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## THE ROLE OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN UNCOVERING CYBERCRIME: A CRIMINOLOGICAL AND SHARIA LAW ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

*This research aims to analyze the role of investigative journalism in uncovering cybercrime using a literature approach that integrates criminological and Islamic law perspectives. The research uses a qualitative-descriptive literature study method, with data collected from academic journals, communication theory books, media ethics, cyber criminology, and Islamic law literature. The research findings indicate that investigative journalism has a strategic function as a form of social control capable of exposing hidden cybercrime practices, promoting transparency, accountability, and policy reform. The criminological perspective provides an understanding of the dynamics of criminal behavior and the function of prevention, while Sharia law emphasizes the principles of justice, ethics, and victim restoration in cyber law enforcement. Integrating these two perspectives builds a framework for responsible, fair, and professional cyber journalism ethics. This research recommends strengthening the capacity of investigative journalists thru technology and legal training, as well as developing regulations that accommodate both positive legal aspects and Islamic values, in order to effectively and sustainably address the challenges of digital crime.*

**Keywords:** Investigative Journalism, Cybercrime, Criminology, Islamic Law

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran jurnalisme investigatif dalam mengungkap kejahatan siber (cybercrime) dengan pendekatan literatur yang mengintegrasikan perspektif kriminologi dan hukum syar'iah. Penelitian menggunakan metode studi literatur kualitatif-deskriptif dengan pengumpulan data dari jurnal akademik, buku teori komunikasi, etika media, kriminologi siber, serta literatur hukum Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa jurnalisme investigatif memiliki fungsi strategis sebagai kontrol sosial yang mampu membuka praktik kejahatan siber yang tersembunyi, mendorong transparansi, akuntabilitas, dan reformasi kebijakan. Perspektif kriminologi memberikan pemahaman tentang dinamika perilaku kriminal dan fungsi pencegahan, sedangkan hukum syar'iah menekankan prinsip keadilan, etika, dan pemulihan korban dalam penegakan hukum siber. Integrasi kedua perspektif ini membangun kerangka etika jurnalisme siber yang bertanggung jawab, adil, dan profesional. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan penguatan kapasitas jurnalis investigatif melalui pelatihan teknologi dan hukum serta pengembangan regulasi yang mengakomodasi aspek hukum positif dan nilai-nilai syar'iah guna menghadapi tantangan kejahatan digital secara efektif dan berkelanjutan.*

**Kata kunci:** Jurnalistik Investigasi, Kejahatan Siber, Kriminologi, Hukum Syari'ah



## A. Introduction

The rapid development of information and communication technology over the past few decades has brought about fundamental changes in various aspects of modern society. Digitalization has facilitated easier access to information, accelerated economic transactions, and opened up vast spaces for communication without geographical boundaries.

However, this technological advancement has also generated new and serious challenges, namely the proliferation of cybercrime, which not only violates the law but also threatens security, privacy, and social order. Cybercrime cases have become increasingly diverse and complex, ranging from identity theft, online fraud, hacking of government and private systems, and the dissemination of harmful content to cyberattacks capable of crippling critical infrastructure.<sup>1</sup>

This phenomenon demands more effective handling strategies, considering that the characteristics of cybercrime are markedly different from those of conventional crimes. Cybercrimes are transnational in nature, difficult to trace, and often involve the use of advanced technologies with continuously evolving modus operandi. On the law enforcement side, security authorities still face a number of obstacles, such as limited technical capacity, misalignment between existing regulations and technological developments, as well as insufficient coordination among law enforcement agencies.<sup>2</sup>

This situation has caused the process of law enforcement and prosecution to become slow and, at times, less effective. Moreover, most legal systems in countries with Muslim-majority populations, including Indonesia, still emphasize positive law without sufficiently

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<sup>1</sup> Mukum Syahrir and Saktiah, 'Efektivitas Hukuman bagi Pelaku Kejahatan Siber di Indonesia: Analisis Kriminologi dengan Metode Content Analysis', *Perkara : Jurnal Ilmu Hukum dan Politik*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2025), pp. 694–711.

<sup>2</sup> Trias Saputra Putri dzahra fatiha anwar Sidiq, 'Tantangan Penegakan Hukum Siber Di Era Lintas Negara Dan Upaya Harmonisasi Global', *Jurnal Risalah Kenotariatan*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2024), pp. 248–61.

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incorporating the principles and values of Sharia law, which offers a fundamental ethical perspective on issues of justice, honesty, and the prohibition of harm. These principles are, in fact, highly relevant in addressing crimes that occur within the digital sphere.<sup>3</sup>

Amid such complexity, investigative journalism emerges as a strategic and crucial social force in uncovering cybercrime.<sup>4</sup> The deep, systematic, and critical methods employed in journalistic investigation are capable of unveiling criminal practices that often remain hidden from both the public and law enforcement authorities. Investigative journalism not only presents factual information but also exposes criminal networks, the operational patterns of perpetrators, and the weaknesses within oversight systems that allow such crimes

to persist.<sup>5</sup> Thus, investigative media serve as a form of social control capable of exerting moral and political pressure on stakeholders to take decisive action in combating cybercrime.

However, the role of investigative journalism in the realm of cybercrime is not without challenges. Journalists are often confronted with security risks, intimidation, and ethical dilemmas when disclosing highly sensitive and technical information. In addition, journalists must possess sufficient knowledge of technology and law to ensure that the reports they publish are valid and can effectively support the process of law enforcement. Cultural barriers and institutional resistance also frequently hinder the ability of investigative media to

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Singgih Imam Wibowo, Munawar Akhmad, and Hidayatullah, 'Kendala Teknis dan Hukum dalam Proses Penyidikan Tindak Pidana Siber di Indonesia', *Jurnal Hukum Lex Generalis*, vol. 5, no. 7 (2024), pp. 1-15, <https://jhlgr.rewangrencang.com/>.

<sup>4</sup> Arifah and Abdul Rahman Ashidiq, 'Aspek Hukum dan Tantangan Etika Jurnalisik dalam Penyebaran Konten Viral di Era Digital

(Studi di Kabupaten Toboali, Bangka Selatan', *JSIM: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Pendidikan*, vol. 5, no. 4 (2024), pp. 847-58, <https://doi.org/10.36418/syntaximperatif.v5i4.486>.

<sup>5</sup> Syam Syahrianti, 'Jurnalisme Investigasi: Elemen, Prinsip Dan Teknik Reportase', *AL-DIN: Jurnal Dakwah dan Sosial Keagamaan*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2022), pp. 127-37.

voice the truth.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, strong efforts in capacity building and support from various parties are essential to strengthen the professionalism and integrity of investigative journalism in addressing cases of cybercrime.

A concrete example that illustrates the role of investigative journalism is the exposure of a data breach case in 2024, in which a group of crackers compromised millions of personal data records belonging to Indonesian citizens.<sup>7</sup> Through the diligent work of investigative journalists, it was revealed that the data leak occurred due to weak security systems within government institutions and private companies.<sup>8</sup> The media successfully uncovered the involvement of certain parties who attempted to exploit the leaked data for organized fraud and financial crimes. This investigative report prompted law enforcement authorities to

initiate further investigations and to strengthen data security regulations. In addition, cases of hoax dissemination and harmful content have been countered by investigative media, which exposed the networks behind the spread as well as the political motives driving them—thereby triggering reforms in social media policy.<sup>9</sup>

From an academic perspective, a study that integrates criminological literature and Sharia law is essential to provide a profound and comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. Criminological literature helps explain the dynamics of criminal behavior, motives, and patterns of cybercrime from both empirical and theoretical standpoints. Meanwhile, Sharia law provides a normative framework that emphasizes moral and ethical principles such as the prohibition of deceit and fraud, respect for

<sup>6</sup> Roswita Oktavianti, 'Perubahan Budaya Tinggi Berita Investigasi Menjadi Budaya Populer', *Jurnal Muara Ilmu Sosial, Humaniora, dan Seni*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2019), pp. 491–500.

<sup>7</sup><https://www.netmarks.co.id/post/serangan-siber-terbesar-yang-pernah-terjadi-di-indonesia> di akses, 02 Oktober 2025

<sup>8</sup> Imanuel Toding Bua and Nur Isdah Idris, 'Analisis Kebijakan Keamanan Siber di Indonesia:

Studi Kasus Kebocoran Data Nasional pada Tahun 2024', *Desentralisasi: Jurnal Hukum, Kebijakan Publik, dan Pemerintahan*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2025), pp. 100–14.

<sup>9</sup><https://lk2fhui.law.ui.ac.id/portfolio/pe-mbobolan-pusat-data-nasional-pembelajaran-pemerintah-dalam-penguatan-keamanan-perlindungan-data-nasional/> diakses, 02 Oktober 2025



property rights, and the obligation to safeguard the welfare of the community.<sup>10</sup> This approach not only enriches scholarly inquiry but also offers a more balanced solution by integrating formal legal aspects with the religious values widely upheld by society.

This research becomes highly relevant and timely when considering the escalating prevalence of cybercrime and the pressing need for a multilayered and integrated response. Furthermore, by examining the role of investigative journalism through the lens of criminological literature and Sharia law analysis, this study is expected to contribute strategically to the formulation of more effective and equitable policies. The findings of this research can serve as a foundation for developing a comprehensive model to combat cybercrime, encompassing the enhancement of investigative media capacity, the strengthening of legal regulations, and the integration of Sharia

values into the national legal system. Thus, it is hoped that a synergy between positive law enforcement and moral religious values can be achieved in fostering a safe, just, and civilized digital society.

Overall, this background not only highlights the urgency of the cybercrime issue and the importance of investigative journalism but also encapsulates the need for an interdisciplinary approach that simultaneously addresses legal, social, moral, and technological dimensions. A study that explores in depth the role of investigative media within this context will make a significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge and social practice, providing innovative solutions to one of the major challenges of the modern world.

In this context, cyber investigative journalism can serve as a powerful instrument of social control capable of uncovering digital criminal practices. Investigative journalists hold a strategic role in revealing public truths through in-

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<sup>10</sup> Imanuel Toding Bua and Nur Isdah Idris, 'Analisis Kebijakan Keamanan Siber di Indonesia:

Studi Kasus Kebocoran Data Nasional pada Tahun 2024'.

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depth, data-driven, and fact-based reporting. However, this practice also encounters ethical challenges such as privacy violations, information manipulation, and the potential for trial by media. Therefore, a strong moral and normative foundation is necessary in journalistic practice, one of which can be derived from the perspective of Sharia law.

From a criminological standpoint, investigative journalism functions as a mechanism of social control that helps prevent crime and reinforces public transparency. Meanwhile, in Sharia law, the principle of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil) underscores the essential role of society — including journalists — in upholding justice and preventing wrongdoing.<sup>11</sup>

Through a literature study approach, this research examines the integration of investigative journalism, criminology, and Sharia law as a theoretical foundation for

understanding the role of the media in uncovering cybercrime.

This study employs the library research method with a qualitative-descriptive approach. Data were obtained from a wide range of scholarly sources, including national and international academic journals in the fields of criminology, journalism, and Islamic law, as well as books on communication theory, media ethics, and cyber criminology. This research raises several essential questions: How does investigative journalism function in uncovering cybercrime? How does criminological theory view the role of investigative journalism as a social phenomenon? And how do the principles of Sharia law perceive the practice of investigative journalism in addressing cybercrime?

By integrating the perspectives of criminology and Sharia law, this study is grounded in the conceptual framework that investigative journalism can serve as

<sup>11</sup> Sukeni, 'Pelaksanaan Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar Sebagai Budaya Hukum dalam Penegakan Hukum (Studi Kasus Pada Organisasi Front

Pembela Islam di Surakarta)', *Dinamika Hukum*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2020), p. 238.



a strategic instrument in combating cybercrime—whether by increasing public awareness, promoting accountability among law enforcement agencies, or establishing normative legitimacy from an Islamic standpoint.

Therefore, an in-depth literature analysis of the role of investigative journalism in the context of cybercrime is expected to provide an interdisciplinary academic contribution as well as practical recommendations for strengthening the legal system and media ethics in addressing the challenges of digital crime.

## B. Discussion

### The Role of Investigative Journalism in Uncovering Cybercrime

In the current digital era, the advancement of information technology brings both convenience and risk, especially in the realm of cybercrime such as hacking, malware distribution, and data theft. Investigative journalism has an

important role in uncovering these various criminal practices that are often hidden and difficult for the public to monitor. Investigative reporters are tasked not only with finding facts but also with tracing digital footprints and conducting in-depth analysis to present the truth that can influence policy and public awareness. This role includes collecting digital evidence, conducting in-depth interviews with sources, and collaborating with digital forensic experts so that investigation results can support law enforcement.<sup>12</sup>

However, journalists are often confronted with the risk of cyber attacks targeting them and the media they use as an investigative tool, thus demanding adequate vigilance and legal protection.<sup>13</sup>

Theoretically, investigative journalism functions as a "watchdog" for society, which not only informs but also empowers the public through transparency and accountability regarding cybercrime

<sup>12</sup> Dawam Al-faqih, *Jurnalisme Investigasi Sebuah Aktivitas Berisiko bagi Jurnalis*, vol. 2 (2020), pp. 1–9.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

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perpetrators. By using data investigation and digital forensic techniques, journalists can break through technological barriers to expose complex and covert criminal practices.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the role of investigative journalism in the context of cybercrime is both strategic and challenging, given that legal protection and digital security are not always optimal.

Through the enhancement of specialized skills in technology and legal understanding, investigative reporters can trace cybercrime networks and uncover the perpetrators' *modus operandi*.<sup>15</sup> This supports law enforcement efforts by providing credible and comprehensive evidence. Awareness of the importance of investigative journalism also encourages the birth of regulations and policies to maintain the

safety and protection of journalists, although these regulations still need to be developed to be able to appropriately face cyber threats.

However, investigative journalists often face cyber attacks targeting them or the media institutions where they work, such as hacking and data theft. This threat can affect the personal safety of journalists and the freedom of the press, requiring clear and effective legal protection.<sup>16</sup> In Indonesia, this legal protection is regulated in the Criminal Code (*Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana - KUHP*) and the Information and Electronic Transactions Law (*Undang-Undang Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik - UU ITE*), although challenges remain in its implementation, especially against criminal acts that are increasingly complex and dynamic.

<sup>14</sup> Asfinawati, 'Peta Bahaya Kriminaliasi Jurnalis Menggunakan Uu Ite & Kuhp', *Aliansi Jurnalis Independen* (2016), pp. 1-24, [https://aji.or.id/system/files/2024-07/final20-20policy20briefuu20ite2028edit292028129\\_0.pdf](https://aji.or.id/system/files/2024-07/final20-20policy20briefuu20ite2028edit292028129_0.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Abdul Ashidiq, Lendra Kurniawan, and Ronaldi, 'Kajian Kriminologi: Mitigasi Cyber

Security Sebagai Penanggulangan Serangan Cyber Crime Dan Upaya Recovery (Studi Bank Sumsel Babel Syari'ah)', *Jurnal ISO: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik dan Humaniora*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2025), p. 9, <https://penerbitadm.pubmedia.id/index.php/iso/article/view/2315/2437>.

<sup>16</sup> Asfinawati, 'Peta Bahaya Kriminaliasi Jurnalis Menggunakan Uu Ite & Kuhp'.

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Furthermore, investigative journalism not only increases transparency and accountability in the digital era but also strengthens democracy and the right to free information. In the context of cybercrime, investigative reports are capable of driving change through public pressure and legal reform, strengthening the mitigation of cybercrime risks, and advocating for the protection of media workers who become targets of attacks.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, building the capacity of investigative journalists through digital technology training, legal support, and digital security systems is key to realizing the social function of journalism in effectively and sustainably combating cybercrime.

Utilizing investigative journalism techniques to uncover cybercrime involves various complementary methods and tools to obtain valid digital evidence and encourage law enforcement. One

main technique is Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT), which is the collection of information from open sources such as social media, discussion forums, and public websites. With OSINT, investigative journalists can extract information related to perpetrators, motives, and attack patterns without having to directly access the attacked system.<sup>18</sup> The Digital Footprinting technique is also very important, which traces the perpetrator's digital trail through analysis of IP addresses, domain registration, email headers, and other digital artifacts. This helps identify the location, identity, and *modus operandi* of cybercrime perpetrators. In addition, timeline analysis is conducted to create a chronological sequence of attack events, making it easier to understand how the attack occurred and its impact. Network traffic monitoring with tools such as Wireshark or tcpdump is also used to

<sup>17</sup> Ahmad Salman Farid and Muhammad Ardiansyah, 'Peran Jurnalis Investigatif dalam Mengungkap Kasus Narkoba: Analisis Tantangan dan Hambatan Investigasi Jurnalisisme', *MUKASI:*

*Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2023), pp. 186–95.

<sup>18</sup> Resti Ananda and Anky Hassaro, *Praktik Jurnalisisme Investigasi dengan Open Source Intelligence (OSINT)* (2022), pp. 1–45.



detect hidden attack and intrusion patterns.

In supporting these techniques, digital forensic tools are very helpful for the collection, recovery, and analysis of electronic data from infected devices. The forensic process begins with careful evidence collection to maintain data authenticity, followed by in-depth analysis, recovery of lost or deleted data, up to the interpretation and reporting of investigation results. These forensic techniques allow investigative journalists not only to obtain strong evidence but also to understand the behavior and patterns of cybercrime in detail.

Investigative journalists must also have sufficient technical skills and legal understanding to collaborate with forensic experts and law enforcement. They must be able to present investigation reports that are accurate, transparent, and easy for the public and policymakers to understand. Protection against journalistic backlash in the form of cyber

attacks is also an important aspect so that they can work safely and effectively.

Overall, investigative journalism with the techniques of OSINT, digital footprinting, timeline analysis, network monitoring, and digital forensics plays a central role in responding to and uncovering cybercrime.<sup>19</sup> This role not only increases public awareness and knowledge of the cybercrime threat but also strengthens legal efforts and prevention with strong and integrated evidence. Enhancing the capacity of journalists through digital technology and information security training is very important so that they become more proficient in carrying out this critical oversight function.

Through this approach, investigative journalism contributes to strengthening law enforcement efforts and preventing cybercrime, which has a direct impact on national and international digital security. As the threat of cybercrime increases, the presence of competent and protected

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<sup>19</sup> Imanuel Toding Bua and Nur Isdah Idris, 'Analisis Kebijakan Keamanan Siber di Indonesia:

Studi Kasus Kebocoran Data Nasional pada Tahun 2024'.



investigative journalists is crucial in maintaining information balance and justice in the digital world.

### **Theoretical Concept: Criminological Perspective on the Role of Investigative Journalism**

Investigative journalism has a strategic role in strengthening the justice system and crime control through the disclosure of criminal cases and deviations hidden from public view. From the perspective of criminology, which is the science that studies criminal behavior, causes, impacts, and crime prevention strategies, investigative journalism functions not only as an information conveyer but also as an effective social control tool. Investigative journalism works with deep research methods and strict fact verification, thus enabling the exposure of criminal networks, corruption, and illegal practices that often involve influential actors and are difficult for law enforcement to detect.

Criminology positions crime as a complex social phenomenon, which can be analyzed through various theories, ranging from classical theories that emphasize individual free choice, to structural and interactionist theories that explain crime as a result of social conditions and interactions between groups.<sup>20</sup> In this context, investigative journalism takes the position as a bridge between theory and practice because it is able to translate theoretical understanding into concrete and accountable observations and reports.<sup>21</sup> For example, social control theory, which highlights how social norms and institutions prevent criminal acts, can be tested and criticized through the results of investigative reports that uncover weaknesses in the surveillance mechanisms within certain institutions.

In addition, the role of investigative journalism within the framework of criminology is closely related to the function of indirect crime prevention.

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<sup>20</sup> Fatimah and Nuryaningsih, *Buku Ajar Kriminologi* (2018).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

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Comprehensive media exposure of criminal cases serves as a deterrent or deterrent effect for both potential perpetrators and responsible agencies. The openness and transparency built through investigative journalism create social and political pressure to improve the legal system and the enforcement of justice, thereby fostering a stronger and more participatory legal culture.

However, in practice, investigative journalists face a range of challenges that are also of concern within the field of criminology, such as the risk of criminalization, intimidation, and threats to personal safety.<sup>22</sup> A concrete example in Indonesia is the use of ambiguously interpreted articles within *the Undang-Undang Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik (UU ITE)*, which are often employed to criminalize journalists and whistleblowers, thereby creating a climate of fear and silencing dissent.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the aspects of legal protection

and ethics in journalism become crucial to discuss from a criminological perspective, so that the functions of social oversight and crime prevention can be carried out optimally without hindrances that may undermine democracy and human rights.

Overall, the integration of criminological theory and investigative journalism produces a paradigm that emphasizes information transparency and the eradication of crime through scientific methods and in-depth investigation. This paradigm reinforces the role of journalists as social and moral agents who contribute to the establishment of justice and societal security by uncovering hidden truths, monitoring the course of law enforcement, and promoting systemic reform grounded in valid and accurate empirical evidence. This approach encourages broad public participation in social oversight and strengthens the legitimacy of criminal justice policies oriented toward fairness and sustainable crime prevention.

<sup>22</sup> Reynaldo Asettyadi and Untung Sumarwan, *Tinjauan Newsmaking Criminology Dan Perlindungan Hukum Bagi Citizen Journalism*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2019).

<sup>23</sup> Imanuel Toding Bua and Nur Isdah Idris, 'Analisis Kebijakan Keamanan Siber di Indonesia: Studi Kasus Kebocoran Data Nasional pada Tahun 2024'.



Criminology, as a social science that studies the causes, impacts, and prevention of crime, regards investigative journalism as an important medium for exposing concealed criminal practices and as a tool of social control.<sup>24</sup>

Investigative journalism enables the disclosure of crimes that do not rely solely on police reports but also critically examine the legal system and law enforcement agencies. This aligns with the principles of criminology, which analyze crime from various sociological, psychological, and legal perspectives to achieve a comprehensive understanding of criminal phenomena.

Through the integration of criminological theory and the practice of investigative journalism, it is expected that a synergy will be established that can foster public awareness and vigilance toward criminal acts, while simultaneously assisting law enforcement institutions in reducing crime through

free, objective, and responsible media exposure. Thus, within the criminological framework, the role of investigative journalism serves as a transparent, educational, and preventive instrument of social control in addressing the dynamics of crime in society.

In criminological studies, cybercrime is understood as a manifestation of contemporary crime influenced by social, technological, and economic dynamics. Several criminological theories are particularly relevant for analyzing cybercrime. **First**, the Anomie Theory explains that crime occurs due to an imbalance of social norms and values, especially in the virtual world, which is often perceived as a free space with minimal supervision. Perpetrators of cybercrime frequently believe that conventional norms do not apply in the digital realm, leading them to violate legal boundaries. **Second**, the Differential Association Theory posits that criminal

<sup>24</sup> Gumelar Duana, Ali Masyar, and Cahya Wulandari, 'Overview of Criminological Theory in Cyber Crime (Customer Data Leakage Cases)',

*Kasus Kebocoran Data Nasabah*) Duana, Masyhar, vol. 11, no. 2 (2024), p. 2024.



behavior results from learning processes and social interactions within groups, including online communities. Cybercrime offenders acquire techniques and justifications for their actions from specific groups or communities that endorse such behavior. **Third**, the Social Control Theory emphasizes the importance of strong social bonds and effective social control mechanisms to prevent deviant behavior. The lack of such control within the digital space enables cybercrime to flourish. **Fourth**, the Neutralization Theory involves the rationalization process employed by offenders to justify their criminal acts—for instance, by assuming that cybercrime does not cause real harm to victims or that the rules of the virtual world differ from those of the physical world.<sup>25</sup>

Within a scientific framework, the role of investigative journalism in addressing cybercrime extends beyond merely uncovering facts; it also functions as an

agent of social change and a reinforcement of the social control system. Supported by criminological theoretical frameworks, investigative journalism can more effectively articulate and analyze criminal behavior, offenders' motivations, and the broader societal impacts of cybercrime.

The emphasis on the theories of anomie, differential association, social control, and neutralization provides a strong academic foundation for analyzing how cybercrime occurs and how investigative journalism can play a role in mitigating such risks. The synergy between criminological theory and the practice of investigative journalism is essential in developing comprehensive strategies for the prevention and enforcement of laws against cybercrime.

Thus, this study underscores the importance of a multidisciplinary approach, wherein criminology provides the theoretical foundation, while investigative journalism serves as the

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<sup>25</sup> Hardianto Djangih and Nurul Qamar, 'Penerapan Teori-Teori Kriminologi dalam Penanggulangan Kejahatan Siber (Cyber Crime)',

*Pandecta: Research Law Journal*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2018), pp. 10–23.

practical instrument for effectively uncovering and addressing cybercrime in the digital era.

### **Sharia Law Perspective: Ethics and Justice in Cyber Investigation**

Sharia law refers to the set of divine rules and legal principles established by Allah SWT through His revelation, namely the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This law governs all aspects of Muslim life—ranging from worship, morality, and social relations to criminal and civil law. The primary purpose of Sharia is to provide righteous guidance for human conduct and to lead believers toward happiness and well-being in both this world and the hereafter.

In the application of criminal law, or *jinayah*, Sharia distinguishes punishments based on the type of offense, namely *hudud* (punishments explicitly prescribed by divine law), *qisas* (retaliatory justice or equal retribution), and *ta'zir* (discretionary punishments determined

by a judge according to the circumstances).

Sharia law is not merely ritualistic; it also governs interpersonal relations, encompassing aspects of justice and ethics in social life. In the context of crime and law enforcement, Sharia emphasizes justice, the protection of individual rights, and the execution of fair punishment grounded in strong and credible evidence.

Sharia law emphasizes the values of honesty, transparency, and justice as foundational principles for legal protection and law enforcement, including within the digital realm and in addressing cybercrime. In the context of cyber investigation, this concept extends beyond the mere application of Islamic criminal law to encompass the primary objectives of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, which include the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.

From an ethical standpoint, Sharia law demands integrity in every stage of law enforcement, meaning that authorities must carry out their duties with full trustworthiness and without

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manipulation. Justice in cyber investigations entails not only retributive measures against offenders but also prioritizing the restoration and rehabilitation of both victims and perpetrators, in accordance with the principles of *ta'zir* and restorative justice. Cybercrime refers to criminal acts committed through digital technology, such as hacking, data theft, online fraud, and the dissemination of false information. These crimes cause tangible harm and disrupt the rights of individuals and society.<sup>26</sup>

Since the phenomenon of cybercrime is a relatively new issue that is not explicitly addressed in classical Sharia texts, scholars employ the method of *ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning) using the principle of *qiyas* (analogical deduction) to establish appropriate rulings. Cybercrimes are generally subject to *ta'zir* punishment, whereby judges

determine fair sanctions based on the extent of harm and social impact.

Ethics in Sharia law is of paramount importance, particularly in the investigative process, which must be carried out with *amanah* (honesty and integrity), *'adl* (justice — treating all parties fairly without bias or abuse of authority), transparency supported by strong evidence, and the avoidance of *fitnah* (defamation) or unnecessary violations of privacy. Justice, in this context, means that offenders should receive proportionate punishment, while also allowing space for rehabilitation and the restoration of victims' rights to achieve social balance and harmony.

Justice in cyber investigation thus signifies law enforcement that not only avoids arbitrary punishment but also prioritizes restitution for damages and the prevention of recurring crimes. This concept aligns with the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, which aims to safeguard five

<sup>26</sup> Khoirunnisa Khoirunnisa<sup>1</sup> and Didi Jubaidi<sup>2</sup>, *Politeia : Journal of Public Administration and Political Science and International Relations Indonesia's Digital Security Strategy: Countering*

*the Threats of Cybercrime and Cyberterrorism*, no. 2 (2024), pp. 62–82, <https://journal.idscipub.com/politeia>.



essential objectives: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property.

The application of *ta'zir* sanctions must correspond to the degree of harm caused, ranging from fines, imprisonment, and exile to corporal punishment or even the death penalty in severe cases. Through the concept of *restorative justice*, Sharia emphasizes the restoration of victims' rights and the rehabilitation of offenders to prevent the recurrence of wrongdoing. Meanwhile, the *shar'i* judicial process upholds clear procedural standards and safeguards human rights throughout the legal proceedings, including the requirement that all judgments be based on strong evidence and the testimony of just and credible witnesses.

### **Integration of Criminology and Sharia Law in the Ethics of Cyber Journalism**

The integration of criminology and Sharia law in cyber journalism ethics is a multidisciplinary approach that aims to

create moral and legal standards in journalistic practice in the digital realm by considering social, legal, and religious aspects. This theoretical concept embraces the understanding of criminology as the science that studies the phenomenon of crime sociologically, biologically, and psychologically, and Sharia law as a framework of Islamic norms and laws that regulate human behavior in the context of justice and ethics, specifically related to the prohibition of slander (*fitnah*), defamation, and the spread of hatred.<sup>27</sup>

As defined by E.H. Sutherland, criminology is the science that studies crime as a social phenomenon covering the process of law-making, law violation, and society's reaction to the violation. Criminological studies do not merely look at crime from a formal legal perspective but also from the perspective of its causes, which can be biological (physical and psychological characteristics of the

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<sup>27</sup> Azhar Ar and Yasminah Mandasari Saragih, *Criminology approach in solving cyber crime*, vol. 15, no. 01 (2024), pp. 72-7.



perpetrator), psychological (mental and emotional state), and socio-cultural (environment and societal norms) aspects. This approach helps in understanding the motive and impact of criminal acts, including crime in the digital or cyber realm, such as the spread of hoaxes and cyberbullying.

Sharia law is a system of rules derived from the Qur'an, the Hadith, and the *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) of scholars that governs all aspects of life, including the ethics of communication and information. In the context of cyber journalism, Sharia law emphasizes the importance of preserving the dignity of individuals and groups, avoiding slander and false news (*ghibah* and *qadhf*), and upholding justice and truth in the dissemination of information. The prohibition against spreading false or harmful information constitutes a core value consistent with the objective of maintaining social order and moral integrity within Islamic society.

Cyber journalism ethics, as a space of interaction, requires adaptive and holistic guidelines given the open, fast-paced, and

misinformation-prone nature of the digital world. In this regard, the integration of criminology assists in identifying and analyzing patterns of information misuse that may constitute cyber offenses, while Sharia law provides the moral and legal foundation concerning the prohibition of slander, the protection of privacy rights, and the promotion of social responsibility. This combination produces a framework of journalistic ethics that is not only normative in terms of positive law but also grounded in Islamic religious values, which bind journalists to a profound sense of responsibility toward truth and its societal implications.

Here are some concepts for the integration model that can be applied:

- 1) Multidimensional assessment: Combining criminological theories in understanding the motive and pattern of cyber criminality with the principles of Sharia law in maintaining morals (*akhlak*) and the law of communication.



- 2) Development of Islamic cyber journalism code of ethics: Based on the principles of justice, truth, and the prohibition of slander in Islam, accompanied by an understanding of the cybercriminal aspect to prevent acts that violate law and social norms.
- 3) Education and training: Educating journalists on the aspects of cyber criminal law and Sharia ethics so that they can manage information with responsibility and professionalism.
- 4) Supervision and law enforcement: Ensuring the implementation of the code of ethics and Sharia law with the support of effective legal mechanisms related to digital content that harms individuals and society.

The integration of criminology and Sharia law in cyber journalism ethics is a theoretical concept that combines social and legal analysis in the digital context with Islamic moral principles. This model is not only oriented towards the prevention and prosecution of cybercrime but also instills strong ethical values to

realize responsible, just, and dignified journalism in the modern digital era.

### C. Conclusion

Investigative journalism has a crucial role in uncovering and tackling cybercrime through a deep, systematic, and evidence-based approach. This role not only functions as social control that encourages transparency and accountability but also as an agent of change capable of influencing policy and public awareness. By integrating the perspective of criminology, which provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the dynamics of criminal behavior and its prevention mechanisms, and the principles of ethics and justice in Sharia law, investigative journalism can prioritize a law enforcement approach that is fair and moral, while also strengthening the social and religious values held by society.

This integration produces a model of cyber journalism ethics that not only

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prioritizes truth and justice but is also oriented towards social responsibility, professionalism, and the protection of media workers from cyber threats. Therefore, the development of the technical, legal, and ethical capacity of investigative journalists, as well as the strengthening of regulations that combine national law with Sharia rules, is highly necessary to create effective and sustainable cybercrime eradication. Thus, the synergy between investigative journalism, the science of criminology, and the principles of Sharia law is an important foundation for building a safe, just, and dignified digital society in the modern era.

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