

## **Cyberstalking on social media, how does Islam view it?**

Nurul Isnaini

[nurul.isnaini@radenintan.ac.id](mailto:nurul.isnaini@radenintan.ac.id)

Annisa Azzahro

[annisaazzahro22@gmail.com](mailto:annisaazzahro22@gmail.com)

UIN Raden Intan Lampung

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### **Abstract**

With the development of information technology and the internet, social media has replaced real social relations with virtual ones. However, virtual social relations carry risks, one of which is Cyberstalking. Cyberstalking is a dangerous cybercrime and targets many people, communities, and organizations (Baer, 2020) As a crime, cyberstalking fulfills the elements of a criminal act which results in disruption of social order. Thus, cyberstalking is contrary to Islamic principles because it creates an insecure atmosphere. This research is library research using library materials in the form of books, journals, magazines, and other library sources as study material (Sukmadinata, 2010). Researchers will use a descriptive qualitative approach. Cyberstalking is a term used to describe various behaviors that involve repeated threats and/or harassment using electronic mail or other computer-based communications that will make people afraid or concerned for their safety). In Islam, these actions are prohibited acts because they contain elements of harassment, threats, harassment, or coercion. In interacting, Islam puts forward the concept of "rahmatan lil alamin" which means being a source of mercy and benefit for all creation emphasizing values such as tolerance, discipline, social care, responsibility answer, and love peace. These values can be applied to the concept of privacy, encouraging individuals to respect the boundaries and personal space of others. The Qur'an teaches that stalking and harassment are prohibited by Allah, and humans need to be careful when engaging in such activities. In conclusion, cyberstalking is a form of harassment that violates Islamic principles and can cause harm to individuals and society.

**Keywords: Cyberstalking, Islam, and Social media**

### **INTRODUCTION**

With the development of information technology and the internet, social media has replaced real social relations with virtual ones. The consequences of using digital technology in the scope of social relations can be seen in velocity namely a depth of human interconnection with technology updates and various (Castles, 2009). Parker (2003) and Solis (2008) say that social media is a means for interacting by creating, sharing, and exchanging information and ideas through words, images, and videos in a virtual network and community. However, virtual social relations carry risks, one of which is cyberstalking (Rohman & Sugeng 2022).

Cyberstalking is a dangerous cybercrime that affects and targets many people, communities, and organizations (Baer, 2020) As a crime, cyberstalking fulfills the elements of a criminal act, namely disrupting social order (Wall, 2007), apart from that, it also causes psychological and emotional impacts for the victims (Maya, 2015). Cyberstalking involves repeated offensive behavior such as false accusations, threats, identity theft, destruction of data, soliciting minors for sexual purposes, and any other form of repeated offensive behavior (Wilson, C., Sheridan, L., & Garratt-Reed, D. 2022). Meanwhile, on social media, Cyberstalker can start by following and peeking at the activities and lifestyles of potential victims on social media platforms (Mohamed, D., & Baig, F.B. 2018) Social media users carry out excessive monitoring activities by monitoring online activities, viewing profiles, sending messages, and distributing information in the form of photos or videos without permission.

Factors that affect cyberstalking namely anonymity, deviant peers (Oktora, 2019), lack of self-control, experiencing previous harassment, not understanding privacy and boundaries (Abdul Rani, 2022), and weak punishment (Mohamed & Baig 2018). The impact of cyberstalking on social media can be very detrimental to victims, including the psychological and emotional stress of harassment, threats, and constant invasion of privacy which can cause anxiety, depression, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) ((Mohamed & Baig 2018), fear and intimidation (Wilson, C., Sheridan, L., & Garratt-Reed, D. (2022).

In Islam, every individual has the right to honor and dignity (Pratiwi, 2018), Cyberstalking is a form of online harassment that can result in a decrease in a person's dignity and honor (Osman, et al, 2020). So, action cyberstalking goes against Islamic principles because it creates an atmosphere of insecurity. Besides that, cyberstalking also violates Islamic concepts regarding privacy (Musa, et al, 2021)

Moral Education can help individuals understand the importance of respecting privacy, both in physical and online spaces (Pambudi, S., & Hidayat, A.W. (2020). It is hoped that this scientific study can provide new insights into overcoming this problem and promote more ethical and respectful online behavior based on Islamic principles.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is library research by using library materials in the form of books, journals, magazines, and other library sources as study material (Sukmadinata, 2010). Researchers will use a descriptive qualitative approach in this research, where the procedures in this research will present or describe the facts that occurred which include activities, attitudes, or opinions towards an individual, organization, situation, procedure, and so on as they are. The aim is to provide systematic facts and precise characteristics of the object being studied (Moleong, 2007).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### 1. Definition of Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking has appeared as a variant of stalking, signaling that our transition to cyberspace presents a new realm of criminal opportunity. Cyberstalking refers to “an individual’s unwanted repetitive relational pursuits through communication technologies, such as computers, tablets, and smartphones” (Tokunaga & Aune, 2017, p. 1453).

### 2. Characteristics of Cyberstalking

According to Octora (2019) classify actions cyberstalking into several types, as follows:

#### a. Vindictive cyberstalker

Addressed to the perpetrator cyberstalking who threatens and harasses victims. Apart from threats and harassment, the perpetrator also carried out spamming in the form of delivery emails consecutively.

#### b. Composed cyberstalker

A cyberstalking crime in which the perpetrator acts cyberstalking with behavior that tends to be threatening.

#### c. Intimate cyberstalker

It's a behavior cyberstalking that is done with the motive of wanting to have a relationship with the target based on the obsession that appears in him.

#### d. Collective cyberstalker

That is action cyberstalking a unique one where two or more people gather to commit crimes cyberstalking aimed at the same target.

### 3. Cyberstalking in an Islamic View

Cyberstalking is a term used to describe a variety of behavior that involves repeated threats and/or harassment using electronic mail or other computer-based communications that would cause people to fear or worry for their safety (Gopalan, R.T. 2020). In Islam, this act is a prohibited act because it contains elements of interference, threats, harassment, or coercion. This has also been confirmed in Surah al-Ahzab verse 58:

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بَغَيْرِ مَا كَتَبْنَا لَهُمْ فَعَدَا حَتَمَلُوا بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا

*It means: "Those who hurt the believers, both men and women, without any fault they have committed, and only based on slander and fabricated accusations, then they have truly committed a real sin"*

In Surah al-Ahzab verse 58 above, it has been explained that hurting others without reason is the same as carrying lies and sins that they should not get if they do not commit such violence. In that verse, Allah refers to those who hurt others when he has done nothing wrong, so those who do so are called those who bear lies and real sins.

In interacting, Islam puts forward the concept of "rahmatan lil alamin" which means to be a source of mercy and benefit for all creation (Rouzi, K.S., Suud, F.M., & Chaer, M.T. 2021), emphasizing values such as tolerance, discipline, social care, responsibility, and peace-loving (Nasir, M.S., & Khalilurrahman, 2022) These values can be applied to the concept of privacy, encouraging individuals to respect people's boundaries and personal space other. Cyberstalking is an act of violating privacy because it involves sharing personal information without the victim's consent, this results in loss of privacy and violation of the victim's personal space (Masur, P.K., & Trepte, S. 2020).

Cyberstalking also violates Islamic principles because this act hurts the victim's psychology and creates a hostile online environment that can lead to social isolation and feelings of helplessness (Rohman, A.N., & Sugeng 2022). A specific form of stalking that involves the use of technology to incite psychological violence against another person (Vasiu, I., & Vasiu, L. (2016) even though Islam emphasizes the importance of treating other people with kindness, compassion, and respect (Salji, I., Fauziah, I.D., Putri, N.S., & Zuhri, N.Z. 2022). This can help create a positive social environment that supports mental health.

In addition to psychological hurt, cyberstalking is included in cybercrime (Octora, 2019). This is because in cyberstalking there are elements of threatening, harassing, and harassing someone. Research shows that cyberstalking is almost similar to offline stalking, and many cyberstalkers threaten, either explicitly or implicitly, to approach their victims offline (Lee, 1998; McFarlane & Bocij, 2003). Research on cyberstalking has been widely done by measuring a variety of behaviors, results show that not all of them involve direct communication, but are done by monitoring social media accounts, hacking personal information, or GPS tracking. (Pereira & Matos, 2016). The perpetrator or cyberstalker is most likely to be 'an emotionally disturbed person and a loner who seeks attention and friendship through cyberspace' (Stephen, 1995, p. 27). Similar to offline stalking, perpetrators become obsessive or angry after rejection, perpetrators use the Internet to pursue objects they are infatuated with, and to exploit victims for sexual purposes (Deirmenjian, 1999; McFarlane & Bocij, 2003; McGrath & Casey, 2002).

Social media in the context of Islam is not to display a variety of indecent acts but is used as an intermediary for the wasilah of goodness that leads people to salvation. In the Qur'an, there is communication described in surah al-Nisa verse 148. Allah Almighty said:

لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلِمَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا

*It means: "Allah does not like bad words, (spoken), continuously except by the one who is wronged. And Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing". (Q.S. Al-Nisa: 148).*

M. Quraish Shihab in his tafseer al-Misbah explains that the verse intends to prohibit humans from doing actions that are beyond the limits of reasonableness. The

word la yuhibbu indicates God's affirmation of dislike of the bad. While al-Jahr refers to something tangible, namely the prohibition of being bad in words and deeds.

Islam encourages individuals to resolve conflicts and disputes through peaceful means, such as dialogue and mediation (Nasir, M.S., & Khalilurrahman, 2022). Engaging in threats or intimidation is contrary to the principle of a peaceful settlement. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also taught his followers to speak words of kindness and avoid hurting others. This includes refraining from making threats or engaging in intimidating behavior (Mendoza González, B., Morales Reynoso, T., & Martínez Gómez, G. (2021).

In addition to threatening, cyberstalking also has an element of harassment. Abuse can be done verbally or through physical actions. In the context of online interactions, harassment can occur through inappropriate sentences, which are sent through digital messages. Sending digital messages with immoral content can also be categorized as an act of harassment. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of treating others with dignity and avoiding all forms of violence or aggression (Natalia, S., & Atmadja, I.D. 2013). The Qur'an has explained the prohibition against harassment. Islam stresses the importance of justice in all interactions. Harassment and humiliation are forms of injustice and oppression that are strongly condemned in Islamic teachings (Nasir, M.S., & Khalilurrahman (2022). This can be seen in Q.S. al-Hujurat [49]: 11.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُونَ قَوْمًا مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءً مِّن نِّسَاءٍ  
عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْألقَابِ بِئْسَ الْاسْمُ  
الْإِيمَانُ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

*"O men of faith, let not one group of men despise another, perhaps the one who is laughed at is better than them. And let not one group of women demean another, perhaps the degraded one is better. And do not be reproachful of yourself and do not call with titles that contain ridicule. As bad as vocations are after faith and those who do not repent are dzalim people."*

The above verse explains the prohibition against ridiculing, insulting, ridiculing, and degrading, especially among believers. In this prohibition, it appears that people who like to find faults and errors of others, inevitably forget the faults that lie with themselves.

Finally, Cyberstalking also violates Islamic principles because it is a disruptive act. Islam teaches the importance of maintaining good relationships with others and avoiding actions that can hurt or disturb others (Ningsih, W.W. 2016). A Muslim should use social media to disseminate useful information and prevent the spread of bad information or harm to others (Jasri, J., et al, (2022).

## CONCLUSION

Cyberstalking is the act of using electronic communications or computers to manipulate or deceive others, thereby causing harm to them. In Islam, this behavior is considered a violation of the concept of "rahmatan lil alamin" which refers to the belief that individuals who do not obey Allah's commands are considered to be people who have violated their obligations. Islam influences the concept of "rahmatan lil alamin" by emphasizing the importance of respecting beliefs, discipline, social values, and personal integrity. Cyberstalking also violates Islamic principles by creating an online environment that is unsafe and can lead to social isolation and disrespect. Cyberstalking also contributes to cybercrime, where individuals engage in online activities that harm others. Research shows that cyberstalkers often engage in offline activities, either explicitly or implicitly, to hinder their actions. This behavior is similar to offline communications but is conducted via social media, personal information, or GPS tracking. Social media in Islam is not intended to justify harmful actions, but rather to provide a safe space for people to search for guidance and protection. The Qur'an teaches that communication is prohibited by Allah, and humans need to be careful when engaging in such activities. In conclusion, cyberstalking is a form of harassment that violates Islamic principles and can cause harm to individuals and society. Every individual needs to be aware of the potential consequences of their actions and use social media responsibly to protect themselves and others.

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