



Legal Awareness Level of Electronic Information and Transaction Law Viewed from Understanding and Legal Attitude Aspects Among Students at SMA Negeri 1 Gianyar

I Wayan Gede Griyawana^{1*}, Ni Nyoman Asri Sidaryanti², I Made Yudana³, I Putu Nova Diputra⁴, Desak Made Putri Pradnyan Dewi⁵, Desak Nyoman Indah Pradnya Dewi⁶, Putu Linda Ardianti⁷, I Gusti Bagus Satria Pratama Putra⁸

^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8} Jurusan Hukum dan Kewarganegaraan, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Singaraja, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: griyawana@student.undiksha.ac.id

Abstract

The digitalization era has transformed social interactions through social media, particularly among Indonesian youth with 204.7 million internet users. Implementation of the Electronic Information and Transaction Law (UU ITE) faces complex challenges among students as digital natives who exhibit a paradox between high technological capabilities and limited digital legal awareness. This study aims to analyze understanding levels and legal attitudes of students at SMA Negeri 1 Gianyar towards UU ITE and identify factors influencing the "digital legal awareness paradox". A descriptive quantitative method was employed involving 330 students through multiple-choice tests (25 items) to measure understanding and Likert scale questionnaires (25 items) to measure legal attitudes. Analysis focused on four indicators of legal understanding and three indicators of legal attitudes. Results show good understanding levels with an average of 80.36 but high variability (range 52-96), while student attitudes remain neutral at 3.5. Findings reveal a "digital legal awareness paradox" where students understand UU ITE's importance but worry about potential misuse, influenced by developmental psychology characteristics, digital native generation traits, and Social Learning Theory. This research provides important contributions for developing more effective digital legal education strategies.

Keywords: Legal Awareness, Electronic Information and Transaction Law, Students, Legal Understanding, Legal Attitudes, Digital Native Generation, Social Media, Digital Legal Awareness Paradox.

1. INTRODUCTION

The digitalization era has fundamentally transformed the way society interacts, communicates, and accesses information, particularly through social media platforms that have now become an integral part of daily life. According to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), the number of internet users in Indonesia will reach 221,563,479 people in 2024, from Indonesia's total population of 278,696,200 people in 2023 (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2024). Based on the results of the 2024 Indonesian Internet Penetration Survey published by APJII, the internet penetration rate - Net Indonesia increased by 79.5% (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2024). Compared to the previous season, the increase was 1.4% (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2024). This digital transformation brings positive impacts in the form of easy access to information and communication, but on the other hand creates new challenges in the form of spreading false information (hoaxes), hate speech, cyberbullying, and various other forms of digital crime. This phenomenon demands adequate legal awareness among society, especially the younger generation who are digital natives, to understand the legal implications of their digital activities.

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Generation Z or digital natives have unique characteristics as the first generation to grow up with internet technology and social media (Sujana, Sukadi & Sari, 2021). They tend to be expressive in voicing experiences, inclusive without distinguishing between online and offline friends, and believe in the importance of dialogue and acceptance of differences of opinion. However, their ability to use technology intuitively is not always balanced with adequate understanding of the risks and legal consequences of digital behavior. Recent research shows that although Generation Z can absorb digital skills quickly, they still need guidance to achieve proper digital culture, digital ethics, and digital security (Rahayuningsih, & Hanif, 2024). This condition creates a paradox where the most technologically literate generation is precisely vulnerable to various digital risks due to lack of legal awareness (Rahayuningsih, & Hanif, 2024).

Contemporary issues surrounding the implementation of the Electronic Information and Transaction Law (UU ITE) in Indonesia show the complexity of problems faced, particularly in the context of freedom of expression versus legal protection in digital space. Although UU ITE has undergone revision in 2016 and a second amendment in 2024 by changing general offenses to complaint offenses and reducing the threat of punishment from five years to two years, controversies surrounding its implementation continue. Research on user behavior and hoax information on Indonesian social media shows that social media algorithms that prioritize engaging content often reinforce the spread of misleading information (Effendi, 2023). This phenomenon directly impacts students as active social media users, where lack of understanding about UU ITE can cause them to unintentionally violate the law through their digital activities, such as spreading unverified information or cyberbullying without realizing the legal consequences.

Previous research shows a significant gap between the level of digital technology use and digital legal understanding among Indonesian teenagers. Research on cyberbullying in Indonesia identified an increase in cyber oppression cases involving celebrities and ordinary people, with some cases ending in suicide [9]. Meanwhile, research on student perceptions of hoax information shows that Generation Z has serious misinformation problems, where their ability to distinguish between true and hoax information is still low (Mandasari, Wijayat & Usman, 2024). Another study using the Social Learning Theory framework explains that adolescent learning about digital norms is more influenced by peer groups than formal authorities, creating a gap between technical understanding of technology and digital legal awareness (Rahayuningsih, & Hanif, 2024). However, research that specifically examines the level of legal awareness among high school students regarding UU ITE by integrating aspects of understanding and legal attitudes in the context of Indonesian digital native generation is still limited, so research is needed that can fill this gap.

Based on the identification of these problems, this research aims to analyze the level of understanding and legal attitudes of students at SMA Negeri 1 Gianyar towards UU ITE, focusing on identifying factors that influence the "digital legal awareness paradox" where students have good understanding but neutral attitudes towards UU ITE. This research is expected to make significant contributions to the development of digital legal science by providing empirical data on the dynamics of digital legal awareness among Indonesian teenagers, as well as providing practical insights for developing more effective digital legal education strategies. The practical benefits of this research include providing recommendations for developing contextual digital legal education curricula, formulating policies that are more responsive to the characteristics of the digital native generation, and developing UU ITE socialization programs that can bridge the gap between technical understanding and digital legal awareness, thereby creating a generation that is not only digitally literate but also has high legal awareness in participating in Indonesia's digital space.

2. METHOD

This research uses a descriptive quantitative research method conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Gianyar involving 330 students as respondents. Sampling was conducted using random sampling technique. Data collection techniques were conducted through two main approaches, namely test and non-test techniques. The test technique uses a multiple-choice test instrument consisting of 25 question items to measure students' level of understanding of UU ITE, while the non-test technique uses a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) to measure students' attitudes towards UU ITE.

Data analysis in this research focuses on four main indicators of legal understanding which include: (1) Basic Legal Understanding measured through questions numbers 1, 2, and 4; (2) Knowledge of Digital Law measured through questions numbers 3, 5, 6, 11, 13, 18, 21, and 22; (3) Legal Awareness measured through questions numbers 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 20, and 23; and (4) Awareness of Rights Protection measured through questions numbers 12, 15, 17, 19, 24, and 25. Meanwhile, students' legal attitudes are analyzed based on three indicators: Legal Discipline, Legal Awareness, and Awareness of Rights Protection measured through 25 statement items in the questionnaire. Test result data is processed using the mean formula to determine the level of students' conceptual understanding ability towards UU ITE, both overall and on each indicator, using scoring criteria that refer to research that categorizes understanding levels from very low to very high based on specific score ranges (Imran, Maro, Ardiansyah, Salim & Ahmad, 2025).

3. RESULT DAN DISCUSSION

Result

Research results show that the level of understanding among students at SMA Negeri 1 Gianyar towards UU ITE is in the high category with an average score of 80.36, although there is a fairly wide score range between 52 to 96. This significant variability indicates the existence of knowledge disparities that need special attention, where there are still students with very limited understanding of UU ITE. This good level of understanding shows that digital legal awareness among teenagers can vary, but most students have shown adequate awareness in facing digital technology developments.

Discussion

Analysis based on understanding indicators reveals an interesting pattern where students best understand Basic Legal Understanding aspects such as UU ITE objectives, year of enactment, and fundamental definitions. Conversely, they face greater challenges in understanding Knowledge of Digital Law that is technical in nature such as encryption concepts, digital signatures, and cybersecurity. On the Legal Awareness indicator, students experience difficulties in recognizing subtle situations such as disguised cyberbullying and understanding the boundaries of defamation, while Awareness of Rights Protection shows relatively good results although there is still a gap between knowing rights and knowing how to protect those rights.

An equally significant finding is students' attitudes towards UU ITE which shows an average score of 3.5, indicating a neutral attitude that reflects the existence of a "digital legal awareness paradox." This paradox occurs where students understand the importance of UU ITE as a protection instrument, but have concerns about the potential misuse of the regulation to censor freedom of expression. This neutral attitude aligns with research findings that show that freedom of expression in cyberspace is often a major concern among teenagers who are more exposed to social media (Tampubolon & Siregar, 2022).

From a developmental psychology perspective, students' neutral attitudes can be

explained through the unique characteristics of adolescents who are in certain stages of cognitive and moral development. Research states that adolescents aged above 12 years are capable of abstract thinking, self-reflection, imagining adult roles, and being aware of community interests (Marinda, 2020). However, emotionally, they are still in the process of identity formation and highly value freedom of expression, thus creating internal tension between rational understanding of the need for regulation and emotional desire for unlimited freedom.

The characteristics of students as a digital native generation also influence their attitudes towards UU ITE, where they use technology intuitively without needing to understand its technical mechanisms. The boundaries between online and offline worlds are often blurred for this generation, while digital behavioral norms are more influenced by peer groups than formal authorities. The habit of instant gratification and instant feedback creates a clash with the formal and rigid nature of legal regulations that often lag behind technological developments.

The influence of Social Learning Theory is also evident in the formation of student attitudes, where learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling influenced by various factors. Research explains that students may experience conflict in social learning due to inconsistent role models, where they witness public figures who sometimes violate or criticize UU ITE (Firmansyah & Saepuloh, 2022). Media coverage that often emphasizes controversial aspects of UU ITE and peer group experiences that may have experienced negative impacts from UU ITE implementation also shape their perceptions.

Several main factors causing students' neutral attitudes include ambiguity in UU ITE implementation, tension between freedom and security, and generational gap in technology perception. Inconsistency in law enforcement, subjectivity in interpreting UU ITE articles, and perception that this law is sometimes used for political interests create confusion among students. Students understand the classic dilemma between freedom of expression and public safety, where they realize the importance of UU ITE to protect from cybercrime and hoaxes but still want to maintain freedom of expression and creativity.

This research also reveals that understanding of criminal sanctions in UU ITE is relatively better than other aspects, showing that students' understanding of the consequences of legal violations in cyberspace is quite high. Although test results show good understanding, students' attitudes that are more neutral indicate there are still doubts or concerns regarding the application of this law in their daily lives in cyberspace. These findings indicate the need for improved education about UU ITE that not only focuses on knowledge transfer, but also attitude formation through formal education in schools and broader awareness campaigns.

3.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings of this research have significant theoretical implications for the development of digital legal awareness theory, particularly in the context of the digital native generation. The digital legal awareness paradox found provides new contributions to the literature on the relationship between digital literacy and legal awareness, in line with studies that emphasize the importance of integrating digital competencies with digital learning policies to form digital citizenship (Alfarizi & Ngatindriatun, 2024). This shows that traditional legal awareness models developed by Soekanto need to be adapted for digital contexts, where psychological, social, and technological factors have more complex roles in shaping legal attitudes. This research also enriches understanding of Social Learning Theory in the context of digital legal learning, where observation and modeling processes take place through digital platforms with characteristics different from conventional learning.

From a practical standpoint, this research provides important insights for developing digital legal education curricula in Indonesia. The disparities in understanding found indicate

the need for more differential and personal learning approaches, where students with different levels of understanding receive treatment appropriate to their needs, as recommended in a systematic review of digital literacy that emphasizes the importance of mixed-methods research methods in understanding the complexity of digital literacy (Wijayanti, Dwiningrum & Saptono, 2024). Digital legal education curricula need to be designed considering the characteristics of adolescent developmental psychology, integrating cognitive and emotional aspects in learning. The recommended pedagogical approach is Digital Citizenship Education, where students can learn from each other and share experiences in contexts relevant to their digital lives (Febrilio, Wibowo & Budiono, 2024).

3.2 Implementation Challenges and Educational Strategies

The implementation of digital legal education faces various structural and methodological challenges that need to be addressed systematically. The first challenge is the limited competence of teachers in understanding and teaching digital law, where the majority of educators do not yet have adequate backgrounds in information technology and its legal implications, as identified in research on developing digital literacy skills among teachers (Temirkhanova, Abildinova & Karaca, 2024). The second challenge is the dynamics of very rapid technological development, while regulations and educational curricula have relatively slow renewal cycles. The third challenge is resistance from students who consider digital regulations as restrictions on their freedom, so appropriate communication strategies are needed to change this mindset.

Recommended educational strategies include developing hybrid learning models that integrate digital content and face-to-face interaction, using case-based learning with case studies relevant to student experiences, and implementing peer learning that utilizes the characteristics of the digital native generation. Additionally, multi-stakeholder cooperation between schools, families, and digital communities is needed to create a learning ecosystem that is supportive of developing digital legal awareness.

3.3 International Comparison and Benchmarking Context

Comparison with digital legal education practices in other countries provides valuable perspectives for strategy development in Indonesia. In Singapore, the Digital Citizenship Education program has been integrated into the national curriculum with a focus on developing critical thinking skills to address digital information through the "EdTech Masterplan 2030" which emphasizes cyber wellness in the Character and Citizenship Education curriculum [11]. This program includes modules on digital law, cyber ethics, and online safety taught systematically from elementary to secondary school levels with a "Find, Think, Apply, Create" framework to deepen digital literacy. Program evaluation shows significant improvement in digital literacy and legal awareness among students, with an approach that emphasizes practical application and real-world scenarios.

South Korea implements a Digital Ethics Education model that integrates legal, ethical, and technological aspects in one learning framework as part of comprehensive educational reform that began in 2024. This model uses collaborative learning and project-based learning approaches, where students work in groups to analyze digital cases and develop solutions that are ethical and legal. Evaluation results show that students not only have good understanding of digital regulations, but also develop positive attitudes towards the importance of compliance with digital law. This model can be adapted for the Indonesian context with adjustments to cultural characteristics and the national education system.

3.4 Policy Recommendations and Curriculum Development

Based on research findings, it is recommended to develop comprehensive and integrated

digital legal education policies. First, the Ministry of Education and Culture needs to develop digital citizenship competency standards that include legal awareness aspects as part of national digital literacy, referring to frameworks developed at the international level such as the Digital Citizenship Education Curriculum Framework being developed for 2025 implementation (Strasbourg, 2024). These standards must be accompanied by clear implementation guidelines and valid assessment tools to measure competency achievement. Second, systematic and continuous teacher training program development is needed, where educators receive updates on digital legal developments and effective learning methodologies.

The recommended digital legal education curriculum must adopt a spiral curriculum approach, where fundamental concepts are taught repeatedly with increasing levels of complexity according to students' cognitive development. For high school level, the curriculum must include modules on UU ITE and its implementation, cyber ethics and digital citizenship, privacy protection and data security, and critical evaluation of digital information, as recommended in the 2024 perspective on the importance of digital citizenship (Team, L. 2024). Each module must be accompanied by case studies relevant to student experiences, practical exercises that enable concept application in real situations, and assessment tools that measure not only cognitive understanding but also changes in attitudes and behavior.

4. CONCLUSION

This research reveals significant findings regarding the level of legal awareness among students at SMA Negeri 1 Gianyar towards UU ITE, where there is a discrepancy between understanding and legal attitudes that reflects the complexity of digital legal issues in the modern era. Research results show that students have a good level of understanding of UU ITE with an average score of 80.36 which falls into the high category, but with quite significant variability (range 52-96) indicating knowledge disparities among students. Analysis based on understanding indicators shows that students best understand basic legal aspects such as objectives and fundamental definitions of UU ITE, but face challenges in understanding technical aspects of digital law such as encryption and cybersecurity, as well as difficulties in recognizing subtle situations such as disguised cyberbullying and boundaries of defamation.

An equally important finding is students' neutral attitudes towards UU ITE with an average score of 3.5, reflecting the existence of a "digital legal awareness paradox" where students understand the importance of regulation but have concerns about potential misuse. This paradox is influenced by several complex factors, including characteristics of adolescent developmental psychology that are capable of abstract thinking but still in the process of identity formation, characteristics of digital natives who use technology intuitively with behavioral norms more influenced by peer groups, and the influence of Social Learning Theory through inconsistent role models and controversial media representation. Factors such as ambiguity in UU ITE implementation, tension between freedom of expression and digital security, and generational gap in technology perception also contribute to this neutral attitude, showing the need for a holistic approach in digital legal education that not only transfers knowledge but also builds positive attitudes by considering psychological, social, and technological characteristics of the digital native generation to create comprehensive digital legal awareness.

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