



Ricko Satriatama
rckostmaa1213@gmail.com
Law Faculty, Swadaya Gunung
Jati University, Cirebon,
Indonesia



Adib
masadibbb2015@gmail.co
m
Law Faculty, Swadaya
Gunung Jati University,
Cirebon, Indonesia



Fadlilyani Ainusyamsi
fadilyaniainusyamsi@gmail.co
m
Law Faculty, Swadaya Gunung
Jati University, Cirebon,
Indonesia



Anom Sutrisno
Anom_sutrisno@ugj.ac.id
Law Faculty, Swadaya
Gunung Jati University,
Cirebon, Indonesia

JURIDICAL ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL VIOLENCE BY CHILDREN IN THE PHENOMENON OF "CONTENT BRAWLS" (CASE STUDY AT KESAMBI POLICE STATION, CIREBON CITY)

Ricko Satriatama¹, Adib², Fadlilyani Ainusyamsi³, Anom Sutrisno⁴

¹²³⁴ Law Faculty, Swadaya Gunung Jati University, Cirebon, Indonesia.

Corresponding Author: rckostmaa1213@gmail.com

Abstract

Background. The phenomenon of "content brawls" involving minors has become a new form of digital violence that threatens social security and public order. This behavior impacts the immediate victim and worsens public perception through massive dissemination on social media.

Aims. This study aims to determine the legal consequences of digital violence carried out by children in the context of content brawls and the police's prevention and handling efforts in cases of digital violence against children in content brawls.

Methods. The method used is normative juridical by using secondary data as primary data, such as laws and regulations, literature studies, and documentary studies, as well as primary data as supporting data, such as interviews with the police.

Result. The results of the study show that there are legal loopholes in the handling of digital violence by children that have not been fully regulated by law, especially in the context of proving malicious intent (*mens rea*) and protection of perpetrators who are still classified as children, so that the handling of cases by the Kesambi Police shows a tendency to use a non-penal approach that prioritizes restorative justice, under the principle of *the best interest of the child*.

Conclusion. Efforts such as Police Go To School, routine raids, and collaboration with local communities are concrete steps in preventing similar cases.

Implementation. This study recommends formulating special policies related to the management of digital violence against children based on the principles of child protection without neglecting aspects of justice and prevention.

Keywords: Child Violence, Digital Violence, Content Brawls

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly growing digital era, a new phenomenon has emerged among children and adolescents: "content brawls." Content brawls refer to acts of physical violence that are not only committed in the real world but also recorded and disseminated through social media to gain recognition, popularity, or sensation alone.¹ These actions usually occur at night and often involve minors carrying sharp weapons.

This phenomenon shows a violent form shift from physical to digital space. In addition to endangering the safety of perpetrators and victims, this action also shows weak social control, parental supervision, and a lack of understanding of the legal consequences of digital violent behavior. Furthermore, the dissemination of this violent content has the potential to violate various legal provisions, both related to physical violence, privacy violations, and violations of the Electronic Information and Transaction Law (ITE).²

The involvement of children in digital violence poses a law enforcement dilemma; on the one hand, they are the perpetrators of crimes, but on the other hand, they are also legal subjects who receive special protection.³ The legal system's unpreparedness to deal with the dynamics of digital violence is an important problem, especially when considering how regulations and law enforcement officials respond to these cases at the local level.

¹ Monica Margaret and Awaluddin Marifatullah, 'Social Media as a Strategy to Prevent Student Fights', *IKRA-ITH Humanities*, 7.1 (2023), pp. 60–70, doi:<https://doi.org/10.37817/ikraith-humaniora.v7i1.2270>.

² Sunarko Kasidin and Refaldy Wiragama, 'ITE Law Policy in Overcoming Cyber Bullying Perpetrators on Social Media', *FOCUS: Journal of Law*, 2.2 (2022), pp. 118–26, doi:<https://doi.org/10.47685/focus.v2i2.305>.

³ Fatin Hamamah and Muhammad Luthfi Abdullah, 'The Dynamics of Children's Legal Protection in the Digital Era: A Literature Study', *UNTAG Consortium in Indonesia*, 5.1 (2023), pp. 169–74.

The case study in the jurisdiction of the Kesambi Police Station, Cirebon City, is a clear illustration of this complexity. In recent years, there has been an increase in cases of night brawls, which are then spread on social media. Despite various interventions from the police, obstacles to law enforcement still arise, such as the absence of technical rules that explicitly regulate digital violence by children, and the limited capacity of investigators to handle digital evidence.⁴

Based on the trend of cases in Cirebon City, data shows that from 2022 to 2024, there has been a significant increase in student brawls. In 2022, cases of brawls recorded by the public are still fairly sporadic and have not been comprehensively documented. However, in 2023, at least four significant student brawls received attention from local and national media. This figure increased in 2024 with five major incidents reported, showing a systematic pattern of violence as well as active involvement in the dissemination of content on social media. Quantitatively, this reflects an increase of about 25% in officially recorded incidents from the previous year.⁵

The increase not only signifies an increase in the frequency of violence but also shows the urgency to reformulate a juridical approach to digital violence committed by minors. This study is essential to test the suitability of applicable legal norms and the effectiveness of law enforcement in responding to the dynamics of violence in the digital era, while still paying attention to the principles of child protection.

Considering the urgency of this phenomenon, a normative legal study is needed that examines the suitability of applicable legal norms with the reality of digital violence, as well as their effectiveness in providing legal protection, both to children as perpetrators and victims. In addition to facing substantial and procedural challenges, law enforcement against child digital violence, such as content brawls, also faces limitations from a digital technical perspective. Proving in cyberspace, such as tracking social media accounts, validating video metadata, and identifying the perpetrators behind the content, requires digital forensic expertise that is not even at the level of the local police (Polsek).⁶ On the other hand, according to the digital criminal

⁴ Isnan Sinusi, Yulita Salim, and Erick Irawadi Alwi, 'Digital Evidence Analysis for the Handling of Online Gender-Based Violence on WhatsApp Social Media Using the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Method', *Bulletin of Islamic Information and Technology Systems (BUSITI)*, 4.2 (2023), pp. 93–105, doi:<https://doi.org/10.33096/busiti.v4i2.1624>.

⁵ Criminal Investigation Unit of the Kesambi Police of Cirebon City, interview, March 20 at 10.00.

⁶ Sinusi, Salim, and Alwi, 'Digital Evidence Analysis for Handling Online Gender-Based Violence on WhatsApp Social Media Using the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Method'.

procedure law, not all violent content can be immediately used as legal evidence without a valid digital authorization and validation process.

Law enforcement in the digital realm also still faces regulatory gaps, especially in interpreting whether the dissemination of violent content by children is considered an ITE crime or simply an ethical violation that needs to be handled through a non-penal approach.⁷ Articles 27 and 28 of the ITE Law have not explicitly regulated visual violence content by children on social media. As a result, law enforcement officials often experience a dilemma between taking repressive action or taking a rehabilitative path that is more in line with the SPPA Law.

This digital-based law enforcement effort requires system integration between the police, social media service providers, and child supervision agencies. Without strong cross-sector cooperation and digital capacity building of law enforcement officials, digital violence by children will be challenging to handle optimally and will continue to grow unchecked.

With this background, this study aims to find out the legal consequences of digital violence committed by children in the context of content brawls, as well as to find out the prevention and handling efforts by the police in cases of digital violence against children in content brawls.

METHODS

This research uses a normative juridical approach, which relies on analyzing legal norms in laws, regulations, and relevant legal doctrines.⁸ This approach focuses on positive legal rules related to digital violence, child protection, and law enforcement. Data collection techniques include literature studies of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. In addition, sources are interviewed to add secondary legal material to the research.⁹ Secondary data can be primary data, such as laws and regulations, literature studies, and documentary studies, or primary data can be supporting data, such as interviews with the police.

DISCUSSION

The Case of Digital Violence in Content Fights

⁷ Lehavre Abeto Hutasuhut and Mada Apriandi Zuhir, 'Law Enforcement of Cyber Bullying Against Children', *Lex LATA*, 2.3 (2020), pp. 589–605, doi:<https://doi.org/10.28946/lexl.v2i3.531>.

⁸ Soerjono Soekanto, *Normative Law Research* (Rajawali Press, 2009).

⁹ Sigit Sapto Nugroho, Anik Tri Haryani, and Farkhani, *LEGAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY* (Oasis Library, 2020).

On April 19, 2024, in the Cirebon City area, there was a case of a brawl that was broadcast live on social media. This phenomenon attracted public attention because it could trigger other escalations of brawls. Based on official documents from the police and the results of interviews with the Kesambi Police Criminal Investigation Office, it is known that the meeting between the two groups of students began with communication through direct messages on social media.¹⁰

After agreeing on a time and place, the two groups conducted a convoy using motorcycles and engaged in a physical clash. The police managed to secure eight motorcycles and 26 perpetrators from both groups. There were no casualties in this incident. Because all perpetrators are still minors, no detention was made. Instead, the settlement is carried out non-penally through an open apology in front of the aggrieved community and accompanied by their respective parents.¹¹

Juridical Analysis of Digital Violence Against Children in Content Brawls

The act of brawls broadcast live on social media meets the elements of digital violence regulated in various regulations, such as the Electronic Information and Transaction Law (ITE), the Criminal Code, and the Child Protection Law. However, technical limitations in ensnaring child perpetrators are the main obstacle.

Normatively, child offenders receive legal protection based on the principle of the child's best interest. Article 1, number 2 of Law No. 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System emphasizes that every handling of children who conflict with the law must prioritize a restorative justice approach. Thus, even though there are elements of law violations, law enforcement officials are directed to avoid repressive criminal processes and prefer coaching efforts.

On the other hand, there are no derivative rules that technically govern how digital violence by children is processed legally, mainly when the violence is carried out in the form of viral digital content. This causes police officers to face a dilemma in law enforcement because digital evidence must be rigorously tested, but there is no standard of proof.

¹⁰ Criminal Investigation Unit of the Kesambi Police of Cirebon City, interview, March 20 at 10.00

¹¹ Criminal Investigation Unit of the Kesambi Police of Cirebon City, interview, March 20 at 10.00

In this case, the Kesambi Police applied a non-penal approach involving psychological coaching, public apology, and parental assistance. This approach is under the spirit of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law, which prioritizes restoration and rehabilitation rather than criminalization.

This approach's advantage is that it avoids stigmatizing child offenders. However, its disadvantages lie in its weak deterrent effect and the potential for the recurrence of similar actions, especially if not accompanied by strict supervision of children's digital activities. Therefore, the handling of this kind of case needs to be strengthened with regulations that are more responsive to digital violence against children, as well as synergy between the police, PKPA, and other child protection institutions.

Preventive Measures by the Police

One form of preventive efforts carried out by the Kesambi Police of Cirebon City is:

1) The police go to School

This activity is a preventive approach from the Kesambi Police to provide legal education directly to students in schools. In this program, members of the police, especially from the Binmas Unit, came to the school and delivered material related to juvenile delinquency, the dangers of drugs, cyberbullying, and the legal consequences of brawls disseminated through social media. Through this direct interaction, it is hoped that students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the law and build trust between students and the police.

2) Routine Raid of Students

The Kesambi Police carry out routine raids to detect potential brawls. This activity targets students who wander outside school hours, especially at vulnerable points such as city parks, terminals, and major road intersections. The police inspect the bags, vehicles, and attributes carried by the students to prevent them from carrying sharp weapons or other dangerous items.

3) Cooperation with the local community

The Kesambi Police actively collaborates with the surrounding community, including community leaders, RT/RW, and local youth, to create a safe and conducive social environment for children and adolescents. This form of cooperation includes joint supervision of adolescent activities in residential environments, involvement of residents in legal counseling, and early

reporting if there are indications of suspicious activities or potential fights. By recognizing the urgency of the problem, the author concludes that a juridical approach to child digital violence in the context of content brawls must be directed at strengthening regulations, digital law enforcement capacity, and collaboration between institutions in child protection.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of *content brawls* involving minors in Cirebon City reflects a new form of digital violence that the applicable legal system has not fully anticipated. Although normatively there are legal umbrellas such as the ITE Law, the Criminal Code, and the Child Protection Law, the implementation of digital violence cases by children still faces various technical and juridical obstacles, especially in terms of proof and limits of law enforcement authority over child perpetrators.

The Kesambi Police's handling of cases shows a tendency to use a non-penal approach that prioritizes restorative justice, in accordance with *the principle of the best interest of the child*. However, this approach is weak in creating a deterrent effect if it is not balanced with strong preventive strategies and ongoing surveillance.

Efforts such as *Police Go To School*, routine raids, and collaboration with local communities are concrete steps that should be appreciated. However, they still need to be strengthened with technical regulations that are adaptive to the development of digital violence. Thus, it is necessary to update legal policies that can respond to the complexity of child digital violence and increase the capacity of law enforcement agencies in handling digital evidence to realize comprehensive child protection in the digital era.

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