
Criminological Study of the Influence of Social Media on Cyberbullying Crimes

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Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed patterns of social interaction, particularly through social media, which is widely used by Indonesian youth. While social media offers benefits such as communication and self-expression, it also creates opportunities for cyberbullying, defined as repeated acts of intimidation or harassment conducted through digital platforms. This study employs normative legal research with a criminological approach to examine the influence of social media on cyberbullying in Indonesia and to analyze the adequacy of existing legal frameworks. From a criminological perspective, cyberbullying is closely linked to anonymity, peer influence, weak social control, and the viral characteristics of digital communication that facilitate deviant behavior. The findings indicate that although the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) and the Criminal Code (KUHP) provide a legal basis for prosecution, their application remains predominantly reactive and has not fully addressed the criminogenic factors emerging in digital environments. The novelty of this research lies in integrating criminological theory with an evaluation of law enforcement effectiveness, revealing that preventive strategies must extend beyond punitive measures toward digital literacy, social control reinforcement, and adaptive legal reform to address cyberbullying comprehensively.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought about major transformations in various aspects of human life, particularly in the fields of communication and information. One tangible manifestation of this progress is the presence of social media, which has become an integral part of everyday life. Social media allows individuals to interact, share information, and communicate without the constraints of time or space.¹ Social media usage in Indonesia continues to experience rapid growth, with teenagers being one of the largest user groups.²

¹ Ahmad Yusron Abdillah, Abdul Madjid, and Patricia Audrey Ruslijanto, "Prevention of Cyberbullying Against Children from the Aspect of Criminology," *International Journal of Business, Law, and Education* 5, no. 1 (2024): 1477–1485.

² Tommy K.H. Chan, Christy M.K. Cheung, and Randy Y.M. Wong, "Cyberbullying on Social Networking Sites: The Crime Opportunity and Affordance Perspectives," *Journal of Management Information Systems* 36, no. 2 (2019): 574–609, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07421222.2019.1599500>.

In January 2024, the number of social media users in Indonesia reached 139 million people, or 49.9% of the total population.³ Approximately 75% of internet users in Indonesia access social media, with 46.5% being female and 53.5% being male.⁴ The most popular platforms are YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and TikTok. The average Indonesian spends 3 hours and 14 minutes per day on social media, with 81% accessing it daily. Activities are varied, ranging from sharing photos or videos (81%), communicating (79%), searching for news or information (73%), entertainment (68%), to online shopping (61%).

Social media usage data in Indonesia in 2024 is as follows: YouTube with 139 million users (53.8% of the population), Instagram 122 million (47.3%), Facebook 118 million (45.9%), WhatsApp 116 million (45.2%), and TikTok 89 million (34.7%). As a generation growing up in the digital era, teenagers use social media for various purposes, including socializing, entertainment, and seeking information. With easy access to the internet and digital devices, teenagers actively use platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and Facebook to communicate, socialize, and express themselves. However, behind these various benefits, a new challenge has emerged: cyberbullying.⁵

Cyberbullying is defined as an act of intimidation, humiliation, or the dissemination of negative content through digital platforms carried out by an individual or group against another person.⁶ This act involves repeated aggressive behavior using digital devices such as smartphones or computers through social media platforms.⁷ Advances in digital technology, particularly social media, provide new spaces for perpetrators to bully without having to meet face-to-face. This phenomenon is increasingly prevalent in Indonesia, with adolescents being the most vulnerable group. The impact of cyberbullying is not only psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, and reduced self-confidence, but also has the potential to develop

³ Ari Muzakir, Hadi Syaputra, and Febriyanti Panjaitan, "A Comparative Analysis of Classification Algorithms for Cyberbullying Crime Detection: An Experimental Study of Twitter Social Media in Indonesia," *Scientific Journal of Informatics* 9, no. 2 (2022): 133–138.

⁴ Abdiel Abraar Arya Aradhana and Charles Sahalatua Pangaribuan, "Cyberbullying in Media Social: A Mainstreaming the Victim Protection Principles in Indonesian Criminal Justice System," *Indonesia Media Law Review* 1, no. 2 (2022): 99–122.

⁵ Sumera Batool, □ Rabia, and □□ Yousaf, "Bullying in Social Media: An Effect Study of Cyber Bullying on the Youth," *Pakistan Journal of Criminology* 9, no. 4 (2017): 119–139.

⁶ Budianto Hamuddin et al., "Mitigating the Effects of Cyberbullying Crime: A Multi-Faceted Solution across Disciplines," *International Journal of Innovative Research and Scientific Studies* 6, no. 1 (2023): 28–37.

⁷ Reginald H Gonzales, "Social Media as a Channel and Its Implications on Cyber Bullying," *DLSU Research Congress*, no. 2006 (2014): 1–7, chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/pdf/conferences/research-congress-proceedings/2014/LCCS/LCCS-I-009-FT.pdf.

into more serious criminal acts.⁸

Several data indicate the extent of cyberbullying in 2024. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that at least 1 in 6 children worldwide will experience bullying in 2024 (Abbany, 2024). UNICEF revealed that one-third of young people in 32 countries reported experiencing online bullying. In Indonesia, 49.1% of adolescents admitted to being perpetrators, while 51% were victims of bullying among 1,600 adolescents aged 13–24 in Jakarta, Central Java, Lampung, and East Nusa Tenggara.⁹ Furthermore, as many as 70% of parents do not limit their children's use of digital devices.¹⁰

From a criminological perspective, cyberbullying is a complex phenomenon, where technological advances have blurred the boundaries between perpetrators and victims and expanded its psychological impact.¹¹ Its consequences are often more severe than conventional bullying due to its widespread and permanent nature in cyberspace. Victims can experience long-term impacts, including trauma and social withdrawal. Rapid digital advancements and the high accessibility of social media require serious attention, particularly in protecting vulnerable groups such as adolescents. Therefore, this study aims to further examine the influence of social media, as a product of digital technological advancement, on cyberbullying as a criminal act.¹²

In Indonesia, cyberbullying can be prosecuted under several legal frameworks. One of the most relevant is Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law)¹³, which was revised through Law Number 19 of 2016 and most recently Law Number 1 of 2003.^{14 15} This law regulates the use of information technology, including violations related to defamation, insults, and the dissemination of information that

⁸ Arron Chakan and Muhammad Fauzan Millenio, "Protection of Cyberbullying Victims in Indonesia (An Overview of Law and Victimology)," *Semarang State University Undergraduate Law and Society Review* 3, no. 1 (2023): 1–26.

⁹ Wenggedes Frensh and Mahmud Mulyadi, "Criminal Policy on Cyberbullying toward Children," *E3S Web of Conferences* 52 (2018).

¹⁰ Prastya Agung Mahendra, ' Hartiwiningsih, and Dian Esti Pratiwi, "Kajian Etiologi Kriminal Terhadap Kasus Cyber Bullying Di Indonesia," *Recidive : Jurnal Hukum Pidana dan Penanggulangan Kejahatan* 9, no. 3 (2020): 252.

¹¹ Bertylla Deva Octania Tjahaja et al., "Dampak Penyalahgunaan Media Sosial Terhadap Kriminalitas Anak," *Kampus Akademik Publishing* 2, no. 2 (2025): 288–299, <https://www.ejurnal.kampusakademik.co.id/index.php/jmia/article/view/4314>.

¹² Muhammad Ibnul Asrum, Hambali Thalib, and Miftahul Jannah, "Criminological Review of the Phenomenon of Cyberbullying," *Horizon Public Legal Studies* 1, no. 1 (2024): 32–49.

¹³ *Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2008 Tentang Informasi Dan Transaksi Elektronik. Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2008 Nomor 58* (Indonesia, 2008).

¹⁴ *Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 2023 Tentang Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana. Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2023 Nomor 1*. (Indonesia, 2024).

¹⁵ *Undang-Undang Nomor 19 Tahun 2016 Tentang Perubahan Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2008 Tentang Informasi Dan Transaksi Elektronik. Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2016 Nomor 251*. (Indonesia, 2016).

is harassing or threatening. Article 27 paragraph (3) of the ITE Law states that defamation or insults committed electronically are criminal acts punishable by imprisonment .

Furthermore, the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) also contains provisions applicable to cyberbullying. Although not specifically regulated, several existing articles can be used if the necessary elements are met. These acts can be categorized as defamation, threats, or actions detrimental to a person's honor or reputation, as stipulated in several articles of the KUHP. From a criminological and legal perspective, this study seeks to understand how the development of digital technology and the use of social media influence cyberbullying in Indonesia.¹⁶ By analyzing criminological theory and existing legal frameworks, this study also examines how law enforcement can be an effort to prevent and address cyberbullying in the digital era.

Previous studies on cyberbullying in Indonesia have largely focused on normative legal analysis and victim protection. For example, Fahmi Firmansyah examines cyberbullying from the perspective of Islamic criminal law and positive law, emphasizing the normative framework governing such acts.¹⁷ Similarly, Nooryanto, Prihatin, and Dewi analyze criminal sanctions for perpetrators and legal protection mechanisms for victims of bullying and cyberbullying, highlighting the importance of legal safeguards.¹⁸ However, these studies primarily concentrate on doctrinal legal analysis and have not comprehensively integrated criminological theory with an evaluation of law enforcement effectiveness in the digital era. Therefore, this study positions itself as an original contribution by combining criminological perspectives with a systematic assessment of existing legal instruments and their practical enforcement, particularly in light of recent regulatory developments.

This study employs a normative legal research method, which emphasizes the systematic analysis of legal norms, principles, and doctrines relevant to cyberbullying on social media. Normative legal research is literature-based and relies on primary legal sources, such as the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE)¹⁹ and the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP), as well as secondary sources including scholarly articles, textbooks, and previous research on cyber law and criminology.

¹⁶ Fahmi Firmansyah, "Tindakan Cyberbullying Dalam Kajian Hukum Pidana Islam Dan Hukum Positif," *Journal of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence* 5, no. 19 (2023): 48–57.

¹⁷ Fahmi Firmansyah, "Tindakan Cyberbullying Dalam Kajian Hukum Pidana Islam Dan Hukum Positif," *Journal of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence* 5, no. 19 (2023): 48–57.

¹⁸ Fista Herry Nooryanto, Lilik Prihatin, and Citra Candra Dewi, "Kajian Hukuman Bagi Pelaku Dan Perlindungan Hukum Bagi Korban Dalam Tindak Pidana Bullying Dan Cyber Bullying," *JlIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 6, no. 1 (2023): 169–177.

¹⁹ *Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 2024 Tentang Perubahan Kedua Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2008 Tentang Informasi Dan Transaksi Elektronik* (Indonesia, 2024).

This method involves three main stages: (1) statute approach, analyzing laws and regulations that govern cyberbullying; (2) conceptual approach, examining legal doctrines, definitions, and principles of criminal responsibility; and (3) comparative approach, reviewing relevant studies and legal frameworks in other jurisdictions to identify best practices. In addition, this research incorporates criminological theories such as Social Control Theory and Labeling Theory to provide insights into the social context and behavioral patterns underlying cyberbullying. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively by linking these criminological perspectives with the structural-legal analysis, aiming to identify gaps, assess the effectiveness of current laws, and propose recommendations for prevention and law enforcement.

Thus, this approach integrates a structural-legal perspective with criminological insight, producing a comprehensive understanding of cyberbullying in Indonesia and offering both descriptive and prescriptive legal analysis.

DISCUSSION

A Criminological Perspective on the Phenomenon of Cyberbullying through Social Media in Indonesia

From a criminological perspective, cyberbullying can be categorized as a form of modern deviance that has emerged due to the rapid development of digital communication platforms. Unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying transcends physical boundaries and relies on digital anonymity, empowering perpetrators. Indonesian adolescents, who are heavy users of social media, often face higher risks as both victims and perpetrators.²⁰ Criminology, as the study of crime and deviance, highlights how social conditions, weak institutional controls, and peer influence contribute to this digital aggression. Therefore, cyberbullying is not only a technological issue but also a social and legal one.

Social Control Theory explains that adolescents with weak ties to their parents, school, or community are more likely to engage in harmful online behavior.²¹ These weak ties reduce their sense of responsibility and increase their vulnerability to peer pressure in digital spaces. In Indonesia, where family structure often plays a central role in socialization, the lack of parental control is a significant risk factor. Surveys show that over 70% of parents do not limit their children's device use, creating a permissive environment for deviant behavior. Thus,

²⁰ Izzata et al., "Pertanggungjawaban Pidana Pelaku Cyberbullying Menggunakan Fake Account," *Welfare State* 3 (2024): 171–196.

²¹ Nooryanto, Prihatin, and Dewi, "Kajian Hukuman Bagi Pelaku Dan Perlindungan Hukum Bagi Korban Dalam Tindak Pidana Bullying Dan Cyber Bullying."

criminology emphasizes the role of weak family and institutional ties in fostering cyberbullying behavior.

Social Learning Theory offers another perspective, stating that adolescents imitate aggressive behavior they witness in online communities.²² Cyberbullying often spreads because perpetrators receive validation in the form of likes, shares, or supportive comments from peers. Such reinforcement reinforces deviant behavior and normalizes online aggression. In Indonesia, the immense popularity of Instagram and TikTok among adolescents provides fertile ground for the reinforcement of such behavior.²³ Criminological analysis suggests that social media serves as both a tool and a space for learning deviant behavior.

Labeling theory emphasizes how stigmatization affects both victims and perpetrators. Adolescents labeled as “bullies” may internalize this identity and continue engaging in deviant behavior, while victims who receive negative labels may experience long-term trauma.²⁴ In the Indonesian context, this labeling is further reinforced by cultural norms that often blame victims of bullying rather than protect them. This dynamic exacerbates the psychological harm caused by cyberbullying, making it more damaging than traditional bullying. From a criminological perspective, this labeling process contributes to the cyclical nature of deviant behavior online.

Indonesia's legal framework attempts to address cyberbullying by implementing existing regulations, particularly the Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE) Law. Article 27 paragraph (3) criminalizes defamation and electronic insults, while Article 29 regulates threats delivered through electronic means. These provisions provide a legal basis for prosecuting cyberbullying cases, even though the term is not explicitly mentioned. However, in practice, law enforcement remains challenging due to the anonymity of perpetrators and the cross-border nature of cyberspace. Criminology helps contextualize these limitations by emphasizing the need for stronger preventative measures.

In addition to the ITE Law, the Criminal Code (KUHP) also contains provisions applicable to cyberbullying. Articles 310 and 335 of the KUHP regulate defamation and unpleasant acts, both of which can include online harassment. While these articles were originally designed for physical interactions, their principles are increasingly being applied in

²² Muhammad Kurniawan, “Pertanggungjawaban Pidana Dalam Kasus Cyberbullying: Analisis Efektivitas Penegakan UU ITE Terhadap Pelaku Remaja,” *BHAYANGKARA LAW REVIEW* Vol. 2, no. 2 (2025): 80–89.

²³ Soleh Lailatul, “KAJIAN KRIMINOLOGI TERHADAP PENGARUH PENGGUNAAN MEDIA SOSIAL SEBAGAI FAKTOR ANAK MENJADI PELAKU PELECEHAN SEKSUAL,” *JURNAL MEDIA AKADEMIK (JMA)* 2, no. 10 (2024).

²⁴ Friandy, “PERSPEKTIF HUKUM PIDANA TERHADAP TINDAK PIDANA INTIMIDASI MELALUI MEDIA SOSIAL (Cyber Bullying),” *Lex Crimen* 4, no. 3 (2018): 147–153.

the digital realm. Furthermore, the Child Protection Law (Law No. 35 of 2014) strengthens legal protection for children by criminalizing violence, both physical and psychological, against children.²⁵ This creates legal synergy that enables law enforcement to address cyberbullying cases involving adolescents.

From a criminological perspective, these legal instruments are important but inadequate if applied in isolation. Criminology suggests that the roots of cyberbullying lie in broader social conditions, such as peer dynamics, lack of digital literacy, and permissive parenting.²⁶ Law enforcement alone cannot completely eradicate this phenomenon without complementary strategies. Therefore, preventive measures must be integrated with law enforcement, including education, parental supervision, and community involvement. This aligns with the criminological principle that effective crime prevention must combine repressive and non-repressive approaches.

Furthermore, the anonymity of social media amplifies cyberbullying and complicates law enforcement. Adolescents often feel detached from the consequences of their actions when hiding behind digital identities.²⁷ This creates a criminological paradox where accountability is weakened in virtual spaces, despite clear legal prohibitions. Indonesian courts often struggle to track perpetrators and prove intent, demonstrating a gap between the legal framework and the digital reality. Criminological theory bridges this gap by explaining why deterrent effects through punishment are often less effective online.

In conclusion, a criminological perspective reveals that cyberbullying is influenced by weak social ties, imitation of deviant behavior, stigmatization, and social media features that enable such behavior. Indonesia's legal framework, including the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), the Criminal Code (KUHP), and the Child Protection Law, provides the basis for criminalizing such acts. However, criminology emphasizes that legal responses must be combined with prevention and educational strategies to address the root causes. Adolescents, as the most vulnerable group, require protection not only through punishment of perpetrators but also through systemic interventions that strengthen family, school, and community ties. Thus, integrating criminological analysis with Indonesian law offers a more holistic approach to combating cyberbullying.

²⁵ *Undang-Undang Nomor 35 Tahun 2014 Tentang Perubahan Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 23 Tahun 2002 Tentang Perlindungan Anak. Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2014 Nomor 297.* (Indonesia, 2014).

²⁶ Irham Putri, Dinda, Fitria, "ASPEK KRIMINOLOGI HUKUM DALAM KEJAHATAN DIGITAL REMAJA: STUDI UU ITE DAN FAKTOR SOSIAL," *Jurnal Hukum dan Kewarganegaraan* 13, no. 11 (2025): 167–186.

²⁷ Rafli Hukom and Martinus Hukmu Setiadi, "Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Pola Kejahatan Di Era Digital: Studi Kriminologi Dengan Pendekatan Netnografi," *Perkara : Jurnal Ilmu Hukum dan Politik* 3, no. 1 (2025): 750–768.

The Influence of Social Media on Cyberbullying Cases in Indonesia

Social media in Indonesia functions as both a tool for communication and a platform that can exacerbate deviant behaviors among adolescents. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook allow users to share content rapidly and reach wide audiences, which, while fostering social connectivity, also creates opportunities for aggressive behavior. The Spiral of Silence Theory, initially developed by Friandy, helps explain why victims of cyberbullying often refrain from speaking out.²⁸ Adolescents fear social exclusion, ridicule, or backlash if they oppose the majority opinion online, leading to underreporting of harmful content. This silence, in turn, allows perpetrators to act without immediate social consequences, normalizing cyberbullying within digital communities.

Peer pressure and the desire for social recognition further reinforce this dynamic. Many adolescents seek validation through likes, comments, and shares, which can unintentionally reward aggressive behavior. Posts that humiliate, threaten, or insult others may gain attention and social approval from peers, embedding deviant behavior as a form of social currency. In this sense, cyberbullying becomes a socially reinforced activity where adolescents imitate the actions of others to maintain their online status. The digital culture, shaped by constant interaction and visibility, amplifies these tendencies.

When combined with Social Control Theory, which emphasizes the role of social bonds in regulating behavior, it becomes evident that weak parental supervision, minimal peer accountability, and limited community oversight increase the likelihood of cyberbullying. Adolescents may perceive online actions as less serious or harmless because they occur behind screens without immediate consequences. The lack of consistent monitoring, both at home and in school environments, reduces the perceived risk of being caught or punished. This detachment from real-world accountability contributes to repeated offenses and perpetuates cycles of deviance within online social networks.

Empirical studies in Indonesia highlight the prevalence and dual role of adolescents in cyberbullying. Research indicates that 49.1% of adolescents aged 13–24 admitted to being perpetrators, while 51% identified as victims.³ These figures suggest that many young individuals are simultaneously involved in aggressive online behavior and vulnerable to it, reflecting a complex interaction between social structures and individual behavioral tendencies. The overlapping roles of perpetrator and victim indicate a fluidity in digital deviance, where social position, anonymity, and impulsive reactions can quickly shift

²⁸ Friandy, “PERSPEKTIF HUKUM PIDANA TERHADAP TINDAK PIDANA INTIMIDASI MELALUI MEDIA SOSIAL (Cyber Bullying).”

participants between categories of bully and bullied.

In addition, the structural features of social media platforms themselves can facilitate these behaviors. Algorithms that prioritize user engagement often amplify sensational or provocative content, increasing the visibility of posts that may be harmful. Features such as anonymity, private messaging, and ephemeral content (like stories) reduce accountability, allowing adolescents to engage in harassment with minimal risk of detection. From a criminological perspective, these structural conditions align with Routine Activity Theory, wherein deviant behavior occurs when motivated offenders encounter suitable targets without capable guardians, creating an environment conducive to cyberbullying.²⁹

The consequences of these dynamics are significant for adolescent development and well-being. Continuous exposure to cyberbullying can result in stress, depression, social withdrawal, and even academic difficulties. Victims may internalize negative labels, consistent with Labeling Theory, which can perpetuate a cycle of victimization and deviant behavior.⁵ Social media interactions, peer dynamics, and the lack of effective monitoring converge to create a persistent risk environment, emphasizing the need for interventions that integrate parental guidance, digital literacy education, peer support, and regulatory enforcement. Addressing these factors holistically is critical to mitigating the prevalence and impact of cyberbullying in Indonesia.

The structural design of social media platforms plays a significant role in amplifying harmful interactions among adolescents. Algorithms that prioritize user engagement often promote sensationalist, controversial, or aggressive content, which indirectly encourages deviant behavior. For example, posts that generate strong emotional reactions whether positive or negative are more likely to be recommended to users, increasing the visibility of harmful or provocative content. This design feature not only normalizes aggressive online behavior but also creates an environment where such content spreads rapidly across peer networks, exposing more adolescents to potential victimization.³⁰

Features such as anonymity, rapid content sharing, and broad global reach further reduce perceived accountability. Adolescents may feel emboldened to post derogatory comments, threats, or humiliating images because they believe they cannot be traced. Anonymity removes the immediate social or legal consequences that would otherwise deter

²⁹ Nugroho, *Media Sosial Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Perilaku Remaja* (Bandung: Refika Aditama., 2020).

³⁰ Wicaksono, *Kriminologi Digital: Memahami Kejahatan Di Era Media Sosial* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2023).

harmful behavior in offline contexts.³¹ This lack of accountability contributes to a higher likelihood of cyberbullying incidents and allows patterns of deviant behavior to persist unchecked, creating what criminologists describe as a “digital deviance ecosystem.”

Routine Activity Theory helps conceptualize this phenomenon in the digital environment. Motivated offenders, such as adolescents seeking social validation or peer recognition, encounter suitable targets peers active online often in the absence of capable guardians. Capable guardians, in this context, could include parents who supervise online activity, teachers who provide digital guidance, or law enforcement monitoring. The combination of motivated offenders, available targets, and insufficient supervision creates ideal conditions for cyberbullying to occur.³² This perspective emphasizes that the problem is not solely individual behavior but also the social and structural context in which it takes place.

From a legal standpoint, Indonesia has established instruments to address cyberbullying. The Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), particularly Article 27 paragraph (3), criminalizes online defamation and insults, while Article 29 regulates electronic threats.³³ These provisions provide a framework for prosecuting harmful online behavior even when the term “cyberbullying” is not explicitly mentioned. Additionally, the Child Protection Law (Law No. 35 of 2014) recognizes psychological violence against children, encompassing forms of cyberbullying that inflict emotional or mental harm.³⁴ Together, these laws reflect Indonesia’s recognition of the risks posed by digital communication and the need to hold perpetrators accountable.

Despite the presence of legal instruments, enforcement remains a significant challenge. Many cyberbullying cases go unreported because victims fear stigma, social backlash, or do not trust authorities to handle the complaint appropriately. Cross-jurisdictional issues also complicate enforcement, particularly when perpetrators are located in different provinces or even abroad. As a result, the effectiveness of legal measures is often limited in practice, and many harmful behaviors persist without consequences. This highlights the gap between formal legal provisions and their practical implementation in the digital context.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that combines legal

³¹ Mahendra, Hartiwiningsih, and Pratiwi, “Kajian Etiologi Kriminal Terhadap Kasus Cyber Bullying Di Indonesia.”

³² Aradhana and Pangaribuan, “Cyberbullying in Media Social: A Mainstreaming the Victim Protection Principles in Indonesian Criminal Justice System.”

³³ *Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 2024 Tentang Perubahan Kedua Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2008 Tentang Informasi Dan Transaksi Elektronik.*

³⁴ *Undang-Undang Nomor 35 Tahun 2014 Tentang Perubahan Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 23 Tahun 2002 Tentang Perlindungan Anak. Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2014 Nomor 297.*

enforcement with social and technological interventions. Beyond relying on criminal sanctions, strategies should include parental supervision, digital literacy education, school-based programs, and platform accountability measures such as content moderation and reporting tools. By integrating criminological theory with legal analysis, it becomes clear that cyberbullying cannot be mitigated solely through punitive measures; preventive and restorative strategies are essential. The structural design of social media, user behavior, and enforcement mechanisms must all be considered together to reduce the prevalence and impact of cyberbullying among Indonesian adolescents.

Labeling Theory offers further insight: adolescents labeled as “bullies” or “victims” may internalize these identities, reinforcing aggressive behaviors or social withdrawal.³⁵ Cultural factors in Indonesia, such as the emphasis on honor, reputation, and conformity, can exacerbate these dynamics, as adolescents may prioritize social acceptance over seeking justice or protection. Furthermore, structural aspects of social media such as the design of interaction features, content algorithms, and engagement metrics interact with individual behaviors to produce systematic patterns of deviance.³⁶

The integration of criminological perspectives with legal analysis highlights the need for a comprehensive response. Prevention cannot rely solely on criminal sanctions. Educational programs that enhance digital literacy, parental guidance to monitor online behavior, and social media platform accountability measures such as content moderation and reporting tools are essential. Such multi-layered strategies align with both Social Control Theory and Routine Activity Theory, providing capable guardianship that reduces opportunities for cyberbullying while fostering positive social norms.

Finally, empirical evidence underscores that cyberbullying in Indonesia is not only widespread but deeply embedded in social and technological systems. By examining the interplay between adolescent behavior, social media design, and legal frameworks, this study demonstrates that effective mitigation requires an integrated approach. Law, education, parental supervision, and platform accountability must work together to disrupt the cycle of aggression, protect victims, and reinforce social norms that discourage online deviance. A combined legal-criminological approach ensures that cyberbullying is addressed both preventively and repressively, reflecting the complex reality of Indonesia’s digital society.

³⁵ Muzakir, Syaputra, and Panjaitan, “A Comparative Analysis of Classification Algorithms for Cyberbullying Crime Detection: An Experimental Study of Twitter Social Media in Indonesia.”

³⁶ Chan, Cheung, and Wong, “Cyberbullying on Social Networking Sites: The Crime Opportunity and Affordance Perspectives.”

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that cyberbullying through social media in Indonesia is a complex criminological phenomenon, shaped by social, psychological, and technological factors. Criminological theories such as social control, social learning, and labeling explain how weak social bonds, imitation of online behavior, and stigmatization contribute to the persistence of this deviant behavior. Social media, with its anonymity, speed, and wide accessibility, acts as both a vehicle and an enabler for harmful behavior. Legal frameworks such as the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), the Criminal Code (KUHP), and the Child Protection Law provide an important basis for criminalizing such acts. However, laws alone cannot fully address the root causes of cyberbullying without complementary preventative measures.

In practice, law enforcement against cyberbullying remains limited due to challenges such as digital anonymity, lack of parental supervision, and cultural stigma against victims. A criminological perspective suggests that the deterrent effect of the law becomes less effective if it is not supported by strong social institutions, digital literacy, and cultural change. Adolescents, as the most vulnerable group, require not only legal protection but also psychosocial support to prevent long-term impacts such as depression, anxiety, and social withdrawal. Schools, families, and communities play a crucial role in creating a supportive environment to reduce the risk of online aggression. This underscores the need for a multidisciplinary approach to effectively address cyberbullying in Indonesia.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be put forward. First, the government needs to strengthen the implementation of existing laws by enhancing digital forensics capacity and inter-agency collaboration. Second, schools and communities should integrate digital literacy and character education into the curriculum to equip adolescents with resilience in the face of online abuse. Third, social media platforms should be encouraged, and even legally required, to implement stricter moderation policies and reporting mechanisms. Finally, parents should play an active role in monitoring and guiding their children's online activities to strengthen social control at the family level. By combining legal, educational, social, and technological interventions, Indonesia can develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce the prevalence and impact of cyberbullying.

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