Phenomenological Investigation of Social Media Technological Aspects Against Cyberbullying from the Third Person Perspective of Higher Education Students

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Abstract. Cyberbullying often occurs among higher education students as they frequently use and easily get access to the internet, especially through social media. However, the awareness of cyberbullying among them is very low. They do not know how to identify cyberbullying and prevent it. This research will discover the characteristics of social media that can help third persons identify and prevent cyberbullying. This research used a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to study a person’s experience of technology regarding cyberbullying. The data collected in this study were obtained from interviews with higher education students. The data acquired were analyzed using Collaizzi’s seven steps descriptive phenomenological analyses. The analysis produced a description of the phenomenon of cyberbullying on social media that have verified by the interviewees. This study found some characteristics of social media to help higher education students identify and prevent cyberbullying and discovers which social media has the most cyberbullying content and the similarities/differences of each social media in helping a third person identify and prevent cyberbullying. And found several technological factors that affect the effort of preventing cyberbullying, such as seeing other people’s activities and personal information on social media, and doing a report or sharing cyberbullying content.

Keywords: higher education students, third person perspective, cyberbullying, social media, phenomenology

1. Introduction

Social media is a popular tool for creating or exchanging content and media by users [1]. It means that social media can provide facilities for its users to interact and communicate with each other in both directions. However, many individuals/groups use social media to harm others through cyberbullying [2].

There are many forms of cyberbullying, such as spreading false information, fighting with dirty words, acts of harassment, pretending to be someone else, or isolating specific individuals [3]. As many as 58% of teenagers who have experienced cyberbullying did not tell their parents or those closest to them [4]. Others (i.e., the third person) who witnesses cyberbullying on social media sometimes do not helpful enough or even just ignore it. It is mainly because many people are unsure whether they see cyberbullying [5].

Cyberbullying is a problem that often occurs among higher education students [6]. It is because most higher education students frequently use the internet and have access
to cell phones and other electronic devices. So many higher education students see and are aware of cyberbullying incidents on their social media [7]. Of the many cases of cyberbullying, there are several examples of cyberbullying higher education students have ever received. For example, the issue occurred with higher education students at some universities [8].

In many cases, the third person only finds out that the person closest to them was the victim of cyberbullying when there is a sudden change in the victim’s behavior, such as avoiding meeting with their friends. In the worst case, the third person only found out when the victim had committed suicide because they could not endure the depression. Those are why the third persons need to be able to quickly identify cyberbullying to take action to help the victims.

The most significant contribution of social media regarding cyberbullying behavior is the existence of free anonymity. Misleading information or information not based on social media can also cause cyberbullying. The more incorrect information spread, the more people will believe it. Or if people see too much false information on social media, that person will think that such cases are normal.

In addition, more and more people tend to spontaneously send multimedia content such as voice messages, photos, or videos on social media. These messages might be sent without privacy awareness and used to bully the victims in the images or videos. If many are forwarding the content, then the victim of cyberbullying can experience mental disorders. If the content makes people feel aggrieved, then the range has violated the boundaries of privacy and includes cyberbullying behavior.

Based on that phenomenon, conducting in-depth research on the third person’s thoughts, views, and perspectives when they witness cyberbullying behavior on social media is essential. However, not many studies have done this before. This study could help get a better understanding of how cyberbullying is seen from a third person’s perspective and how these third persons can identify cyberbullying behavior. In addition, through this research, we can learn how third persons can actively play a role and reduce cyberbullying behavior.

Previous research was limited to finding higher education students’ opinions about their responsibilities when they saw cyberbullying on social media [5]. Other research is also limited to examining the impact of cyberbullying and the reasons higher education students do cyberbullying [9]. And further previous research discusses ways to prevent higher education students from engaging in cyberbullying behavior [10]. Based on those, this study focuses more on how the characteristics contained in social media can help third persons identify and prevent cyberbullying behavior.

Based on the background, this research aims to discover social media features that can identify and prevent cyberbullying behavior. This aim is achieved by doing phenomenological qualitative research on higher education students to investigate social media’s different characteristics and find out what features help identify and prevent cyberbullying. In qualitative research, data collection will directly interact with the interviewee and see how the interviewee behaves. This research examined the problems/issues of the interviewee to obtain information about these problems. This phenomenological research investigated individual life experiences with aspects of technology that have been integrated into their daily lives.

This research will focus more on the problem of cyberbullying that occurs on social media and how technology or social media in this research can become a forum for third persons to discover and prevent cyberbullying. The types of cyberbullying examined in this study include flaming, denigration, and harassing. Cyberbullying case of flaming is B shows hatred towards A by delivering messages of anger and rudeness.
The message contains the word bullshit which is considered a form of insult and the word brag which is considered a form of cursing [11].

Cyberbullying case of denigration is B replied to A’s content with slander. This can be seen from B’s words, “I’m afraid you have the pathological wild illness” whose truth cannot be ascertained. Cyberbullying case of harassment is B responded to the A’s content with “Don’t you wish to be accompanied to seek clinical help?” which includes harassment. Because in fact, A does not have a mental disorder and B sends the sentence repeatedly. Moreover, the social media used in this study are Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Prior Research

One study discusses how higher education students can conceptualize cyberbullying via SNS (Social Networking Service) [5]. It outlines how higher education students think about their responsibility when they witness cyberbullying on SNS. And how higher education students can respond to cyberbullying on social media. Another study discusses the impact of cyberbullying on social media [9].

It identifies why female students do cyberbullying and what are the effects of cyberbullying. Finally, the study produced recommendations in the form of awareness programs. The results obtained from conducting this research are the impact of cyberbullying. Among them is the emergence of feelings of sadness, disappointment, anger, and hatred that lead to depression.

A study was conducted about discusses how personal and psychological human factors can encourage cyberbullying behavior and how to prevent higher education students from being involved in cyberbullying behavior at universities [10]. The research provided an understanding of the impacts of cyberbullying on higher education students and stakeholders. The results obtained from conducting this research are the impact of cyberbullying, including feelings of sadness, disappointment, anger, and hatred that lead to depression.

Based on several previous studies that have been discussed, it shows that cyberbullying does occur a lot on social media. But many social media users just witness the cyberbullying and do nothing. This is because there is ambiguity regarding the ability of bystanders to identify cyberbullying and prevent it. In previous studies, the population was limited to only one university and data collection was carried out by survey which resulted in a lack of in-depth knowledge regarding the topic.

In this study conducted research about the third person’s perspective on cyberbullying behavior. And discussed on how higher education students, as third persons, can identify cyberbullying behavior and utilize technology to minimize the impact of cyberbullying. The population in the study was conducted at several universities in Indonesia. Retrieval of research data is done by conducting interviews. This research focuses more on technological aspects that can help bystanders to identify and prevent cyberbullying.

2.2 Cyberbullying

There are several definitions of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying consists of the word “cyber” which comes from Greek, and the word “bullying” which was first introduced in 1970 [12]; [13]. Some studies have tried to define cyberbullying by combining 25 other scientific definitions [14]. His description of cyberbullying is all activities carried out repeatedly by individuals or groups on social media/electronic media intending to
cause harm or feelings of discomfort to other people.

Another definition of cyberbullying is endangering/hurting others intentionally and repeatedly through electronic media. Electronic media include cell phones, email, personal blogs, and social media [3]. Cyberbullying is a dangerous action an individual or group carries out intentionally to attack/humiliate/isolate other individuals [15].

Cyberbullying has several forms, including flaming, denigration, and harassment [16]. Flaming is an online fight using dirty words. Denigration is the act of spreading malicious rumors/slander on social media. And harassing is sending messages that contain offensive/hurt continuously.

2.3 Social Media

Social media are various kinds of internet-based applications made on an ideological basis, and Web 2.0 and exchange information [1]. One of the characteristics of social media is an interactive and participatory application. It means that social media can provide facilities for its users to interact and communicate with each other in two directions. So users can receive and view content that others have created. Or users can create their content/information according to what they want.

Technology/social media’s role in cyberbullying can be divided into two. The first is the positive role of technology and the negative role of technology. The first role is anonymity. Anonymity is a user’s understanding of his identity that cannot be identified/traced when using social media [17]; [18]. The positive role of anonymity can be used to seek support/share cyberbullying content in discussion forums to block cyberbullying [19]. And the negative role of anonymity is that it can be used by irresponsible parties to continuously spread content that contains incorrect information with offensive words.

Misleading information, namely the amount of information spread on social media which is false information, and this information aim to harm someone [20]. Misleading information can make people bored and prefer not to respond to/ignore information on social media. So that many users choose not to do anything when they witness cyberbulllying behavior on their social media due to the large amount of misleading information they receive. The way to avoid misleading information is to track down who sent the information or find out where the source came from [21].

Nowadays, smartphone cameras have been widely used to take pictures and then upload these pictures or videos to users’ social media accounts [22]. Users use this convenience to increase reach and engagement on social media so that many people will learn about the uploaded images/videos. In addition, this can be a negative role for technology if the image/video is uploaded without the permission of the person in the image/video. And the impact is even worse if many people repeat the content on social media.

3. Method

The conducted study were starting from the data collection process to the analysis of the collected data. The data collection process discussed research instruments, selection of data sources, data collection techniques, data recording, and data analysis. The data analysis methodology used in this study uses qualitative methods with a phenomenological approach. A flowchart illustrating the stages of this research data analysis can be seen in Figure 1.

3.1 Data Retrieval Process

This study conducted interviews with social media users who had witnessed
cyberbullying behavior. This interview generated the opinions, behaviors, and feelings of the informants about what they experience and further investigates the phenomenon. In this study semi-structured interviews were conducted, meaning that a list of questions was created to guide, not dictate, the interview. Questions for discussion are prepared before the interview, and additional questions can be developed during the interview process to gather more in-depth information from the interviewee’s perspective.

The interview questions consist of 3 sections, namely: (1) the demographics/profiles of the interviewees, (2) questions regarding cyberbullying, and (3) questions regarding social media. In the cyberbullying section, the interviewees were given questions about the definition of cyberbullying according to the interviewees and how they identify and prevent cyberbullying. Whereas in the social media section contain any social media used by the interviewees to what are the characteristics of social media that can be useful to help identify and prevent cyberbullying. The last part of this section investigates about the different features related to the social media used by the interviewee.

The interviewees of this study are higher education students who actively use social media. The social media users investigated in this study are the users of one or several of Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. Another criterion is that they have witnessed cyberbullying on social media and understand the phenomenon. The number of interviewees in the study is considered sufficient if the information obtained is adequate (saturated and does not provide additional new information). There were 14 male and female interviewees. Interviewees were higher education students who have an age range of 15 to 25 years.

3.2 Familiarization with Data

This step was done by reading the interviewee’s interview transcript continuously and repeatedly. To get an important statement in interview transcript, each of them was read at least five times in this study before moving to another step.

3.3 Statement Identification

This step was done by identifying all important explanations or statements from interviewees. This important statement was obtained from the interview transcript about utilizing social media to identify and prevent cyberbullying. The interview transcript also discussed identifying the characteristics of social media that users need and the differences between their characteristics. This step determined the important statements from the interviewees related to the phenomenon.
3.4 **Formulating the Meaning (Bracketing)**

This step was done by identifying or formulating meanings related to the phenomenon under study. The meaning of these important statements determined after gathering the important statements from all interview transcripts. In this step, prejudices must be limited. Also, this step must remain focused on the phenomena experienced by interviewees and restrict their personal opinions/views.

This study formulated several important statements with the same meaning into a unit of meaning. For example, if the interviewee expressed his feelings when he saw cyberbullying on social media, the meaning formulated would represent various kinds of feelings from the interviewees. This meaning can be related to the interviewee’s emotions when using social media. Or if the interviewees reveal various characteristics/features of social media, then making meaning associated with comparing the different types of social media.

3.5 **Theme Grouping**

This step was done by grouping the previously identified meanings into a general theme. This theme consist of several meaningful formulations that have been made before. This stage also requires limiting the prejudices and must avoid any potential influence from existing theory.

In this study, the meanings that have been formulated were grouped into one big theme group. If the meaning discusses what the interviewees do when accessing social media, then the theme group can explain the impact of using social media. In this step, a group of themes was created from several meanings that are considered to have the same meaning.

3.6 **Develop an Inclusive Description**

This step was done by developing a complete description of the themes that have been made before. The themes created were explained. This explanation contains the meanings that are in each theme. The description regarding the theme of the phenomenon under study was written entirely and thoroughly.

In this study, the description of the theme explained the meanings contained in the theme. The description also contains several snippets of interviews with interviewees who can prove that the themes’ meaning follows the interviewees’ data. The interview excerpt is a detail of a complete critical statement. This step explained starting from the important statements from the interview transcript, the meaning of the statement, to the general theme that has been made.

3.7 **Developing a Fundamental Structure**

After developing a description of the phenomenon under study, the next step is condensing the narrative’s contents. This step changes the complete and thorough explanation of the theme into a short statement. This statement has a core regarding important aspects of the structure of the phenomenon under study.

In this study, after a description of all the themes, conclusions were made from the various descriptions of the themes. The conclusion/short statement contains a brief explanation of the theme. After making short statements on all themes, the next step is created an ending that includes detailed and straightforward answers. At this stage, it produced a conclusion that explains all of the themes that.

3.8 **Fundamental Structure Verification**

This step was done by verifying back to the interviewees regarding the generated
fundamental structure. The interviewees were asked whether the statement included the experiences they shared during the previous interview. If the interviewees feel dissatisfied with the statement, they could return to the previous stages to change/modify the content. Step changes can be adjusted based on good feedback from interviewees. It will minimizes the subjectivity of the research. The steps can be stopped if the interviewees agree with the research results.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter discussed the results of the phenomenological research that has been done including the results of the method utilized the results of the data analysis process.

4.1 Results of Analysis Significant Statements and Meaning

At this stage, it produced results from analyzing important statements and formulating their meaning based on the interview transcripts that have been made before. The interview transcripts were analyzed using the QDA Miner Lite application. After analysis, important statements were produced, and meanings were formulated. The results of the important statements and meaning formulation in this study can be seen in Table I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Important Statement</th>
<th>Formulating of Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I have seen other people share content and were given an explanation that the news included cyberbullying</td>
<td>See what other people are doing on social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I saw it from his anonymous account</td>
<td>View other people’s profiles on social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Most people who bully use fake accounts. The one with no profile photo or profile information</td>
<td>View other people’s profiles on social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I was using social media from waking up until night. So the first time I woke up, I immediately opened social media</td>
<td>Social media can be addictive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Maybe doing both at once (report and comment) is better. So let more and more people report, and more people can see the content and support the victims</td>
<td>Social media helps increase awareness of cyberbullying</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table I, it can be seen that the important statements represent various kinds of story snippets from the respondents. The important statements were then formulated with meaning. The formulation of this meaning consists of users viewing other people’s activities and profiles on social media. Another meaning is that social media can cause addiction or increase cyberbullying awareness. Next, a group of themes was created based on the meaning that had been formulated.

For example, important statement number 1 contains snippets of opinions from interviewees regarding how they see others sharing content about cyberbullying on their social media. This statement snippet can be formulated into a meaning more representative of the explanation of several interviewees, not just one interviewee. So the meaning is that on social media, we can see what activities other people are doing on social media. Because on social media, not only can you see other people sharing content, but you can also see other people’s comments or various ways of preventing
other people from cyberbullying behavior on social media.

4.2 Results of Theme Grouping

At this stage, it produces results from several themes that have been grouped and what units of meaning have been formulated into the same group. In this study, five themes and some formulations of their meaning have been grouped. The name of the theme is obtained from similar important statements grouped together to form a general theme. The five themes formed from this important statement are the impact of technology, social and emotional technology, the benefits of technology, and a comparison of technological characteristics. The results of the grouping of themes and related meanings in this study can be seen in Table II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Five Themes with Related Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 1: Impact of Technology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing Other People’s Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing Other People’s Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 2: Social Technology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 3: Emotional Technologies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resentment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Addicted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 4: Benefits of Technology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Tool for Users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarization</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme 5: Comparison of Technological Characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics Required By The User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
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<tr>
<td>TikTok</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table II, the name of the first theme is the Impact of Technology. It is because previously explained that the meaning that has been made is that on social media, we can see what activities other people are doing on social media. But in fact, interviewees see other people’s actions and other people’s personal information to increase awareness of cyberbullying. So the theme suitable for a series of activities carried out by interviewees on social media is the impact of technology on the behavior of identifying cyberbullying.

4.3 Inclusive Descriptive Results

Theme 1 explains the impact caused by users using social media. The interviewees revealed that before identifying whether this was cyberbullying, they first saw the content shared. The content is a fact or not, contains negative connotations, and whether the content contains threats or can lead to other people’s opinions. Apart from seeing the content, the interviewees also saw the comments. These comments are hate comments, contain harsh words, have lies, or vilify other people.

Apart from seeing activity, the interviewees identified cyberbullying by looking
at their profile/account information. Account criteria that usually carry out cyberbullying are accounts that have few followers, no profile photos, unclear account names, and the account is private. After identifying cyberbullying, interviewees had a sense of concern regarding victims of cyberbullying. This concern can be in the form of interviewees participating in preventing cyberbullying by not participating in nasty comments like perpetrators and helping victims of cyberbullying by participating in reports and liking content that supports victims.

Theme 2 explains that interviewees could improve their social skills on social media. Some respondents stated that they knew other people through their friends’ social media activities that they saw. So respondents can also see that the new person is involved in cyberbullying or helping victims. Some respondents also said that they saw cyberbullying content in various ways. For example, from their feeds page or FYP (For Your Page), threads on Twitter, and base accounts on Twitter.

Theme 3 contains an explanation about when users talk about their experience of cyberbullying that occurs on social media, and they talk about this experience emotionally. However, not all respondents experience the same emotions. It was because many respondents tell their experiences in a language full of feelings and emotions. Examples of felt emotions include addiction, resentment, abandonment, or sadness.

Theme 4 explains several significant statements about the benefits of using technology/social media. Almost all respondents explained that social media was a “tool” for them regarding cyberbullying behavior. The tool here explains that users use social media to view cyberbullying. And also, social media can be used as a tool or medium for cyberbullying. In addition, by using several social media, users feel familiarity between social media with one another.

Theme 5 explains the characteristics/features found on the social media that the interviewees use. Several interviewees described the characteristics they need when using technology: the report feature and content/comment dislike feature. Social media with the most cyberbullying content is Twitter compared to Instagram and Twitter. It is because Twitter is considered free to share tweets accompanied by pictures, videos, or links. As for social media, Instagram and TikTok are deemed to have characteristics/features that can prevent cyberbullying. For example, the hide comment feature or the one-time report feature removed the audio in the content.

4.4 Fundamental Structure Results

In this study produced several characteristics in social media that can help to identify and prevent cyberbullying. For example, social media characteristics/features allow users to see other people’s activities (content/comments) and profiles/personal information about other people’s accounts before determining whether what that person is doing is cyberbullying or not. Several characteristics/features make it possible to prevent cyberbullying. An example of these characteristics/features is reporting content/comments containing cyberbullying.

Other social media characteristics/features allowed users to share their experiences on social media. For example, users share content about cyberbullying that is currently happening to ask for help from others to report the content. Or users can also send their experiences regarding cyberbullying on social media so that other people can help them. The characteristics of social media can also make users feel emotional. For example, users feel sad, angry, or addicted to using social media.

Twitter has characteristics/features that are different from other social media. Users could identify cyberbullying based on tweets/comments from that person’s
account, because Twitter is text-based social media, and cyberbullying can be identified through tweets/comments that contain harsh words. Whereas on Instagram, users identify cyberbullying based on photos. If the shared photos can hurt others, that content can be categorized as cyberbullying. Similar to Instagram, Tiktok, which focuses on videos, users identify cyberbullying by seeing whether the words conveyed in the video have a negative connotation.

And the characteristics that are deemed necessary to be able to identify and prevent cyberbullying are report content/comments. But users said it would be better if the report feature could detail the reasons in more detail so that much cyberbullying content could disappear from social media. In addition, the content/comment dislike characteristics/features are also considered necessary to identify whether the content is cyberbullying because we can see how many other people dislike the content. The following characteristic is that it is easy for users to see the profiles/personal information of different accounts so that if the account does not have a clear photo or name, and a small number of followers, it can be ascertained that the account is an account for spreading hatred/cyberbullying.

4.5 Fundamental Structure Verification
During the verification process, interviewees agreed to all statements and conclusions from this study, following what they said and felt. They decided that the characteristics of social media that they needed most to identify and prevent cyberbullying were the report and dislike content/comment features. And they also agreed that social media has the same characteristics with one another so they feel familiar when using social media.

5. Conclusion
This study has mapped out the important characteristics of technology or social media on cyberbullying behavior using the phenomenological research method. These characteristics can be characterized by the impact of technology, technology that is social and emotional, the benefits of technology, and the comparison of technological characteristics.

Initially, users would feel the impact of technology by seeing other people’s activities and personal information on social media. It normally could increase user awareness and concern about cyberbullying behavior on social media. After that, users start to try helping cyberbullying victims by utilizing social media, for example, doing a report or sharing the content so that many will know about it. It proved that social media can be a tool for users to be aware of cyberbullying and can participate in preventing cyberbullying on social media.

Users would also experience emotional feelings when they witness cyberbullying on social media. Users could feel various emotions related to cyberbullying on social media, such as annoyance, sadness, or neglect. The existence of social media can also make users feel addicted to continuing to access social media. Finally, users could get many benefits from the technology.

These benefits can be in the form of technology used as a tool for users to identify and prevent cyberbullying. The purpose of this tool is a medium for users to be able to know, do, and identify cyberbullying. Users also feel familiarity related to social media with one another. Apart from having the same features, there are also some differences in the characteristics of social media. For example, cyberbullying on Twitter focuses more on tweets/text. On Instagram, it focuses more on photos, and on TikTok, it focuses on videos.
This research produces several characteristics on social media that can help identify and prevent cyberbullying, namely looking at activities (content/comments) from other people and profiles/personal information of other people’s accounts first before determining whether that person is doing cyberbullying or not. Another characteristic/feature is reporting content/comments containing cyberbullying. And the characteristics deemed necessary to identify and prevent cyberbullying are more detailed content/comment reports so that much cyberbullying content can disappear from social media. As well as the presence of content/comment dislike characteristics/features, it is also considered necessary to identify whether the content is cyberbullying because we can see how many other people dislike the content.

And based on the data obtained, users feel that cyberbullying can be found more on Twitter compared to Instagram and TikTok. It is because the focus of Twitter is tweets/comments. And also, Twitter can include images, videos, or links that can lead to other users’ opinions. For Instagram social media, it is felt that it has good features to prevent cyberbullying, such as the hide comment feature or filters before users upload their content. TikTok also has a one-time report feature that removed audio from content cyberbullying.

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