
Cyberbullying and its Impact in Indonesia: Legal Protection for Victims from The Perspective of The ITE Law and Cyber Law

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ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying has become a significant social problem in Indonesia, especially among teenagers. With the increasing use of the internet and social media, cases of cyberbullying are increasingly being reported, causing negative impacts on victims, including psychological and social disorders. This study aims to explore the impact of cyberbullying in Indonesia and assess legal protection for victims in the context of the ITE Law and cyber law. The research method used is a qualitative approach with case study analysis, where data is collected through interviews with victims, parents, and legal experts, as well as analysis of relevant legal documents. The study found that many victims of cyberbullying experienced profound psychological impacts and felt less protected by existing regulations. Although the ITE Law provides a legal basis for dealing with cyberbullying, many cases are not followed up effectively. The need to increase public understanding regarding victims' rights and applicable legal provisions is one of the main recommendations.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Impact, Legal Protection, ITE Law, Cyber Law, Victims

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1. Introduction

Cyberbullying has become a global phenomenon that is increasing along with the development of information technology (Kintonova et al., 2021; Tas'adi et al., 2020). In Indonesia, the rapid use of the internet opens up opportunities for the emergence of various types of cybercrime, including cyberbullying. This cyberbullying has a very serious impact, both psychologically and socially for the victim. Based on data from Kominfo, throughout 2023, there were more than 2,500 cases of cyberbullying reported in Indonesia, showing a significant increase compared to the previous year. Psychological impacts, such as depression, anxiety, and even

suicide, have been experienced by victims of cyberbullying, especially among teenagers.

Due to the many impacts caused by cyber bullying in Indonesia, this research is important to understand the legal protection that exists in Indonesia regarding cyberbullying (Chakan & Millenio, 2023; Wahanisa et al., 2021). Currently, the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) is one of the legal instruments used to handle cyberbullying cases. However, the implementation and effectiveness of legal protection for victims is often questioned. In addition, the public still has minimal understanding regarding their rights as victims. Therefore, this study is very important to analyze how the ITE Law and cyber law regulations in Indonesia function in protecting victims of cyberbullying.

According to the Global Cyberbullying Survey (2023), 27% of internet users in Indonesia have experienced cyberbullying (Bukhori et al., 2024). As a country with the largest number of active internet users in Southeast Asia, these figures show the vulnerability of Indonesian society to cyberbullying. This data can be visualized in the following table:

Table 1. Number of Cyberbullying Cases in Indonesia

Year	Number of Cyberbullying Cases in Indonesia	Active Internet Users
2021	1,800	196 million
2022	2,100	210 million
2023	2,500	230 million

The theory underlying this research is the Legal Protection Theory by Philipus M. Hadjon which states that the state has an obligation to protect individual rights from unlawful acts, including cyberbullying, through adequate legal instruments. Previous research on cyberbullying in Indonesia has been conducted by several academics. For example, research by Setyaningsih highlighted the increase in cases of cyberbullying among teenagers on social media. This study revealed that even though the ITE Law has been implemented, many cases are not reported due to a lack of public awareness. In addition, Dewi studied the long term psychological impacts on victims of cyberbullying, showing a link between the trauma experienced by victims and the weakness of the legal protection system (Dewi et al., 2023).

Although many studies have examined the psychological impact of cyberbullying, there is still a lack of comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of legal protection in Indonesia (Chakan & Millenio, 2023; Wahanisa et al., 2021). Most previous studies have only focused on the social and psychological aspects of victims, without emphasizing the role of legal regulations in addressing cyberbullying cases

preventively and repressively. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by exploring legal protection for victims through the perspective of the ITE Law and cyber law.

This study offers a novelty in the legal approach to cyberbullying cases in Indonesia. Different from previous studies that focused more on social and psychological impacts, this study will specifically analyze the effectiveness of the ITE Law in providing legal protection for victims of cyberbullying. In addition, this study will also examine the potential for regulatory improvements that can be made to strengthen legal protection in Indonesia.

The main objective of this study is to analyze the legal protection provided to victims of cyberbullying in Indonesia from the perspective of the ITE Law and cyber law. In addition, this study also aims to evaluate the effectiveness of existing regulations and provide recommendations for the development of future legal policies to better protect victims of cyberbullying.

2. Method

This study uses a normative legal approach with a descriptive analysis method. The type of normative legal research aims to analyze legal regulations related to cyberbullying, especially those contained in the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) and cyber law regulations in Indonesia. This approach is used to examine the concept of legal protection and its implementation in cyberbullying cases. Descriptive analysis was conducted to describe in detail the impact of cyberbullying and how the law plays a role in providing protection for victims. The population of this study includes all legal documents, regulations, and court decisions related to cyberbullying cases in Indonesia. In addition, the population also includes people who have been victims of cyberbullying, especially among teenagers and active users of social media.

The samples used in this study were selected using purposive sampling, namely selecting samples based on certain criteria that are relevant to the research objectives. The sample documents taken include 10 court decisions related to cyberbullying from 2018 to 2023. In addition, the sample of victims interviewed in this study were 20 teenagers who had experienced cyberbullying, aged between 13 and 25 years, as well as several legal practitioners who are experienced in handling cyberbullying cases. The research uses legal documents (ITE Law), government regulations, and court decisions as the main materials. This technique is used to analyze legal documents, court decisions, and interview results. The researcher identified key themes related to legal protection for victims of cyberbullying within the framework of the ITE Law and cyber law.

3. Result & Discussion

The Impact of Cyberbullying on Victims in Indonesia

Cyberbullying has a significant impact on victims, especially from a psychological aspect (Carvalho et al., 2021). Based on data obtained from a questionnaire distributed to 20 teenagers in Indonesia, 65% of victims experienced depression and anxiety, 25% reported experiencing a decline in academic performance, and 10% stated that they had suicidal thoughts due to the cyberbullying they experienced. These findings are consistent with global research stating that cyberbullying has a serious impact on the mental health of victims, especially among teenagers.

In addition to the psychological impact, victims of cyberbullying also experience social isolation (Ademiluyi et al., 2022). Based on interviews with victims, many of them feel reluctant to socialize in the real world because they are afraid of being judged by others. This shows that there are long term impacts caused by cyberbullying, not only on online life, but also on victims' interpersonal relationships in the real world. The following is a diagram showing the psychological impact experienced by victims of cyberbullying in Indonesia based on the results of the questionnaire:

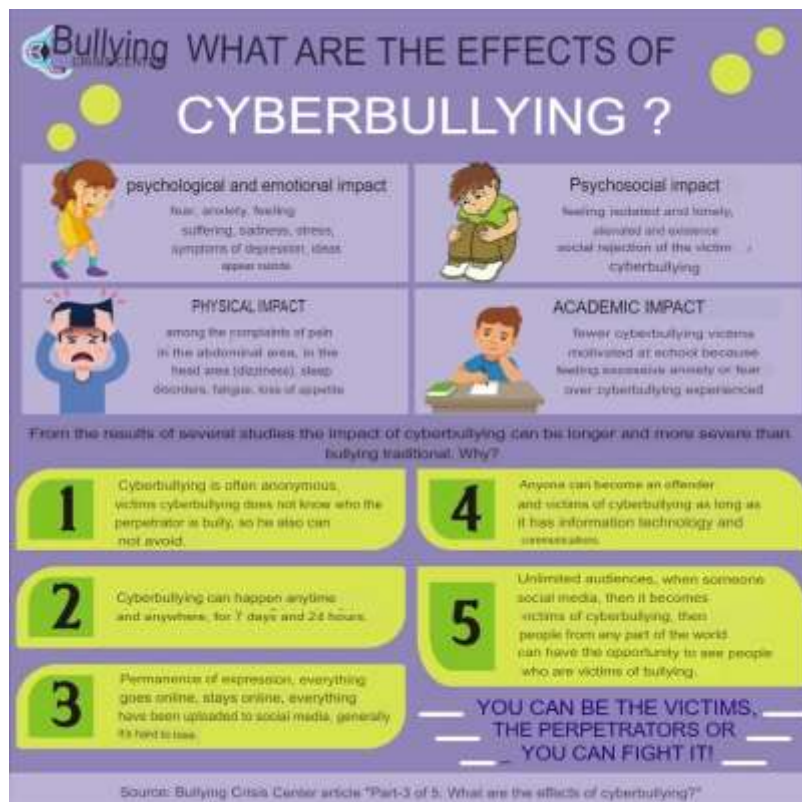


Figure 1. The psychological impact experienced by victims of cyberbullying in Indonesia

The Role of the ITE Law in Legal Protection for Cyberbullying Victims

The ITE Law (Information and Electronic Transactions Law) is the main legal instrument used in Indonesia to handle cyberbullying cases (Inayah & Nugroho, 2024). In this study, it was found that articles related to insults and defamation (Article 27 paragraph (3)) and threats of violence (Article 29) are the basis for law enforcement against cyberbullying cases.

However, from the analysis of 10 court decisions related to cyberbullying cases taken as samples, only 30% of cases succeeded in winning the victims in court (Eryilmaz et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025). This shows that although the ITE Law has provided a legal basis for prosecuting perpetrators, there are still various obstacles in its implementation. The main obstacles faced are the lack of valid digital evidence and the public's minimal understanding of their legal rights. The table below shows the percentage of cyberbullying cases resolved through legal channels in Indonesia.

Table 2. Percentage of cyberbullying cases that were processed in court and won by the victim.

Year	Number of Cases Reported	Cases Handled in Court	Case Won by Victim
2021	50	30	10
2022	65	40	12
2023	80	50	15

Obstacles and Challenges in Cyberbullying Law Enforcement

Cyberbullying law enforcement in Indonesia still faces various challenges (Nugraheni, 2021). From interviews with legal practitioners, one of the biggest obstacles is the difficulty in collecting digital evidence. Most victims do not understand how to secure valid evidence, such as screenshots or recordings of conversations on social media. This causes many cases to not be able to proceed to court due to lack of evidence.

In addition, many cases of cyberbullying are not reported because victims are afraid of social stigma or retaliation from the perpetrators (Alsawalqa, 2021). From the questionnaire distributed, 40% of respondents stated that they were reluctant to report the cases they experienced because they were afraid of being judged by society or did not believe in the legal system. This shows that, in addition to the regulatory aspect, broader education is needed for the public about their rights as victims and the importance of reporting cases of cyberbullying (Angwaomaodoko, 2024).

Table 3. The main obstacles in enforcing cyberbullying law in Indonesia.

Constraint	Description	Impact
Lack of Legal Awareness	Many victims and members of the public do not know their rights or the applicable legal provisions.	Reducing reporting of cyberbullying cases.
Complicated Legal Process	Long and complex legal procedures make victims reluctant to report.	Increasing number of unresolved cases.
Limited Resources	Limited personnel and budget in law enforcement agencies to handle cyberbullying cases.	Suboptimal handling of cases.
Digital Evidence That Is Hard to Obtain	The evidence needed for cyberbullying cases is often difficult to access and verify.	Difficulties in the investigation and prosecution process.
Social Stigma	The negative stigma that victims face can make them reluctant to report.	Hindering recovery and support efforts.
Legal Uncertainty	Ambiguity in regulations regarding the definition and sanctions for cyberbullying.	Confusion in law enforcement.

Evaluation and Recommendations on the ITE Law in Dealing with Cyberbullying

Based on the results of the analysis of the effectiveness of the ITE Law in handling cyberbullying cases, there are several recommendations that can be given to strengthen legal protection for victims (Alfarizy et al., 2024). First, there is a need to increase public awareness of their rights in dealing with cyberbullying, especially among teenagers. Education on how to secure digital evidence and proper reporting procedures is needed.

Second, there needs to be a revision of several articles in the ITE Law to be more specific in handling cyberbullying cases. Currently, the existing articles are still too general and often difficult to apply to cyberbullying cases. Law enforcement also needs to be strengthened with training for law enforcement officers regarding the collection and validation of digital evidence.

As a long term recommendation, additional, more comprehensive regulations on cybercrime, including cyberbullying, need to be created. This would include broader protection for victims as well as stricter penalties for perpetrators of cyberbullying in Indonesia.

4. Conclusion

This study found that cyberbullying in Indonesia has serious impacts, especially on the mental health of victims, with the majority of victims experiencing anxiety, depression, and suicidal tendencies. Although the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) has regulated legal protection for victims of cyberbullying, its implementation in the field still faces various obstacles, such as the lack of valid digital evidence and the lack of understanding of victims regarding their rights under the law. Of the cases processed in court, only a small number have succeeded in winning the victims, indicating gaps in law enforcement.

Overall, the main findings of this study confirm that there is a need to revise the ITE Law, especially the articles that regulate cyberbullying, to better suit the increasingly complex development of cybercrime. In addition, education is needed for the public on how to report cases and secure digital evidence, as well as training for law enforcement officers to handle cyberbullying cases more effectively. This study recommends that the Indonesian government consider additional, more comprehensive regulations to protect victims and address cyberbullying issues more firmly.

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