize the rational processing of emotions. Officers equipped with robust emotional intelligence can process negative feelings such as frustration or anger constructively, preventing impulsive aggressive outbursts even under extreme provocation Gross, (2021).

Extensive psychological literature has established the critical, contrasting roles of both conformity and emotional intelligence in predicting aggressiveness. Studies consistently demonstrate that conformity has a strong positive correlation with aggressiveness. For instance, Gustina et al., (2024) found that group conformity directly triggers aggression among crowds. Similarly, Isnaeni, (2021) highlighted that youth conform to aggressive behaviors to gain peer acceptance. This is further supported by Wicaksono et al., (2025), who noted that individuals conform to aggressive actions in highly solidary environments. Conversely, emotional intelligence operates as a crucial internal inhibitor. A'yunnisa & Indriana, (2018) proved that individuals equipped with higher emotional intelligence exhibit significantly lower levels of aggressiveness. Maditia & Sakti, (2021) also concluded that emotional intelligence plays a central role in suppressing aggressiveness through better

impulse control. Ubago-Jiménez et al., (2021) found that advanced emotion regulation strategies directly reduce aggressive tendencies.

Despite the wealth of existing literature, a substantial research gap remains apparent. Previous empirical investigations proving that both variables simultaneously influence aggressive behavior have predominantly focused on adolescents in educational settings, as seen in the work of Tutiani, (2017). Other studies have examined teenagers in mid-adolescence Agung et al., (2017). Furthermore, similar research has been conducted on personnel operating within highly structured, rigid military environments Ahda, (2019). Research applying these psychological constructs to adult civil law enforcement officers, who must continuously navigate unpredictable and ambiguous public spaces, remains exceptionally limited. This study explicitly addresses that gap, offering significant novelty by contextualizing the interaction of conformity and emotional intelligence within the unique, high-stress field duties of the Satpol PP.

Addressing the identified theoretical gap and empirical phenomenon, the primary objective of this study is to analyze the simultaneous and partial effects of conformity and emotional intelligence on the aggressiveness of Satpol PP members in Padang City. By thoroughly investigating these psychological determinants in a civil enforcement context, the findings are expected to contribute to the broader social psychology literature. Furthermore, this study intends to provide an evidence-based foundation for institutional policy recommendations, specifically aimed at fostering humane enforcement procedures and developing effective mental coaching programs for frontline personnel..

METHODS

This study utilized a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to examine the relationships between variables without direct manipulation. The research was conducted on the active field personnel of the Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP) in Padang City. A total of 186 officers were recruited as the sample through a purposive sampling technique. The selection criteria specifically targeted active members with field operational experience, as they are directly exposed to the social frictions and high-stress environments central to this investigation.

Data collection relied on printed, self-administered questionnaires utilizing three standardized psychological instruments. To measure the dependent variable, this study employed the Aggression Questionnaire. Buss & Perry 1992 constructed this comprehensive tool to evaluate four specific behavioral and emotional dimensions, namely physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. For the first independent variable, conformity was measured using the Conformity Scale. Mehrabian & Stelf 1995 developed this scale to capture an individual's innate temperament and tendency to yield to group normative pressures.

The second independent variable, emotional intelligence, was assessed using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS). Wong & Law, (2017) structured this instrument to effectively evaluate emotional appraisal and regulation in practical, organizational settings. Their scale is theoretically rooted in the established four-branch ability model of emotional intelligence, which was systematically updated and validated by Mayer et al., (2016). All items in these scales were rated using a standard Likert-type format, requiring respondents to indicate their level of agreement with various behavioral statements.

Before conducting the primary data analysis, the construct validity of the instruments was strictly verified using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). During this validation process, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was utilized as the primary fit index, adhering to the stringent cutoff criteria recommended by Hu & Bentler, (1999) for covariance structure analysis. The reliability of the scales was also confirmed to ensure high internal consistency. Finally, after satisfying the classical statistical assumptions of normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity, the hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression to ascertain the simultaneous and partial effects of conformity and emotional intelligence on aggressiveness.

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RESULTS

This study involved 186 active field personnel of the Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP) in Padang City. The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that the majority were male (73.12%), mostly aged between 26 and 35 years (45.70%), and typically had less than 5 years of working experience (53.76%). A detailed breakdown of the respondents' demographic characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	136	73.12%
Female	50	26.88%
Age		
< 25 Years	32	17.20%
26 - 35 Years	85	45.70%
36 - 45 Years	43	23.12%
> 45 Years	26	13.98%
Length of Work		
< 5 Years	100	53.76%
6 - 10 Years	44	23.66%
11 - 15 Years	27	14.52%
> 15 Years	15	8.06%

Descriptive statistics were calculated to provide an overview of the variables measured in this study. As shown in Table 2, the empirical mean for emotional intelligence (M = 50.15) was higher than the theoretical mean, indicating good emotional capacity among the officers. Conversely, the empirical means for conformity (M = 18.44) and aggressiveness (M = 32.42) were lower than their theoretical estimates.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Conformity (X1)	8	34	18.44	5.875
Emotional Intelligence (X2)	29	64	50.15	5.915
Aggressiveness (Y)	16	64	32.42	7.643

Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure the data met the prerequisites for multiple linear regression analysis. As detailed in Table 3, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test confirmed that the data for all variables were normally distributed, with all significance values above the 0.05 threshold. Furthermore, the multicollinearity test indicated no high correlation between the independent variables (Tolerance = 0.996, VIF = 1.004), and the Glejser test confirmed the absence of heteroscedasticity within the regression model.

Table 3. Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Description
Conformity	0.059	0.200	Normal
Emotional Intelligence	0.061	0.089	Normal
Aggressiveness	0.049	0.200	Normal

Following the assumption tests, multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the partial and simultaneous effects of conformity (X1) and emotional intelligence (X2) on aggressiveness (Y). The mathematical equation formulated from the regression analysis is as follows: Y= 46.673 + 0.490X1-0.465X2 (1) The results of the partial hypothesis testing (t-test) are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	46.673	-	10.529	0.000
Conformity (X1)	0.490	0.377	6.037	0.000
Emotional Intelligence (X2)	-0.465	-0.360	-5.758	0.000

As shown in Table 4, conformity has a significant positive effect on aggressiveness ($t = 6.037$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that an increase in conformity leads to a corresponding increase in aggressive behavior. Conversely, emotional intelligence demonstrates a significant negative effect on aggressiveness ($t = -5.758$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating that higher emotional intelligence is directly associated with reduced aggressiveness. Additionally, the simultaneous test (F-test) yielded an F-value of 37.275 ($p < 0.001$), confirming that both conformity and emotional intelligence collectively exert a significant influence on aggressiveness. The coefficient of determination (R2) was found to be 0.289, meaning that the two independent variables account for 28.9% of the variance in aggressive behavior, while the remaining 71.1% is explained by other external factors.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal the complex psychological mechanisms driving aggressive behavior among civil law enforcement personnel. The statistical analysis confirms that conformity exerts a significant positive influence on aggressiveness. This means that social pressures and the need for affiliation heavily dictate how officers respond to public resistance. Husen, (2024) emphasized that the economic and political conflicts inherent in field duties create a tense environment ripe for such behavior. In these volatile situations, the concept of deindividuation explains how individuals submerged in a cohesive group experience diminished self-awareness Baron & Branscombe, (2016). Consequently, they are more likely to execute repressive actions if such behaviors are normalized within their specific unit. This strongly aligns with the findings of Gustina et al., (2024), who observed

that group conformity directly triggers aggression in crowd settings. Isnaeni, (2021) also noted that individuals conform to aggressive behaviors primarily to gain acceptance from their peers. Furthermore, Wicaksono et al., (2025) demonstrated that highly solidary environments significantly exacerbate this conformity-driven aggression.

The manifestation of this aggression in the field is multifaceted and highly visible. Peláez-Fernández et al., (2016) conceptualize human aggression as intentional harm directed at individuals who wish to avoid it, which perfectly describes physical enforcement clashes. The dimensions of this aggression include physical and verbal hostility, as originally mapped by Buss & Perry 1992. Interestingly, the direct nature of the officers' aggression contrasts with the indirect manipulation often seen in other demographics, a behavioral distinction highlighted by Keller, (2018). This direct confrontational style is often a product of normative and informational social influences. Toelch & Dolan, (2016) posited that such influences compel individuals to align their judgments with the perceived dominant group response. In the context of Satpol PP operations, this blind alignment often violates the principles of proportionality and protection expected in public order enforcement Maileni et al., (2026). This phenomenon further complicates the boundary of authority between civil police and other law enforcement agencies Suhartanto & Perwira, (2020).

In contrast to the negative impacts of group pressure, this study demonstrates that emotional intelligence exerts a significant negative effect on aggressiveness. The foundational theory introduced by Mayer et al., (2016) posits that emotional intelligence equips individuals with the ability to accurately monitor and regulate both internal and external emotions. This capacity acts as a critical internal buffer against violent impulses. Gross, (2021) argued that robust emotional regulation allows individuals to navigate intense provocations rationally rather than reactively. Mayer et al., (2016) updated this ability model to emphasize that the cognitive processing of emotions fundamentally prevents the escalation of conflicts. When applied to professional settings, these emotional competencies significantly improve both performance and attitudes Wong & Law, (2017).

The empirical evidence from this current study corroborates the conclusions drawn by Peláez-Fernández et al., (2016), who found that perceived emotional intelligence heavily moderates adult aggression. Similarly, A'yunnisa & Indriana, (2018) proved that higher emotional intelligence is directly associated with significantly reduced aggressiveness. Maditia & Sakti, (2021) also concluded that advanced emotion regulation is central to suppressing

aggressive tendencies under pressure. Moreover, Ubago-Jiménez et al., (2021) identified emotional intelligence as a paramount protective factor against physical aggression in high-stress environments.

The simultaneous interaction of these variables indicates that the aggressiveness of Satpol PP members is a product of competing psychological forces. On one side, there is the basic temperament of conformity pulling the individual toward collective norms Mehrabian & Stelf 1995. On the other side, internal emotional regulation attempts to maintain rational control. This dynamic has been observed in other highly structured populations. For example, Ahda, (2019) found similar simultaneous effects of emotional intelligence and conformity on the aggressiveness of military personnel. Agung et al., (2017) also documented this dual influence among adolescents navigating social pressures. Tutiani, (2017) provided further evidence that the interplay of these two specific variables significantly determines final behavioral outcomes. Validating these complex psychological constructs requires rigorous methodological standards, and meeting strict cutoff criteria in structural analysis ensures that the observed interactions are statistically reliable Hu & Bentler, (1999). Ultimately, these findings underscore the urgent need to redesign standard operating procedures (SOPs) and systematically integrate emotional intelligence coaching to foster more humane public order enforcement.

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CONCLUSION

This study concludes that conformity and emotional intelligence significantly and simultaneously affect the aggressiveness of Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP) members in Padang City. Specifically, conformity exerts a significant positive influence on aggressiveness, demonstrating that stronger adherence to group norms increases the likelihood of aggressive actions during field operations. Conversely, emotional intelligence has a significant negative impact, indicating that officers with higher emotional regulation capacities exhibit much lower levels of aggressiveness. Collectively, these two psychological factors account for 28.9% of the variance in aggressive behavior among the personnel.

The findings theoretically contribute to the field of social psychology by elucidating the interplay between external social pressures and internal emotion regulation within the specific context of civil law enforcement. This study highlights how strong emotional capacity can effectively buffer against the negative impacts of rigid group solidarity in high-

stress environments. Practically, it is strongly recommended that the Satpol PP institution optimize more humane standard operating procedures (SOPs) and implement targeted emotional intelligence training to minimize aggressive responses in the field. Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to expand upon this study by employing qualitative methodologies or integrating other potential mediating variables to capture a more holistic view of law enforcement behavior.

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