TEENAGER-RELATED CYBERBULLYING CASE IN INDONESIA

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→ BACKGROUND

For the younger generation, social media has become an integral part of their daily life. Based on a survey by APJII (2019), 51.5% of internet users in Indonesia primarily used the internet to access social media. In addition, research conducted in Yogyakarta found that high school students spend an average of 7 hours 24 minutes per day using social media (Priwati, 2020). Young people tend to feel more comfortable using social media because it allows them to develop their identity and build new relationships (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012). Social media also helps teenagers express their feelings, socialize with friends, and explore their self-identity without dealing with the pressure of face-to-face interactions.

However, the threat of cyberbullying also looms large on social media. In Indonesia, the Indonesian Commission on Child Protection (KPAI) found that, in 2016, there were 904 cases of online bullying against minors. A survey of 495 high school students in Yogyakarta also found that more than 80% of the respondents had experienced cyber victimization (Safaria et al., 2016). Interestingly, around 51.5% of these cyberbullying cases occurred on Facebook. This research also revealed an important finding on the relationship between students and their parents when it comes to cyberbullying. Out of those who experienced cyberbullying, only 11.1% told their parents about it. This finding shows that the existing in-platform mechanisms are insufficient, as they fail to notify parents and other adults to intervene and prevent cyberbullying cases targeting students.

This research aims to identify patterns of teen cyberbullying in Indonesia. This research seeks to explain the phenomenon from both psychological and sociological perspectives. A psychological perspective, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), is widely used to understand the issue of teen cyberbullying. However, the authors also investigated two extended personal normative factors that can influence an individual's behavioral intention and decision-making processes, moral norms, and anticipated regret. From a sociological perspective, this research tries to explain how power imbalances could contribute to the proliferation of cyberbullying practices among teenagers.

Therefore, considering the study's aims, the research questions of this study are:

- What is the role of social media in the cyberbullying phenomenon among teenagers in Indonesia?; and

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➡ ON THE DEFINITION OF CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying is defined as 'willful and repeated harm inflicted through computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices' (Patchin & Hinduja, 2015, p. 2). Specific harmful acts include: flaming (e.g. insulting, posting rude or vulgar messages), online harassment (e.g. multiple/intense offensive words/comments), denigration (e.g. spreading rumors, posting an unreal embarrassing story about the victims), masquerading, outing, trickery, online exclusion, cyberstalking, sexting, happy slapping, and doxing (posting others' personal photos or sensitive information without their consent) (Aizenkot & Kashy-Rosenbaum, 2020; Willard, 2008; Kowalski et al., 2012). It has been widely noted that cyberbullying is a purposeful act, intentionally done to cause harm. Although the behavior is conducted virtually, cyberbullying has similar characteristics as traditional bullying (Navarro, et al., 2015) including the intention to harm, repetition, and power imbalances. Furthermore, repetition within a cyberbullying context could refer to the situation where an individual or group of people post a single hurtful content on a public page which may cause constant negative consequences for the victims (Holfeld & Mishna, 2018). As a single post can stay on the internet permanently and attract a wider audience, the victims may feel repeated intimidation. Additionally, the power imbalance in cyberbullying can be associated with the advanced skills and high confidence in using social media and creating content, as well as referring to the individual characteristics in which the perpetrators are more potent than

victims. For example, some school bullies may never become cyberbullies due to a lack of confidence in using ICT, while those who never bully face-to-face may cyberbully due to their high confidence in using technology and constructing online content (Law et al., 2012). Other researchers, however, argue that power imbalances in cyberbullying are difficult to identify as it could rely on victims' perception towards their interaction with bullies (Menesini et al., 2012).

The correlations between the use of social media and cyberbullying have been discussed in numerous papers. For example, Kowalski et al. (2014) argued that cyberbullying might lead to more severe impacts on its victim as the content could be distributed to many people in a short time and might be stored for an indefinite time. This leads to a more magnified sense of embarrassment and, potentially, greater scrutiny from others that could significantly affect the victim's psychological state. This borderless nature of the internet stays true for many social media platforms. Twitter, for example, exacerbates the spread of information with its 'retweet' feature, where users will often retweet content, not only to diffuse information, but also to engage with and gain clout from others (Boyd et al. 2010). Closed-in platforms such as Facebook and messaging applications, on the other hand, facilitate the spread of information through closed groups and private messages that exclude the victims (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012).

Unfortunately, many people still ignore cyberbullying as a serious issue despite the real harms that it can cause. Rao et al. (2018) suggested that many people undermine the impact of cyberbullying due to the absence of physical contact. Harassment posts are often written out as 'just words' that bring little to no impact for the victim. A study by Scott et al. (2019) further supports this finding, showing that cyber abusers often perceive their acts as friendly teasing and often blame the victims for being too sensitive. This non-physical characteristic, thus, becomes the main factor used to trivialize bullying on social media.
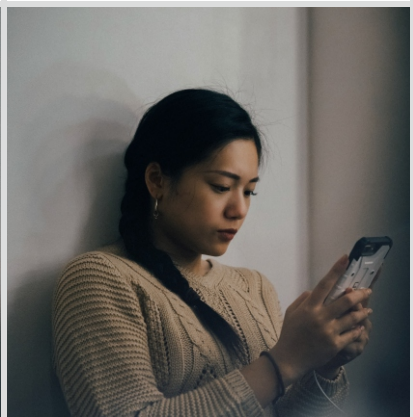
⊘ THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

⊘ Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Cyberbullying among teenager students is perceived as a group process and requires school and community-based interventions. At the class level, students who engage in cyberbullying usually know each other (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). One cyberbullying study in Indonesia (Yulianti, 2013) reported that most perpetrators and victims are classmates, followed by other students from outside the class. Yuliantiualitative finding revealed that cyberbullying is an extension of school bullying – students who are bullied at school are more likely to be victimized on social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Line, WhatsApp) by other students attending the same school. Furthermore, at the school and community levels, a review study (Tanrikulu, 2019) noted that parents, siblings, families, and adults in the online and offline communities are potential resources for youths to learn cyberbullying perpetration.

Cyberbullying, as a group process, aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) framework. The phenomenon could not be separated from the role of bystanders – other students or adults at school who witness, reinforce, and defend the behavior. The more positive students' attitudes and subjective norms towards cyberbullying, the higher their tendency to conduct and normalize the behavior. Additionally, when students feel it is easy to perform the behavior, they are more likely to do it. Thus, TPB as one of the theoretical frameworks of this research helps explain how social-cognitive beliefs influence students' cyberbullying intention and behavior. It also uncovers the possibility of an intervention for reducing cyberbullying among Indonesian high school students, which involves peers, schools, and communities.

The construct of TPB has been widely used to understand the phenomena of cyberbullying among teenager students (e.g. Pereira et al., 2021; Aizenkot & Kashy-Rosenbaum, 2020; Vlaanderen et al., 2020; Pabian & Vandebosch, 2014). The theoretical framework emphasizes the importance of individuals' intention as a predecessor of their behavior. According to Ajzen (1991), three aspects could predict the behavioral intention: 1) the individual's attitude toward the behavior; 2) subjective norms, which refers to individuals' perceptions of how important others think about their behavior; 3) perceived behavioral control, referring to individuals' perceptions of the ease or difficulty in conducting the behavior. From the perspective of TPB in a cyberbullying context, these aspects influence the intention to perform a behavior – i.e. cyberbullying – which leads to the occurrence of the behavior itself.
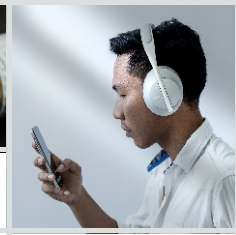
In addition to the main TPB aspects of this research, we also investigated two extended personal normative factors influencing individuals' behavioral intentions and decision-making processes, moral norms and anticipated regrets (Manstead, 2000). Both factors reflect an individual's internalized moral values regarding a specific negative behavior. For instance, students who are aware of their moral norms and have anticipated moral regrets about cyberbullying perpetration are less likely to cyberbully others. These values, attitudes, and moral beliefs are developed through their social learning processes and interactions with peers, teachers, parents, and society (Bandura, 2001).

Sociological Perspective of Cyberbullying

The phenomenon of cyberbullying is the result of a complex interplay between individuals and the wider social environment. Therefore, the sociological approach is also used in this study as a means to understand cyberbullying holistically. From a sociological perspective, the power imbalance could contribute to the proliferation of cyberbullying practices among teenagers. A sociology theorist, Piere Bourdieu, introduced a concept of capital could help us to analyze the extent to which teenagers engage in cyberbullying practices. Capital is form of capacity and resources that enable an individual to control the power. In this research, social and cultural capital play a significant role in determining whether an individual is a perpetrator or victim. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as a network or connectivity based on a mutual relationship, while cultural capital refers to knowledge that contributes to the individual's social status. With regards to cyberbullying, social capital is manifested in all resources allowing each individual to obtain significant recognition. In the digital realm, those resources could manifest in the number of followers that will determine the capacity of support and solidarity. The more followers someone has, the stronger position that an individual gets, which will determine the capacity of their power. Those who gain many followers or supporters will feel more confident to intimidate others. In contrast, those who have fewer friends are more vulnerable to be a victim. Meanwhile, cultural capital relates to the knowledge regarding the hierarchical status between offender and victim. In this case, the victim will perceive that the offender's status is far superior.

➡ Research Methodology

Considering the purposes of the study, a mixed method approach was used as a research methodology. Data collection was conducted through surveys, focus group discussions, and interview sessions. A nationwide survey was conducted in 34 provinces to collect quantitative data of Indonesia's teenagers' perspectives and experiences on cyberbullying. The samples were chosen based on stratified random sampling to ensure an adequate representation of teenagers throughout Indonesia. In choosing the sample, two specifications were used as determinants: first, the respondents should be teenagers within the age group of 13–18 years old; and second, the respondents must be currently enrolled in junior or senior high school. We conducted a primary survey with 88 representative respondents to ensure that the questionnaire covered this study's objective. After the primary survey was concluded, we carried out the actual survey with the participation of 3077 respondents.

After collecting teenagers' perspectives and experiences on cyberbullying through surveys, we aimed to strengthen the findings using qualitative data. The intended targets of the qualitative data were parents, and local and national stakeholders. To maintain the confidentiality and objectivity of the research, the names of the respondents quoted in this paper have been pseudonymized. For the interviews, six parents of teenagers aged 13–18 years old were interviewed. The respondents' social and economic backgrounds were considered to ensure that the data collected from interviews would be rich and representative. For the focus group discussion, participants came from Bantul 1 Senior High School, Lendah 2 Junior High School, the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, the Ministry of Education, the Commission for The Protection of Children, the Clerry Cleffy Institute, and the SEJIWA Foundation. The qualitative data collected from interviews and focus group discussions provides a more holistic understanding of Indonesia's teenagers' cyberbullying phenomenon.

RESEARCH'S FINDINGS

Quantitative Findings

Based on the data obtained, 3077 participants met the criteria and responded to the questionnaire. Overall, 1182 participants or 38.41% admitted to cyber-offenders, and 45.35% were cyber-victims. The cyber actors use the three most social media platforms on WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook, respectively, and the most common forms of demeaning (spreading gossip and rumors), and ostracizing (isolating other people from the group followed on online platforms).

By comparing the participants' education levels, it was found that more high school students were involved in defamation and ostracism (see Table 1).

Table 1. The percentage of cyber offenders and the type of cyberbullying behavior, based on the participant's level of education (N = 3077)
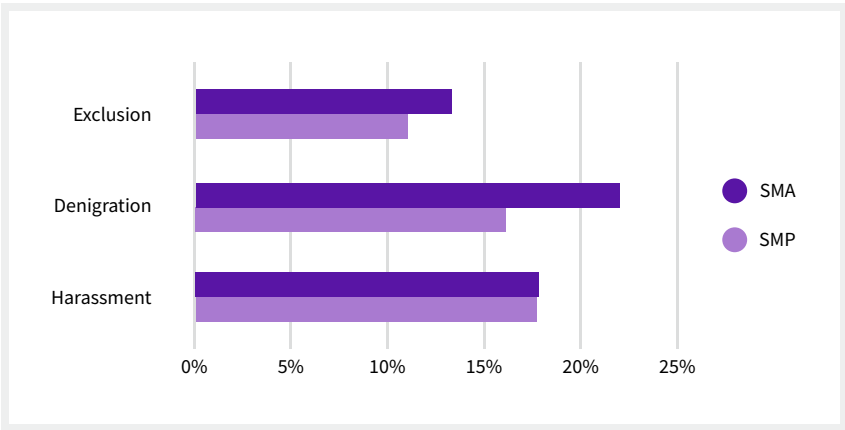
The data also suggested that male participants were more involved in cyberbullying through harassment and ostracism. Meanwhile, female participants were more involved in defamation behavior, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2. The number of cyber offenders based on the participants' gender (N = 3077)
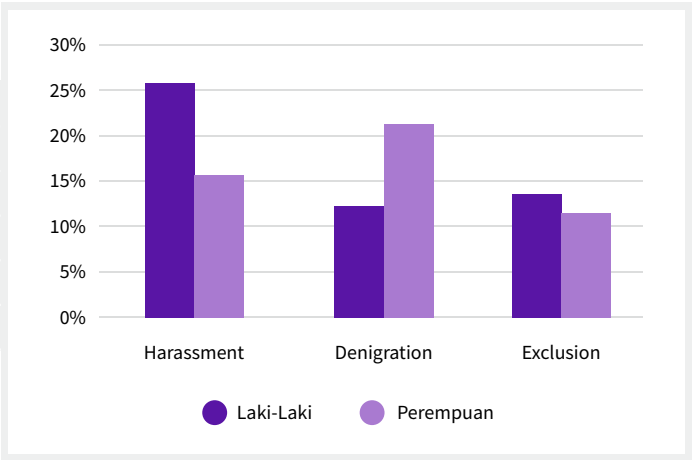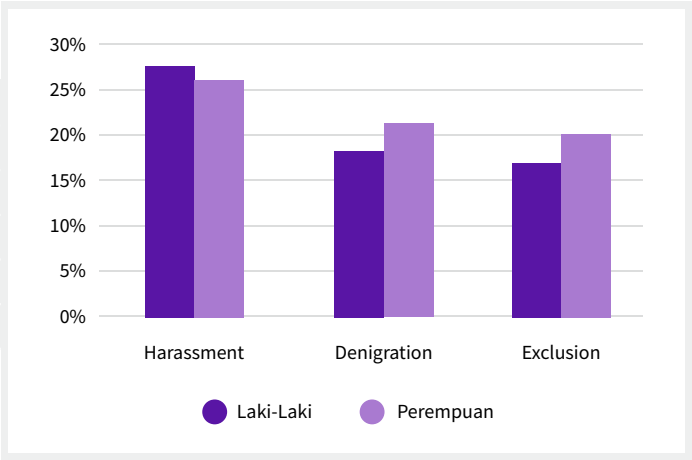

On the other hand, male victims of cyberbullying are more likely to engage in behavioral harassment. This contrasts with female participants who only become victims of demeaning and ostracizing behavior (as seen in Table 3).

Table 3. The number of cyber victimizations based on participants' gender (N = 3077)

Based on the data set, an analysis of the aspects forming cyberbullying behavior was conducted (Figure 1). The results show that attitudes towards cyberbullying, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, moral norms, and anticipated regret encourage an individual's intention to carry out cyberbullying behavior.

Figure 1. The dynamic of TPB of cyberbullyin
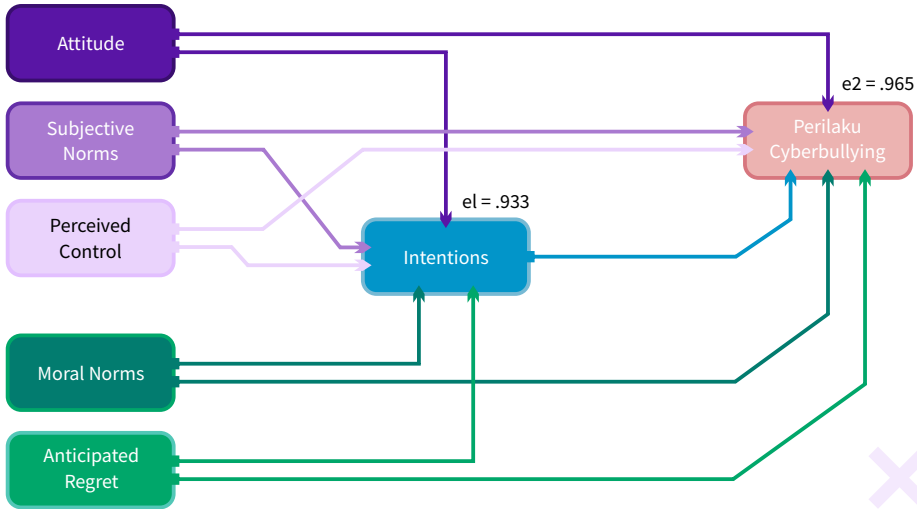
More specifically, the figure shows that three main aspects of TPB, including attitude towards cyberbullying, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control predict cyberbullying perpetration, mediated by intention. Statistically speaking, the aspects are positively correlated with behavioral intention, and the intention is positively associated with cyberbullying behavior. This means that students who have more positive attitudes and subjective norms and greater perceived behavioral control towards cyberbullying are more likely to have a higher intention of cyberbullying and manifest it to the actual behavior.

Meanwhile, moral norms and anticipated regret are negatively associated with cyberbullying intention and behavior, indicating that students who are scored higher in moral norms and anticipated regrets are less likely to cyberbully others.

➡ QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

➡ Parents' Perspectives on Cyberbullying

The survey findings show that cyberbullying is a prevalent phenomenon among Indonesian teenagers. Not only are they prone to be the victims, teenagers can also become the perpetrators of cyberbullying. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, six parents were selected and interviewed. Parents' perspectives on cyberbullying are necessary considering that they play a significant role in teenagers' lives. Moreover, existing studies suggest a correlation between parents' monitoring and teenagers' possibility of becoming cyberbullying victims or offenders (Taiariol, 2010).

There are three main questions in the interviews. The first explored parental involvement in their teenagers' social media use. All six parents interviewed admitted that they allowed their children to own personal smartphones and use social media without intensive supervision. However, some parents would occasionally monitor the kind of platforms and content often visited by their children. In addition, some parents also lectured their children to refrain from accessing harmful sites and partake in unethical behavior while using social media.

> 'I do not intensively monitor what my children do [on the social media]. However, I am always telling them to be careful and use the internet for necessary things. I'm also telling them only to post positive content and be kind to other netizens by not offending them. If someone writes bad things about him, I ask him to take it as constructive criticism instead.' (Hera, February 2021)

Interestingly, despite the seeming lack of involvement, many parents expressed the willingness to increase their role in their teenagers' daily social media activities. However, they believed that it might not be possible considering that the importance of the internet has significantly increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Teenagers are expected to spend more hours using social media for educational and recreational purposes because of Covid-19-related lockdowns in various regions throughout the country. Parents worried that tightening control over their children's internet use may hinder their children's learning and socializing processes. Such concern was expressed by Rita, a mother of a middle school-age teenager, as shown in the quotation below;

> 'I have to guide them and make sure that they are okay. There are many people who like to curse, berate, or mock other people on the internet [social media]. I want to have more supervision over their activities on the internet. Because of Covid-19, they have to stay at home. No school or other outside activities. They use their phone for everything. Thus, if I become more controling, it would do more harm than good.' (Rita, February 2021)

Parents were aware that teenagers are vulnerable subjects as social media is not truly safe for teenagers. They perceived social media as the nesting ground for miscreants who prey on teenagers. Parents worried that their children could be victims of human trafficking, underage grooming, identity theft, and other kinds of cybercrimes. Interestingly, while most interviewees are familiar with the act of harassing, tormenting, and degrading other people through social media content, only a few recognize such actions as cyberbullying. Regardless of the lack of awareness, they recognized it as a pressing threat to teenagers on the internet. However, most had never had first or second-hand experiences in dealing with cyberbullying.

Still, despite the lack of experience, most parents agreed that cyberbullying should be combatted. Rita, for example, shared her concern on how cyberbullying could dangerously affect teenagers' lives as shown in a quotation below.

> 'People [netizens] are often smacked talking and being really rude. It could drive someone into depression, make someone hates themselves.' (Rita, February 2021)

Wita, a mother of a middle school student also shared,

> 'Cyberbullying could disrupt teenagers' wellbeing. It could affect them both physically and mentally. It could affect the victim's mental health. When their mental health decreased, it would affect their school performance.' (Wita, February 2021)

Parents realized that they need assistance to ensure teenagers' safety on social media, especially in preventing cyberbullying. Most have tried to protect their children by teaching them how to behave on social media. Nevertheless, they still felt powerless and inadequate because there is a wide gap between parents and children when it comes to digital literacy. Parents could not control or monitor teenagers' activities because their children were far more digitally literate. This lead to the third main question if the interview which aimed to gather parent's opinions on how to make social media safer and combat cyberbullying among Indonesian teenagers. Based on the answers, we found that parents believed that stakeholders' intervention is vital in protecting teenagers. Thus, the national government should create a set of regulations on cyberbullying to improve the way cyberbullying is addressed and handled. Besides the government, parents also urged the social media platforms to revamp their current terms of condition and tools to reduce the prevalency of cyberbullying.

Stakeholders' Experiences on Handling and Combatting Cyberbullying

The main questions of FGD are the experiences of stakeholders in dealing with the cyberbullying cases among children and teenagers, including the mechanism of prevention acts and the challenges of policy implementation. The FGD's participants mostly agree that cyberbullying is a complex issue against children and teenagers, which is in line with an increase in the intensity of technological use.

> 'We also conducted a survey distributed among the members of a child forum in 34 provinces, and the results show that 70% of children have had unwanted experiences on the internet'. (The representatives of Kemenpppa, February 2021)

Compared to 'traditional' bullying, cyberbullying is more difficult to handle for several reasons such as: 1) the issue is hidden and very personal, meaning the cases will not be revealed unless the victim could provide the relevant reports; 2) not all online media platforms have the facility of reporting regarding the case; 3) the culture of victim-blaming and stigma becomes the obstacle from the victim to report the case directly. These situations have complicated the stakeholder to trace the perpetrator and tackle the case properly.

On the other hand, based on the experience of CSOs in advocating the cyberbullying case, the absence of relevant policies is also the cause of the cultivation of cyberbullying among children and teenagers.

'The online activities have facilitated the spread of harmful content. Thus, children may think that cyberbullying is "normal". They are encouraged to reproduce cyberbullying practices because they can see many people do the same". (The representatives of Commission for The Protection of Children, February 2021)

In particular, the relevant policy is strongly needed to end the culture of victim-blaming and stigma. Usually, reporting of incidents of cyberbullying comes from parents. However, not all children are willing to openly share their unpleasant experiences immediately after receiving the abusive treatments because they fear the negative consequences. The children's fear also reflects the common trend that students mostly do not share with their parents about their online activities and prefer to surf the internet alone (Kowalski & Giumetti, 2014). In addition, the children may feel afraid that their parents will be angry and not allow them to use social networking sites anymore (Kowalski & Giumetti, 2014).

On the other hand, adults are less familiar with online activities, and rarely have a specific account on the same networking sites as their children, which may lead them not to supervise their children's online activities as intensively. In short, the difficulty in revealing the case may relate to the children's inability to express emotional feelings, and the knowledge gap between parents and children regarding how to deal with the risk of cyberbullying. Thus, policy intervention is essential for the cultural and behavioral changes toward cyberbullying.

➡ STRATEGY AND INTERVENTION

Based on our study, we suggest that what is needed is an anti-cyberbullying program using TPB as the theoretical framework, which focuses on determinants of behavioral intention, could be an alternative approach to tackle cyberbullying among Indonesian youths. Cyberbullying intention and behavior are associated with internal (i.e. attitudes, beliefs, perceived behavioral control) and external factors (i.e. how others respond to the behavior). Practically, the TPB framework could be implemented through the following strategies:

➡ Providing and socializing the relevant information about the meaning of cyberbullying in the Indonesian context. In the Indonesian context, the definition and meaning of cyberbullying are still somewhat unclear. In the Indonesian language, cyberbullying is translated into several terms, such as perudungan, perisakan, and penindasan, reflecting the inconsistency. Thus, it is necessary to redefine the meaning and categorization of cyberbullying acts before formulating the specific article in a policy. Moreover, this definition would be helpful to construct the same perceptions and then sensitivity toward cyberbullying that may happen in young people's daily lives.

➡ Providing knowledge and awareness about the negative consequences of the behavior. More specifically, providing knowledge that the behavior is perceived as unacceptable behavior by important people around them (e.g. peers, teachers, parents). Additionally, students and wider society need to be trained on how to intervene in cyberbullying situations (Vlaanderen et al., 2020), such as employing assertive communication skills (Pereira et al., 2021), self-behavior monitoring and control, and effective strategies to respond to cyberbullying (Aizenkot & Kashy-Rosenbaum, 2020).

➡ Empowerment and training for parents and schoolteachers or counselors on implementing the TPB programme could sustain the effectiveness of the anti-cyberbullying intervention.

➡ Providing more comprehensive coordination among the stakeholders to strengthen the protection system in online spaces, especially for children. Practically, it could be integrated with the Law of Child Protection.

→ It is necessary to increase the collaborative work among stakeholders, whether at national and local levels, regarding the prevention acts. The involvement of school parties is also essential to socialize and internalize the strength and weaknesses of online activities for students. Undeniably, today's younger generation are digital natives because they are fluent in computer and internet digital languages (Prensky, 2001). However, this trend is not yet accompanied by equal capacity in dealing with the risk of cyberbullying.

→ CONCLUSION

This research is one of the earliest and most comprehensive efforts to understand teenage cyberbullying in Indonesia. Therefore, this study contributes to building knowledge on the phenomenon of teenage cyberbullying in the country. It does so by covering a large number of teenager student respondents throughout all regions in Indonesia. Furthermore, this research extensively explains teenage cyberbullying by analyzing both psychological and sociological factors. The authors analyzed the Psychological Perspective (TPB) and investigated two extended personal normative factors that influence an individual's behavioral intention and decision-making process, moral norms, and anticipated regret. In a broader sense in which the sociological environment becomes an active determinant to the phenomenon, the authors also found that power imbalances could contribute to the proliferation of cyberbullying practices among teenagers.

Even though the study has generated a rich dataset on the topic, there are still plenty of opportunities to analyze the data in more detail. Where relevant, the authors have presented cross-tabulations and breakdowns of various dimensions of determinants of teenage cyberbullying in Indonesia. However, we have not done more analytical studies using the data to find the local context or definition of Cyberbullying that can mostly suit Indonesia's society.

There are still many opportunities to analyze the data in more detail. For example, the data could be explored to construct Indonesian society's perspective and definition of cyberbullying. As the authors have mentioned in the previous section, the definition of cyberbullying in the Indonesian language is still unclear. Besides, the authors found that there are few incompatible definitions of cyberbullying that are identified in the existing studies, compared to what we find in the fields. Thus, some actions might be identified as cyberbullying in the literature, while they are unlikely to happen in Indonesia's context, and vice versa.

Another aspect that could be explored in subsequent or future studies is how parents understand cyberbullying. Further elaboration is needed as this study has not covered how parents' understanding of digital parenting and cyberbullying can be a primary cause of teenage cyberbullying.

As authors have found that there are various statistics on teenage cyberbullying cases throughout regions in Indonesia, further studies can also address the question of what mainly contributes to this landscape. The study, perhaps, can intensively analyze why some regions have higher cyberbullying cases compared to others. In addition, this study can also cover why cyberbullying cases in some platforms are higher than others.

Finally, the results of this study could be further analyzed to identify policy recommendations. This study has presented some of the key conclusions from the research, but questions could be raised as to what policy recommendations would be appropriate to respond to these findings. These are some of the questions that could be further explored as a follow-up to this research.

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A B O U T   C F D S

Center for Digital Society (CfDS) is the research center established by the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada. The institution is created under the concern over the contemporary dynamics of socio-political condition of the world that is accentuated by the impeccable influence of information technology. The phenomenon triggers the new patterns and complexities in the society, and thus requires new approaches in managing such complexities.

CfDS pledged to delve more on the study of contemporary digital society, including related issues surrounding the topic; such as the issues of smart city and urban development. The emphasis is then put on the utilization of technology to shape the society in becoming digitalized, as well as to bring solvency to social issues.

Vision

Solving Social Problem and Accelerating Prosperity through Indonesia Digital Society

Activities

1. Research and Development
2. Dissemination and Publication
3. Education and Policy Advocacy

Research Scopes

1. Digital Governance
2. Digital Economy
3. Future Technology

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