

# The lady Escort Vulnerabilities at Work

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## ABSTRACT

The number of Entertainment venues in Jakarta increased by 40%. In Jember Regency, karaoke entertainment venues are spread across urban and sub-district areas. Every karaoke place provides a Lady Escort or karaoke guide. The purpose of this study was to explore sexual activity by Lady Escort in the karaoke room. This research uses a qualitative design by studying the role of lady escort in the karaoke business and its effect on health and social issues. The respondents are lady escorts in karaoke houses who have been working for at least one year. The data is collected over six months through observation and in-depth interviews with the lady escorts of karaoke houses. The results of the study: the lady escort looks like sexy girls who guided customers in karaoke. The Activities in the karaoke room such as singing while drinking alcohol and smoking. When accompanying customers, they often receive sexual acts such as being held, hugged, and kissed. A lady escort should obey anything attractive to her. If a lady escort refused, then the customers could get angry. They could continue their sexual activity at another place like in the hotel.

**Keywords:** Sexual Activities, Lady Escort, Customer, Karaoke Room

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, there have been numerous entertainment businesses. In 2017, the number of entertainment businesses in Jakarta rose to 40%. The rise significantly affected hotel, restaurant, and entertainment tax revenue for the past three years. In 2014, the hotel, restaurant, and entertainment tax was Rp 3,7 trillion, while in 2016, it was increased to Rp 4.6 trillion [1].

From 1970 until 1994, entertainment businesses spread around big cities such as Surabaya and Malang. Meanwhile, today, businesses are spread across the whole region [2]. This business proliferates in Jember. People in Jember enjoy karaoke as an alternative recreation after finishing their high tension activities on that day. Despite its recreational side, the rapid growth of the karaoke business negatively affects society. The number of karaoke businesses is in line with the potential violation of the karaoke business operation, like business license violations and non-licensed business operations. This business will disturb the public order and decrease the regional revenue or society's welfare even further.

Along with the increasing number of karaoke businesses in the Jember regency, several business

license violations are also. Muhammad Hatta reported to Faktualnews.com on Tuesday 8 October 2019 10:09 WIB that a karaoke house, Camp'us 888, located on Jalan Jawa, Summersari Sub-district, Jember Regency, East Java was unlicensed. This place was also the scene of the persecution of former council member Maman Sabariman. The existing permission was from the Tourism Agency of Jember, issued on 6 April 2016. Thus, the karaoke house located in the campus area was considered as violating the rule written in Permendagri 138 Article 9 Verse 1 stated that in terms of implementing the licensing and non-licensing services, the Integrated Licensing Service Agency (PTSP) held the administrative responsibility.

In contrast, technical responsibility was held by the local authorities [3]. The entertainment business, especially karaoke, always provides lady escort. The job of a lady escort is accompanying or guiding the guest during the session in a karaoke room. Based on the previous research by Zamroni Rudi Nugroho in 2012, lady escort sometimes also provides sexual service for the guest. Some of them are even students [4]. If this trend continues, there is a concern about the rise of Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) and social issues in Jember Regency.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Karaoke house is used as covert prostitution where certain women accompany the guest to sing and provide sexual service [5]. Much research has been created and invented to obtain a better result and benefit human beings and as the reference for future research—the involvement of students as lady escort. The karaoke guide will not only accompany the guest in enjoying the karaoke but also provide sexual service. The most dominant factor which causes the students to work as part-time escorts is their inability to fulfil their consumptive and hedonic desire and an urge to get abundant materials in a short time [4].

The entertainment business proliferates in Jember Regency. However, some of the entertainment areas are unlicensed. Even some are violating the permit. Further, the entertainment area is also used as a drug-dealing place. There was also a persecution report in an entertainment area that later created social issues [3]. Therefore, a study is needed related to activities in karaoke rooms and can learn the role of female escorts in the karaoke business and their influence on health and social problems.

### 2.1. Gender

Based on the feminism study, gender means characters or traits attached to a particular sex, either in custom or psychological behaviour, not the biological difference. The gender equality activists define sex as the biological identity since born, such as man or woman based on their genitals. Meanwhile, gender is the 'social genital' in the masculine or feminine attribute given in the socio-cultural construct. They argue that masculine attributes shall not always be attached to men, and the feminine one shall not permanently be attached to women since those attributes are not their real nature. Instead, they are formed through socio-historical events where the traits are not fixed and can be learned. Thus, they are interchangeable across sex. This kind of definition is different from the initial meaning in its original language, and there were some problems when it was introduced to another language. No language or culture can differentiate the biological sex (genitals) and social 'genitals.' The origins of the term 'gender' were inseparable from the humanity study, especially psychology and the trans-sexual trends [6]. Therefore, gender can be defined as a socio-cultural construct of the difference between men and women concerning their role, behaviour, and interchangeable characteristics [7].

### 2.2. Entertainment Business and Karaoke

Karaoke is defined as a form of entertainment where people sing along with music and lyrics text. People doing karaoke will sing with their voices following the music played. They could sing free as they wanted to be based on their abilities. Karaoke services include several

essential integrated components, namely video, text, and sound [8].

The government policy and supervision regarding karaoke service are as follows: Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 9 1990 and Number 10 2009 concerning Tourism; Law Number 32 2004 concerning Regional Government; Regional Regulation of Grobogan Regency Number 3 2011 concerning Nuisance Permit; Regent Regulation Number 17 2013 concerning Karaoke Business Operation [9].

### 2.3. Women's Role in Business

Any discussion topic regarding women and their attractiveness will always be interesting. However, on the other side, for years, media always depicted women's roles as sexual objects or handled only the domestic role [10]. Night female workers mentioned in this research are women working as a waitress at nightclubs. Not only serve drinks, but the waitresses also talk with the guest and become guides for those nightclubs providing karaoke rooms [11].

Business owners consider employing women for the nightclubs as something less profitable that they tend to ignore. This kind of mistreatment is also supported by the reluctance of the female workers to demand their rights due to the fear of being fired. It raises the business owners' arrogance. They use this arbitrary principle while employing female workers. The workers shall agree to any terms and conditions offered to remain employed, and those against it may quit [12].

### 2.4. Health and Social Issue

Covert prostitution within the karaoke business is quite harmful since it will increase STD such as HIV/AIDS, which is currently incurable [13]. Several theories that can be used to analyze deviant behaviour are as follows: Theory of Functionalism by Emile Durkheim. Emile Durkheim argued that collective conscience in society is caused by heredity, diverse physical environment, and social environment. Theory of Differential Association by Edwin H. Sutherland. He argued that deviance happens due to differentiation or differential association [8].

## 3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative design by studying the role of lady escort in the karaoke business and its effect on health and social issues. The respondents are lady escorts in karaoke houses who have worked for at least one year and agree to be interviewed.

The data is collected over six months through observation and in-depth interviews with the lady escorts of karaoke houses. The result of the in-depth interview will be analyzed through the qualitative method.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Results

Karaoke house is chosen as one of the entertainment places by most people [14], including the society of Jember Regency. People are visiting karaoke houses for relaxation by sharing their hobbies in singing and enjoying the music with their companions. The existence of a karaoke house in a certain region could affect the local communities' social, cultural, and economic condition of the local communities because they can use it to earn a living.

Based on the observation result, the karaoke houses in Jember were located in two central regions: urban area (administrative area) and suburb (Kalisat, Tanggul, Balung, Puger, Kencong). Instead of being licensed as karaoke houses, some places are licensed as café with karaoke facilities added later. The facilities were added to attract the customer.



**Figure 1** Karaoke Rooms in Jember City

Karaoke houses in Jember Regency are divided into several categories based on their room size: Small, Medium, and Large. The customer will choose the room based on the number of visitors. If there were two visitors, they would be suggested to take the small room. 3-4 visitors will be suggested to take the medium room. If there were more than four visitors, the large room would be suitable. They could also rent the room based on their desired consideration. The rate will be varied based on its size and rent duration (per hour). A larger room will cost more expensive. The lowest rate for small rooms in the urban area during the daytime was Rp 20.000. The cost will be varied at each house. The rates for urban and suburban karaoke houses are also different. One of the karaoke houses offers a room package plus two bottles of alcoholic drinks for Rp 250.000. The karaoke house also provided lady escort (karaoke guide) service whose age range is between 18 up to 45 years old. The karaoke house staff will offer the visitor if they want to hire a lady escort or not. The visitor is permitted to bring their lady escort. The escort rate is Rp 100.000 per hour aside from the tip they receive from the guest.

The interview with the lady escorts explained that they got at least Rp 400.000 for a single session (singing fee and additional tip). Sometimes they got up to Rp 1.500.000 for a six-hour session (singing fee and additional tip).

*"... it is varied, the basic fee is 100.000 per hour, but sometimes they gave us an additional tip. We got at*

*least 400.000 at the end of the session, depends on the guest generosity (laugh)" (Lady Escort A)*

If the karaoke management hired the escort, they would have to pay 25% of their introductory rate to the management. For example, if their rate is Rp 100.000, they give Rp 25.000 to the karaoke staff. There is no fixed rule regarding revenue sharing (just the average calculation).



**Figure 2** The atmosphere in the Karaoke Room

The lady escort will usually wear sexy looks while working. Based on the interview with the escorts, the activities inside the karaoke room were usually singing, drinking alcohol, and smoking. When accompanying the guest, the lady escorts often received sexual treatment such as being touched, hugged, and kissed. They must obey what the guest wants. If they refuse, the guest will feel offended, and they might express their anger by throwing bottles at the escort, swearing, and sending them out of the room.

*"As an escort, we have to sing along with the guest, as well as drinking and smoking" (Lady Escort A)*

*"Surely the guest was touchy... and we have to comply if they hugged or kissed us" (Lady Escort B)*

*"if we refused, we would be scolded, hit with bottles, and sent out of the room. Then we will not get paid while that is the only way we could do to make money" (Lady Escort A)*

The karaoke management made several rules regarding the limitation of activities allowed in the karaoke room, such as the prohibition of getting naked and having sexual intercourse. If the guest and the escort were going to do so, they had to do it at another place outside the karaoke house.

*"there were several things we shall not do, such as getting naked or making love. We have to get into another place if we want to do it." (Lady Escort B)*

*"Usually, the guest requested to have intercourse after drinking sessions, and I could only agree to it. It is a risk in this job, and because we are tipsy, so we did not realize it." (Lady Escort A)*

There were not many choices for the escort other than giving the guest what they wanted. Alcohol also took part in this matter that they crossed the borderlines.

Any reasons which turn someone into an escort are the singing hobby and economic motive. A lady escort shall sing well. Any woman with excellent singing skills will easily do their job as a lady escort [15]. Meanwhile, the economic factors ranging from their inability to pay the debt for their living cost since there is not anyone who provides a living for them (widow), and because there are no other jobs, they could find due to their lack of skills. The significant amount of money usually lures them to work as an escort [16]. Here is the explanation:

*"... I am a widow. I need much money for living. I also have to pay my debt, so I choose this job." (Lady Escort A)*

*"I am also a widow, a junior high school graduate. I could only sing..." (Lady Escort B)*

*"...I could save some money from this job. I want to start a business in the future" (Lady Escort A)*

*"What business?" (Researcher)*

*"I do not know yet. I will just focus on saving for now" (Lady Escort A)*

The escorts often received unpleasant treatments from the karaoke guest, such as swear words and bad words. This treatment mostly happened under the effect of alcohol that they did not aware of what they did. However, the escorts will ignore this behaviour since they know it was the effect of alcohol. They realized that it was part of their job.

*"... I have never been beaten. Just the rude words, being shouted at, or sometimes mocked because I am overweight..." (Lady Escort B)*

*"It is fine, and it is just the risk of being in this job" (Lady Escort B)*

*\ "It happened when the guests were drunk." (Lady Escort A)*

On the other hand, some guests did not ask the escort to drink alcohol with them. They only asked them to guide the song and tipped them.

*"...there were some good guests too who only asked us to sing along and tipped us." (Lady Escort A)*

However, the job of a lady escort was not only as of the karaoke guide. They had to be ready for additional requests aside from karaoke service, such as having sexual intercourse. This action belongs to prostitution. Prostitution itself is considered an illegal informal

economic activity that violates the law [17]. Prostitution is a type of human trafficking which partly caused by poverty and low education [18].

Their job was quite risky to be infected by sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Gonorrhoea, and syphilis [19]. Besides, there are also Lymphogranuloma Venerum (LGV), Bacterial Vaginosis, Herpes Genitalis, Kondiloma Akuminata, Trichomoniasis, candidiasis vaginalis [20]. Based on the in-depth interview, the lady escorts were also concerned about being infected by STD. However, they argued that it was the risk of their job, and they checked their genital condition every day.

*"...of course I am afraid of it, but that is the risk, I think." (Lady Escort B)*

*"...yes, I am so afraid. I check my Miss V every day." (Lady Escort A)*

Regarding the use of contraception, they stated that they would sometimes use it. They will use it if they remember, and the guest agrees to do so. However, if they forgot or the guest asked them not to use it, they will not use it.

*"Sometimes we use it, and sometimes do not. Just when we remember or when we were sober enough." (Lady Escort A)*

*"Some guests refused to use it..." (Lady Escort A)*

Meanwhile, safe sexual activity and wearing condoms are the primary efforts to prevent sexually transmitted infections during penetrative sexual activity [21]. When they were asked if they had any intention to quit this job, they said yes.

*"Of course, there must be a time when we have to stop. I am not doing it again when I am older (laugh)" (Lady Escort A)*

*"Also, the guests will seek for the younger ones." (Lady Escort A)*

*"Surely I will stop if I have collected much money for my business capital." (Lady Escort B)*

*"I will stop when I have found someone who can accept me as who I am right now." (Lady Escort A)*

The escorts are now only focused on living their life instead of thinking about their future.

*"I am working for my life today, and the future can wait." (Lady Escort A)*

The escorts also ignore what other people think of them. They only think about themselves, and they argue that they decide their own lives.

*"I do not care with people, or whatever they think about me. It is my life." (Lady Escort A)*

*"...I just do not care with them. Let them talk." (Lady Escort B)*

#### 4.2. Discussion

Women played a significant role in the karaoke business – in this term, it was defined as a karaoke house or café with karaoke facilities. Women were used as tools to attract customers. Moreover, women working as lady escort tended to be treated arbitrarily as the guest wished. They could not refuse since they considered that this was part of their job, and if refused, they would not be paid and even got some physical and verbal abuse. Activities within a karaoke room involved: singing, smoking, and drinking alcohol. Women who chose to work as an escort were productive age, minimum skills, widow status, and in high demand for money and materials. There is an intention to quit their current job. However, they still need to collect a certain amount of money or find the right person to live with before doing so. They did not always use condoms during sexual intercourse, which later raised their concern about being infected by the sexually transmitted disease. However, so far, they check the condition of their genitals every day.

Based on the research in Makassar City regarding their opinion on karaoke guides, they tend to judge them negatively from their appearance, wearing a mini dress and revealing clothes that could feature the person's sensuality [22]. Other research in Demak, Central Java, explained that the existence of karaoke houses was considered as violating public order due to their noises, the lady escort appearance, and the alcoholic drinks flow [23]. Therefore, the karaoke houses operation shall be organized further. It will be solved if there is a clear and firm regulation from the Government.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

Karaoke business with poor management is highly potential to spread the sexually transmitted disease. The local communities are also disturbed by the noises from karaoke houses and concerned about its lousy influence on society through activities such as smoking, drinking alcohol, and those lady escorts revealing wearing clothes that featured their sensuality.

The contribution of this research is to provide an understanding of opinion regarding the implementation of regulation in managing karaoke business, norms enforcement, and legal protection for the karaoke guide. We also suggested that the Health Institution provide

counselling regarding sexually transmitted diseases (STD).

#### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All Authors contribute to the research design and implementation, result analysis, and text writing.

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