

Law, Silence, and Digital Recourse: Addressing Bullying and Body Shaming in Indonesian Higher Education

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Article history:

Received 2025-04-23

Revised 2025-05-21

Accepted 2025-08-01

Keywords:

Bullying; Body Shaming;
Law; E-Complaint;
University.

DOI:

doi.org/10.26905/idjch.v16i2.15371.

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Abstract: Bullying and body shaming in Indonesian higher education persist not because the law is absent, but because it remains systematically inaccessible to those who suffer its violations. Existing legal instruments including Articles 310, 315, and 351 of the Criminal Code, Article 27A of the ITE Law, and Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024 provide a formally adequate normative framework, yet their enforcement is consistently undermined by institutional silence, hierarchical campus culture, and the absence of trusted reporting mechanisms. This study examines the effectiveness of that legal framework and evaluates the capacity of an electronic complaint system to function as a legally grounded instrument for institutional response to bullying and body shaming in the campus environment. Employing a socio-legal research design that integrates direct observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and systematic legal analysis, the study was conducted at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universitas Nurul Jadid, in August 2024. The findings demonstrate that the e-complaint system measurably reduces the structural barriers to victim reporting by providing anonymity, real-time complaint tracking, and digitally admissible evidentiary records. However, its full legal potential is contingent upon compliance with the Personal Data Protection Law, institutional embedding within Regulation No. 55/2024's Satgas framework, and sustained commitment to anti-retaliation enforcement. Law and technology, this study concludes, are most effective not as alternatives but as mutually reinforcing instruments of institutional accountability.

1. Introduction

Bullying and body shaming in higher education are no longer marginal incidents confined to school corridors they have evolved into a structured pattern of harm that operates within and is sustained by institutional silence. What makes their persistence in the university setting particularly alarming is not merely the prevalence of the acts themselves, but the failure of legal instruments to provide meaningful recourse when they occur. In Indonesia, the OECD recorded 42,540 bullying incidents globally in 2021, with 2,790 cases situated in Asia alone, and Indonesia consistently ranked among the highest in the region a figure that does not account for the vast majority of cases

that go unreported due to fear, stigma, and mistrust in institutional mechanisms.¹ This unreporting crisis is not incidental; it is structurally produced. Research by Jatningsih et al. demonstrates that while 93.2 percent of university students in Indonesia can identify and define violence on campus, only 1.1 percent possess adequate knowledge of reporting procedures, revealing a devastating gap between legal awareness and legal access.² The implication is sobering: laws may exist, but their effectiveness depends entirely on whether victims can and do invoke them.

The Indonesian legal framework governing bullying and body shaming is dispersed, fragmented, and insufficiently specific. Under the Criminal Code (Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana/KUHPP), these acts may be prosecuted under Articles 310, 315, and 351, covering defamation, minor insult, and maltreatment respectively. However, as Erdianti has shown, none of these provisions mention body shaming explicitly, creating interpretive ambiguity that law enforcement agencies exploit to avoid action a structural flaw that renders criminal accountability not merely difficult but often impossible in practice.³ The ITE Law (Law No. 11 of 2008, as last amended by Law No. 1 of 2024) partially addresses online forms through Article 27A, which criminalizes defamatory electronic content, but this provision too is laden with definitional elasticity that has historically been weaponized against victims the so-called “rubber article” problem rather than perpetrators.⁴ The result is a legal architecture that appears comprehensive on paper while delivering minimal protection in reality.

The normative inadequacy is compounded at the institutional level. Campus policies in Indonesia were, until recently, almost entirely silent on non-sexual forms of violence. Ministerial Regulation No. 30 of 2021 (Permendikbudristek No. 30/2021) marked the first attempt to codify preventive and remedial measures in higher education, yet its scope was narrowly confined to sexual violence, deliberately excluding bullying, discrimination, and psychological abuse from its protective framework.⁵ This legislative lacuna was not remedied until the promulgation of Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024 (Permendikbudristek No. 55/2024), which, for the first time, expanded the definition of campus violence to include six distinct categories: physical, psychological, bullying, sexual, discriminatory and intolerant practices, and harmful institutional policies.⁶ This shift is significant it reframes bullying not as a behavioral anomaly to be managed internally but as a governance failure demanding institutional accountability. Yet the critical question that follows is whether this normative expansion translates into operational protection, particularly given the persistent distrust of formal reporting channels documented in empirical studies.

¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *PISA 2018 Results: Are Students Smart About Money?* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020), cited in relation to global bullying data, <https://doi.org/10.1787/48ebd1ba-en>.

² Oksiana Jatningsih et al., “Institutional Accountability Through Campus Policies Against Gender-Based Violence: A Case Study of Universitas Negeri Surabaya,” *Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government* 23, no. 10 (2025): 1295, [https://doi.org/10.4335/23.10.1293-1306\(2025\)](https://doi.org/10.4335/23.10.1293-1306(2025)).

³ Rokhmad Nur Erdianti, “Body Shaming Act as a Crime in Indonesian Criminal Law,” *Justitia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum dan Humaniora* 9, no. 1 (2022): 37–43, <https://doi.org/10.31604/justitia.v9i1.37-43>.

⁴ Mohamad Rusdiyanto Ulaan Puluhulawa and Riski Husain, “Body Shaming Through Social Media as a Digital Crime in the Era of Disruption,” *Jambura Law Review* 3, no. 1 (2021): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.33756/jlr.v3i1.7200>.

⁵ Oksiana Jatningsih et al., “Institutional Accountability Through Campus Policies,” 1294. Permendikbudristek No. 30/2021.

⁶ Republic of Indonesia, Ministerial Regulation of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No. 55 of 2024 on the Prevention and Handling of Violence in Higher Education (*Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Nomor 55 Tahun 2024 tentang Pencegahan dan Penanganan Kekerasan di Lingkungan Perguruan Tinggi*), Article 1 (enacted October 2024), accessed at <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/305767/permendikbudristek-no-55-tahun-2024>. Regulation No. 55/2024.

Puluhulawa and Husain have identified two interlocking legal pathologies that obstruct accountability: weak legal substance in which statutory provisions fail to anticipate the modes and magnitude of modern harm and a deficient legal culture, in which victims' reluctance to report, combined with inadequate enforcement, perpetuates the very impunity that enables repeat offending.⁷ The study of bullying and body shaming in higher education sits precisely at the intersection of these two pathologies. A body-shaming act committed on campus may engage Article 315 KUHP, Article 27A of the ITE Law, and the Ministerial Regulation No. 55/2024 simultaneously yet the absence of a clear, accessible, and trusted reporting pathway makes multi-instrumentality more a theoretical aspiration than a practical reality. It is this disjunction between legal pluralism and institutional effectiveness that this study interrogates.

Recent scholarship on workplace bullying and harassment in higher education institutions, identifies institutional culture, power asymmetries, and weak reporting infrastructure as the primary structural conditions that allow bullying to persist and escalate, regardless of formal prohibitions.⁸ These findings have direct relevance to the Indonesian campus context, where patriarchal norms, hierarchical structures between senior and junior students, and institutional pressures to protect reputational standing systematically disadvantage victims. The problem, in short, is not the absence of law, but the absence of law that works. This observation compels a critical reassessment not only of statutory provisions but of the mechanisms through which victims access those provisions mechanisms that are, by design or neglect, constructed to fail them.

It is within this analytical framework that electronic complaint systems (e-complaint) emerge as a subject of legal, not merely technical, inquiry. The capacity of a digital reporting platform to reduce the friction that inhibits victim disclosure by offering anonymity, real-time tracking, and institutional independence from informal power networks has implications for the practical effectiveness of substantive legal protections. Aprilina et al. have demonstrated that the deployment of e-government complaint infrastructure in Indonesia has measurably improved transparency and accountability in public service delivery, but its application to campus-based violence reporting remains understudied, particularly from a legal standpoint.⁹ The integration of such systems must be interrogated against the requirements of evidence law (i.e., the admissibility of digital evidence under Law No. 11 of 2008), personal data protection obligations under Law No. 27 of 2022, and the due process rights of both complainants and respondents under the Code of Criminal Procedure (KUHAP).

Against this background, two research questions animate this study: First, how does the existing legal framework comprising the KUHP, the ITE Law, and Ministerial Regulation No. 55/2024 address bullying and body shaming in the Indonesian university environment, and where do its enforcement gaps lie? Second, how can an electronic complaint system function as a legally valid and institutionally effective instrument for facilitating the reporting of, and legal response to, such conduct? The novelty of this research lies in its departure from the prevailing descriptive-norma-

⁷ Puluhulawa and Husain, "Body Shaming Through Social Media," 15-16.

⁸ Margaret Hodgins and Patricia Mannix-McNamara, "Workplace Bullying and Harassment in Higher Education Institutions: A Scoping Review," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 21, no. 9 (2024): 1173, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21091173>.

⁹ Vita Aprilina et al., "The Role of Digitalization in Enhancing Public Service Efficiency: Challenges and Opportunities in Managing Public Complaints Through E-Government in Indonesia," *International Journal of Social Work* 2, no. 1 (2025): 57-67.

tive approach that has characterized prior work on this subject. Rather than restating what the law provides, this study critically examines what the law fails to achieve in practice, and proposes a legally grounded, empirically informed model of institutional response that integrates digital complaint infrastructure with a coherent framework of substantive protection. This contribution is particularly urgent at a moment when Indonesia's regulatory apparatus has finally acknowledged the scope of campus violence but has yet to develop the enforcement mechanisms required to make that acknowledgment meaningful.

2. Method

This study employs a socio-legal research approach (*pendekatan yuridis-empiris*), which situates legal norms and instruments within the social conditions that govern their application and effectiveness.¹⁰ The socio-legal method does not treat law as an autonomous, self-referential system; rather, it interrogates the relationship between normative prescriptions and social reality examining not merely what the law states, but how it operates, where it fails, and why the gap between legal text and lived experience persists.¹¹ This methodological orientation is particularly well-suited to the present study, which is concerned not only with identifying the statutory framework governing bullying and body shaming in higher education, but also with assessing the degree to which that framework translates into accessible and effective protection for victims within the campus environment.

The research was conducted at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (*Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*), Universitas Nurul Jadid (UNUJA), Probolinggo, East Java, between August 26 and 27, 2024. The site was selected on two grounds: first, UNUJA had documented recurring incidents of bullying and body shaming in campus spaces including the canteen, outdoor yards, and classrooms that had not been resolved through existing institutional mechanisms; and second, the institution's relatively open academic culture provided an enabling environment for empirical data collection, particularly for candid accounts from students and teaching staff. The choice of a single institutional site reflects a purposive, case-study logic rather than a random sampling strategy, consistent with the exploratory and context-sensitive aims of qualitative legal inquiry.¹²

Data were collected through four complementary techniques. Direct observation was conducted across identified high-risk campus locations to document the spatial and interactional patterns associated with bullying conduct specifically, the settings in which such acts occur, the social dynamics that enable them, and the extent to which institutional surveillance or intervention was present. In-depth interviews were conducted with three categories of informant: students who had either experienced or witnessed bullying or body shaming, academic staff (*dosen*) who held direct supervisory responsibility over student conduct, and the developers of the e-complaint application that forms the technical subject of this study. This multi-stakeholder interview design allowed for the triangulation of perspectives across hierarchical positions within the campus, re-

¹⁰ Sulistyowati Irianto and Shidarta, eds., *Metode Penelitian Hukum: Konstelasi dan Refleksi* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2011), 175.

¹¹ Reza Banakar and Max Travers, eds., *Theory and Method in Socio-Legal Research* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2005), 1–25

¹² John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2018), 97–98.

ducing the risk of single-source bias.¹³ Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with prospective end-users of the e-complaint system, with particular attention to how design features such as anonymity, evidence submission, and complaint tracking correspond to users' actual reporting needs and concerns. Finally, systematic review of primary legal sources (statutes, ministerial regulations, and their legislative histories) and secondary legal scholarship provided the normative foundation against which the empirical findings were analyzed.

Data analysis proceeded through a process of reflexive thematic analysis, following the framework established by Braun and Clarke, which identifies themes as analytic products of the researcher's interpretive engagement with data rather than latent features that passively emerge from it.¹⁴ This approach was chosen over alternative methods such as grounded theory or content analysis because it allows the researcher to bring the normative categories of legal doctrine into dialogue with the experiential categories produced by the fieldwork, generating an analysis that is simultaneously sensitive to legal structure and social meaning.¹⁵ Themes were developed through iterative coding of interview transcripts and field notes, followed by a process of refinement and peer review. Validity was strengthened through methodological triangulation across all four data sources: where observations, interview accounts, FGD outputs, and documentary sources converged on a common finding, that finding was treated as analytically robust; divergences were noted and investigated rather than suppressed.¹⁶

It is important to acknowledge the methodological limits of this study. The selection of a single institution restricts the generalizability of the findings to other campus contexts with different organizational cultures, demographic compositions, or institutional development levels. Moreover, the two-day data collection window imposes constraints on longitudinal insight into how bullying patterns and reporting behaviors evolve over time. The study therefore does not claim to produce a statistically representative account of bullying in Indonesian higher education; it claims, instead, to generate a theoretically grounded, empirically situated analysis of the legal and institutional conditions that enable or obstruct victim recourse in one particular setting a form of knowledge that carries its own transferable analytical force, as Creswell and Creswell argue, through the generalizability of propositions to analogous institutional contexts.¹⁷

3. The Legal Framework for Bullying and Body Shaming in Indonesian Higher Education: Between Normative Ambition and Enforcement Reality

The central premise of any analysis of bullying and body shaming in Indonesian higher education must begin with an uncomfortable acknowledgment: the problem is not the silence of the law, but the inadequacy of law that speaks imprecisely. The Indonesian legal system provides

¹³ Margaret Hodgins and Patricia Mannix-McNamara, "Workplace Bullying and Harassment in Higher Education Institutions: A Scoping Review," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 21, no. 9 (2024): 1173, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21091173>.

¹⁴ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "One Size Fits All? What Counts as Quality Practice in (Reflexive) Thematic Analysis?" *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 18, no. 3 (2021): 328–352, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>.

¹⁵ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 259–260.

¹⁶ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "One Size Fits All? What Counts as Quality Practice in (Reflexive) Thematic Analysis?" *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 18, no. 3 (2021): 328–352, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>.

¹⁷ Oksiana Jatningsih et al., "Institutional Accountability Through Campus Policies Against Gender-Based Violence: A Case Study of Universitas Negeri Surabaya," *Lex Localis – Journal of Local Self-Government* 23, no. 10 (2025): 1297, [https://doi.org/10.4335/23.10.1293-1306\(2025\)](https://doi.org/10.4335/23.10.1293-1306(2025)).

multiple normative entry points through which acts of bullying and body shaming may be prosecuted, yet the persistence indeed the escalation of these acts in campus settings strongly suggests that statutory provisions alone are insufficient to generate meaningful deterrence or victim protection. The gap between formal legal prescription and operational enforcement is, as this section demonstrates, structural rather than incidental, and closing it requires more than the restatement of existing provisions.

Under the Criminal Code (*Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana/KUHP*), bullying that takes physical form may engage Article 351 on maltreatment (*penganiayaan*), while its verbal and psychological dimensions fall within the ambit of Article 310 (defamation/*pencemaran nama baik*), Article 311 (qualified defamation), and Article 315 (minor insult/*penghinaan ringan*). Erdianti's analysis of body shaming as a criminal act under Indonesian law demonstrates that while body shaming the targeted denigration of a person's physical appearance satisfies both the objective and subjective elements of Article 315, the provision was not drafted with this conduct in mind, and its maximum penalty of imprisonment not exceeding four months and two weeks generates minimal deterrent effect against acts capable of producing sustained psychological injury.

Erdianti's normative analysis establishes the governing legal architecture with precision, but its analytical significance lies in what it reveals about the limits of analogical application: using Article 315 KUHP as the default provision for body shaming requires prosecutorial creativity that enforcement agencies, in practice, rarely exercise voluntarily. The provision's colonial-era drafting presupposes verbal insult in interpersonal settings and was never designed to capture the cumulative, appearance-targeted, often digitally mediated character of body shaming in the contemporary campus environment a mismatch that explains why 1,203 reported body shaming cases in 2023 resulted in vanishingly few successful prosecutions.¹⁸ This is not merely a matter of sentencing proportionality; it reflects a deeper legislative indifference to the severity of appearance-based humiliation as a distinct category of harm an indifference that shapes how police, prosecutors, and campus administrators respond when such cases are brought to their attention.

The result, as confirmed in empirical studies, is that enforcement officials frequently decline to proceed on the basis that the conduct in question does not rise to the level of legally cognizable harm, even when it clearly satisfies the textual elements of the relevant provision. This study employing a normative-empirical approach confirms that despite the formal applicability of KUHP provisions to bullying conduct, institutional barriers including inadequate reporting mechanisms, fear of stigma, and the absence of victim-centered campus policies remain the primary obstacles to enforcement. The study's finding that many universities lack specific internal regulations or effective reporting mechanisms is directly applicable to UNUJA's pre-intervention context and underscores the structural rather than incidental character of enforcement failure.¹⁹

The introduction of Law No. 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law), most recently amended by Law No. 1 of 2024, extended the reach of criminal law into the digital domain through Article 27A, which prohibits the dissemination of electronic content containing insults or defamation. For bullying and body shaming conducted through social media platforms

¹⁸ Rokhmad Nur Erdianti, "Body Shaming Act as a Crime in Indonesian Criminal Law," *Justitia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum dan Humaniora* 9, no. 1 (2022): 37-43, <https://doi.org/10.31604/justitia.v9i1.37-43>.

¹⁹ Efektivitas Kebijakan Hukum dalam Penanganan Kasus Bullying di Lingkungan Perguruan Tinggi, *Jurnal Disiplin* (2025): 3-5.

now the predominant mode of peer-directed humiliation among university-age populations in Indonesia this provision offers a formally applicable legal basis for prosecution.

Puluhulawa and Husain, however, document a structural paradox embedded in the ITE Law's application: its definitional elasticity, far from facilitating victim recourse, has historically been exploited to file defamation claims *against* victims who publicly disclose their experiences of body shaming, reproducing the impunity of perpetrators while simultaneously punishing those who speak out. The "rubber article" (*pasal karet*) problem diagnosed by Puluhulawa and Husain in which Article 27 paragraph (3) of the pre-2024 ITE Law was weaponized against victims and whistleblowers has not been fully resolved by the 2024 amendment. While Article 27A's revised formulation attempts to draw a distinction between criminal defamation and the communication of factual grievances, the practical implementation of this distinction depends on prosecutorial judgment and judicial interpretation that remain unpredictable and frequently unfavorable to victims in campus settings.²⁰

The 2024 amendment's introduction of Article 27A represents a legislative attempt to distinguish legitimate complaint from criminal defamation, but the boundary remains contested in judicial application and practically inaccessible to victims who lack both legal knowledge and institutional support. The deeper structural problem, as Puluhulawa and Husain diagnose through Friedman's legal system framework, lies not only in the substance of the provision but in the *legal culture* that surrounds it: the widespread internalization of shame by victims, combined with chronic distrust of enforcement agencies, systematically suppresses the willingness to invoke legal mechanisms even when those mechanisms are formally available.²¹

The institutional dimension of this enforcement failure became legally cognizable if not yet operationally resolved with the promulgation of Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024 (*Permen-dikbudristek No. 55/2024*) on the Prevention and Handling of Violence in Higher Education, which entered into force in October 2024.²² This regulation represents a qualitative shift in the regulatory architecture governing campus violence: where its predecessor, Ministerial Regulation No. 30 of 2021, confined its protective scope to sexual violence, Regulation No. 55/2024 enumerates six categories of violence subject to institutional intervention physical, psychological, bullying, sexual, discriminatory and intolerant practices, and harmful institutional policies and mandates every higher education institution to establish a task force (*Satuan Tugas/Satgas*) composed with minimum gender-representative requirements (at least two-thirds women) for the prevention and handling of these acts. For the first time, bullying in its non-sexual forms including body shaming, psychological torment, and discriminatory exclusion is explicitly captured within a ministerial framework carrying binding administrative consequences for non-compliant institutions. A study of campus violence policy implementation at Universitas Negeri Surabaya confirms, however, that even well-designed regulatory frameworks produce limited practical outcomes when institutional reporting infrastructure is absent or distrusted: despite nearly universal definitional awareness among students, only 1.1 percent possessed adequate procedural knowledge of how to invoke

²⁰ Mohamad Rusdiyanto Ulaan Puluhulawa and Riski Husain, "Body Shaming Through Social Media as a Digital Crime in the Era of Disruption," *Jambura Law Review* 3, no. 1 (2021): 1-19, <https://doi.org/10.33756/jlr.v3i1.7200>.

²¹ Puluhulawa and Husain, "Body Shaming Through Social Media," 15-16.

²² Republic of Indonesia, Ministerial Regulation of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No. 55 of 2024 on the Prevention and Handling of Violence in Higher Education, Article 1 and Chapter III (enacted October 14, 2024), <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/305767/permendikbudristek-no-55-tahun-2024>.

protection mechanisms, indicating that Regulation No. 55/2024's entry into force does not automatically translate into accessible protection.²³

Research on the effectiveness of legal policies for addressing bullying in Indonesian higher education reveals a convergent set of structural obstacles that operate independently of statutory content: low human rights awareness among campus communities, inadequate and untrusted reporting systems, the persistence of seniority culture (*senioritas*) that normalizes hierarchical harassment, peer pressure that discourages victim disclosure, and the social labeling of those who report as troublemakers or complainants.²⁴ These findings are consistent with the broader international literature on workplace bullying and harassment in higher education institutions, which identifies institutional culture particularly the neoliberal management pressures, academic precarity, and weak horizontal accountability characteristic of contemporary universities as the primary structural condition enabling bullying to persist regardless of formal prohibitions.²⁵ Hodgins and McNamara's identification of institutional culture specifically the combination of hierarchical power structures, precarious academic employment, and weak peer accountability as the primary structural condition enabling bullying persistence in higher education institutions has direct application to Indonesian campuses, where the *senioritas* system institutionalizes precisely the power asymmetries and peer group loyalties that international scholarship identifies as the core enabling conditions for sustained bullying conduct.

Taken together, these convergent findings compel a conclusion of significant policy implications: the normative infrastructure for addressing bullying and body shaming in Indonesian higher education has, with the enactment of Regulation No. 55/2024, reached a level of formal adequacy that was previously absent. What the system now lacks is not additional law, but a reliable, accessible, and institutionally independent mechanism through which victims can invoke the law that exists. This observation is the direct analytical premise of the following discussion of electronic complaint systems as a legally grounded instrument of institutional response.

4. The E-Complaint System as a Legal Instrument: Accessibility, Evidentiary Validity, and Data Protection

If the first discussion established that Indonesia's legal framework for bullying and body shaming suffers primarily from an enforcement deficit rather than a normative vacuum, the present section turns to the central proposition of this study: that an electronic complaint system constitutes not merely a technological convenience, but a legally consequential instrument capable of directly addressing the structural conditions that suppress victim recourse. This argument proceeds on three analytically distinct but practically interrelated levels the accessibility of reporting, the evidentiary value of digitally submitted complaints, and the personal data protection obligations that any such system must fulfill. Each level generates both legal support for the e-complaint

²³ Oksiana Jatningsih et al., "Institutional Accountability Through Campus Policies Against Gender-Based Violence: A Case Study of Universitas Negeri Surabaya," *Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government* 23, no. 10 (2025): 1295-1296, [https://doi.org/10.4335/23.10.1293-1306\(2025\)](https://doi.org/10.4335/23.10.1293-1306(2025)).

²⁴ Efektivitas Kebijakan Hukum dalam Penanganan Kasus Bullying, 7-9.

²⁵ Margaret Hodgins and Patricia Mannix-McNamara, "Workplace Bullying and Harassment in Higher Education Institutions: A Scoping Review," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 21, no. 9 (2024): 1173, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21091173>.

model and a set of legal constraints that must be integrated into its design if it is to serve victims rather than expose them to further harm.

The most immediate legal argument in favor of an e-complaint system is its capacity to reduce the friction that prevents victims from invoking the protections already available to them under existing law. Aprilina et al. document that the deployment of e-government complaint infrastructure in Indonesia grounded in Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services, which mandates every public service provider to maintain a dedicated complaint management unit has measurably enhanced the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of public complaint resolution, principally by eliminating the physical, social, and temporal barriers that discourage face-to-face reporting.²⁶ Their analysis is directly transposable to the campus violence reporting context, with one critical qualification: public service complaints concern administrative performance failures, while campus violence complaints involve personal safety, social power dynamics, and the risk of retaliation factors that impose additional design requirements on any digital reporting system beyond those sufficient for ordinary administrative complaints.

Translated to the campus context, this finding carries direct policy relevance: the dominant obstacles to bullying and body shaming reporting identified in the empirical data fear of social labeling, hierarchical intimidation, and the absence of anonymity are precisely the barriers that a well-designed digital reporting channel is architecturally positioned to reduce.

The e-complaint system developed and tested at UNUJA embodies this logic by enabling anonymous submission, providing real-time tracking of complaint status, and decoupling the reporting process from the social dynamics of face-to-face disclosure. Critically, the anonymity feature does not merely improve user experience; it has direct legal significance under Article 19 of Ministerial Regulation No. 55/2024, which imposes on universities an affirmative obligation to provide reporting mechanisms that guarantee confidentiality and protect reporters from retaliation an obligation that digitally anonymized systems satisfy far more reliably than their paper-based or in-person counterparts.²⁷ The e-complaint system's anonymity architecture must therefore be understood not as a user-experience feature but as a legal compliance requirement under existing ministerial regulation.

The second legal dimension of the e-complaint system concerns the evidentiary status of the data it generates. A complaint submitted through a digital platform containing a description of the incident, its time and location, the identity of the alleged perpetrator (where provided), and attached digital evidence such as screenshots, photographs, or video recordings constitutes electronic information and an electronic document within the meaning of Article 5 paragraph (1) of the ITE Law (Law No. 1 of 2024), which affirms that "electronic information and/or electronic documents and/or their printed outputs constitute valid legal evidence." This provision has been authoritatively interpreted by the Constitutional Court in Decision No. 20/PUU-XIV/2016, which confirmed that electronic information and documents constitute admissible evidence provided

²⁶ Vita Aprilina, Timbul Dompok, Lubna Salsabila, and Karol Teovani Lodan, "The Role of Digitalization in Enhancing Public Service Efficiency: Challenges and Opportunities in Managing Public Complaints Through E-Government in Indonesia," *International Journal of Social Work* 2, no. 1 (2025): 62–63.

²⁷ Republic of Indonesia, Ministerial Regulation No. 55 of 2024 on the Prevention and Handling of Violence in Higher Education, Article 19 paragraph (1) and (2) (enacted October 14, 2024), <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/305767/permendikbudriset-no-55-tahun-2024>.

they are obtained lawfully and are relevant to the matter at issue.²⁸ The Constitutional Court's interpretation in Decision 20/PUU-XIV/2016 confirming electronic documents as valid evidence provided they are lawfully obtained and relevant establishes the foundational evidentiary framework within which e-complaint systems operate. The practical implication for system design is that complaint data must be collected and stored in a manner that satisfies the "lawfully obtained" requirement: with the reporter's informed consent, through a technically secure system that prevents unauthorized access or modification, and with audit trails sufficient to demonstrate data integrity before a court.

For the e-complaint system at UNUJA, this means that a complaint submitted through the platform if technically authenticated and stored with integrity is not merely an administrative record but a legally cognizable document that may be introduced as evidence in criminal proceedings under KUHAP, whether the matter is pursued under Article 315 KUHP, Article 27A of the ITE Law, or any other applicable provision. The system's design features mandatory evidence attachment (PDF upload or Google Drive link), timestamped incident records, and categorized complaint classification directly serve the formal validity requirements for electronic evidence under Article 6 of the ITE Law, which requires that electronic information be accessible, displayable, complete in its integrity, and legally accountable.²⁹ This alignment between system design and evidentiary requirements is not coincidental; it reflects the observation, established in comparative legal analysis, that effective digital reporting systems must be designed with evidentiary chain-of-custody in mind from the outset, rather than retrofitted to satisfy procedural requirements after deployment.³⁰

This normative-empirical study confirms that Indonesian courts apply both formal requirements (authenticity and integrity, established through digital forensic authentication) and material requirements (relevance and reliability) when assessing electronic evidence admissibility. The study's finding that courts show inconsistent implementation of these standards with some accepting electronic evidence without forensic authentication highlights the importance of embedding technical authentication mechanisms into e-complaint systems at the design stage, rather than relying on judicial discretion to supply the evidentiary foundation after the fact. This comparative study of the ITE Law's 2024 amendments and the UU PDP establishes that the regulatory relationship between these two instruments creates a "regulatory dualism" in Indonesian data governance a potential source of interpretive conflict for institutions that process personal data in both the transactional (ITE Law) and the personal privacy (UU PDP) dimensions. Campus e-complaint systems, which collect data that is simultaneously electronic transaction data and sensitive personal data, sit squarely within this regulatory overlap and must ensure compliance with both instruments rather than treating them as alternatives.

The third and most legally complex dimension of the e-complaint system concerns its obligations under Law No. 27 of 2022 on Personal Data Protection (*Undang-Undang Perlindungan Data Pribadi*/UU PDP), which entered into full effect in 2024. The e-complaint system at UNUJA collects multiple categories of personal data: the reporter's WhatsApp number (mandatory), the identity

²⁸ Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia, Decision No. 20/PUU-XIV/2016 (2016), together with Article 5 paragraphs (1) and (2) of Law No. 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions as amended by Law No. 1 of 2024.

²⁹ Analysis of the Validity of Electronic Evidence in Criminal Trial in Indonesia, *Indonesian Journal of Law and Economics Review* (2025): 4–6, <https://doi.org/10.21070/ijler.v21i0.1395>.

³⁰ Studi Komparatif Perlindungan Data Pribadi dalam UU ITE 2024 dan UU PDP 2022, *Jurnal Riset Hukum* (2025): 7–8.

of the alleged perpetrator (where disclosed), incident location and time, and any attached digital evidence that may contain images or other personally identifying information. Under the UU PDP, the system operator in this case, UNUJA's institutional management functions as a *pengendali data* (data controller) subject to obligations of transparency, data security, purpose limitation, and breach notification.³¹ Of particular legal sensitivity is the WhatsApp number field: while its stated purpose is to enable administrative follow-up, its mandatory character creates a tension with the anonymity protection required by Regulation No. 55/2024, since a phone number may be sufficient to identify a complainant even in the absence of their name.

A legally compliant redesign of the system should render this field optional rather than mandatory, and should separately encrypt reporter contact details from complaint substance, ensuring that only designated personnel with specific authorization can cross-reference them. The UU PDP's requirements in this regard are not merely procedural they are substantive conditions for the system's legitimacy, since a data breach that exposes a complainant's identity to the alleged perpetrator would constitute not only a legal violation but a direct materialization of the retaliation risk that the system was designed to prevent.³² Comparative analysis with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) reveals that Indonesia's UU PDP, while structurally similar in its rights-and-obligations framework, lacks the GDPR's explicit provisions on *data protection by design and by default* a principle that requires privacy-protective features to be embedded in system architecture from inception rather than added as post-hoc compliance measures. The campus e-complaint system at UNUJA would benefit from adopting this principle voluntarily, as its application through end-to-end encryption of reporter contact data, automatic data minimization, and access control segregation would substantially reduce the legal and practical risk of identity disclosure.

Taken together, the empirical findings from UNUJA and the legal analysis across these three dimensions support a coherent institutional model of campus complaint management that integrates the substantive protections of the KUHP, the ITE Law, and Regulation No. 55/2024 with a digitally accessible, evidentiary valid, and data-protective reporting architecture. The system's observed effectiveness in enabling anonymous reporting, generating traceable complaint records, and providing real-time transparency to both complainants and administrators demonstrates that technology, when legally grounded and institutionally embedded, can function as a genuine force multiplier for victim protection rather than a superficial interface.

What remains is the broader challenge of institutional culture: as the data from UNUJA confirm, even a technically sound and legally compliant system will underperform if it is not accompanied by sustained institutional commitment to enforcing Regulation No. 55/2024's anti-retaliation provisions and to rebuilding the trust deficit that currently prevents the majority of victims from reporting at all.³³ Jatningsih et al.'s case study finding that even universities with formally compliant campus violence policies exhibit low actual reporting rates when institutional trust is absent constitutes the empirical foundation for the argument that technological and normative so-

³¹ Implementation and Challenges of the Personal Data Protection Law No. 27 of 2022 in Indonesia, *Indonesian Journal of Social Technology* 5, no. 12 (2024): 6015–6018.

³² Comparative Analysis of Indonesia's Personal Data Protection Law and International Frameworks, *ILCA Law Review* (2024): 5–7, <https://doi.org/10.21070/ijler.v21i0.21>.

³³ Oksiana Jatningsih et al., "Institutional Accountability Through Campus Policies Against Gender-Based Violence: A Case Study of Universitas Negeri Surabaya," *Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government* 23, no. 10 (2025): 1303–1304, [https://doi.org/10.4335/23.10.1293-1306\(2025\)](https://doi.org/10.4335/23.10.1293-1306(2025)).

lutions must be accompanied by active institutional trust-building. The anti-retaliation provisions of Regulation No. 55/2024, combined with the e-complaint system's anonymity features, provide the legal and technical infrastructure for trust; but the conversion of that infrastructure into actual reporting behavior requires consistent visible enforcement and a campus culture that treats reports as expressions of civic responsibility rather than sources of institutional embarrassment.

5. Overcoming the Trust Deficit: The E-Complaint System as a Catalyst for Institutional Culture Change

The preceding two sections have established a diagnostic framework: Indonesia possesses a legal architecture for addressing bullying and body shaming in higher education that is, as of 2024, formally adequate but operationally impotent. The KUHP provisions are structurally misaligned with the nature of the harm; the ITE Law carries a history of weaponization against victims; Ministerial Regulation No. 55/2024 has expanded the normative frontier without yet transforming enforcement practice; and the structural conditions of institutional culture hierarchical normalization of harassment, peer pressure against disclosure, and deep distrust of formal reporting mechanisms operate as force multipliers for all these legal deficiencies simultaneously. The question this section addresses is not whether an e-complaint system is technically functional the UNUJA prototype demonstrates that it is but whether, and under what institutional conditions, it can function as a genuine catalyst for the cultural transformation without which legal reform remains inert.

The foundational challenge is what the international literature terms the "trust deficit" the gap between a victim's recognition that an act is harmful and legally actionable, and their willingness to initiate formal institutional recourse. Wieberneit et al.'s systematic review of barriers to reporting campus violence across fifteen empirical studies identifies three dominant and overlapping clusters: *fear of consequences* (including social ostracism, perpetrator retaliation, and institutional inaction), *self-blame and shame*, and *minimization of the experience*.³⁴ Strikingly, these barriers are not unique to sexual violence they map precisely onto the conditions documented at UNUJA, where victims of body shaming and psychological bullying consistently described fear of being labeled as "oversensitive," concerns about social exclusion from peer groups, and doubt that institutional administrators would treat their complaints seriously. This finding has a direct design implication: a reporting system that reduces the *visibility* of reporting through anonymity, asynchronous submission, and the absence of face-to-face confrontation addresses the first and second clusters directly, because it removes the social cost of disclosure from the immediate interaction. The UNUJA e-complaint system's architecture anonymous submission, WhatsApp-only contact (with no name required), and Telegram bot-mediated notification operationalizes precisely this logic, though its current mandatory WhatsApp field, as noted in the preceding section, partially undercuts the anonymity it otherwise provides.

A scoping review by Tan et al. examining technological tools designed to support victims of online harassment, published in *Aggression and Violent Behavior* (2024), finds that across five evaluated digital reporting and support tools, users consistently valued three components above all oth-

³⁴ Marcella Wieberneit, Annicka Maria Seemann, and Rachel M. MacQueen, "Silenced Survivors: A Systematic Review of the Barriers to Reporting, Investigating, and Adjudicating Cases of Sexual Assault and Rape," *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse* 26, no. 1 (2024): 1-18, <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380241261404>.

ers: *emotional support*, *informational support*, and *labelling* that is, the system's capacity to name and validate what has happened to them as a legally cognizable harm rather than a matter of personal sensitivity.³⁵ Tan et al.'s finding that users were consistently *dissatisfied* with the evidence collection component of existing tools is directly applicable to the UNUJA system's design: the current requirement that reporters upload a PDF or Google Drive link as mandatory evidence imposes a technical and psychological burden at precisely the moment when the victim is most vulnerable, creating a barrier that mirrors in digital form the evidentiary burden that deters victims from approaching law enforcement in person. A legally informed redesign should render evidence submission *optional* in the first instance, with the system prompting users to add supporting documentation at a later stage once an initial complaint has been received and administratively processed a sequencing approach that lowers the entry barrier to formal reporting without sacrificing the evidentiary quality of submitted complaints.

The concern with evidence quality, however, cannot be entirely subordinated to accessibility. Sheikh et al.'s systematic review of technology-facilitated violence in low- and middle-income countries, published in *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse* (2023), documents that in similar socio-legal contexts, the most commonly cited reason for non-prosecution of digitally evidenced complaints is not the absence of evidence but the difficulty of proving the *authenticity* of submitted digital material against claims of fabrication by alleged perpetrators.³⁶

This finding converges with the analysis in the preceding section regarding Article 6 of the ITE Law's integrity requirement, and compels a specific technical recommendation: the UNUJA system should implement automated timestamping and hash verification for all submitted materials at the moment of upload, creating a cryptographic record of data integrity that satisfies the admissibility requirements of the ITE Law without requiring the reporter to understand or manage those requirements themselves. The legal complexity is absorbed into the system's backend; the user experiences only a simple submission interface. This is the model of what might be termed *embedded legal compliance* system architecture that builds statutory requirements into technical processes, making legal validity the default outcome of standard system use rather than an additional burden on the victim.

The institutional dimension of the e-complaint system's impact extends beyond individual case management to the broader question of institutional accountability under Ministerial Regulation No. 55/2024. Integrating multi-stakeholder governance analysis from Rante et al.'s study of complaint management systems in Indonesian public infrastructure programs published in the *Indonesian Journal of Science and Technology* (2025) reveals that the most consequential determinant of a digital complaint system's effectiveness is not its technical architecture but its *institutional embedding*: whether complaints generate traceable administrative responses, whether response timelines are publicly disclosed, and whether systemic patterns in complaint data are used to inform

³⁵ Yannis Tan, Laura Vandenbosch, and Heidi Vandebosch, "A Scoping Review of Technological Tools for Supporting Victims of Online Sexual Harassment," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 78 (2024): 101953, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2024.101953>.

³⁶ M. Murtaza Raza Sheikh, Neha Singh, Rabia Arshad, and Ruchi Sinha, "Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence and Abuse in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review," *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse* 25, no. 2 (2023): 1189-1207, <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380231189191>.

³⁷ Yudi Rante, Agustinus Numberi, Musa Yusuf Owoyemi, and Yerlan Kozhamzarov, "Integrating Multi-Stakeholder Governance, Engineering Approaches, and Accountability Complaint Management Systems in Indonesian Public Infrastructure," *Indonesian Journal of Science and Technology* 10, no. 2 (2025): 415-438, <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijost.v10i2>.

institutional policy rather than merely to close individual cases.³⁷ Applied to UNUJA's e-complaint system, this governance analysis suggests that the system's current design which tracks individual complaint status in real time provides the technical foundation for institutional accountability, but that foundation is only activated when UNUJA's Satgas unit (mandated by Regulation No. 55/2024) uses aggregated complaint data to identify hotspot locations, recurring perpetrator patterns, and systemic institutional conditions that produce complaint clusters. The system thereby transforms from a passive reporting channel into an active instrument of institutional governance generating, as Regulation No. 55/2024 Article 19 requires, not only individual case resolution but the institutional learning necessary to prevent recurrence.

The most ambitious claim this study can make on the basis of its empirical and legal findings is therefore this: the e-complaint system, when legally grounded, institutionally embedded, and architecturally designed with victim protection as a non-negotiable constraint, functions not merely as a technological supplement to existing legal mechanisms but as a structural intervention in the legal culture conditions victim silence, institutional passivity, perpetrator impunity that have historically neutralized those mechanisms. Puluhulawa and Husain identified weak legal culture as the most intractable element of Indonesia's failure to address body shaming effectively;³⁸ Hodgins and McNamara identified institutional culture as the primary structural condition enabling bullying persistence in higher education globally.³⁹ The e-complaint system cannot, by itself, transform culture but it can alter the cost-benefit calculation that victim silence currently reflects, by making reporting safer, faster, more anonymous, and more institutionally consequential than it has ever been. Whether UNUJA and institutions like it invest in that potential is, ultimately, a question not of technical capacity but of institutional will and that is a question that Ministerial Regulation No. 55/2024, for the first time, allows the law to answer.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to examine two interrelated questions: how the existing legal framework addresses bullying and body shaming in the Indonesian university environment, and how an electronic complaint system can function as a legally grounded instrument for institutional response. The findings converge on a single, unavoidable conclusion Indonesia does not suffer from a shortage of law, but from a chronic failure to make law accessible to those who need it most. The KUHP, the ITE Law, and Ministerial Regulation No. 55/2024 together constitute a normative framework of formal adequacy. Yet formal adequacy has never, in itself, protected a single victim. What protects victims is law that reaches them law mediated through institutions they trust, through mechanisms they can navigate, and through processes that do not punish them for speaking. For too long, the campus environment has supplied none of these conditions. Hierarchical culture, peer pressure, institutional reputational interest, and the absence of safe reporting channels have conspired to maintain a silence that the law, however well-drafted, cannot penetrate on its own. The e-complaint system developed and tested at UNUJA represents a genuine, if still imperfect, attempt to close this gap. By enabling anonymous reporting, generating evidentiary records, and produc-

³⁸ Puluhulawa and Husain, "Body Shaming Through Social Media," 15-16.

³⁹ Margaret Hodgins and Patricia Mannix-McNamara, "Workplace Bullying and Harassment in Higher Education Institutions: A Scoping Review," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 21, no. 9 (2024): 1173, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21091173>.

ing institutionally traceable complaint data, it transforms the act of reporting from a socially costly, institutionally uncertain risk into a structured, legally consequential, and personally safer choice. This transformation is not cosmetic it is structural. It alters the conditions under which legal protection is accessed, and in doing so, it extends the practical reach of law to populations that statutory provisions alone have historically failed to reach. Three directions for future development follow directly from this analysis. First, the system's data protection architecture must be redesigned to fully comply with the UU PDP's anonymity requirements. Second, UNUJA's Satgas must use aggregated complaint data not merely to close individual cases but to drive systemic institutional reform. Third, replication of this model across Indonesian higher education institutions requires a standardized legal and technical framework developed in coordination with the Ministry of Education a task that Ministerial Regulation No. 55/2024 has created the mandate, but not yet the mechanism, to accomplish.

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