

The “No Viral, No Justice” Phenomenon and Its Implications for Due Process in the Legal System

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ABSTRACT

The “No Viral No Justice” phenomenon reflects a shift in the relationship between society, social media, and the law enforcement system in the digital age. This study aims to analyze the implications of this phenomenon on the application of the *due process of law* principle within the legal system. The method used is normative legal research with a conceptual and statutory approach, supported by qualitative analysis of empirical practices. The research findings indicate that virality on social media significantly influences the response of law enforcement officials, thereby creating disparities in case handling and potentially undermining the principles of equality before the law and the presumption of innocence. Furthermore, public opinion pressure can interfere with the independence of legal proceedings and shift the orientation of justice from procedural to perceptual. Although social media functions as an effective tool for social control, the dominance of unverified information risks undermining the integrity of the judicial system. This study concludes that this phenomenon poses a serious challenge to the rule of law and demands strengthened regulations, greater professionalism among officials, and improved public legal literacy to maintain a balance between transparency and judicial independence.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The “No Viral No Justice” phenomenon is a contemporary social phenomenon that reflects a shift in the relationship between society, digital media, and the law enforcement system. This term implies that a legal case tends to receive serious attention from law enforcement officials only after it has gone viral on social media. In the context of a rule-of-law state (*rechtstaat*), this situation raises fundamental questions regarding the independence and

integrity of the judicial systems. Normatively, law enforcement should be grounded in the principles of *equality before the law* and *due process of law*, not in the pressure of fluctuating public opinion [1]. Therefore, this phenomenon is relevant for academic study, particularly from the perspectives of law and procedural justice.

Advances in information and communication technology have created a new public sphere that enables the public to actively participate in monitoring the course

of law enforcement. Social media, as the primary instrument in the digital age, functions not only as a means of communication but also as an effective tool for social control. However, the intensity of the spread of unverified information has the potential to create bias in legal processes. In many cases, public pressure generated through virality actually influences the direction of investigations and prosecutions, thereby raising concerns about the disregard of the *presumption of innocence* [2].

The main issue raised in this study is how the “No Viral No Justice” phenomenon affects the application of the principle of *due process of law* within the legal system. Additionally, this study questions to what extent the legitimacy of public opinion intervention in the law enforcement process can be justified within the framework of a democratic state. The imbalance between legal responses to viral cases and non-viral cases indicates the potential for procedural discrimination. This has implications for the decline in public trust in law enforcement institutions as well as the weakening of the rule of law itself.

Previous literature has discussed the relationship between the media, public opinion, and law enforcement. Studies on “*trial by media*” indicate that massive media coverage can influence the perceptions of judges and law enforcement officials. Additionally, other research highlights how the digitization of information accelerates the formation of social pressure on legal institutions. However, studies specifically linking the phenomenon of virality to the principle of *due process of law* remain relatively limited, particularly in the Indonesian context [3]. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap with a more comprehensive approach.

The approach used in this study is a legal-normative approach combined with a conceptual analysis of social phenomena. This study will examine the legal norms governing judicial proceedings and compare them with empirical practices occurring in society. Additionally, a critical analysis of the role of social media in shaping public

opinion is a key component of this study. Thus, this research is not merely descriptive but also analytical and evaluative of the existing legal system.

The objective of this study is to identify and analyze the implications of the “No Viral No Justice” phenomenon on the principle of *due process of law*. Additionally, this study aims to formulate conceptual recommendations to strengthen the integrity of the judicial system amid the pressures of information digitization. This study is also expected to contribute to the development of legal theory, particularly regarding the relationship between law, media, and society in the digital age.

Philosophically, this study is grounded in the belief that the law must remain an objective instrument of justice and not be subject to external pressures. The dominance of unchecked public opinion has the potential to shift the function of the law from *the rule of law* to *the rule of opinion*. In this context, it is important to reaffirm that justice must not be determined by the popularity of a case, but rather by legal truth tested through valid procedures. Therefore, strengthening the principle of *due process of law* is an urgent priority in addressing the challenges of the digital era.

The novelty of this research lies in its effort to integrate the analysis of digital social phenomena with the fundamental principles of procedural law. This study views the “No Viral No Justice” phenomenon not only as a social symptom but also as a structural challenge to the modern legal system. Through an interdisciplinary approach, this study aims to offer new perspectives on understanding the dynamics of law enforcement in the digital age and to propose innovative and practical solutions. Thus, this research holds both theoretical and practical significance for the development of contemporary legal science.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *The Concept of Due Process of Law in the Legal System*

The principle of *due process of law* is a cornerstone of modern legal systems,

ensuring that every individual receives fair treatment through lawful legal procedures. The concept of *the rule of law* emphasizes that no one may be punished without undergoing a clear and fair legal process [4]. This principle has since evolved within both Anglo-Saxon and civil law systems as a safeguard for the protection of human rights. In the context of procedural law, *due process of law* encompasses the right to a defense, *the presumption of innocence*, and an independent and impartial judiciary [5].

Procedural justice is an integral part of substantive justice, wherein fair procedures lead to fair rulings [6]. In practice, the application of this principle often faces challenges, particularly when there is external intervention such as political pressure or public opinion. Therefore, the integrity of the judicial system heavily depends on the consistent application of legal procedures without discrimination [7].

In the Indonesian context, the principle of *due process of law* is reflected in various laws and regulations, including the 1945 Constitution and the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP). However, the implementation of this principle still faces various obstacles, particularly regarding the professionalism of law enforcement officials and external influences on the judicial process. This indicates that while the principle is normatively recognized, it still requires strengthening in practice [8].

2.2 *The “No Viral No Justice” Phenomenon and the Role of Social Media*

The “No Viral No Justice” phenomenon has emerged as a consequence of the development of social media, which enables the public to voice injustices widely and rapidly. The *network society* has transformed communication patterns into more decentralized and participatory ones [9]. In this context, social media functions as a tool for social control capable of pressuring law enforcement institutions

to act more responsively toward specific cases.

However, the existence of social media also raises new issues, namely the emergence of a “*trial by media*” that can undermine the independence of the legal process. Massive media coverage can create public pressure that leads to bias in law enforcement [10]. This is reinforced by research showing that the virality of a case is often a primary factor in determining the priority of handling by law enforcement officials [11].

On the other hand, this phenomenon can also be understood as a form of public distrust in the formal legal system. When the public feels that legal channels do not provide justice, they tend to use social media as an alternative to gain attention and justice [12]. Thus, “*No Viral No Justice*” is not merely a communication phenomenon but also a reflection of a crisis of legitimacy within the legal system.

2.3 *Social and Legal Implications for Procedural Justice*

The implications of the “*No Viral No Justice*” phenomenon for the legal system is highly complex, particularly regarding procedural justice. Legal legitimacy is heavily dependent on the public’s perception of the procedural justice being applied [13]. When legal processes are influenced by public pressure, this legitimacy can erode because the system is perceived as no longer objective and impartial.

Furthermore, public pressure generated through social media has the potential to undermine the principle of *the presumption of innocence*. Individuals involved in a case may face social judgment before a final and binding court ruling is issued [14]. This not only harms the parties involved but also undermines the fundamental principles of law that uphold justice and legal certainty.

Furthermore, this phenomenon also poses a dilemma for law enforcement officials between meeting

public demands and maintaining the integrity of legal procedures. The judicial system must be able to maintain a balance between transparency and independence so as not to be trapped by external pressure [15]. Therefore, strengthening regulations and ethics regarding the use of social media is necessary to prevent interference with ongoing legal processes.

Thus, an examination of the “No Viral No Justice” phenomenon indicates a significant relationship between the development of information technology, societal behavior, and the dynamics of law enforcement. Existing literature underscores the importance of upholding the principle of *due process of law* as the cornerstone of the legal system, while also anticipating the negative impacts of public opinion intervention in the digital age.

3. METHODS

This study employs a normative legal research design using a *conceptual approach* and a *statutory approach*. These approaches were selected because the research focuses on analyzing legal norms governing the principle of *due process of law* and their relevance to the “No Viral No Justice” phenomenon in legal enforcement practice. The subject of this study is the legal system and law enforcement agencies, while the object of the study encompasses legal norms, legal principles, and social practices related to the influence of social media on legal processes. The research was conducted from 2024 to 2026, focusing on Indonesia as the study location, given the high penetration of social media and the evolving dynamics of law enforcement.

The research instruments used consist of document analysis and *library research*, encompassing primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials. Primary legal materials include legislation such as the 1945 Constitution, the Criminal Procedure Code (KUHP), and regulations related to information technology. Secondary legal

materials include books, scientific journals, and previous research relevant to the research topic, while tertiary legal materials consist of legal dictionaries and encyclopedias. The sampling method in this study employs *purposive sampling*, which involves the selective selection of data sources based on their relevance and credibility regarding the issue under examination. Data collection was conducted through literature review and documentation of cases reflecting the phenomenon of virality in law enforcement.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively using descriptive-analytical and interpretive methods. The collected data was then analyzed by examining the alignment between applicable legal norms and empirical practices observed in society. Additionally, a critical analysis was performed to identify gaps between the principle of *due process of law* and the reality of law enforcement influenced by public opinion on social media. The results of this analysis were then used to formulate legal arguments and conceptual recommendations aimed at strengthening the integrity of the judicial system in the digital age. Through this approach, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the issues under examination.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that the “No Viral No Justice” phenomenon has become a recurring pattern in law enforcement practices in Indonesia. This finding is based on an analysis of various cases that garnered widespread attention after going viral on social media. In many situations, the response from law enforcement officials increased significantly after public pressure intensified. This indicates a correlation between the virality of information and the acceleration of case handling. This situation demonstrates that public exposure exerts pressure on legal institutions. However, this also raises

questions regarding the consistency of law enforcement [16].

This study found that there is a disparity in case handling between viral and non-viral cases. Cases that do not receive public attention tend to undergo slower processes or are even neglected. Conversely, viral cases often receive priority in investigations and prosecutions. This indicates an imbalance in the implementation of the principle of equality before the law. Such imbalance has the potential to create procedural injustice within the legal system. Thus, this phenomenon contradicts the fundamental principle of *due process of law* [17].

From a procedural law perspective, this finding indicates external interference with the independence of law enforcement officials. Public pressure generated through social media can indirectly influence legal decisions. This has the potential to shift the orientation of law enforcement from legal norms to public perception. Consequently, law enforcement officials face a dilemma between maintaining procedural integrity and responding to public demands. This situation highlights structural challenges within the modern legal system. Therefore, mechanisms to strengthen the independence of legal institutions are necessary [18].

Research also indicates that social media functions as an effective tool for social control. The public can quickly voice dissatisfaction with legal processes perceived as unfair. In this context, virality becomes a means to advocate for justice. However, this social control is often not balanced by adequate information verification. Consequently, circulating information may be biased or even misleading. This poses a risk to the objectivity of legal processes [19].

The research findings reveal that this phenomenon is also influenced by the level of public trust in legal institutions. Low public trust drives the use of social media as an alternative to seek justice. In this situation, virality becomes a strategy to attract the attention of law enforcement officials. This indicates a crisis of legitimacy within the legal system. Public trust is a key factor in

the effectiveness of law enforcement. Therefore, increasing transparency and accountability is crucial.

In a comparative analysis, similar phenomena were also found in various countries with high social media penetration. This indicates that “No Viral No Justice” is not merely a local phenomenon but a global one. However, its impact varies depending on the strength of legal institutions in each country. Countries with strong legal systems tend to be better equipped to withstand public pressure. Conversely, countries with weak legal systems are more vulnerable to external intervention [20]. Therefore, strengthening legal institutions is a critical factor.

This study also found that the principle of *presumption of innocence* is often disregarded in viral cases. Individuals involved in legal cases frequently face public judgment before a court ruling is issued. This creates a social stigma that is difficult to erase. Additionally, public pressure can influence the opinions of law enforcement officials. This situation has the potential to undermine the integrity of the judicial process. Therefore, protection of individual rights must be strengthened [21].

In the context of justice theory, this phenomenon indicates a shift from procedural justice to opinion-based justice. Justice is no longer determined solely by legal procedures but also by public perception. This contradicts the concept of *the rule of law*, which emphasizes the supremacy of the law. This shift has the potential to create legal uncertainty. Such uncertainty can erode public trust in the legal system. Therefore, it is important to refocus on legal procedures [22].

Research findings also indicate that law enforcement officials often adopt a pragmatic approach when responding to viral cases. This approach aims to mitigate public pressure and maintain social stability. However, this pragmatic approach may compromise fundamental legal principles. This creates an ethical dilemma in law enforcement. Authorities must balance public interest with legal integrity [23].

Therefore, clear guidelines are needed for dealing with public pressure.

This study found that existing regulations do not specifically address the impact of social media on legal processes. This regulatory gap results in a lack of clear boundaries regarding public intervention. Consequently, law enforcement officials lack firm guidelines for dealing with this phenomenon. This creates room for inconsistent practices. Therefore, adaptive regulatory updates are needed to keep pace with technological developments. Such regulations must be able to maintain a balance between transparency and independence [24].

From a sociological perspective on law, this phenomenon demonstrates a dynamic interaction between law and society. Law is no longer static but is influenced by social and technological developments. Social media has emerged as a new factor shaping these dynamics. This indicates that the law must be able to adapt to changing times. However, such adaptation must not compromise fundamental legal principles [25]. Therefore, a balanced approach is necessary.

This study also identifies the role of influencers in shaping public opinion regarding legal cases. Influencers wield significant influence in disseminating information and shaping public perception. In some cases, the opinions formed by influencers can influence the direction of case handling. This demonstrates that the power of social media lies not only in the number of users but also in the actors involved. Therefore, digital literacy is of utmost importance.

The research findings indicate that social media can serve as an effective advocacy tool for victims of injustice. In many cases, victims who previously received no attention eventually achieved justice after their cases went viral. This highlights the positive aspect of this phenomenon. However, such effectiveness should not serve as the primary basis for law enforcement. Justice must remain grounded

in lawful procedures. Therefore, the role of social media must be appropriately balanced.

In a normative analysis, this phenomenon conflicts with the principle of legal certainty. Legal certainty demands that every case be treated consistently without being influenced by external factors. However, in practice, virality becomes a factor influencing case handling. This creates uncertainty within the legal system. Such uncertainty can harm the public. Therefore, efforts are needed to strengthen legal certainty.

This study also found that this phenomenon impacts the workload of law enforcement officials. Viral cases often require faster and more intensive handling. This can divert attention from other equally important cases. Consequently, an imbalance occurs in the distribution of resources. This indicates that virality can affect the efficiency of the legal system. Therefore, case management must be improved.

From a criminal law perspective, this phenomenon can affect the evidentiary process. Public pressure may prompt authorities to expedite the evidentiary process without following complete procedures. This has the potential to lead to errors in law enforcement. Such errors can have serious implications for individual rights. Therefore, the principle of due diligence must be upheld. Law enforcement must remain grounded in valid evidence.

This study also indicates that this phenomenon can affect judicial independence. Judges, as the decision-makers in cases, must be free from external pressure. However, in high-profile cases, public pressure can influence a judge's perception. These risks compromising the objectivity of the ruling. Therefore, protections for judicial independence must be strengthened. This is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the judiciary.

In the context of legal ethics, this phenomenon poses new challenges for the legal profession. Lawyers, prosecutors, and judges must be able to maintain professionalism amid public pressure. Professional ethics are a key factor in

preserving legal integrity. Without strong ethics, law enforcement can be influenced by external interests. Therefore, legal ethics education must be improved. This is essential for addressing the challenges of the digital age.

Research findings indicate that this phenomenon also impacts public perceptions of justice. The public tends to believe that justice can only be achieved through viral content. This perception can erode trust in the formal legal system. Low levels of trust can hinder the effectiveness of law enforcement. Therefore, efforts are needed to rebuild public trust. This can be achieved through legal reform.

In policy analysis, this phenomenon highlights the need for regulations governing the use of social media within a legal context. Such regulations must be able to control the dissemination of information that could disrupt legal processes. Additionally, regulations must protect individual rights from public judgment. This is crucial for maintaining a balance between freedom of expression and justice. Therefore, policymakers must be responsive to technological advancements.

This study also found that this phenomenon can trigger legal populism. Legal populism occurs when legal decisions are influenced by majority pressure. This has the potential to disregard the principle of objective justice. Legal populism can undermine the judicial system. Therefore, it is important to maintain the independence of the law from political and social pressure. This is a major challenge in the digital age.

From a communication theory perspective, this phenomenon highlights the crucial role of framing in shaping public opinion. The way information is presented can influence the public's perception of a case. Biased framing can create pressure on law enforcement officials. This demonstrates that the media holds significant power in influencing the law. Therefore, media accountability must be strengthened. The media must present information objectively.

Research findings also indicate that the public's legal literacy remains low. Many

people do not fully understand legal processes. This makes them susceptible to inaccurate information. Low legal literacy reinforces the "No Viral No Justice" phenomenon. Consequently, legal education is crucial. Such education must be conducted on an ongoing basis.

This study found that this phenomenon also impacts victim protection. In some cases, victims actually experience revictimization due to social media exposure. Victims' personal information can spread widely without adequate protection. This indicates that social media can have negative consequences. Therefore, protection for victims must be strengthened. This is essential for safeguarding human rights.

In a critical analysis, this phenomenon reveals a paradox in law enforcement. On one hand, social media can accelerate justice. On the other hand, social media can undermine procedural justice. This paradox highlights the complexity of the relationship between law and technology. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is necessary. This approach must consider various aspects.

This study also shows that this phenomenon can influence public policy. Viral cases often prompt the government to adopt policies quickly. However, policies adopted hastily can create new problems. Therefore, policies must remain grounded in thorough analysis. This is crucial for maintaining policy quality. The government must exercise caution when responding to public pressure.

From an administrative law perspective, this phenomenon can influence public officials' decisions. Public officials often respond to public pressure to maintain the institution's image. This can compromise the principle of objectivity. Therefore, effective oversight mechanisms are necessary. These mechanisms must be able to safeguard the integrity of decisions. This is crucial to prevent the abuse of power.

This study found that this phenomenon also impacts the judicial system as a whole. The judicial system must face increasingly complex pressures. These

pressures originate from various sources, including social media. This indicates that the judicial system must be more adaptive. However, such adaptation must still uphold legal principles. Therefore, reform of the judicial system is essential.

In an evaluative analysis, this study demonstrates that this phenomenon requires a comprehensive approach. Addressing it involves not only regulation but also education and institutional reform. A multidisciplinary approach is necessary to understand this phenomenon. This indicates that law cannot stand alone; it must interact with other disciplines. Therefore, collaboration is essential.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the “No Viral No Justice” phenomenon has significant implications for the principle of *due process of law*. This phenomenon creates new challenges in law enforcement in the digital age. Consequently, serious efforts are needed to uphold the integrity of the legal system. Such efforts must involve various stakeholders. Thus, the legal system can continue to function optimally. This study makes a significant contribution to understanding the dynamics of contemporary law.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the “No Viral No Justice” phenomenon has significant implications for the application of the *due process of law* principle within the legal system, particularly in the context of law enforcement in the digital age. This phenomenon indicates a trend where virality

on social media influences the response of law enforcement officials, thereby creating disparities in case handling and potentially undermining the principle of equality before the law as well as the presumption of innocence. Although social media can function as a tool for social control that promotes transparency and accountability, the dominance of unverified public opinion risks creating external pressure that interferes with the independence of the legal process. Thus, this phenomenon reflects a shift from procedural justice toward justice based on public perception, which ultimately risks undermining the integrity of the judicial system and eroding public trust in the rule of law.

As a recommendation, there is a need to strengthen regulations specifically governing the relationship between social media and the law enforcement process to maintain a balance between public transparency and judicial independence. Additionally, enhancing the professionalism and integrity of law enforcement officials must be a priority to ensure they are not easily influenced by public opinion pressure. The government and relevant institutions also need to develop legal literacy and digital literacy programs for the public to prevent the spread of biased and misleading information. Furthermore, institutional reform within the judicial system must be carried out continuously to ensure that the principle of *due process of law* remains the primary foundation in every legal process, so that justice does not depend on virality, but rather on objective and procedural legal truth.

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