

Implementation of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law in Encouraging Responsible and Intelligent Use of Social Media Among Senior High School Students in Palangka Raya

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Abstract: This study aims to analyse the level of awareness and application of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (commonly referred to as the ITE Law) and digital ethics among senior high school students. Employing a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design, the study seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the ITE Law is implemented and how ethical awareness is fostered in students' use of social media. This methodological approach was selected to obtain a holistic and in-depth portrayal of students' attitudes, comprehension, and behaviours concerning social media regulations and digital conduct. The research subjects consist of students and teachers from a senior high school in Palangka Raya, while the object of the study is the application of the ITE Law within the context of cultivating responsible digital behaviour in the school environment. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews with selected teachers and students, observations of student activities both inside and outside the classroom, and document analysis of relevant materials such as school regulations and socialisation resources related to the ITE Law, particularly those used during school orientation programmes (Introduction to School Environment Program) and guidance counselling sessions. The research instruments comprised interview protocols, observation sheets, and documentation checklists. The data were analysed qualitatively using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which encompasses three key stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Through this analytical process, the researcher sought to identify patterns, themes, and meanings within the collected data, which were subsequently presented in the form of descriptive narratives. This approach enabled an exploration of the complex and context-specific social realities surrounding students' legal awareness and ethical considerations in the use of social media.

Keywords: UU ITE, Social Media Usage Ethics, and High School Students' Understanding

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Introduction

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology (ICT), particularly the internet, has fundamentally transformed how individuals interact, communicate, and access information. One of the most transformative digital innovations is the emergence of social media, which has become an inseparable part of daily life, especially for younger generations. Social media not only functions as a tool for interpersonal communication but has also evolved into a dynamic virtual public sphere, where self-expression, idea exchange, and public opinion formation take place at a global and accelerated pace. Its interactive and participatory nature allows users, particularly adolescents and students, to engage in global discourse and civic participation within an increasingly complex digital environment.

However, this growing reliance on social media also presents serious challenges, particularly in the realms of ethics and law. A low level of digital literacy, especially among students, has contributed to various forms of misuse in digital spaces. The spread of hoaxes, hate speech, cyberbullying, and inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography - reflects a lack of understanding of ethical and legal boundaries in online interactions. These behaviors demonstrate not only insufficient digital competencies but also a worrying disconnect between students' online behavior and the ethical and legal standards that should govern their conduct.

To address these challenges, the Indonesian government enacted Law No. 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law), later amended by Law No. 19 of 2016. This law provides a comprehensive legal framework aimed at ensuring the safe, fair, and responsible use of digital technologies. It encompasses a wide range of issues, including data protection, privacy, defamation, and cybercrime prevention. Despite its significance, the effectiveness of the ITE Law in shaping student behavior remains limited, primarily due to the lack of awareness among students about its content and implications - let alone the internalization of its values in their daily digital practices.

Scholars and educators have voiced concerns about students' readiness to engage ethically in digital environments. Lewis (2010) argues that while social media provides users the freedom to communicate openly, this freedom must be accompanied by social responsibility. Suseno, as cited in Maulinda & Suyatno (2016), highlights the importance of communication ethics in fostering respectful social interaction in digital settings. Bertens (2013) links ethics with morality, particularly in the context of conflicting opinions that frequently arise on social media. Similarly, Haryatmoko (2007) emphasizes the need to balance the right to self-expression with the responsibility to avoid harming others. James (2009) further suggests that digital ethics education for youth should be grounded in core values such as respect, responsibility, and

integrity - values that many students have yet to fully embrace.

Field observations in a public senior high school in Palangka Raya indicate that students still exhibit limited awareness of digital ethics and the legal consequences of their actions online. A notable case involved the circulation of private student videos via social media, which constituted a serious violation of both ethical norms and the legal provisions outlined in the ITE Law. This incident underscores the urgent need to enhance digital literacy and deepen students' understanding of the legal and ethical principles that should govern their behavior on social media.

Despite the growing urgency of this issue, academic research examining the implementation of the ITE Law in school settings - and its impact on students' ethical conduct in digital spaces - remains limited. This gap presents a strategic opportunity for empirical investigation, especially given the increasing role of schools in shaping students' digital citizenship and civic awareness. Accordingly, this study, titled "Implementation of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law in Encouraging Responsible and Intelligent Use of Social Media Among Senior High School Students in Palangka Raya," aims to assess students' understanding of the ITE Law and evaluate how ethical values are manifested in their digital behavior. The findings are expected to inform the development of more effective educational policies on digital and legal literacy, thereby reinforcing the role of schools in fostering a generation that is not only digitally skilled but also ethically grounded and legally responsible in their use of social media.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a descriptive design to gain an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law) and students' ethical awareness in the use of social media. A qualitative approach is deemed suitable as it enables the researcher to explore social phenomena within their natural settings, revealing the meanings behind students' behaviors, perceptions, and understanding of legal norms and digital ethics. Rather than focusing on quantifying behaviors, this approach emphasizes the interpretation of experiences, social interactions, and institutional practices within the educational context.

The research subjects consist of students and teachers from a public senior high school in Palangka Raya, selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in digital literacy and character education programs. The object of this study centers on how the ITE Law is integrated and applied within the school environment, particularly in relation to efforts aimed at fostering ethical, responsible, and intelligent use of social media among students.

Data collection techniques employed in this study include:

1. In-depth interviews with teachers and students to explore their understanding, experiences, and perspectives regarding the ITE Law and digital ethics;

2. Participant observation of student activities inside and outside the classroom, including during digital literacy sessions, school orientation programmes, and character education lessons;
3. Document analysis of school policies, materials school orientation programmes, ITE Law dissemination content, and counselling session records relevant to digital behaviour and ethical guidance.

The research instruments were carefully designed to ensure consistency and depth in the data-gathering process. These instruments include semi-structured interview guides tailored to students and educators, observation sheets for behavioural mapping, and documentation checklists for analysing written materials related to the implementation of digital policies and laws.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes three interrelated components:

1. Data reduction, where irrelevant data are filtered, and meaningful patterns are identified;
2. Data display, which involves organising the data into visual or narrative forms to facilitate interpretation;
3. Conclusion drawing and verification, where insights are derived from the data, compared, and validated across multiple sources (triangulation).

This analytic process was iterative and dynamic, enabling the researcher to refine themes, explore emerging categories, and validate interpretations based on empirical findings. Triangulation of sources and methods was applied to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Additionally, reflective field notes and memoing were employed to capture the researcher's analytical thinking and ensure transparency in the interpretation process.

By adopting this qualitative framework, the study seeks not only to document the level of students' awareness regarding the ITE Law but also to interpret the contextual factors such as school culture, teacher guidance, and peer influence that shape their ethical practices in digital spaces. This approach provides nuanced insights into how legal and ethical digital competencies are internalised in the everyday lives of students, thereby contributing to the development of more integrative and effective digital citizenship education.

Results

A. Implementation of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law)

Findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis show that the implementation of Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law) in a

senior high school in Palangka Raya has been conducted through several socialization efforts. However, students’ understanding of the ITE Law remains limited, with ongoing digital violations indicating a gap between the information provided and students’ actual behavior on social media.

A summary of the key findings is presented below:

Aspect	Findings
Legal Awareness of ITE	Most students reported having heard of the ITE Law; however, their comprehension of its provisions and the specific offences it regulates is still minimal. Many students are unfamiliar with key articles of the law, such as those concerning defamation, hate speech, and the distribution of illegal content. This limited understanding often leads to unintentional violations, as students do not fully grasp the legal consequences of their online actions. Furthermore, the complexity of the law and insufficient educational emphasis contribute to gaps in knowledge, underscoring the need for more targeted and accessible legal literacy programs within the school curriculum.
Socialisation Efforts	The school conducted dissemination activities during the School Orientation Programme and counselling sessions, including inviting law enforcement officers to educate students about the risks of inappropriate social media use. In addition to these efforts, the school also organised workshops and interactive discussions to engage students more actively in understanding the importance of responsible digital behaviour. Teachers incorporated digital ethics topics into their lesson plans to reinforce the message throughout the academic year. Despite these initiatives, the effectiveness of the socialisation programmes was hindered by limited student participation and varying levels of interest, indicating a need for more innovative and relatable approaches to raise awareness effectively among adolescents.
Observed Violations	Several cases of misconduct were identified, including the circulation of private videos, incidents of cyberbullying, and the sharing of inappropriate content via social media.
Preventive Measures	The school has incorporated digital ethics into its code of conduct and reinforces these principles through routine reminders delivered by teachers and during school events.

Student Attitudes	Although some students have demonstrated an awareness of responsible digital behaviour, others continue to engage in risky activities, such as disseminating harmful content without considering the consequences.
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B. Ethical Awareness and Communication Ethics

Students' behavior on social media reflects varied understanding of moral values and legal norms. Many students perceive social media as a private space rather than a public forum with social responsibilities. Field data indicates ethical violations such as sarcasm, offensive language, and misinformation sharing. Several cases were noted, including students anonymously mocking teachers or peers using fake accounts.

Interviews revealed that students from less supervised or lower-education family backgrounds showed more impulsive online behavior. Cultural values emphasizing respect and harmony, though central to Indonesian society, are not fully internalized in students' digital conduct. Furthermore, most ITE Law education remains theoretical and disconnected from students' real-life experiences, reducing its effectiveness.

C. Challenges to Legal Awareness

Five major challenges were identified:

1. Knowledge-Behavior Gap – Students are aware of rules but often fail to apply them.
2. Lack of Parental Involvement – Minimal digital supervision from families.
3. Insufficient Curriculum Integration – Legal topics are only briefly discussed in orientation sessions.
4. Peer Influence – Students avoid reporting violations due to social pressure.
5. Implementation Weakness – Efforts are fragmented and lack consistent reinforcement.

Discussion

The results highlight that while schools have made some effort to implement digital literacy and legal awareness programs, these efforts remain fragmented and insufficiently embedded in the curriculum. Most students lack a comprehensive understanding of the ITE Law, which leads to recurring violations. This aligns with findings by Sudibyo (2022) and Tani & Mediatati (2020), who emphasize the inconsistency of digital literacy education and underdeveloped legal awareness among adolescents. Overall, the study indicates that while schools have made efforts to promote digital legal awareness, the results are far from optimal. Many students still perceive social media as a space free from clear rules, leading to frequent instances of inappropriate

behaviour. Educational efforts need to be strengthened not only within schools but also at home and in the broader community. A more comprehensive and collaborative approach involving educators, parents, legal authorities, and professionals is required to develop strong legal and ethical digital awareness among students.

Student behaviour on social media reflects their level of understanding regarding moral values, legal norms, and applicable communication ethics in the digital era. Based on field observations and interview data, it was found that most students perceive social media narrowly as a private space for self-expression, rather than as a public forum that demands social and legal responsibility. This perception introduces various risks, ranging from privacy violations to the spread of hate speech. In this regard, communication ethics serves as a critical foundation that must be emphasized. As explained by Haryatmoko (2007), ethical communication considers the rights of others, prioritizes honesty, and avoids manipulation or symbolic violence. In digital spaces, this includes the way students write comments, share information, and interact with other users. In reality, however, many students engage in unethical behaviours such as sarcastic remarks, use of offensive language, and dissemination of unverified information. According to Sari and Utomo (2020), approximately 63% of Indonesian students have shared unverified information, and 47% admitted to posting negative or offensive comments on social media. These statistics indicate a low level of ethical and legal literacy both of which are essential in cultivating a healthy digital culture. Several real-life incidents reflect this lack of ethical awareness in a high school in Palangka Raya. In addition to the unauthorized sharing of private videos, there have been cases where students created fake social media accounts to mock teachers or peers anonymously. These actions not only damage interpersonal relationships within the school environment but may also be classified as cyberbullying, which carries legal implications under Article 45B of the ITE Law regarding defamation or violation of personal dignity.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that social environmental factors strongly influence students' digital behaviour. Interviews with counselling teachers revealed that students from families with low educational backgrounds or minimal digital supervision tend to be more unrestricted and impulsive in their online activity. This aligns with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which posits that individual behaviour is influenced by environmental systems—including family, school, and digital communities. Moreover, the role of cultural and religious values in shaping students' ethical awareness cannot be overlooked. In Indonesian society, which upholds collectivist values and norms of politeness, social media should ideally serve as a tool to strengthen social ties - not a platform to spread hate or defame others. However, these cultural values are often not internalized in students' digital practices due to a lack of contextualized approaches in digital ethics education. Unfortunately, most ITE Law socialization materials used in schools remain theoretical and normative, without employing contextual strategies that connect legal knowledge to students' lived digital experiences. As a result, students fail to see the direct relevance between legal education and their everyday interactions online. Kartikawangi (2022) argues that legal education in the digital age must be

participatory, case-based, and encourage moral reflection - not limited to rote learning of legal articles. From a pedagogical perspective, schools should integrate digital ethics across multiple subjects - not just during orientation programmes or Civics Education. This integration is crucial in developing students' critical thinking, moral reasoning, and empathy for others in online interactions.

Several recommended strategies to enhance students' ethical awareness include:

1. Digital legal case simulations: engaging students in analyzing real-life cases such as hoaxes, defamation, or online harassment. This method aims to provide practical understanding of the legal and ethical consequences of violating digital regulations.
2. Application of restorative justice in schools: introducing justice mechanisms that are educational and aimed at restoring social harmony rather than solely punishing offenders. This approach helps students understand the importance of responsibility and constructive correction of mistakes.
3. Collaboration with religious and cultural leaders: working together with local religious and cultural figures to reinforce digital ethical values rooted in local wisdom. This approach integrates social and cultural norms in shaping students' digital character, making it more relevant and widely accepted.

These strategies are expected to foster deeper and sustainable ethical awareness among students in using social media and digital technology responsibly. Equally important is the need for digital literacy training for teachers so that they can serve as role models in ethical digital communication. As stated by UNESCO (2021), educators are key agents in cultivating a responsible and inclusive digital culture.

Several challenges have been identified that hinder the development of legal awareness among students concerning social media use and the implementation of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law):

1. Discrepancy Between Students' Knowledge and Behavior

Although the school has conducted socialization regarding the ITE Law and social media ethics, most students still struggle to apply this knowledge in their daily digital activities. Interview results revealed that students are aware of basic rules, such as the prohibition against distributing private content without permission, but they do not fully realize the legal consequences that may arise from such violations. For example, the case involving the circulation of private videos within the school illustrates behaviors that contradict both legal and ethical standards, despite students having been informed about these regulations.

2. Insufficient Parental Involvement in Digital Supervision

Students generally admit that parental supervision and guidance regarding social media use remain suboptimal. Many parents do not fully understand the legal and ethical risks associated with social media, leading to inadequate oversight. This situation causes students to

tend to neglect ethical boundaries when interacting online due to a lack of guidance from their family environment.

3. Suboptimal Integration of Digital Legal Education

The socialization of the ITE Law at a high school in Palangka Raya is still incidental and not well-integrated into the regular learning curriculum. Socialization activities mostly take place at the beginning of the academic year or during school orientation (MPLS), resulting in insufficient reinforcement of students' legal knowledge over time. Additionally, some teachers lack the specialized competence needed to effectively teach legal and digital ethics aspects to students.

4. Social and Cultural Influences within the School on Legal Awareness

In the social and cultural context of a high school in Palangka Raya, peer group norms significantly shape student behavior. Some students admit reluctance to report or reprimand friends who commit ethical violations on social media for fear of being perceived as troublemakers or ostracized. This condition creates an environment where minor violations may be tolerated and potentially escalate into more serious issues.

5. Implications for Education Development and Law Enforcement in Schools

The study's findings confirm that the existing socialization efforts on the ITE Law are insufficient to build profound legal awareness among students. A more holistic approach is necessary, such as incorporating legal and digital ethics material regularly into the curriculum and strengthening extracurricular activities that promote digital responsibility. Furthermore, active involvement from parents and the broader community is essential for comprehensive cultivation of responsible digital behavior.

Collaboration among schools, parents, and law enforcement agencies must be enhanced to provide accurate information, effective supervision, and consistent enforcement of regulations. Teacher training programs are also crucial to improve their ability to deliver ITE Law material and social media ethics in an engaging and understandable manner for students. In this way, the school can become a supportive environment for fostering a digitally literate, legally aware, and ethically responsible younger generation in social media use.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the implementation of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE Law) at a high school in Palangka Raya has primarily been carried out through socialisation efforts, such as the School Orientation Programme and counselling sessions. However, students' understanding of the substantive content and legal consequences of the ITE Law remains limited. This is evident from the continued occurrence of violations such as the distribution of private videos, hate speech, and cyberbullying, indicating a clear disconnect between students' legal knowledge and their actual online behaviour. From an ethical perspective, many students exercise their freedom of expression without a sufficient sense of responsibility, reflecting low awareness of digital communication ethics. Although the school

has taken preventive measures by incorporating digital ethics into school rules and providing regular reminders, these efforts have not yet yielded optimal results. Additionally, the limited involvement of parents in supervising their children's online activities further hampers the development of students' legal awareness and accountability in the digital environment. Based on these findings, it is recommended that schools strengthen the integration of legal education and digital ethics into the curriculum through case-based learning and interactive discussions. Collaboration with law enforcement agencies, psychologists, and community leaders should also be expanded to deepen students' understanding of the legal and social consequences of their online behaviour. Parental involvement should be improved through initiatives such as digital parenting seminars or training programs designed to equip parents with the knowledge and skills necessary to guide their children responsibly in navigating the digital world. For future research, an in-depth investigation into the influence of culture, religion, and local values on students' legal awareness in the digital context is recommended. Comparative studies across different schools or regions would also provide broader, more contextualised insights and contribute to the development of more targeted and effective educational interventions.

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