

Legal Protection of Children in Media Reporting Through the Implementation of Child-Friendly News Guidelines

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ABSTRACT

This study examines legal protection efforts for children in media reporting through the implementation of Child-Friendly Reporting Guidelines (PPRA). The mass media has a strategic role in conveying information to the public but is also responsible for protecting children's rights, privacy, and dignity. Children who are the subjects of the news, either as victims or witnesses, often face the risk of exploitation and privacy violations, especially in sensational reporting. This article aims to encourage the press community to produce news that has a positive nuance and is oriented towards protecting the identity and rights of children in order to minimize the negative impact of reporting. The study uses normative legal methods to analyze relevant journalistic regulations and codes of ethics. The results of the analysis show that implementing PPRA is an important legal and ethical instrument to maintain a balance between press freedom and child protection while encouraging more responsible journalistic practices.

Keywords: Media, Legal Protection, Children, Journalism.

I. Introduction

Media is a communication tool connecting two parties, functioning as a bridge or intermediary. McLuhan and Quentin Fiore stated that "the media every age becomes the essence of society," which shows that media and society are closely interrelated. Media is an important element in people's lives, whether they realize it or not because it positively and negatively impacts people's behavior patterns (Khatimah, 2018). The delivery of information in the form of news requires a means of communication called the media. Mass media acts as a forum for delivering the results of journalistic work. The public uses this term to refer to the place of news publication. Journalistic works produced by journalists are published through the mass media. Without media support, news in journalism loses its meaning. Thus, the mass media is the leading platform for delivering news to the public. Mass media refers to its use as reading material for the general public. The mass media also provides information about changes, ongoing processes, and results that have been or will be achieved. Its primary function is to disseminate information widely and promote products (Saragih, 2019).

Journalism utilizes media as a platform to disseminate information delivered through news. In its development, mass media now comes in various forms that are increasingly diverse. The emergence of the internet has further strengthened the view that media, especially online media, provides excellent benefits in life, including journalism. Besides functioning as a tool for information dissemination, journalists also use

social media as a reference or news material source. Journalism means journalism or care. The word "journal" comes from the meaning of report or record. Therefore, journalism is a series of activities that include searching, collecting, compiling, processing, writing, editing, presenting, and disseminating news through mass media. According to Law No. 40/1999 on the Press, Chapter I Article 4, a journalist is an individual who regularly carries out journalistic activities. Thus, anyone who works in news-related activities, whether in newspapers, magazines, radio, television, movies, or news agencies, can be called a journalist. Journalists have the right to create quality news but must also uphold moral and social responsibility not to harm other parties. The moral aspect relates to conscience. A journalist must consider whether the news presented is based only on "news value" or reflects his moral responsibility. Effendy emphasized that journalists must have a journalistic conscience that encourages them to assess the news from a personal point of view, for example, considering what if the person being reported is a member of their own family. Thus, the written news results from mature thinking and reflects wisdom (Nuraeni, R. 2017).

Children are a gift from God and have high dignity as individuals, so they deserve adequate protection. As the nation's next generation, children must be protected from negative information or news that can affect their development. A good physical and mental environment is a crucial foundation for children to grow and develop optimally and adequately toward positive maturity and contribute to their best interests. In this era of increasingly sophisticated information, the legal protection of children in the context of the media is a critical issue (Press Council Regulation No. 1/Peraturan DP/II/2019). Legal protection of children's rights ensures that children are treated correctly and fairly to achieve their welfare. This is important because children are unable to protect themselves from various mental, physical, and social threats that can arise in various aspects of life. Therefore, children need help from others to protect themselves, given that their situation and conditions are very different compared to adults. Child protection aims to create an environment that allows every child to obtain their rights. Protecting children also means protecting humanity as a whole.

Article 1 Paragraph 2 of Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection stipulates the definition of "child protection is all activities to ensure and protect children and their rights so that they can live, grow, develop, and participate optimally by the dignity of humanity, and receive protection from violence and discrimination" (Kanza, 2018). Often, children are the object of news coverage that presents facts and can potentially cause profound psychological impact. Insensitive reporting that does not take into account children's interests can violate their rights and add to harmful social stigma. Many news stories are released without regard to child protection guidelines, so children are often exposed to information that is not suitable for their needs. In an atmosphere of intense competition in the media world, journalists often do not consider whether an event is newsworthy and what impact it has on the news subject. The media is often caught up in the practice of over-exploiting news, thus ignoring the privacy rights of sources, especially when it comes to children. The desire to increase readership or ratings of television programs can reduce the sensitivity of journalists to the effects of their reporting. Therefore, in the context of news involving children, the media should be wiser in paying attention to the future of children affected as victims and be more selective in choosing news that is suitable for publication. Implementing Child-Friendly Reporting Guidelines (PPRA) is critical to minimize these risks (Lismartini & Nany, 2020).

PPRA includes protection for children who have not reached the age of 18, whether living or deceased and covers all marital statuses, whether married or unmarried. In cases of violence, the identity of the child must be strictly preserved. The Indonesian Press Community, consisting of journalists and news organizations, has agreed to abide by the PPRA. The Press Council also recognizes that reporting on child victims is often not managed properly and wisely. Therefore, journalists are expected to carefully protect child victims in the performance of their duties so that the media can avoid undue offenses and support law enforcement while preventing sexual crimes from occurring. A child's identity, which includes their name, photo, and other information that can identify them, such as their family name, should be protected by not including their full address or other specific information (Suci, 2021). Indonesia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and implemented Law No. 23/2002 on Child Protection, updated to Law No. 35/2014.

As such, this legal framework is expected to provide better and more comprehensive protection for children nationwide (Waktu Indonesia, 2019).

II. Research Method

The research method used in this study is normative legal research, which focuses on tracing and analyzing applicable legal regulations and underlying norms. Data collection is done by gathering legal materials through literature study, which includes reviewing books, academic references, and relevant laws and regulations. In addition, previous research related to the issue being studied will also be considered, along with other documentation supporting the analysis. With this approach, the research aims to understand better the existing legal foundation and how it is applied in a broader context.

III. Result and Discussion

3.1. Legal Protection of Children in Media Reporting Through the Implementation of Child-Friendly News Guidelines

Guidelines for reporting on children are developed by considering various legal norms in the law, journalistic code of ethics, and other relevant guidelines. It ensures that children's rights and protection are well maintained in every media news coverage (Lismartini & Nany, 2020).

1) Law No. 40/1999 on the Press:

- Article 3, paragraph 1: The national press is a medium of information, education, entertainment, and social control.
- Article 5, paragraph 1: The national press is obliged to report events and opinions with respect for religious and racial norms of public decency and the principle of presumption of innocence.
- Article 6: The national press carries out its role as follows:
 - Fulfill the public's right to know;
 - Upholding the fundamental values of democracy, promoting the rule of law and human rights, and respecting diversity;
 - Develop public opinion based on precise, accurate, and correct information;
 - Conduct supervision, criticism, correction, and suggestions on matters relating to the public interest;
 - Fight for justice and truth;

2) Law No. 32/2002 on Broadcasting

- Article 4, paragraph 1: Broadcasting as a mass communication activity has a function as a medium of information, education, healthy entertainment, control, and social glue.
- Article 5: Broadcasting is directed to:
 - Uphold the implementation of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia;
 - Maintain and improve morality and religious values as well as national identity;
 - Improve the quality of human resources;
 - Maintain and strengthen the unity of the nation;
 - Raising awareness of law-abidingness and national discipline;
 - Channeling public opinion and encouraging the active role of the community in national and regional development and preserving the environment;
 - Prevent ownership monopolies and promote fair competition in broadcasting;

- Encourage the improvement of the people's economic capacity, realize equity, and strengthen the nation's competitiveness in the era of globalization;
 - Provide correct, balanced, and responsible information;
 - Promote national culture.
- 3) Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection as amended by Law No. 35/2014 on the amendment of Law No. 23/2002 on Child Protection
- Article 1, paragraphs 1 and 2:
 - A child is someone who is not yet 18 (eighteen) years old, including children still in the womb.
 - Child Protection is all activities to ensure and protect children and their rights so that they can live, grow, develop, and participate optimally by the dignity of humanity and receive protection from violence and discrimination.
 - Article 15: Every child has the right to protection from:
 - Abuse in political activities;
 - Involvement in armed disputes;
 - Involvement in social unrest;
 - Involvement in events that contain elements of violence;
 - Involvement in war; and
 - Sex crimes
 - Article 20: The State, Government, Local Government, Community, Family, and Parents or Guardians are obliged and responsible for implementing Child Protection.
- 4) Law No. 11/2012 on the Juvenile Justice System
- Article 19:
 - The identity of the Child, Child Victim, and/or Child Witness must be kept confidential in reporting in the print or electronic media.
 - The identity, as referred to in paragraph (1), includes the name of the Child, the name of the Child Victim, the name of the Child Witness, the name of the parents, address, face, and other things that can reveal the identity of the Child, Child Victim, and/or Child Witness.
 - Article 97: Any person who violates the obligations as referred to in Article 19 paragraph (1) shall be punished with a maximum imprisonment of 5 (five) years and a maximum fine of Rp500,000,000.00 (five hundred million rupiah).
- 5) Journalistic Code of Ethics (2006)
- Article 5: Indonesian journalists do not mention and broadcast the identity of victims of moral crimes and do not mention the identity of children who are perpetrators of crimes. Interpretation:
 - Identity is all the data and information concerning a person, making it easy for others to trace.
 - A child is a person who is less than 16 years old and unmarried.
 - Article 9: Indonesian journalists respect the rights of sources about their private lives, except for the public interest. Interpretation:
 - Respecting the rights of sources is an attitude of restraint and caution.
 - Private life refers to all aspects of a person's life and family other than those related to the public interest.
- 6) Code of Journalism Ethics - Alliance of Independent Journalists (KEJ-AJI)
- Article 10: Journalists use ethical and professional means to obtain news, images, and documents.
 - Article 17: Journalists maintain the confidentiality of confidential sources of information, the identity of victims of sexual crimes, and perpetrators and victims of underage criminal acts.
 - Article 18: Journalists respect privacy, except for the public interest.

7) AJI Member Code of Conduct

- Article 35: AJI members adhere to the principle of protecting minors (under 18 years old) who are perpetrators or victims of criminal acts. The form of protection is carried out by disguising their identity. The child's identity includes full name, photo, address, school, names of parents and next of kin, and other inherent characteristics. If it is urgent to interview a child, they must be authorized and accompanied by a competent adult. The spirit of protecting children involved in criminal cases is to protect their future.
- Article 36: AJI members disguise the identity of all victims of sexual crimes and perpetrators of sexual crimes who have links that could lead to the disclosure of the victim's identity. Child and adult victims are not revealed by their full names, photos, addresses, schools, names of parents and next of kin, and other inherent characteristics. Child victims and/or perpetrators of sexual crimes may not be interviewed.

8) Cyber Media News Guidelines:

- Section 3 on User Generated Content
 - Cyber media must include terms and conditions regarding User-Generated Content that does not conflict with Law No. 40 of 1999.
 - Cyber media requires users to give written consent for the publication of User-Generated Content.

9) Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) Broadcasting Code of Conduct and Broadcast Program Standards (P3SPS)

- Article 14
 - Broadcasters must provide protection and empowerment to children by broadcasting programs at the right time by the classification of broadcast programs.
 - Broadcasters must consider the interests of children in every aspect of broadcast production.

3.2. Guidelines to be Followed in Media Reporting on Children through the Implementation of Child-Friendly News Guidelines

The Child-Friendly Reporting Guidelines are guidelines aimed at the media that report issues related to children sensitively and responsibly. Child-friendly reporting aims to protect children's rights, safeguard their interests, and ensure they are not exploited in the news. 23 guidelines must be adhered to in media reporting on children through implementing child-friendly reporting guidelines (Lismartini & Nany, 2020):

1) Attention to Children's Issues

Journalists should pay special attention to child-related issues to promote children's rights. This means covering news about children and making it a prominent focus in the news. Journalists must strive to make the news interesting and relevant to compete with other news that may attract more public attention. Regarding journalism principles, journalists should strive to keep children's issues visible and discussed in society.

2) Protecting the Dignity of the Child

Journalists are responsible for maintaining and protecting children's dignity in the news. This can be done by covering and reporting on children's issues proportionally and avoiding sensationalism that can be harmful. For example, in the case of child victims of violence or bullying, it is important for journalists to not only emphasize the dramatic aspects but also consider the long-term impact of the news on the child's psychology and reputation.

3) Equal Treatment

Journalists must treat all children fairly and without discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, race, or other backgrounds. Equal treatment means journalists must value children's competence

as news sources, regardless of social or educational status. Creating an inclusive space where every child feels valued and recognized is important.

4) **Balanced Coverage**

Journalists should strive to present information in a balanced manner in cases of controversy, prioritizing the child's interests. This means journalists should conduct in-depth research to understand different points of view and ensure that all relevant voices are heard. Journalists should reflect these perspectives somewhat if there are multiple versions of the story without putting the child at a disadvantage.

5) **Avoiding Exploitation**

Journalists must be cautious not to exploit children for business or clicks. In covering news involving children, it is important not to dig deeper into the story than necessary, especially to create a sensation or attract readers' attention. Journalists must have strong ethics in assessing whether information taken from children is genuinely relevant and not harmful.

6) **Protecting Children's Identity**

Journalists must protect children's identities in all reports, especially for children in conflict with the law, victims of violence, or suffering from diseases that can cause stigma. This includes names, photos, addresses, schools, and other characteristics that can make children easily recognizable. To maintain privacy, journalists can use pseudonyms, disguise faces in photos, or take pictures remotely to prevent recognition.

7) **Assistance during Interview**

Journalists should ensure that a parent or guardian accompanies children when conducting interviews with children. This is important to protect the child's well-being and ensure they do not feel pressured or coerced into sharing information that could harm themselves or their families.

8) **Interview Ban on Open Cases**

Journalists are not allowed to interview child witnesses in cases where the perpetrator of the crime has not been caught. This is to avoid possible intimidation or influence that could interfere with the ongoing legal process.

9) **Ban on Interviewing Victims of Sexual Crimes**

Interviewing child victims of sexual crimes can exacerbate the trauma experienced. Journalists should respect the child's healing process and not make things worse by repeating the traumatic experience through questions.

10) **Prohibition of Interviewing Children under LPSK Protection**

Journalists are not allowed to interview children under the protection of the Victim Witness Protection Agency. This protects the child from potential harm and ensures the legal process can run properly.

11) **Honoring Children's Reluctance**

If the child shows reluctance to be interviewed, journalists should respect that decision. No further attempts should be made to coerce the child into talking, which may add to the child's distress and discomfort.

12) **Prohibition of Enticing Children**

Journalists should not lure children with money, goods, or other gifts to get information. This unethical approach can undermine children's trust in journalists and the media.

13) **Prohibition of Exploitation Photos or Videos**

Journalists should avoid taking photos or videos that could sexually exploit children. This is not only unethical but can also have legal consequences.

14) **Ban on Interview Engineering**

Journalists should not manipulate or direct children to do things that can make the news results more interesting. All information must be obtained naturally and not forced.

- 15) Consideration of News Impact
Journalists should always consider the impact of reporting on children in the short and long term. If there is any doubt about the potential negative impact, it is better to report on the general situation of the child rather than specific details that could be harmful.
- 16) Accuracy of Information
In reporting on children's issues, journalists must ensure that all information presented is accurate and in line with reality. This involves verifying data and facts with reliable sources.
- 17) Be Careful in Reporting Missing Children
Journalists should be cautious about reporting the identity of a missing or hostage child. If the child's identity must be revealed, this should be done carefully to ensure the information can assist in the discovery effort.
- 18) Avoid Mentioning Identities Related to Politics
Journalists should avoid mentioning the identity of children involved in parents' political activities. If necessary, the information should be conveyed in general terms without mentioning specific individuals.
- 19) Avoid Sadistic News
Journalists should avoid reporting that contains elements of sadism or cruelty towards children. Reporting that describes in detail violence against children should be avoided to protect the dignity and psychological well-being of children.
- 20) Hide Identity in Dangerous Situations
Journalists should conceal the child's identity in cases where reporting may pose a threat or stigma. This includes considering how reporting may affect the child's reputation and safety in the community.
- 21) Publicize Identity in Achievement
If children make positive achievements that can inspire other children, journalists may publish their identity. However, the emphasis should remain on the achievement, not the child's identity.
- 22) Avoid the Sensational Approach
Journalists should avoid sensationalist approaches that may aim to attract more attention but may harm children. Reporting should focus on relevant facts and context, not exaggeration or drama.
- 23) Identify Visuals Worth Airing
Journalists should carefully consider the visuals or images of children shown in the news. In the context of conflict or disaster, visuals of children as victims can increase public empathy, but should be presented in a way that respects the child's dignity and circumstances, not in a distressing or harmful way.

IV. Conclusion

Implementing the Child-Friendly Reporting Guidelines is important in protecting children's rights in media coverage. The mass media must carry out its role responsibly by respecting children's identity and privacy, especially for children who are victims or witnesses in some instances. Through the implementation of these guidelines, the media can prevent the exploitation of children and ensure more ethical and balanced reporting. In addition, compliance with laws and journalistic codes of ethics is necessary to create a safe and supportive environment for children. Implementing these guidelines is expected to improve the quality of journalism and provide better legal protection for children in Indonesia..

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