Social Construct of Online Gender-Based Violence in Mainstream and Special Media in the Era of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Online gender-based violence is still in the spotlight in gender research and feminism in Indonesia. The reason is that reporting on this issue has not received more attention in the media. In addition, victims of cases of gender-based violence, including on online platforms, are often cornered in media coverage by the framing that is built. For this reason, this study wants to uncover how the social constructs carried out by mainstream mass media and special media about women write about this issue and how these two different media segments frame online gender-based violence in their news content. The mass media selected in this study are Kompas.com and Konde.co. The theories used in this research are Postmodern Feminism and Social Construction by Berger and Luckmann. The method used is Robert N. Entman framing analysis. The results show that Kompas.com is structured in building its narrative on the issue of violence against women, including online gender-based violence. Meanwhile, Konde.co is a more specific medium in building the narrative using the storytelling method.

Keywords

Social Construction, Postmodern Feminism, Framing, Online Gender-Based Violence and Mainstream Media.

1. Introduction

Mass media is still believed to be the most powerful means of disseminating messages (Baran & Davis, 2014) until now, even amid the onslaught of social media. Even though the number of social media users, especially in Indonesia, is currently increasing from previous years, the mass media still plays a vital role as a mass messenger. Data to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), in 2019 – 2020, internet users in Indonesia increased by 8.9% from 2018 to 73.7% (APJII, 2020). However, the mass media still strongly influences the audience (Nur, 2021). The phenomena that occur in society are also inseparable from the social construction formed by the media. The media's repetition of news consequently influences society's perspective. One phenomenon that occurs from social construction from media is gender-based violence. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines gender-based violence as direct violence perpetrated against someone based on their sex or gender. This includes the danger or threat posed by physical and mental trauma (RedlineIndonesia, 2021). This issue often does not get more attention in Indonesian society because this issue is considered no bigger than political, legal, and criminal cases.

Some media often report on issues of gender-based violence, but the news exposures are often only short stories and rarely do not get a portion as the headline. Their narrations often contain discrimination against their victims. Instead of protecting the victims, some got bullied by society and received negative stigma after the news was released (Sari et al., 2018). The impact of this violence is not trivial because of the trauma left behind. Even victims of violence in online media also have a severe impact on their victims (Bhwana, 2021).

People tend to choose online media over printed media in today's increasingly rapid media development. This is the reason for choosing online platform media in this study. As a representation of the mainstream media, Kompas.com was chosen because the previous studies conducted by the author showed that this media tends to take sides with the victims and is very cautious when writing about sensitive issues such as the news of gender-based violence. In comparison, the special media chosen by the author is Konde.co because it is the preferred media for women and minorities.

According to the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI), data on gender-based violence cases, especially online, is increasing in the current pandemic era. AJI analyzes that the increasing number of online gender-based violence cases is due to the increasing number of people who dare to report their stories. There is also a possibility that the cases have been high, but only a few were reported and recorded (AJIJakarta, 2021). There are still many problems in the mass media coverage of online gender-based violence, including poor information validation and inconsistent use of diction that lacks the survivor's perspective. So, this research will focus on the news frame regarding online gender-based violence in Kompas.com and Konde.co reporting in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This research is very significant because cases of online gender-based violence are increasing in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic (Jatmiko et al., 2020). The rapid development of technology today helps human life and harms individual security, especially violations of privacy rights, including sexual violence. Sexual violence does not only occur physically face-to-face. However, it has also occurred in the online realm, which impacts not only the psychological aspect but also social isolation and economic loss (Sumunarsih, 2021).

1.1 Objectives

This research aims to uncover how the framing carried out by the mainstream mass media Kompas.com and special media Konde.co in the issue of online gender-based violence in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, from March 2020 to February 2022.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Postmodern Feminism

This research aims to see how the news constructed by Kompas.com and Konde.co, is based on postmodern feminism theory. According to Jacques Derrida's view, postmodern feminism is a series of interrelated signs, roles, and rituals that must be internalized by someone as a symbolic meaning in linguistics (Tong & Botts, 2018). Feminist culture, in the view of postmodern feminism, is not just a struggle to improve the social and economic status of women, more than that, feminist culture demands equal participation of men and women in politics, the economy, and the military (Roseneil, 1999). This equality is also inseparable from the development of postmodern feminism, which deconstructs radical feminism starting from the second wave of sex, sexuality, motherhood, childbirth, and language institutions (Hafiz et al., 2019).

In terms of the struggle for gender equality in Indonesia, the mass media, one of the powerful message-spreading tools, has not been much in favor of women. In The National Commission on Violence Against Women's analysis, the mass media have not yet written news about the fulfillment of the rights of victims of violence. In addition, the constructs carried out by the mass media, when viewed from the content of the news, still lead readers to create stereotypes and judge the victims (Komnas Perempuan, 2015). In addition, in The National Commission on Violence Against Women report, the mass media were also assumed to jump to a premature conclusion in their writings just for click-bait.

2.2 News Construction and Framing on Gender-Based Violence Issued

Berger and Luckmann first proposed construction in media coverage. According to him, the reality is shaped by a person or group through continuous action and interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Continuous action and

interaction will not occur without a social process. The social process that is formed and created by mass is through mass media, where the mass media has the power to spread the message widely at the same time. Free individuals are inevitable because the interaction process will continuously be affected, including how to construct women.

The construction of gender inequality in the news on Tribunnews.com shows that online media contribute to the construction of gender inequality through their reporting. Research using Sarra Mills's critical discourse analysis shows several dictions that are used when telling how transactions are carried out by Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) (Doko, 2019). However, this contrasts with other studies that examine the news platform Vice through its three channels, namely Vice Broadly (a channel for women only), Vice News (a channel for hard news), and Vice Belgium (a channel specifically for Vice for Belgium). Research using quantitative content analysis methods in Belgium found that the three channels owned by Vice provide more space for women in their reporting (D'Heer et al., 2020).

In a bit different case from Indonesia and Belgium, the United States showed that the standard of news anchors at a local TV station was based on the dominance of male judgments. Research using quantitative methods that analyzes photos and profiles of each on-air host found that women should look younger and sexier in front of the screen. This case became famous after one of the anchors was not allowed to host the show because she was over 40 years old (Bock et al., 2018). This case shows that discrimination against women does not only occur in the content of the news and the rules of the news agency. The discrimination against women raised by the media in its content includes racial differences. The role of women turned out to be important in preventing victimization themselves (Lykke, 2016). Lykke's research, which focused on race and gender-specific media, found that white women received more attention than black women.

3. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach that is used to examine social events, spiritual phenomena, and sign processes based on a non-positivist approach, for example, people's lives, history, behavior, perceptions, motivations, organizational functionalization, social movements, religion, and others. Denzin and Lincoln state that qualitative research uses a natural setting to interpret the phenomena (Moleong, 2018). In qualitative research, in-depth data collection was carried out. If the data collected is deep and can explain the phenomenon under study, there is no need to look for another sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). At the same time, the method used in this research is descriptive type. This is because research that wants to dismantle the framing carried out by the mass media will describe situations or events (Rakhmat & Ibrahim, 2021). In this case, the researcher acts only as an observer and is not involved in the events.

Data analysis of the six news articles will be analyzed using framing tools from Robert N. Entman. The Entman framing model was chosen because this study wanted to see to what extent the mainstream media represented by Kompas.com and mainstream media such as Konde.co formed the social construct of online-based gender violence. Although many framing models exist, the Entman model has unique characteristics in highlighting certain aspects of reality/issues (Eriyanto, 2002). Entman chooses four aspects to dissect how reality is highlighted in an article. Entman uses four devices in the framing concept that he uses. The first is to define a problem to see how an issue or event is seen. Second, diagnose causes, namely what caused the event to occur. Third, make the moral judgment in which the media presents what moral values are used to legitimize or delegitimize an action. Moreover, fourth is treatment recommendation which explains what solutions are offered to overcome the problem or issue. Meanwhile, the validity of the data from the analysis of six articles will use a credibility test with the persistence of researchers. They increased the persistence of researchers aiming to discover new things from previous studies (Fiantika et al., 2022).

4. Data Collection

The data used in this study is divided into two, namely primary and secondary. Primary data consists of news articles from both media, namely Kompas.com and Konde.co. The following is a list of articles analyzed in this study;

Table 1. List of news articles of Konde.co and Kompas.com

Kompas.com		Konde.co	
Date	Title of News	Date	Title of News
August	Kasus Kekerasan pada Perempuan via	August	Kekerasan Digital: Perempuan, Media dan
28 th , 2020	Internet Naik 3 Kali Lipat Selama	27 th , 2020	Aktivis Menjadi Sasaran Serangan
	Pandemi		https://www.konde.co/2020/08/kekerasan-
(article 1)	https://tekno.kompas.com/read/2020/0	(article a)	digital-perempuan-media-dan.html/
	8/28/18000087/kasus-kekerasan-pada-		
	perempuan-via-internet-naik-3-kali-		
	lipat-selama-pandemi		
March	LBH Apik: KDRT dan Kekerasan	March 6 th ,	Komnas Perempuan: Jumlah Kekerasan
11 th , 2021	Berbasis Gender Online Meningkat	2021	Perempuan 2020 Turun Karena Minimnya
	sejak Pandemi		Data yang Masuk
(article 2)	https://nasional.kompas.com/read/202	(article b)	https://www.konde.co/2021/03/komnas-
	1/03/11/15344061/lbh-apik-kdrt-dan-		perempuan-jumlah-kasus-kekerasan-
	kekerasan-berbasis-gender-online-		perempuan-2020-turun-karena-minimnya-
	meningkat-sejak-pandemi		data-yang-masuk.html/
February	Ragam Modus Kekerasan Berbasis	January	Dugaan Prostitusi Online Artis CA:
22 nd , 2022	Gender Online, Pelanggaran Privasi	4th, 2022	Perempuan "Dikuliti", Si Lelaki Hidung
	hingga Dstribusi Foto Pribadi		Belang Melenggang
(article 3)	https://nasional.kompas.com/read/202	(article c)	https://www.konde.co/2022/01/dugaan-
	2/02/20/16430101/ragam-modus-		prostitusi-online-ca-perempuan-dikuliti-
	kekerasan-berbasis-gender-online-		sedangkan-si-lelaki-hidung-belang-
	pelanggaran-privasi-hingga		melenggang.html/

In Table 1. List of News Articles of Konde.co and Kompas.com there are six news articles, of which three are from Kompas.com and the other three are from Konde.co. During the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 – 2022), Konde.co, as a special media for women, submitted at least nine articles written by the editor. Meanwhile, Kompas.com has published at least 18 news articles about online-based gender violence. From all these articles, this study selected three articles from each portal that adequately represent the framing method used by the two-mass media. At the same time, the secondary data are from the journal and other documents that support this article. Data analysis of the six news articles above will be analyzed using framing tools from Robert N. Entman.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Kompas.com Analysis

Kompas.com, as one of the oldest cyber media, was chosen to represent the mainstream media in this study because it is one of the Top Ranks Online News Portals on the Alexa.com site. Kompas.com, among other online news portals, was ranked seventh as of April 21, 2022.

5.1.1 Cases of Violence against Women via the Internet Increase 3 Times During the Pandemic

Table 2. Article 1 Kompas.com

Define problems	The number of online gender-based violence cases against women has tripled
	during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Diagnose causes	Lack of understanding in the community about the characteristics of the digital
	world. This reduces alertness.
Make moral judgment	Ellen said that this was due to a lack of understanding of the characteristics of the
	digital world that made people careless so that violence could emerge.
Treatment recommendation	There needs to be an increase in digital security literacy.

In Table 2. Article 1 Kompas.com, the article published on August 28, 2020, highlighted women who are considered less alert about digital security. This results in cases of online gender-based violence. This article is more specific about reporting on women as victims of online violence.

5.1.2 LBH Apik: Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Online Increase Since the Pandemic

Table 3. Article 2 Kompas.com

Define problems	An increase in the number of cases of domestic violence and online gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Diagnose causes	The victims, including children, did not dare to report their cases to their parents
	and law enforcement officers. Moreover, the ITE Law is not strong enough to
	ensnare perpetrators of online gender-based violence.
Make moral judgment	Meanwhile, the online gender-based violence case is also in the spotlight because
	children are victims. 16 out of 33 cyber grooming cases targeted child victims.
	"These cases are complicated to process because children are often reluctant to
	inform their parents about the problems they are facing," he said.
Treatment recommendation	Individuals who are victims of online gender-based violence should immediately
	consult with institutions that can provide legal reinforcement and assistance, as
	well as assistance.

In Table 3. Article 2 from Kompas.com was published on March 11, 2021, and the editorial staff of Kompas.com raised the issue of online gender-based violence, whose victims also included children. This article explains that one of the obstacles that cause online gender-based violence cases is challenging to identify and handle because victims are afraid to report their cases to their parents and related institutions and agencies. This article also emphasizes the weakness of the Law on Information and Electronic Transactions (UU ITE) in protecting victims of online gender-based violence. Furthermore, this article also tells how examples of online gender-based violence cases have been successfully handled and what options are offered if mediation for victims and perpetrators is unsuccessful.

5.1.3 Various Modes of Online Gender-Based Violence, Privacy Infringement to Private Photo Distribution

Table 4. Article 3 Kompas.com

Define problems	Various modes and types of online gender-based violence
Diagnose causes	increasingly sophisticated technology and the massive use of social media.
Make moral judgment	He caused the various modes of online gender-based violence due to increasingly sophisticated technological developments and the massive use of social media. Some online gender-based violence modes and types include cyber grooming, online harassment, hacking, illegal content, invasion of privacy, threats of distribution of personal photos/videos, and defamation.
Treatment recommendation	The need for a legal umbrella such as the Law on Sexual Violence Crimes Bill
	to ensuare online gender-based violence perpetrators and the importance of protecting online privacy.

In Table 4. Article 4 was published on February 20, 2022, Kompas.com wanted to present various modes and types of online gender-based violence. In this article, the leading resource person was the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, Bintang Puspayoga. According to Minister Bintang, the various modes and types of online gender-based violence are due to technological developments and the massive use of social media. This article also emphasizes the need for a legal basis to ensnare online gender-based violence perpetrators.

5.2 Konde.co Analysis

Konde.co was chosen because it segmented a particular audience, women and minority groups. As of April 21^{st,} 2022, even though Konde.co is not on the high list of popular websites in Indonesia; it has several popular articles with

regular social engagement on Alexa.com. However, there are still limited specific media that specifically report on women and minority groups.

5.2.1 Digital Violence: Women, Media, and Activists Become Targets of Attacks

Table 5. Article a Konde.co

Define problems	Hacking into critical mainstream media, women, women's websites, and women's activists who are actively campaigning for women's and minority issues through websites and social media.
Diagnose causes	A form of digital attack on women and groups that voice women and minorities, to degrade the gender of women. And hacking of mainstream news portal websites because they often criticize government policies in their news broadcasts.
Make moral judgment	Women often experience this violence. Among others, women often receive physical humiliation, demeaning their race, demeaning their hobbies, degrading their sexual orientation, and other sexist treatments. (Paragraph 6). Usman Hamid, Director of Amnesty International Indonesia, said that three categories of hackers may occur in Indonesia, namely those carried out by the state directly such as the TNI, state intelligence, or the police; groups outside the government but have associations with the government, for example, the influence of electoral relations during the election or political fanaticism; and involving criminal community groups. (Paragraph 39)
Treatment recommendation	The government is asked to handle and resolve this hacking case seriously.

In Table 5. Article a, published on August 27, 2020, Konde.co wanted to show that one form of online gender-based violence is hacking, where the modes and forms are varied. What is told in this article was the experience of the mass media and journalists that have raised the issues of women and minority groups. In this article, Konde.co talks about the perpetrators of violence are not only men but also people or groups who have power. More specifically, it is said that the groups that have the power refer to the government and the state, including its institutions. Meanwhile, the solution offered is to urge the government and the state to be serious about resolving cases of violence and not selective.

5.2.2 Komnas Perempuan: The Amount of Violence against Women in 2020 Drops Due to the Lack of Data Entered

Table 6. Article b Konde.co

Define problems	According to Komnas Perempuan's Annual Records, the COVID-19 pandemic
	affected data collection on cases of violence against women.
Diagnose causes	The COVID-19 pandemic is the cause of the decline in violence data reported by
	several institutions. Of the 239 institutions, only 120 reported data on sexual and
	gender violence to Komnas Perempuan.
Make moral judgment	A total of 299,911 cases could be registered in 2020, a decrease of 31% from cases
	in 2019, which recorded 431,471 cases. The returned questionnaires decreased by
	almost 100% from the previous year.
	In the previous year, the number of questionnaires returned was 239 institutions,
	while this year, only 120 institutions. However, as many as 34% of institutions that
	returned questionnaires stated an increase in cases of complaints during the
	pandemic.
Treatment recommendation	In 2020, there will be progress from a legal perspective, with the addition of
	regulations regarding the protection of women, both at the national and regional
	levels. Amid the pandemic, it was also observed the growth of community support
	groups for victims of sexual violence. This support creates resilience for victims
	to become empowered and feel not alone.

In Table 6. Article b, published on March 6, 2021, presents a decrease in the number of cases of sexual violence and all forms of violence against women. The data is issued by the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) every year. But what is interesting, according to the article from Konde.co is the decrease in the amount of violence against women. The reason is due to the COVID-19 pandemic; many institutions are not working optimally. During the COVID-19 pandemic, less than half of Komnas Perempuan's partner institutions reported data on violence. However, the article states that despite the decline in the amount of violence against women, the reporting rate has increased in several reporting institutions. The article also appreciates several central and regional government policies which have begun to experience an increase in the number of regulations as an effort to protect. Besides that, community support groups have also started to grow for victims of violence.

5.2.3 Alleged Online Prostitution of CA Artists: Woman "Skinned", Man Masher Walks

Table 7. Article c Konde.co

Define problems	Women's sexism and objectification are in reporting about CA artists in online prostitution cases.
Diagnose causes	Media coverage still corners women, especially artists involved in online prostitution. However, the man who was a client in the case was never named in the news.
Make moral judgment	Following the news of allegations of online prostitution involving actresses on online media and television channels in recent days, important things need to be highlighted. Because there are still many inequalities in the handling, there is objectification against CA as a woman. Almost the same pattern always occurs when the police uncover online prostitution involving celebrities. Also, a few years ago, when allegations of online prostitution involving female VA artists surfaced. It has been a few years; in fact, the perspective and legal conditions that corner women are still happening. According to the police, the online prostitution case that happened to CA started with a public report that in one of the relatively luxurious hotels in Central Jakarta, there was often a practice of prostitution. The cyber team then investigated and found the CA actress at the scene with a man who was not identified at all.
Treatment recommendation	Emphasize that the media can write news that is more gender-sensitive. Including the connection with angle exploration so that it does not only refer to sources that are often still biased towards women's perspectives.

In Table 7. Article c published on January 4, 2022, Konde.co raised the issue of prostitution involving a public figure with the initials CA. The article criticized the news that cornered CA as a woman with sexism and objectification. CA as an artist is exploited by his social media to corner himself. The article also criticized the mass media coverage of similar cases, never mentioning the identity or names of the men involved in the case. Then the article suggested that the mass media be able to write gender-sensitive news.

5.3 Overall Analysis Elaboration

From the six articles analyzed above, there are differences between Kompas.com and Konde.co reports. Kompas.com, as the mainstream media, reports quite a lot of cases of violence against women, including online gender-based violence. However, the contents still do not explain who is to blame for an issue. The narrative formed is still fully defending women. In the first article, in 2020, even the narrative still depicts women as victims who are less aware of all forms of violence in the online realm.

Meanwhile, Konde.co builds the narrative by using storytelling. From the description of the storytelling, it is quite clear how the social construct is built. In this case, Konde.co is more daring to say who is to blame for an issue. Therefore, it justified a need to take sides with women as a vulnerable group that requires special attention. Konde.co builds a more prominent social construct regarding the protection of women. In addition, this media does not hesitate to criticize anyone who does not take side with the victims of violence, including the mass media of their colleagues.

These two-mass media, Kompas.com and Konde.co agreed to place women as a group that deserves protection and equality in all aspects. Both media also show their side to women, including children, especially those who are victims of violence. However, the differences between the two are very visible in constructing a narrative about the phenomena that occur. This is in line with Derrida's theory that women are represented in a series of interrelated signs, roles, and rituals (Tong & Botts, 2018). In articles made by Kompas.com, it has been explained about online gender-based violence, and how it affects individuals. Meanwhile, Konde.co is more specific in explaining the issue. And written in more detail and sharper in addressing the issue of online gender-based violence.

More the difference between the two is seen in the form of writing. While Kompas.com writes in the form of a narrative in the standard straight news, Konde.co writes by storytelling. In this regard, it may be influenced by the policies of the respective mass media. As a result, the social constructs that the two media want to build are almost the same, namely how the community must start to be aware of the threat of perpetrators or other forms of online gender-based violence that are around (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). From the two media, both Kompas.com and Konde.co have sided with the media, and both agreed that the position of women as social beings has the same rights, including groups of children, as written by Kompas.com (Bock et al., 2018; D'Heer et al., 2020; Doko, 2019).

6. Conclusion

Kompas.com and Konde.co as actors who spread messages in masse are seen as trying to oppose discrimination against women. Whereas in two media, there are also women as part of the organizational structure who want to fight for gender equality and the protection of their people. It is in line with (Lykke, 2016) research where women refuse to be victimized themselves. Even though Kompas.com is independent media, regardless of the patriarchal culture, in this case, it can be seen in the analysis in the first article entitled "Cases of Violence against Women via the Internet Increase 3 Times During the Pandemic" still cornering the position of women who seem to be an uneducated group. There are still dictions from the article that was in favor of women.

Meanwhile, in Konde.co, as a special media for women, the ideology of postmodern feminism is very visible from the freedom of writing. Shamelessly, straightforwardly and write down the problems that are built. In more detail, Konde.co is not shy about pointing out who is to blame in an issue related to women. This research shows that the two media, both Kompas.com and Konde.co, have taken sides with women and children who are often victims of online gender-based violence. The narrative that is built, it shows that the level of this violent crime has claimed many victims. Although the number of violence during the Covid-19 period has decreased, it is not shown progress because many partners of institutions from The National Commission on Violence Against Women do not report the number of cases they received (Komnas Perempuan, 2020). We are aware that this research still needs further development and observation, so it is hoped that further research will look at other mainstream media and specifically in reporting on online gender-based violence, especially the media with the highest viewers.

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