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DIGITAL LITERACY AND LAW CLINIC CYBERCRIME PREVENTION EFFORTS AMONG TEENAGERS

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Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology has had a significant impact on adolescents' social behavior. While the digital world provides easy access to information and social interaction, it also presents various threats such as cyberbullying, online fraud, and other cybercrimes. This article aims to explain the role of the Legal Clinic and digital literacy as a preventive strategy in preventing cybercrime among adolescents. This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive analytical approach, based on a literature review and observations of the Legal Clinic program in several schools and youth communities in Indonesia. The results indicate that educational activities conducted through the Legal Clinic are effective in increasing legal awareness and adolescents' ability to use technology responsibly. Digital literacy has proven to be a key factor in building individual resilience against cyber threats. This article recommends synergy between educational institutions, law enforcement, and community organizations to strengthen legal-based digital literacy among the younger generation.

Keywords: Legal Clinic, Digital Literacy, Cybercrime, Youth, Prevention

INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly advanced digital era, people's activities, including among teenagers, are increasingly dependent on information and communication technology. The internet and social media have become an integral part of daily life, from learning and

socializing to participating in the digital economy. Teenagers, known as digital natives, are the most active internet user group in Indonesia. They grow and develop amidst the rapid flow of digitalization, where access to information, entertainment, and communication is at their fingertips. However, behind this convenience lies a major challenge that is often overlooked: low legal awareness and digital literacy, which makes them vulnerable to various forms of cybercrime.

The phenomenon of cybercrime in Indonesia shows a worrying upward trend. According to data from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo), cybercrime cases have increased significantly every year. The most common forms of crime among teenagers include the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, cyberbullying, online scams, and misuse of personal data. This situation is exacerbated by a lack of legal awareness among teenagers, who often do not realize that their online activities have legal consequences, just as they do in the real world. In many cases, both perpetrators and victims of cybercrime are young people, indicating that they are not only at risk of becoming victims but also perpetrators due to a lack of legal awareness Palilingan, Evelin Evelita (2024: 89)

The main problem statement in this study is rooted in the fact that the gap between technological advances and society's readiness to deal with them ethically and legally remains quite wide. Many teenagers utilize technology without adequate understanding of legal responsibilities and digital ethics. They often view cyberspace as a limitless, free space where all forms of expression can be carried out without consequence. As a result, actions such as spreading hate speech, uploading content without permission, or even sharing other people's personal information are considered normal, even though they can be prosecuted by law under Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE) and its amendments in Law Number 19 of 2016.

Furthermore, weak awareness of digital privacy is also a significant factor contributing to the rise in cases of personal data misuse. Many teenagers readily provide access to their personal data, such as home addresses, phone numbers, or private photos, without considering the security risks. This makes them easy targets for cybercriminals, such as identity theft and online fraud. Yet, personal data is a crucial asset that must be protected, as stipulated in Law Number 27 of 2022 concerning Personal Data Protection.

From an educational perspective, this issue also reflects the suboptimal legal education system at the school level, which has not fully integrated digital literacy and legal education contextually. Legal outreach efforts undertaken by the government and law enforcement agencies are often formal and theoretical, and inappropriate for the active,

participatory, and visual learning styles of adolescents. Consequently, the educational messages conveyed are difficult for this young age group to effectively absorb.

It is in this context that the novelty of this research emerged: the idea of implementing a Legal Clinic as an educational tool integrated with digital literacy. The Legal Clinic is not simply a legal consultation platform as is commonly the case, but rather is designed as an interactive learning space that combines legal approaches and digital technology. Through the Legal Clinic, young people can learn directly about legal issues relevant to their online activities, such as data security, social media ethics, the legal responsibilities of internet users, and the impact of illegal acts such as digital plagiarism, the distribution of negative content, and copyright infringement. Apriani, Rika, Sigit Setiawan,(2025: 89)

The Legal Clinic concept stems from the experiential learning paradigm, which is learning based on real-life experiences. In the Legal Clinic, participants not only receive theoretical lectures but also engage in case simulations, interactive discussions, and practical exercises to solve simple legal problems related to the digital world. This approach has proven more effective in building legal awareness and digital literacy than traditional outreach methods. Through these activities, young people can naturally internalize legal values, understand the consequences of their digital actions, and develop critical thinking about the information they consume and share.

In addition to providing legal education, the Legal Clinic also plays a role in developing responsible digital characters. In this context, digital literacy is understood not only as the ability to use technology, but also as the ability to think critically, act ethically, and make informed decisions in a digital environment. In line with Gilster's (1997) opinion, digital literacy encompasses the ability to critically and ethically understand and use information from various digital sources. Therefore, the existence of a digital literacy-based Legal Clinic is crucial in developing a young generation that is not only technologically literate but also possesses a strong legal awareness.

Furthermore, the Legal Clinic can also serve as a collaborative bridge between educational institutions, law enforcement officials, and the community. Schools are a strategic space for implementing Legal Clinic activities because they are where the process of character and value formation takes place intensively. Legal officials such as prosecutors, police, and advocates can act as mentors, providing direct guidance to students on the application of law in the digital world. Meanwhile, the community and parents play a role in supporting a conducive learning environment at home. The synergy between these three elements can create a comprehensive educational ecosystem in efforts to prevent cybercrime among adolescents.

The main objective of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of the Legal Clinic in increasing legal awareness and digital literacy among adolescents as a cybercrime prevention strategy. This study also aims to evaluate the extent to which the Legal Clinic program can shape responsible digital behavior, strengthen collaboration between educational institutions and law enforcement, and improve adolescents' ability to recognize and avoid potential cybercrimes. Thus, this study is expected to provide not only theoretical contributions to the development of digital legal literacy but also provide practical benefits for educational institutions, the government, and the community in developing a legally aware and ethical young generation in the digital era.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to describe the phenomenon in depth based on data obtained through observation, interviews, and literature review. The research focuses on Legal Clinic activities held at several educational institutions and youth communities in Medan, Bandung, and Yogyakarta during the 2023–2024 period.

Primary data was obtained through interviews with Legal Clinic participants, supervising teachers, and legal facilitators involved in digital literacy activities. Meanwhile, secondary data was collected from scientific literature, laws and regulations on Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE), and official reports from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and the National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN). The data analysis process was conducted interactively, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was tested through source and method triangulation techniques, comparing information from various relevant parties.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

1. The Role of Legal Clinics in Increasing Legal Awareness of Youth

The research findings indicate that the Legal Clinic plays a significant role in fostering legal awareness among adolescents. It serves not only as a means of legal consultation or counseling, but also as a practice-based and participatory educational platform. In practice, the Legal Clinic serves as an interactive space that connects legal theory with the digital social realities faced by today's youth. This is crucial considering that the younger generation is the most active group in social media use, yet often lacks a thorough understanding of the legal aspects governing their digital activities. Therefore, the Legal Clinic serves as a legal learning medium that is more contextual, engaging, and relevant to the daily lives of adolescents.

Various activities held within the Legal Clinic program include seminars, case simulations, group discussions, digital security training, and direct assistance in understanding laws and regulations related to cyberspace. In seminars, for example, teenagers are given a basic understanding of digital law concepts, the rights and obligations of internet users, and social responsibility in interacting online. Meanwhile, through case simulations, participants are invited to explore examples of legal violations that frequently occur in the digital world, such as the distribution of content containing ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA), defamation, and misuse of personal identity. Through this participatory approach, teenagers are not merely passive listeners but also play an active role in analyzing and resolving legal issues logically and critically.

The impact of the Legal Clinic activities is evident in the increased legal knowledge and awareness of the participants. Teenagers participating in this program demonstrated a better understanding of basic legal concepts in cyberspace, particularly those related to data privacy, the limits of hate speech, the spread of false information (hoaxes), and online fraud (online scams). They began to understand that digital activities are not free from legal oversight but fall under the umbrella of strict regulations, such as Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE) and its amendments. Knowledge of the ITE Law is crucial because many teenagers are unaware that simple actions on social media, such as sharing photos or comments without permission, can have legal implications.

The Legal Clinic facilitators also play a significant role in strengthening this awareness. Through an educational approach and easy-to-understand delivery, they provide concrete examples of the legal consequences of digital violations. For example, they explain cases of unauthorized distribution of private photos, which can be charged under the privacy law, or hate speech on social media, which can be subject to criminal penalties. This approach helps teenagers understand that cyberspace is not a limitless space, but rather a public space governed by legal norms and social ethics. This fosters a new awareness among teenagers that their digital behavior must reflect responsibility and caution.

In addition to improving legal knowledge, the Legal Clinic also encourages changes in adolescents' attitudes toward digital technology. Before participating in the program, many of them viewed the internet as a private space with unlimited access. However, after gaining understanding from the facilitators, adolescents began to view the internet as a public space with rules, responsibilities, and legal risks. They became more cautious in sharing information, more selective in receiving news, and more aware of the importance of maintaining their digital

reputation. This attitudinal transformation is a tangible result of the practical and communicative approach to legal education.

Furthermore, the Legal Clinic also serves as a means of developing legal character among adolescents. Through interactive and experience-based activities, adolescents are trained to think critically, rationally, and ethically when making decisions in the digital world. They understand the law not only as a set of restrictive rules but also as an instrument to protect their rights as technology users. The Legal Clinic successfully instills the value that law is not merely a tool for punishment, but also a moral and social guideline for a safe, orderly, and just digital life.

Thus, it can be concluded that the Legal Clinic has had a real and far-reaching impact on building legal awareness among young people. This program not only broadens their understanding of the legal aspects of the digital world but also fosters a sense of responsibility and caution in online activities. The Legal Clinic plays a crucial role as a bridge between education, law, and technology, and is a strategic innovation in developing a digitally savvy and law-abiding young generation.

2. Changes in Teenagers' Attitudes towards Social Media Use

The change in adolescents' digital behavior after participating in the Legal Clinic program was one of the key findings of this study. Based on interviews and observations, a clear transformation in the way adolescents interact and participate in digital spaces was evident. Prior to the Legal Clinic program, most participants had a habit of using social media without regard for ethical and legal aspects.

They often share personal information openly, such as their location, daily activities, family photos, and even phone numbers. This practice is carried out without considering potential security risks, such as misuse of personal data, online fraud, and the threat of cyberbullying. Furthermore, several participants also admitted to using social media as a means to express excessive emotions, for example through angry posts, mocking others, or spreading unverified opinions. This behavioral pattern indicates that many teenagers still do not understand the legal consequences of their digital activities.

However, after receiving training from the Legal Clinic program, participants demonstrated significant and measurable changes in attitude. They became more selective in uploading content, cautious in providing comments, and understood that the digital world has the same strict legal rules as the physical world. The principle of "think before sharing" became a key value instilled through the Legal Clinic activities, and this was successfully internalized by most participants. Teenagers began to realize that every digital activity leaves a permanent

electronic footprint that can be used as legal evidence in the event of a violation. This awareness made them more prudent in interacting on social media, whether in the context of communicating with friends, disseminating public information, or participating in social issues online.

Furthermore, understanding personal data protection is a key focus of the Legal Clinic. Through training provided by facilitators, teenagers are taught how to manage social media account security, avoid malicious links, and reject suspicious requests for personal information. They are also trained to recognize digital crime schemes such as phishing, reward-based scams, and online extortion. With this knowledge, participants are better able to maintain their privacy and protect themselves from various forms of cybercrime. Interviews with several participants indicate that they are now more cautious about accepting friend requests from strangers and more critical in responding to messages or links sent via social media.

The impact of this shift in attitudes is not only visible at the individual level, but also in the social environment and digital culture at school. After attending the Legal Clinic, some participants volunteered to become digital literacy agents teenagers who actively participate in disseminating knowledge about digital ethics and cyber law to their peers. They utilize school resources, such as extracurricular activities, class discussions, and student forums, to educate their peers about the risks of digital crime. In some cases, teachers even involve Legal Clinic alumni as mentors in advanced training activities on digital security. This creates a positive domino effect, where a group of legally aware teenagers spreads their understanding to their peers.

The Legal Clinic thus serves not only as a medium for individual learning but also as a driving force for the formation of positive digital social movements within the educational environment. Through a participatory and community-based approach, this program fosters a collaborative spirit among students, teachers, and legal advisors. Students no longer view the law as something frightening or restrictive of freedom of expression, but rather as a guide that protects their rights and dignity in cyberspace. With this awareness, young people are better able to balance freedom of expression with social responsibility, a crucial attitude in building a healthy and ethical digital ecosystem.

This behavioral change also demonstrates that educational approaches like the Legal Clinic are far more effective than conventional, one-way legal outreach methods. This program has successfully shifted teenagers' perception of social media, from being seen as a mere space for entertainment and self-expression to a productive tool for learning, positive networking, and contributing to a civilized digital society. Furthermore, they are beginning to understand

that their online presence has real social and legal consequences, necessitating a responsible attitude in every action Rizqia, Galuh (2019: 90)

Observations at several schools have revealed an interesting phenomenon: students who have participated in the Legal Clinic are becoming role models for their peers in digital behavior. For example, they are less likely to post personal issues on social media, refrain from spreading news without clear sources, and prefer to convey criticism politely and constructively. These behavioral patterns demonstrate that ethical digital transformation can be fostered through inclusive legal education that is relevant to the lives of adolescents.

Thus, it can be concluded that the Legal Clinic has made a significant contribution to shaping adolescent attitudes toward social media use. This program not only increases legal awareness but also instills moral values, responsibility, and empathy in interacting in the digital world. This change signifies the success of a learning approach that combines legal, psychological, and character education aspects, making adolescents more mature in their digital behavior. The Legal Clinic, with its digital literacy strategy, is able to produce a young generation that is not only technologically savvy but also legally aware and ethical in utilizing social media in the modern era.

3. The Effectiveness of Digital Literacy as an Effort to Prevent Cybercrime

The Legal Clinic's digital literacy activities are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how to use technology wisely, ethically, and safely. In these trainings, young people are taught various practical skills, such as how to recognize fake news (hoaxes), verify information sources, and manage personal account security. They are also trained in digital communication ethics, including how to interact politely and legally in cyberspace.

This approach has proven effective in developing critical thinking patterns regarding information circulating online. Participants became more aware that not all content shared on social media is trustworthy, and they began to use verification principles before sharing information. With this increased critical thinking ability, adolescents' potential to become perpetrators of hoaxes or hate speech significantly decreased.

More broadly, digital literacy is also a tool for preventing cybercrime because it instills an understanding of the risks and responsibilities of online life. When adolescents understand how technology works and the legal systems that govern it, they are better able to avoid potentially unlawful actions, whether intentionally or unintentionally. This demonstrates that digital literacy is not just a technical competency but also part of developing a modern legal character.

4. Collaboration between Schools, Law Enforcement, and the Community

From a social perspective, the Legal Clinic has successfully created positive synergy between educational institutions, law enforcement officials, and the community. Schools serve as a strategic platform for internalizing legal values from an early age, as the educational environment offers emotional intimacy and a strong influence on adolescent behavior. In this program, teachers act as facilitators, connecting students with legal material in a contextual manner.

Legal officials such as prosecutors, advocates, and police officers were also involved as mentors and resource persons, providing direct explanations of digital law regulations, law enforcement procedures, and actual case examples. This hands-on approach made the legal material easier to understand and felt relevant to the daily lives of teenagers.

Furthermore, community involvement, particularly from parents and local communities, is crucial to the program's success. Numerous cases demonstrate that cybercrime among adolescents stems from a lack of supervision and education within the family environment. By involving parents in the Legal Clinic's activities, a sustainable legal learning ecosystem is created, both at school and at home.

5. Quantitative Impact and Participant Perception

Interview and survey results indicate that 80% of Legal Clinic participants experienced an improved understanding of digital legal risks after the training. They were able to identify types of cybercrime, recognize violations of the ITE Law, and understand the legal consequences of each digital action.

Supervisors and facilitators also gave positive feedback on this activity. They noted that the Legal Clinic helped foster digital discipline, raise awareness of social responsibility, and reduce cases of digital ethics violations within the school environment. In fact, some schools have begun integrating digital legal literacy modules into extracurricular activities and student character building.

DISCUSSION

In terms of implementation, this activity also fosters legal confidence among teenagers. They no longer view the law as something scary or something only for adults, but rather as a life guide that can help them wisely face the challenges of the digital world.

1. Theoretical Analysis and Conceptual Relevance

Theoretically, the findings of this study align with the concept of digital literacy proposed by Paul Gilster (1997), namely the ability to understand and use information from various digital sources critically, ethically, and effectively. In a legal context, digital literacy is an important foundation for building legal awareness in modern society.

The higher a person's digital literacy level, the less likely they are to engage in illegal behavior online. Conversely, low digital literacy can be a gateway to cybercrime, both as victims and perpetrators. Therefore, law-based digital literacy can be considered a progressive preventive strategy, complementing the currently more repressive law enforcement system.

The Legal Clinic occupies a unique position as it bridges the worlds of education and law. It transforms the old paradigm that separated legal knowledge and technological mastery into a complementary, integrated approach. Thus, the Legal Clinic concept can serve as an innovative model in today's legal education, especially for the younger generation growing up in the digital age.

2. Social Implications and Recommendations

The positive impact of the Legal Clinic and digital literacy program is felt not only by participants but also by the wider community. Increased legal awareness among adolescents has the potential to reduce the rate of digital law violations in the future. Furthermore, this program can serve as a national educational platform supporting Indonesia's vision of an ethical and just digital society.

This study recommends that the government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, support the implementation of Legal Clinics in every high school and university. A digital legal literacy curriculum should also be incorporated into character education programs to ensure a systematic and sustainable development of legal behavior.

CONCLUSION

The Legal Clinic and digital literacy program have proven to be a significant contributor to cybercrime prevention efforts among youth. Through an educational and interactive approach, this program has been able to raise legal awareness, instill digital ethics, and foster social responsibility in the use of technology. Synergy between educational institutions, law enforcement, and the community is a key factor in the program's successful implementation.

Cybercrime prevention requires not only strict law enforcement but also legal education that adapts to technological developments. Therefore, it is crucial for the government and educational institutions to make Legal Clinics an integral part of the national digital literacy program. This way, young people, as the nation's next generation, can become intelligent, critical, and law-abiding technology users in the digital age.

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