Self-concept of Victims of Cybersexual Harassment on Instagram

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ABSTRACT

Cybersexual harassment is a form of harassment in online media due to the technology, internet, and social media advancement. The global use of social media and networks has risen the forms of harassment on social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Some forms of harassment that often occur on Instagram are posting content containing sexual subjects, inappropriate images or videos, and giving sexual comments, either in the comment columns or direct messages. This study aims to investigate the self-concept of victims of cybersexual harassment on Instagram. The method employed descriptive qualitative to understand the phenomenon of cybersexual harassment from the victim's perspective. Researchers applied the purposive sampling technique to determine subjects who met the set criteria as samples in this study. The data collection technique is in-depth interviews with 4 informants who have fulfilled the criteria and documentation to obtain data according to the research objectives. The results of this study indicate that victims of cybersexual harassment perceived negative self-concepts and positive as well in a portion. Those with negative self-concept had low self-confidence, felt unaccepted by their community, considered others better, preferred left alone, and found it difficult to express their feelings after encountering sexual harassment on Instagram. Meanwhile, those with positive self-concept felt that others had a good view of them, rarely compared themselves and perceived the strengths of others as motivation, obtained values to build a positive view of themselves, and had a positive attitude in interpreting and evaluating actions about the harassment they experienced.

Keywords: Self-Concept, Cybersexual harassment, Instagram.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology and information has created a variety of interaction processes that occur globally. The very existence of the internet has led human civilization to a more modern, sophisticated, and practical direction [1]. According to TNS Chief Development Officer Mathew Frogatt, the internet has become a significant part of life in the 21st century (2016: 3). Social media, also known as social networks, is a component of new media that provides opportunities for users to participate, interact, and connect with other users on various social media platforms.

The current globalization has transformed the use of the internet on a global scale which becomes the emergence of online gender-based violence [2]. Behavioral deviations during social media interaction also appear following the technological advances, particularly in social media which includes pornography, obscenity, sexual content, or illegal sexual activities [3], as well as bullying and fraud[4].

Based on the research "The Use of Social Media on Sexual Harassment of Students in the Working Area of Harapan Baru Community Health Center, Samarinda", found that there was a significant influence on the use of social media on cybersexual harassment [5]. Instagram is one of the social media that features images or pictures, captions, instastories, and comment sections. In a survey conducted by Aljohani et al, it was discovered that Instagram is one of the most sought-after social media [6]. Of 415 respondents, Instagram reached 253 users. The popularity of Instagram is also supported by research conducted by Alhabash asserting that from research...
involving 396 students, the intensity of Instagram users was more dominant than Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter[7].

Cybersexual harassment ‘online sexual harassment’ is one of the unusual behaviors that is dispersed on social media. The study "Victim Blaming Cases of Sexual Harassment against Via Valen on Instagram" revealed that most of the online harassment cases were found from social media of 66%. Of those, 22% were derived from the comment section, and approximately 25% of victims stated that they were the targets of online sexual harassment which frequently happens on social media [8]. The phenomenon of cybersexual harassment did not exclude teenagers who were dominated by the age of 19-34 years [9].

Based on data obtained by SAFEnet, an organization that strongly strives for digital rights in Southeast Asia discloses that there are many forms of online gender-based violence, including intent to deceive, online harassment, hacking, illegal content, invasion of privacy, threats to leak personal images or videos, and online recruitment[10]. The center of online sexual harassment comprises complimenting body shape, asking about private parts, sending photos, pornographic links or videos, asking victims to send exposed images or videos, posing threats of rape, inviting to intercourse activity, and confessing to using the victims’ bodies as sexual images [10].

The research entitled "Dynamics of Sexual Harassment on Social Media" found that harassment on Instagram could be directly and implicitly conveyed through comments as experienced by the Indonesian badminton athlete in his @jonatanchristiofficial account. In the research "Social Media and Online Gender-Based Violence amid the COVID-19 Pandemic", based on the National Commission for Eradication of Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) data, victims of online gender-based violence reached 241 cases and in 2020 the number become around 940 cases. The victims would experience psychological impacts from the harassment such as guilt, shame, and humiliation [11]. This finding is in line with the self-concept a person has about how someone perceives himself or herself. According to Arafa et al., cybersexual harassment affects psychological disorders; sadness, loneliness, and guilt [12].

Based on this background, this research formulated a problem: how is the self-concept of victims of cybersexual harassment that occurs on social media Instagram? This research is essential to probe because by considering the literature and the phenomenon of the harassment cases in various forms that occur on social media, especially Instagram, it is substantial to understand how the self-concept of victims of cybersexual harassment on Instagram is in order to provide a comprehension to social media users to become wiser in using it. Based on the data from Komnas Perempuan, sexual violence during the COVID-19 pandemic worsened with a total of 940 cases [10].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Interpersonal communication is a direct communication activity between a person and the other user and the sender can send messages directly and the recipient can receive and respond directly as well. Interpersonal communication is also communication whose messages are modified in verbal or nonverbal form. In the book The Interpersonal Communication Book, interpersonal communication is defined as the process of sending and receiving messages between two people or among a small group with a certain effect and instant feedback [13]. Self-concept is a person's views and feelings about oneself. Anita, et al. explicate self-concept as "all you think and feel about you, the entire complex of beliefs and attitudes you hold about yourself" [14].

Self-concept is an indispensable part of a human. Self-concept is used to understand how individuals view themselves. Several factors influence self-concepts such as education, parents, and self-criticism [15]. Bastaman revealed that there are two kinds of self-concept; positive self-concept and negative self-concept [16]. A positive self-concept is formed as a person continuously receives positive feedback in the form of compliments and appreciation for a long period. The negative self-concept is associated with negative feedback such as ridicule and humiliation.

The factors modifying the formation of self-concept, according to Joseph A. DeVito in Pratiwi, (2019), are: (1) Others Image. The concept of looking glass self from Charles Horton Cooley states that when a person is eager to look at his self-image, he may know it from other people. A person can see it through other people especially those who are close to him. (2) Social Comparison. Moreover, developing self-concept can also be carried out by comparing oneself with others. A person can find out what he is like, whether he is a smart, good, or competent man through comparisons with other people. In everyday life, if a person wants to feel good about himself, he can compare himself to those who he knows are not on par. (3) Cultural Teaching. A person's self-concept can also be shaped through parent, teacher, media, and culture that can instill one’s beliefs, values, and attitudes. These teachings can set a standard against which a person can measure himself. For example, achieving what is considered a success from cultural perspective, will contribute to a positive self-concept.
On the contrary, perceived failure to achieve what the culture has set can contribute to a negative self-concept. (4) Your Interpretations and Evaluations. A person's self-concept can also be constructed based on what he does, a person also responds to his behavior, interprets and evaluates it. This interpretation and evaluation facilitate the formation of one's self-concept[17].

In Charles H. Cooley's Looking Glass Self theory, Cooley's self-concept formation is compared with the self-image of an individual in a mirror. An individual's self-concept is decided by what he thinks others think of him. There are 3 fundamental elements of the looking glass self, namely: (1) Imagining, which is imagining your personality and appearance that will be seen by others. (2) Interpreting, when a person interprets others' assessments of his appearance. (3) Developing self-concept, a person has a feeling to develop self-concept as a form of other people's response to it, such as pride or shame.

3. METHOD

This study used qualitative research with a descriptive approach that aims to provide an interpretation of reality or social phenomena. The subject of this research is the victim of cybersexual harassment on Instagram because many forms of harassment have been found on social media. The informant sampling technique used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling technique is a technique with certain considerations [18].

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<th>No</th>
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The samples in this study were drawn from subjects who had met the criteria as informants, therefore four informants met the criteria. The reason for selecting the informants was based on the experience of victims who experienced harassment on Instagram so that data could be taken according to the purpose of the study. This research applied primary and secondary data collection. Primary data collection was carried out by in-depth interview techniques obtained through the four informants. The secondary data came from relevant journals and documentation. Data analysis used interactive data analysis techniques. The data validity took data source triangulation, which is seeking the truth of data or information through different data sources.

4. RESULT

This research was conducted by conducting interviews with four sources who have a background as a student experiencing sexual harassment on Instagram.

The interview process was conducted according to the predetermined interview guidelines. In this study, the research results were compiled based on the findings obtained from the informants.

4.1. Cybersexual Harassment Experienced

In this study, informants experienced cybersexual harassment on social media Instagram. Informants experienced cybersexual harassment through the direct message feature. This was experienced by ADN, MR, DVA, and AI. Harassment through video calls was encountered by MR and harassment through Instagram group was suffered by AI informants. Based on data obtained from victims of cybersexual harassment on Instagram, harassment forms encompassed images posting which involving intimate organs of the perpetrator via direct message, questions that led to sexual issues received by the victims through Instagram groups, and invitations to sexual intercourse. The four research informants received harassment from men and women using fake accounts, however, some of them also endured such treatment from people they knew.

Direct Message is an Instagram feature to interact between people through messages. Figure 1 shows a photo obtained from AND informant whose perpetrator sent more than one indecent image to the informant.

"I received pornographic images and sometimes there were also VC (Video calls). As far as I know, the perpetrator is a man and someone I don’t know because it is a fake account. (ADN interview, 29 October 2021)

"Besides on Facebook, I also received images sent via Direct Messages. I also received a video call and I picked up so the perpetrator showed me obscene things. After that incident, I immediately blocked the account" (MR Interview, 31 October 2021)

"I was once sent sex-related content on Direct Messages, I was also registered in a group containing sex-nuanced chats, and invited me to have sexual intercourse" (AI Interview, 30 October 2021)

Informants revealed that they often received chats, images, and posts that contained sexuality. Furthermore, there was an informant who was invited to have sexual intercourse. According to DVA and AI, the harassment perpetrators were not only men but also women. In response to this action, the
informants initially took it as a joke but later they began to feel uncomfortable and blocked the account which was identified to be fake. In the Direct Message feature, the perpetrators sent messages to informants in form of images and chats containing sex-related discourse. Besides, the Direct Message feature also allows informants to block accounts used by perpetrators to send sexual messages.

4.2. Others’ Perception of Informants

All informants imply that they never posted anything that could incite the perpetrator to commit harassment against them. In perceiving themselves, informants attempted to see people’s perceptions of them.

“I think that I am good and easy to get along with others because my friends once told me that I am a person who is very close to other people” (ADN Interview, 29 October 2021)

“My friends think that I am a person who is always enthusiastic, active, and confident” (MR Interview, 31 October 2021)

"In my opinion, my friends and people around me may see me as normal, maybe I’m pretty good given that I am treated well by my friends when communicating” (DVA Interview, 30 October 2021)

Based on interview data obtained from informants, the establishment of informants’ self-concept is based on others’ views towards them. According to people’s perception, three informants ADN, MR and DVA viewed themselves as good and easily accepted by their acquaintances. Different things were expressed by AI who got harassed on Instagram and bullied as the informant was often humiliated in vocational high school. Hence, AI did not have a good self-judgment or concept given the following excerpt.

“I think I am seen as a person who is not very sociable, but actually I am a good person to them” (AI Interview, 31 October 2021)

Moreover, AI stated that since vocational high school he has been less social and appeared to be remote. Some friends even attempted to talk bad image of the informant.

In self-concept, informants tend to see how other people view her. Of the four informants, three of them thought that they were good people, could get along well, were humble, polite, and accepted by their environment. However, it is different from AI who received more than 2 kinds of harassment on Instagram. AI is seen as introverted, making it difficult to get along.

4.3. Comparing Yourself with Others

Based on the results of interviews with informants, comparing themselves with others is also often carried out.

“Yes, I have, but with Japanese artists. In the context of beauty and body shape” (ADN Interview, 29 October 2021)

“I often compare myself to others in terms of body, weight, intelligence, and friendship” (AI Interview, 31 October 2021)

”Ofentimes. Maybe more likely the context of appearance and intelligence. For example, this person is smarter than me, this person looks more attractive, I feel very distant from other people, feel unattractive.” (DVA interview, 30 October 2021)

From the interviews, three informants thought that they are less attractive. A similar episode was vividly shown in an interview with AI who has wavy hair and a stout body so the informant lacked confidence and regarded other people were far better. When the informant compared himself with other people, he felt very much different from a physical aspect. He felt indifferent and his physique was not attractive compared to other people. Another statement was expressed by MR.

“I rarely compare myself to other people in terms of anything. But I often see what’s in people as a motivation.” (MR Interview, 31 October 2021)

In contrast to the other three informants, MR viewed herself as a person who accepts circumstances, be it in the physical or personal aspect, and actualize herself as a better person.

In the process of comparing themselves with others, ADN, AI, and DVA compared themselves physically. The three informants viewed that they are physically unattractive with excessive body weight and wavy hair so they valued themselves as less attractive. This contrasts to MR who rarely compares herself to others in terms of physique. MR uses other people as motivations to make herself better.

4.4. Role of Parents for Informants

Furthermore, one of the factors that can shape an individual's self-concept is the influence of parents, environment, and media. This is shown by DNA and AI. They often received advice related to the friendship between men and women which they applied in their lives.

"Yes very often. Usually with my parents. They told me not to get too close to men and don’t date for now” (ADN Interview, 29 October 2021)

"My friends advise about life, for example, what to do when you graduate from high school, what to do when you have it (boyfriend)” (AI interview, 31 October 2021)
ADN and AI were advised by their parents and friends related to the friendship with the opposite sex and their dating style. As consequence, this affects how ADN responded to the harassment she encountered on Instagram by giving an appropriate response and immediately blocking the perpetrator. The respondent's compliance in following the values in the family is also shown by 'no date' principle. Unlike the previous two respondents, MR and DVA, they frequently received advice on how to behave. This is expressed by MR and DVA who were told by their parents.

"Yes, of course, I was often advised by my parents, especially my father about how to behave and get along in the environment." (MR Interview, 31 October 2021)

"Yes, it is more likely from my parents. For example, in order to be an ordinary person, don't have too many desires, don't be too outstanding, just be simple as that." (DVA interview, 30 October 2021)

MR and DVA admitted to having a closer bond and feeling more comfortable when talking to their parents. They were told a lot of advice when they were with their parents. On many occasions, their parents also acted as problem solvers when they had problems or something to decide. The active role of parents was also described by the two informants in the interviews. They admitted that their parents always provided them with solutions to every problem, advice when they wanted to make a choice, and direction as well as guidance in making decisions.

4.5 Interpretation and Evaluation

A person's self-concept can then be shaped by what he does, responds to his own behavior, interprets, and evaluates it. These interpretation and evaluation processes help the formation of a person's self-concept.

"I think that my action against the perpetrator was right by abandoning them without response. Because I know some of them and I think they wanted to make my image bad" (AI Interview, 31 October 2021).

"Initially, I didn't want to block because I thought I was a regular follower. But finally, I decided to block the account after getting a video call from the perpetrator, and I think that can prevent further action from the perpetrator" (MR Interview, 31 October 2021).

"In my opinion, the action I took when blocking the perpetrator's account was a good step" (DVA Interview, 30 October 2021).

It is different from AND in evaluating the actions of the harassment. The informant experienced self-concept change.

"Initially, I responded to the perpetrator by replying to the chat sent via Direct Message. Then, from there I thought whether my actions were wrong when posting photos on Instagram and responding to chats from the perpetrator" (ADN Interview, 29 October 2021)

From the results of interviews with the four informants, three of them evaluated themselves in terms of their responses and replies to the harassment they experienced, viewing themselves as good, critical, and wiser individuals in responding to something. Unlike the other three informants, ADN assessed himself as the wrong person. The informant felt that it was wrong when she posted something on Instagram so the perpetrator did wrong to her.

5. DISCUSSION

With Cooley's Looking Glass Self theory and analysis of the factors that influence self-concept according to Josep A. DeVito that consists of: (1) Other Image, (2) Social Comparison, (3) Cultural Teaching, and (4) Your Interpretations and Evaluations, this study investigates how the self-concept possessed by victims of cybersexual harassment, both positive and negative. By understanding one's self-concept, it is simpler to understand the behavior and personality of the person [9].

In connection with the previous concept, the researchers connected the concept with data obtained from informants to find out how the self-concept is experienced by victims of cybersexual harassment on Instagram.

A negative self-concept can be formed from what one believes about other people's views that are perceived as bad, such as introvert and difficult to get along with. The positive self-concept is formed from the beliefs of others' views that are good, including easy to get along with, accepted by others, enthusiastic, active, and confident. In the theory of Looking Glass Self, a person's self-concept is significantly determined by what one thinks about other people's views.

In this study, other people's views shape an assessment of each informant. When the informants feel that other people's views of themselves are good, they perceive it as an acceptance, otherwise, if they see that other people's views are bad, then they assume that there is no acceptance from others. Self-concept can be established from other images, namely views from surrounding people or it can be considered that communication is enjoyable (positive). It can be seen from a relationship that shows caring, acceptance, and joint attention attitudes. As for the unpleasant (negative) communication experience, it can be seen from a bad attitude, unacceptance from others, and inattentiveness to each other.
The negative self-concept can also be seen from the behavior of comparing oneself with others, where the informants compare themselves to others in terms of physics, namely the feeling of less attractive, less intelligent, and small association. This triggers feelings of inferiority. William H. Fitts revealed that victims of cybersexual harassment are more likely to compare themselves physically to those who perceive other people as more attractive, prettier, taller, and slimmer[10]. The informant's positive self-concept is established when one compares himself with others, yet uses it as motivation to be a better person. Self-concept is formed from interactions with people around so that it will have an impact on a person's image of himself and self-esteem. The researchers found that three informants who experienced harassment appeared to compare themselves with others physically and considered themselves to be lacking [20].

From interviews with informants, it was discovered that two informants stated that the role of the family is very essential to them, parents always provided solutions when two informants encountered problems so with these actions, informants could deal with the problem through positive attitudes. In addition, the two informants also expressed that the communication they had with their parents and the values they had instilled were implemented adequately. The most common advice given by their parents is related to the relationship boundaries of the opposite sex. They were told by parents and friends whose advice circulated on how the pattern of friendship with the opposite sex. This also has an impact on the way the informants respond to the harassment that happened to them on Instagram by blocking the perpetrator's account.

The other two informants explained that the role of the family is not only as an advice provider but also as a problem solver when they are involved in problems or making decisions. In the Looking Glass Self theory, the significant role of others, such as family, also provides a positive view of the four informants, the family instills values that equip them and form a positive perception. However, in this case, the role of friends and other closest people, as well as how the informant's experience of interaction with significant others is also a determining factor of how their self-concept is formed. Cooley also suggests that a person's self-concept of himself is actually the result of acceptance by others and the view of the self appears dialectically through communication that exists with the environment, which can influence how we want ourselves to be described in front of others [21].

Self-concept is formed from the results of individual interactions with others through established communication. The family is the onset for children to experience other people's responses about themselves. This provides the child with knowledge, hope, and self-assessment. This is what is referred to as self-concept [22]. Positive and negative self-concepts are formed through interactions with the environment, especially significant people such as parents [23]. The research conducted by Arini & Amalia suggested that the role of the family is the main capital in the formation of children's self-concept [24].

Positive self-concept is also formed from the interpretation and evaluation of informants of their actions, in this case, related to their response to the harassment behavior they received. Informants considered their actions to perpetrators by ignoring and blocking the perpetrator's account as the right choice, assessing themselves as good, critical, and wiser people in responding to something. The negative self-concept is established when the informants blame themselves for what happened to them, the informant feels that their actions, such as replying to direct messages and posting photos on Instagram, lead to harassment experience. Someone who realizes who he is, observes, and evaluates himself will be able to avoid a negative self-concept [25].

Cybersexual harassment will modify a negative self-concept in an individual. This can be seen from insecurity, introverted self, and less social life, thus crossing the researchers’ minds that anyone who experiences harassment on social media will eventually have a huge impact on one's behavior. Based on the self-concept formation factors above, it was found that victims of cybersexual harassment on Instagram had more negative self-concept compared to a positive self-concept. This is in line with research conducted by Wirman et al. that on average, victims who experienced sexual harassment on social media would possess a certain negative self-concept. This can be seen from the informants' circumstances who exhibited apprehensiveness, unacceptance of their situations, shame of themselves, and a quiet and closed person [9].

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be determined that victims of cybersexual harassment had a negative self-concept and some of them had a positive self-concept. Through the Looking Glass Self theory analysis, informants assumed that other people perceived them as positive people, easy to open up, get along, have an optimistic attitude, and can be accepted by the surrounding environment. This is assessed by the informants through the acceptance and behavior of the surrounding environment towards them. In addition, some thought
that other people judged them as ordinary, introverted, and unaccepted by their surroundings. This will contribute to the formation of self-concept. Nevertheless, other factors also promote the formation of the self-concept. This is observed from four formations of one's self-concept in form of Other Image, Social Comparison, Cultural Teaching, and Your Interpretations and Evaluations. It was found that people preferred to exhibit negative self-concept, had low self-esteem, felt unaccepted by society, perceived other people are better, were aloof, and found it difficult to express thoughts after encountering sexual harassment on Instagram. Meanwhile, those with positive self-concept felt other people had good views of them, rarely compared themselves with others, perceived the strengths of others as motivation, were exposed to values that build a positive view of themselves, and had a positive attitude in interpreting and evaluating actions their life regarding the harassment they experienced. This research needs to be strongly supported by further studies by taking the perspective of the perpetrators of cybersexual harassment.

AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTIONS

Two authors have full contributed in process conceived and designed the analysis, collected the data, analysis and wrote the paper.

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