

## Cyberbullying in Ruteng City: The Phenomenon and its Impact

Maria Senisum<sup>1</sup>, Ambros Leonangung Edu<sup>2\*</sup>, Adriana Ina T. Talu<sup>3</sup>

Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng, NTT

**Corresponding Author:** Ambros Leonangung Edu

[ambros.leonangung@gmail.com](mailto:ambros.leonangung@gmail.com)

---

### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Cyberbullying,  
Students, Ruteng

*Received :* 10 August

*Revised :* 12 September

*Accepted:* 30 October

©2025 Senisum, Edu, Talu:

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



### ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying, a disturbing phenomenon in the digital age, has become an increasing focus of attention in the field of education. Cyberbullying is an expression of relationships in the virtual world in the form of violence intended to hurt or demean others, by spreading gossip or false information, manipulating accounts without permission, making threats, and other actions aimed at harming or demeaning a person's reputation. This study aims to investigate the prevalence, types, and impacts of cyberbullying among students in the city of Ruteng. The results show that cyberbullying is a serious problem among students in Ruteng. Although most respondents claim not to be involved in cyberbullying, a number of respondents have been victims and experienced academic, emotional, and social impacts. This shows that cyberbullying is still a relevant concern in the student community. An in-depth analysis of these types of behavior highlights the complexity of the phenomenon of cyberbullying and the expansion of forms of violence in the digital realm

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Online communication has become a crucial element in students' lives, with an increasing trend in usage driven by ease of access and, most importantly, the perception of privacy. This privacy allows individuals to express themselves more freely than face-to-face interactions, which often limit non-verbal expression (Chisholm, 2014). Paradoxically, increased privacy in online communication encourages greater openness, facilitating individuals to share things that may be difficult to express in person. However, the ease and anonymity offered by the virtual world, coupled with low digital literacy, has created opportunities for rampant cybercrime, one of which is cyberbullying. This phenomenon has become a widespread concern in the digital age, where perpetrators can act quickly, anonymously, and reach a wide audience without geographical or temporal limitations (Park, et al., 2021).

Cyberbullying is a relatively new form of bullying, carried out through electronic devices and information technology such as e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, website posts, digital messages, or sending images to the victim's mobile device (Park et al., 2021). These actions are deliberate and repeated behaviors that aim to hurt other individuals through the use of computers, cell phones, or other electronic devices. Bullying, in principle, is a form of violence committed by those who feel stronger against individuals who are considered weak. These actions are aggressive and intentional, occurring repeatedly, and characterized by an imbalance of power. To be categorized as bullying, an act must meet four main criteria: repetition, intent, adverse impact, and power imbalance (Patchin & Hinduja, 2015).

According to data from the Cyberbullying Research Center, approximately 50% of teenagers have experienced online abuse. Furthermore, 37% of them admit to using social media to hurt their peers, and 43% to insult others. In aggregate, one in five internet users is involved in cyberbullying. The characteristics of electronic media exacerbate this phenomenon, allowing perpetrators to disguise themselves, spread abusive content quickly, reach a wide audience in a short time, transcend geographical and temporal boundaries, and occur at any time (Alomar & Alabady, 2023). Cyberbullying is also experienced by students both as perpetrators and victims. An online survey conducted by Kraft and Wang (2009) at a liberal arts college revealed a surprising fact: of the 471 students sampled, 10% had experienced cyberbullying, while 9% had been victims of cyberstalking. Interestingly, students under the age of 25 showed higher vulnerability to cyberbullying than their older counterparts (Kristiawan, 2023). An interesting study involving 60 students in Purwokerto (aged 18-23 years) revealed a disturbing phenomenon. The study found that 34% of students had been victims of cyberbullying, while 66% had witnessed such behavior firsthand on social media. The most common form of bullying was verbal abuse such as body shaming, ridicule, insults, and social harassment (online harassment). These results confirm that cyberbullying is a real threat among Purwokerto students, demanding serious attention to create a safer online space. Cyberbullying is a form of harassment carried out through digital media. Expressions of harassment can take the form of text, images, or videos that

corner, insult, or demean a person. In many cases, cyberbullying can even be more cruel than conventional bullying because the anonymity provided by the internet often allows perpetrators to lose track of their identity and be immune to punishment.

In the digital age, bullying has migrated from the physical environment of schools or campuses to the online realm, infiltrating through devices that are always within reach. The increase in student activity in online interactions, social media exploration, sharing of thoughts, and building virtual communities has encouraged intensified research on cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is often more cruel than conventional bullying because the anonymity of the internet allows perpetrators to avoid identification and accountability.

Research on cyberbullying is becoming more intense as students become increasingly active in online interactions, especially when they enjoy exploring social media, sharing their thoughts, and building virtual communities. Recently, research on cyberbullying has intensified as students become more active in interacting with their gadgets. Based on vosviewer's analysis of cyberbullying on campus, several findings have been obtained.

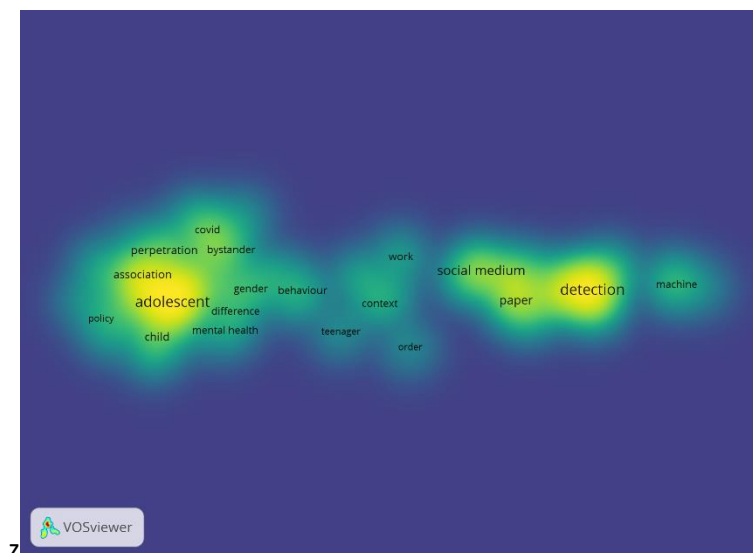


Figure 1. Density Map

First, the density map above visually displays the concentration of main themes in cyberbullying research. We can see two prominent areas of high density. On the left side, there is a dense cluster dominated by terms such as “adolescent,” “mental health,” “perpetration,” “bystander,” and “policy.” This indicates that most of the research focuses on the subject of cyberbullying (adolescents/young people, which may include college students), serious psychological impacts (mental health), the roles of those involved (perpetrators and witnesses), and policy frameworks. The presence of “covid” in this cluster also indicates a research focus on the dynamics of cyberbullying during the pandemic. On the right side, another dense cluster formed around “detection,” “social medium,” and “machine,” highlighting the high level of attention given to the development of computational methods for identifying and analyzing cyberbullying on social media platforms. These two areas of density reflect the

two main pillars of current cyberbullying research: a deep understanding of human aspects and the development of technological solutions.

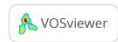
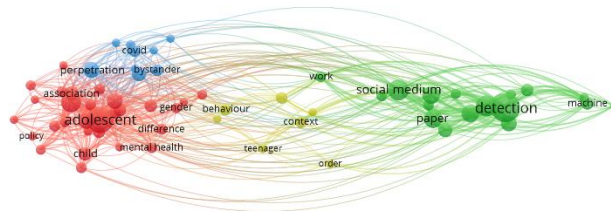


Figure 2. Network Visualisation. Networking Connections in Cyberbullying Research

The network map above shows the relationships and connections between various keywords in the cyberbullying literature. There are clearly two large interconnected clusters. The red cluster on the left highlights psychosocial and sociological aspects, with closely connected nodes such as “adolescent,” “mental health,” “bystander,” “perpetration,” “policy,” “child,” “gender,” and “behavior.” This illustrates how age, gender, behavior, mental health, and individual roles influence each other in the context of cyberbullying. The green cluster on the right, which is connected to the red cluster through several terms such as “work” and “social medium,” focuses on technological and analytical aspects, with nodes such as “detection,” “social medium,” “machine,” and “paper” forming a strong network. The lines connecting these two clusters show that despite specialization, researchers are beginning to bridge the understanding of human impact with automated detection efforts. For example, research on the impact of cyberbullying on “mental health” can be linked to the development of ‘detection’ methods in “social medium.”

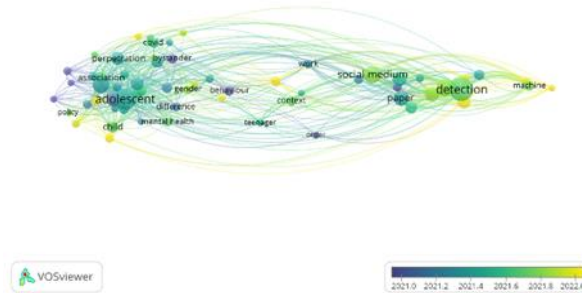


Figure 3. (Overlay Map): The Time Trajectory of Innovation in Cyberbullying Research

The overlay map above adds a time dimension to the network map, showing research development trends based on publication period (indicated by color gradation from dark blue for older research to light yellow for the most recent research). The psychosocial cluster on the left shows a mixture of colors, indicating that topics such as “adolescent,” “mental health,” and “policy” have been the focus of research for a longer period of time, but are still being published with new research. On the other hand, the cluster centered on “detection,” “social medium,” and “machine” on the right side tends to be dominated by light green to bright yellow colors. This is a strong indicator that the development of technology-based cyberbullying detection methods, particularly using machine learning and social media analysis, has been a very active and innovative area in recent years. This shift in color clearly shows the direction of research evolution, where the focus of recent research tends to shift or add a technological dimension in efforts to understand and address cyberbullying.

From the previous studies described above, this is where the novelty of my research on cyberbullying among students in Ruteng, NTT lies. First, global visualizations, although covering “adolescents,” do not specifically highlight the context of students and the campus environment as a dominant and explicit research cluster. This study fills that gap by focusing precisely on the student population, a crucial demographic segment that faces unique digital dynamics in higher education. Second, and more crucially, this study adds a unique geographical and socio-cultural dimension. The city of Ruteng, as a developing city with an urban background in East Nusa Tenggara, represents a context that is rarely touched upon in the global cyberbullying literature. The studies represented in the VOSviewer visualization tend to be general or focus on metropolitan areas/developed countries.

In developing cities such as Ruteng, the use of gadgets in interactions between students has led to a serious cultural shift towards digital violence. Initial observations in Ruteng show a shift in online behavior from sharing knowledge to consuming hoaxes, irrelevant images or videos, accompanied by comments that corner, harass or demean others. In Ruteng, cyberbullying is a recent phenomenon that has emerged with the use of gadgets in interactions between students. As a growing city surrounded by rural communities, this

cultural shift towards digital violence cannot be considered a trivial matter. Based on preliminary information from a number of respondents, cyberbullying has become inevitable, but its impact is very painful. There is a phenomenon of shifting from utilizing digital space to share knowledge to activities such as reading hoax news and viewing irrelevant images or videos on Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, etc. Many student comments contribute to the online discourse by cornering, harassing, or belittling others. Among students themselves, whether perpetrators or victims, cyberbullying essentially causes hostility and conflict between individuals or groups, which originates from intimidation in the virtual world. From a psychological perspective, victims can experience stress, anxiety, depression, or even feelings of isolation. They feel isolated, ashamed, and helpless. They are often afraid to speak up or report the incident for fear of retaliation or stigma. In addition to psychological impacts, cyberbullying also affects students' academic performance. Victims are often reluctant to go to school, feel unsafe, or even decide to drop out of school. This certainly has an impact on their future and their potential.

In response to this phenomenon, comprehensive and systematic efforts are needed. Students, lecturers, and the community need to be educated about what cyberbullying is, how to identify it, and what to do when faced with it. Campuses, as educational institutions, play a crucial role in preventing and addressing cases of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is one of the greatest challenges faced by the digital generation today, particularly students in the city of Ruteng. While technology has brought numerous benefits, it has also introduced new challenges that need to be addressed.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Online communication has become a crucial element in students' lives, with an increasing trend in usage driven by ease of access and, most importantly, the perception of privacy. This privacy allows individuals to express themselves more freely than face-to-face interactions, which often limit non-verbal expression (Chisholm, 2014). Paradoxically, increased privacy in online communication encourages greater openness, facilitating individuals to share things that may be difficult to express in person. However, the ease and anonymity offered by the virtual world, coupled with low digital literacy, has created opportunities for rampant cybercrime, one of which is cyberbullying. This phenomenon has become a widespread concern in the digital age, where perpetrators can act quickly, anonymously, and reach a wide audience without geographical or temporal limitations (Park, et al., 2021).

## METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this study is a mixed method. In this case, the research used a quantitative approach with a survey design to explore the phenomenon and trends of cyberbullying among students in Ruteng. The data collection process was carried out by distributing questionnaires to selected respondents. The questionnaires were distributed directly on campus or through online platforms, depending on the preferences and availability of the respondents. Data collection was conducted anonymously to ensure the confidentiality and trust of respondents in the study. After the questionnaire data was obtained, the researchers conducted interviews to confirm the questionnaire results. In this study, data analysis was performed using statistical techniques to correlate the researchers also conducted correlation tests to see the impact of cyberbullying on a number of factors experienced by students.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Symptoms of Cyberbullying Behavior

The findings show that out of a total of 79 respondents, 52 respondents (68.8%) admitted that they did not use social media to hurt or belittle others. This indicates that most participants in the survey had a positive attitude or deliberately did not engage in cyberbullying behavior. However, there were still quite a few respondents who engaged in such behavior. A total of 20 respondents (25.3%) answered "rarely," indicating that a small number of students may have committed such acts, but not as a frequent habit. Meanwhile, 1 respondent (1.3%) admitted to "often" and 6 respondents (7.6%) said they "very often" hurt and belittle others on social media, indicating that a small number of students actively use social media to belittle others.

Table 1. How Often do You use Social Media to Hurt or Belittle Others?

|       |               | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|---------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Tidak Pernah  | 52        | 65.8    | 65.8          | 65.8               |
|       | Jarang        | 20        | 25.3    | 25.3          | 91.1               |
|       | Sering        | 1         | 1.3     | 1.3           | 92.4               |
|       | Sangat Sering | 6         | 7.6     | 7.6           | 100.0              |
|       | Total         | 79        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

Furthermore, when asked whether students use social media to spread gossip or false information with the aim of damaging someone's reputation, 12.2% of respondents admitted that they had committed verbal abuse or harassment through social media. This seems to indicate that such incidents occur sporadically, even though they are not commonplace. This could be an indication that in certain situations, such as in the context of humor, revenge, or a lack of understanding of the ethical and legal implications, some students still engage in such actions on social media. Similar issues also relate to taking photos or personal information without permission to share with others, as well as creating or taking over fake accounts to damage someone's reputation and exclusionary actions to isolate someone from virtual social spaces.

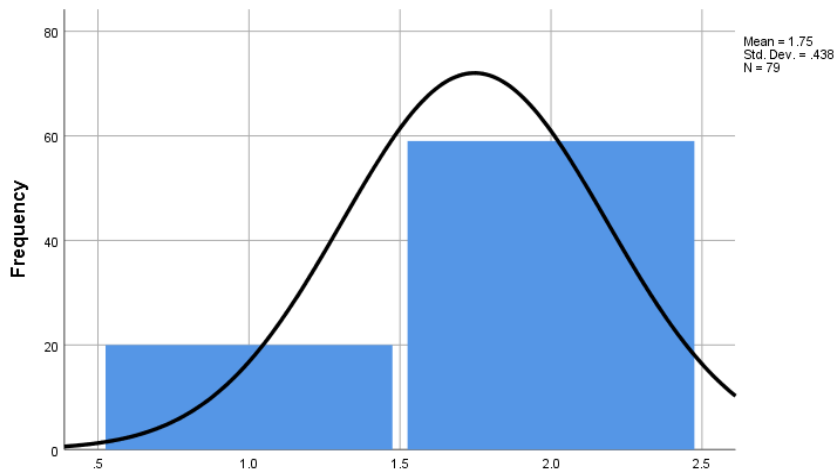
One interesting aspect that needs to be understood is how individuals feel after engaging in cyberbullying. Do they feel satisfied and happy, or do they experience feelings of guilt and regret? To answer this question, respondents were asked to assess how often they felt satisfied or happy after engaging in cyberbullying behavior. The results of the study found that 50 respondents (63.3%) and 9 respondents (11%) felt dissatisfied, indicating that cyberbullying is not a strong source of emotional satisfaction for most perpetrators. This could mean that many of them do it not because they want to have fun, but perhaps because of external factors such as social pressure, negative emotions, or momentary impulsiveness. However, 22.6% admitted to feeling satisfied and 2.5% even said they felt very satisfied. This shows that there is a small group who may derive emotional satisfaction from cyberbullying, for example, because they feel more powerful or get the reaction they want from the victim.

Table 2. How Often do You Feel Satisfied or Happy After Committing Cyberbullying Behavior?

|       |             | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Tidak Puas  | 50        | 63.3    | 63.3          | 63.3               |
|       | Kurang Puas | 9         | 11.4    | 11.4          | 74.7               |
|       | Puas        | 18        | 22.8    | 22.8          | 97.5               |
|       | Sangat Puas | 2         | 2.5     | 2.5           | 100.0              |
|       | Total       | 79        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

Furthermore, the majority of respondents were aware of the negative impact of cyberbullying. A total of 59 respondents (74.7%) admitted to being aware of the negative impact, indicating that most cyberbullies understand the consequences of their actions. Even though they engage in such behavior, they still have moral awareness or reflect on the consequences. However, 20 respondents (25.3%) were unaware of the negative impact. These respondents are unaware of the impact, which indicates a lack of empathy or understanding of the consequences of cyberbullying. It could be that they consider cyberbullying to be trivial, entertaining, or are unaware that their actions can have serious consequences for the victims and themselves. Individuals like this are potential perpetrators who may be waiting for an opportunity to engage in online bullying.

Figure 4. Have You Ever Been Aware of The Negative Impact of Cyberbullying on Victims or Yourself?



An interesting finding is that when asked how many respondents had been victims of cyberbullying, the majority of respondents had not experienced the spread of hoaxes about themselves. 64.4% claimed to have never been victims, indicating that in their social media environment, cases of hoaxes targeting individuals do not occur very often. Perhaps they have good control over their personal information or are in a relatively safe digital environment. However, 35.4% had been victims of hoaxes to varying degrees. 21.5% experienced hoaxes occasionally (rarely), while 11.4% experienced them “often.” There were 2.5% who were very frequent victims of hoaxes, indicating that for a small number of individuals, hoaxes can be a serious recurring problem.

Table 4. Have You Ever Been a Victim of Hoaxes or False Information About Yourself on Social Media?

|       |               | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|---------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Tidak Pernah  | 51        | 64.6    | 64.6          | 64.6               |
|       | Jarang        | 17        | 21.5    | 21.5          | 86.1               |
|       | Sering        | 9         | 11.4    | 11.4          | 97.5               |
|       | Sangat Sering | 2         | 2.5     | 2.5           | 100.0              |
|       | Total         | 79        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

### The Impact of Cyberbullying

Repeated cyberbullying can affect the mental well-being of victims, causing social isolation, lowering self-confidence, and in some cases even triggering depression or thoughts of avoiding social interaction. Those who experience high levels of stress may need support from friends, family, or even professional help to cope with the emotional impact. 59.5% of respondents felt stress to varying degrees 35.4% felt “Rarely” stressed, meaning the impact was not very intense but still felt occasionally. 16.5% felt “Often” stressed, meaning they were frequently disturbed by cyberbullying. 7.6% experienced “Very Often” pressure, which could indicate serious psychological impacts, such as anxiety,

stress, shame, feeling humiliated, decreased self-esteem, prolonged depression, or fear of interacting in the digital world. The correlation test results found that cyberbullying does indeed have a negative impact.

Table 5 .Correlations

| <b>Correlations</b> |                                      |                         | Total Skor<br>Fenomena<br>CyberBullying | Total Skor<br>Dampak<br>CyberBullying |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Spearman's rho      | Total Skor Fenomena<br>CyberBullying | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000                                   | .556**                                |
|                     |                                      | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .                                       | .000                                  |
|                     |                                      | N                       | 79                                      | 79                                    |
|                     | Total Skor Dampak<br>CyberBullying   | Correlation Coefficient | .556**                                  | 1.000                                 |
|                     |                                      | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .000                                    | .                                     |
|                     |                                      | N                       | 79                                      | 79                                    |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the above output, it is known that there is a Significant Positive Relationship between the phenomenon of cyberbullying and its impact. The strength of the relationship is at a moderate level with a correlation coefficient value of 0.556. A significance value of 0.00 indicates that this result is very significant at the 1% level. Thus, the higher and more frequent the cyberbullying behavior occurs, the higher and more intense the impact tends to be.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents (more than 50%) never reported cyberbullying incidents to their families. Victims tend to be reluctant to talk to their families about their experiences. Factors that may influence this decision include fear of consequences from parents, such as restricted internet access or reprimands. Shame or reluctance to admit that they are victims. The assumption that their families will not understand or be able to provide the right solution. Quite a few respondents shared their situation with friends rather than family. However, most victims still chose not to seek help at all. Peers are more trusted in the context of cyberbullying because they often have similar experiences in the digital world. However, not all victims have access to supportive friends, so many of them end up facing cyberbullying alone. The same applies to victims' openness to the school/campus. A possible cause is the lack of clear school policies on handling cyberbullying. Victims and perpetrators also believe that the school will not be able to help or will only give warnings without concrete solutions. However, respondents believe that cyberbullying is an issue that cannot be ignored due to its impact on students' academic, social, and emotional development. Therefore, campuses are expected to be more proactive in providing the necessary resources to identify potential victims of cyberbullying.

### **Implication**

From the above findings, there are several practical implications that can be applied as input for campuses, students, and interested parties. First, a digital literacy and social media ethics program is needed and must be made part of the campus hidden curriculum. Bullying is a repetitive aggressive behavior that demonstrates dominance but has a negative impact on the victim, so campuses need to integrate anti-cyberbullying education into soft skills courses, character education, and so on. Second, campuses need to create an easy, anonymous, and responsive mechanism for reporting cyberbullying incidents, such as an online platform that is directly connected to a counseling center. Third, campuses need to provide or strengthen free and easily accessible psychological counseling services, including for victims of cyberbullying. Fourth, collaboration with parents and external parties. Educating parents and the community about cyberbullying is a strategic step, given that the majority of victims do not report it to their families.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings from this research provide valuable insights into the dynamics of cyberbullying behavior and the challenges faced in addressing this issue. Although the majority are not directly involved in cyberbullying, they are still vulnerable to becoming victims. Low awareness of the negative impacts of cyberbullying and a lack of participation in reporting cases indicate the need for further education and support for victims of cyberbullying on campus. Therefore, comprehensive and sustainable measures must be taken to address this issue and create a safer and more inclusive environment for all individuals in the digital world.

Ruteng, NTT. Efforts to address this issue require collaboration between various stakeholders and the development of a holistic strategy. With a better understanding of this phenomenon, it is hoped that a safer and more supportive environment can be created for all students.

## **REFERENCES**

- Edu, Ambros Leonangung, dkk. PERILAKU BERPACARAN REMAJA KOSKOSAN DI KOTA RUTENG, KABUPATEN MANGGARAI, NTT. Indonesia: Unika Santu Paulus Ruteng, 2020, Vol. 12. 25029576.
- Edu, Ambros Leonangung and Jaya, Petrus P. Redy. Media Literacy and Critical Ability of Students College at Manggarai Regency. Indonesia: Universitas Negeri Jakarta, 2019.
- Laena, Mohamad Idris and Santiago, Faisal. Cyberbullying in Criminology Perspective. Semarang, Indonesia: ICLSSEE 202, 2022.
- UNICEF. Perundungan di Indonesia: Fakta-fakta Kunci, Solusi dan Rekomendasi. Indonesia: UNICEF, 2020.
- Safaria, Triantoro. Prevalence and impact of cyberbullying in a sample of indonesian junior high school students. TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 2016, Vol. 15.
- Olweus, Dan. BULLYING IN SCHOOLS: FACTS AND INTERVENTION. Norway: Research Centre for Health Promotion, University of Bergen, 2014.
- Lestari, Wahyu. Peran Lokal Genius Dalam Kesenian Lokal (The Role of Local Genius in The Local Art). 2, s.l.:Harmonia : Jurnal Pengetahuan Dan Pemikiran Seni, 2000, Vol. 1.