Digital Literacy of Social Media Users in Preventing Online Gender-Based Violence in Indonesia

Rila Setyaningsih[1], Didik Haryadi Santoso[2], Aditya Fahmi Nurwahid[3]

Abstract

Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) is violence committed against a person based on gender or gender with the help of digital technology. Women are the most vulnerable group to becoming victims of OGBV, although it is possible that men can also be victims. It is important for social media users to have online resilience or the ability to deal with negative risks in the online world. This study explores the types of OGBV that occur and efforts to prevent recurrence of cases. This study uses a constructivist paradigm with a qualitative research design with the type of case study. The subjects in this study consisted of six people. Interviews, observations, and documentation are the data collection techniques used in this study. Data analysis in the study consists of several steps (i.e., data reduction, data presentation, and drawn conclusions) as well as triangulation and source triangulation techniques to ensure the validity of the research data. This study found several types of online gender-based violence experienced by victims. These types of online gender-based violence are verbal harassment and bullying, account hacking, cyberstalking, and threats of sexual violence. The victims already have digital literacy skills to prevent the recurrence of the case. Digital literacy in question is in the form of efforts to maintain digital security on the social media accounts used. These findings are an important basis for the development of more effective and appropriate policies and intervention programs in accordance with local conditions.

Keywords: *Digital Literacy, Online Gender-Based Violence, Prevent, Sosial Media.*

Introduction

Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) is violence committed against a person based on sex or gender with the help of digital technology. Online gender-based violence is violence committed in online spaces (Fenton et al., 2023). Online gender-based violence is prejudice and harassment that is carried out disproportionately based on their gender through technology (Zviyita & Mare, 2024). The psychological, social and economic impact is the effect of online gender-based violence (Andrew, 2023). It was further explained that gender-based violence is actually triggered by the gender of the victim which results in injuries, including on the psychological side. (Wirawan et al., 2022). Online gender-based violence includes sexual threats and sexual aggression or so-called high-tech violence (Bosch & Gil-Juarez, 2021). Explicit verbal language, threats of rape and murder, hurtful comments and gender-related social criticism and ridicule are forms of online gender-based violence (Fenton et al., 2023).

Women are the most vulnerable group to become victims of OGBV, although it is possible that men can also be victims. Data in Indonesia shows that women is the majority of victims of violence, and the most victim of violence aged 13-17 years (Tristiana et al., 2023).Violence against women is recognised to be gender-based because it is violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or violence that disproportionately affects women (Kavanagh & Brown, 2020). Gender-based violence that disproportionately affects women is an act that poses various dangers, including depriving women of their freedom (Violin & Nafi, 2022). Violence against women is different from that faced by men because women are the target of sexual orientation, class and social status (Zviyita & Mare, 2024). In previous research, there were several themes of online gender-based violence aimed at men, including sexist, misogynistic, and sexual language (Fenton et al., 2023). The dominance of male behavior in women through sexual harassment is the result of misogynistic attributes in the form of gender-based violence (Zviyita & Mare, 2024).

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[1] Department of Communication Science, Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta, Email: rilasetyaningsih55@gmail.com
[2] Department of Communication Science, Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta, Email: didikhs@mercubuana-yogya.ac.id

[3] Department of Communication Science, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Email: adityanurwahid@unesa.ac.id

The university environment is one of the potential places for Gender-Based Violence. Violence against women, especially new students, is carried out directly or indirectly (Rodríguez et al., 2024). Significantly, sexual violence continues to occur in the University community and such violence has a negative effect on the mental and emotional health of victims as well as educational outcomes (Mackinlay, 2024). There is a lot of evidence of violence in the workplace environment, especially in the university environment with female victims (Ali et al., 2024). There are several conditions where survivors of violence at the University choose to remain silent due to several things such as the dependence of gender power in relationships in the university structure, actors, and the act of silencing survivors (retaliation, threats, intimidation, normalization, accommodation) and the attitude of blaming the victim and stereotypes. (Pilinkaite Sotirovic et al., 2024). There needs to be a sexual violence prevention program in the university environment to deal with various types of violence and also efforts to resolve conflicts that arise (Muñoz-Galiano et al., 2024).

It is important for social media users to have online resilience or the ability to face negative risks in the online world. The level of online risk significance and developing online resilience is important (Martzoukou et al., 2023). Resilience refers to ability to overcome and adapt to difficult, unfamiliar, or threatening situations without psychological damage (Nishimoto et al., 2023). Online resilience is an effective effort to address online risks and the negative impacts of the online world and protect the feelings of danger that arise based on the experience of facing a risk (Vissenberg & D'haenens, 2020). Internal resilience factors include contitable, spiritual, emotional, behavioral and also physical factors which are important elements in the process of adaptation and facing various difficulties (Luo et al., 2022). Resilience is an adaptive and dynamic process in a personality (Davey et al., 2022). Prosocial resilience is supported by communication channels related to the promotion of anti-violence cultural identity (Watkin et al., 2022). Online resilience interventions are needed to address mental health needs, especially in environments with limited mental health resources (Hechanova et al., 2023).

There are several limitations in handling cases of sexual violence, namely only recognizing forms of rape and molestation. Limitations that arise in dealing with survivors of gender-based sexual violence include the absence of counseling services, limited rehabilitation centers, poor referral recommendations, and lack of training for health services (Ikuteyijo et al., 2023). Limitations in gender-based violence screening and management, lack of training in the evaluation and handling of gender-based violence cases, limited resources such as screening guidelines and tools, and minimal referrals and monitoring are challenges in handling gender-based violence cases (Matoy et al., 2024). Limited time required to investigate reports, remove reporting deadlines, specialist counseling, academic support; and independent advocacy is a problem that often arises in handling gender-based violence and harassment (Bull, 2024). Some of the important things that need to be done in handling gender-based violence cases include training law enforcement officials in handling gender-based violence cases, allocating resources to speed up case processing, and encouraging stronger collaboration between law enforcement officials and various stakeholders (Hellen et al., 2023).

Indonesia already has a number of regulations, but the implementation of regulations has not been fully implemented. Existing gender-based violence laws do not contain victim-sensitive procedures and do not have a human rights and gender perspective. Currently, Indonesia has adopted a new regulation related to the handling of sexual violence, namely Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning the Crime of Sexual Violence (Zaltina & Nurtjahyo, 2024). Supreme Court Regulation (Perma) No. 3 of 2017 on Guidelines for Judging Cases of Women in Conflict with the Law. This Perma seems to provide hope for producing progressive court decisions by contributing to the elimination of discrimination against women in the court process (Saraswati, 2021). In Indonesia, positive law still has a dual attitude where digital sexual violence with extortion motives is considered a crime on the one hand but results in weak sanctions on the other (Muslimin et al., 2024). The Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) needs to internalize the perspective of gender justice and how it impacts their attitudes and behaviors in carrying out their roles and functions to prevent domestic violence (Wijayati et al., 2023).

Digital attacks carried out by various types of OGBV can hinder a person's ability to think and communicate in cyberspace. Poor digital literacy makes exposure in cyberspace can make a person vulnerable to bad influences, and can become perpetrators or victims of OGBV. Women as a vulnerable group need to

receive digital literacy education regarding the potential dangers of the social media era such as intimate surveillance, digital predation, and technology-facilitated gender violence (Hopkins, 2022). Women as a vulnerable group need to be involved in digital literacy education (Nair & Banerjee, 2021). Digital literacy and resilience are crucial for them to navigate the digital world as much as the real world (Tran et al., 2020). The use of social media without adequate digital literacy, it will lead to an increase in dysfunctional behavior (Lubis et al., 2022) including online gender-based violence.

This research was carried out because it has several urgencies. The increasing prevalence of OGBV on social media shows an urgent need for in-depth research on this phenomenon, especially in the university environment which is one of the potential places for OGBV to occur. Online gender-based violence is increasingly prevalent on social media. The existence of digital technology as a means of OGBV requires a better understanding of how this technology is used to commit violence, as well as its prevention and handling strategies. Technology has become a medium for committing gender violence aimed at a person based on the type of violence (Martínez-Bacaicoa et al., 2024). The use of technology for harassment and prejudice exacerbates gender-based cyber violence in the form of discrimination (Armiwulan, 2021). Gender-based violence in the modern context is carried out through a framework that adapts to the digitalization of technology (Abercrombie et al., 2023). Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is an increasing problem in online spaces, affecting around half of all women and targeting those from marginalised groups in particular (Abercrombie et al., 2024) This research is important to identify risk factors and protective factors related to KBGO in higher education settings, which can help in the development of effective policies and interventions. Online resilience is important in protecting well-being from the dangers of exposure to online risks (Vissenberg & D'haenens, 2020). There are common risk factors for the development of psychopathology that require precision to protect oneself from behavioral addiction including internet addiction (Quaglieri et al., 2022). Risk factors for OBGV perpetrators that appear include anxiety, online disinhibition, and previous victimization (Wirawan et al., 2022).

Literature Review

Gender violence and partner violence are often carried out through social media (García-Ruiz et al., 2024). Research on the prevention of online gender-based violence in higher education has been carried out before, including the title workplace gender-based violence among female staff in public higher education institutions in eastern Ethiopia: Institution- based cross-sectional study with the result awareness-raising campaigns against gender-based violence and reporting procedures in case of violent incidents, enforcing existing policies, orientation to employees, safeguarding the night shift female workers, and survivor support services should be implemented by key stakeholders. (Ali et al., 2024). Research entitled assessing training on digital gender based violence in higher education taking into account gender and sexual orientation showing results The difference between previous and subsequent knowledge proves that short training programmes on DGBV (Digital Gender-Based Violence) can improve students' knowledge of DGBV (Freude et al., 2024). Other research about towards a research agenda for examining online gender-based violence against women academics showing results the need for greater protection and regulation of virtual environments in order to support those who use them (Kavanagh & Brown, 2020).

Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) is a form of gender violence mediated by online media. Online gender-based violence includes sexually explicit language, exaggerated rape and murder threats, unpleasant remarks or social criticism connected to gender, sexual allusions, and mocking (Fenton et al., 2023). Association of Progressive Communications argue that OGBV consists of any type of violence that are committed, abetted, or aggravated, in part or fully, by the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as mobile phones, the internet, social media, and email (Zviyita & Mare, 2024). OGBV is violence motivated by the gender of the victims, likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering (United (Wirawan et al., 2022). OGBV is violence against individuals through technology, referring to a specific gender (Muslimin et al., 2024). The forms of online violence are online gender-based violence, digital sexual harassment, image-based sexual abuse, and online sexual coercion (Martínez-Bacaicoa et al., 2024).

Digital literacy is needed to prevent online gender-based violence. Digital literacy is the ability to become active and ethical online content producers and creators, developing a critical understanding of online malpractice versus ethical behavior (Martzoukou et al., 2023). Digital literacy skills are used to facilitate the development of network literacy that will enable some of the most vulnerable and oppressed members of society to prepare for a post-release future in the rapidly evolving era of social media (Hopkins, 2022). Digital literacy and resilience are crucial for them to navigate the digital world as much as the real world (Tran et al., 2020). The lack of digital literacy in Indonesia during the rapid penetration of information and communication technology has made internet users a way to abuse it to behave deviantly (Lubis et al., 2022). Digital literacy plays an important role in preventing cybercrime (E. Lee & Lee, 2024).

Methods

This research uses a constructivism paradigm with a qualitative research design in the type of case study. The subjects in this study consisted of 6 people consisting of men and women. In more detail, information about the research subject is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Research Subject Data

No.	Initial	Gender
1.	Research Subject 1	Male
2.	Research Subject 2	Male
3.	Research Subject 3	Male
4.	Research Subject 4	Female
5.	Research Subject 5	Female
6.	Research Subject 6	Female

The data collection techniques in this study consist of interviews, observations, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews, conducted face-to-face with key informant (Troisi et al., 2024). Data analysis in the study consists of several steps (i.e. data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn) as well as source triangulation and triangulation techniques to ensure the validity of the research data

Findings and Discussion

This section describes the types of online gender-based violence experienced by the research subjects and describes the efforts to prevent repeat cases. This study found several types of online gender-based violence and prevention efforts made by victims in preventing recurrence of cases. Digital literacy is important as an effort to prevent online gender-based violence.

Type of Online Gender-Based Violence

There are several types of online gender-based violence that are experienced according to their experiences. The types of online gender-based violence experienced by the research subjects are: verbal abuse and bullying, account hacking, cyberstalking, and threats of sexual violence.

Table 2. Interview Results about Type of OGBV

No.	Answer Categories	Interview Transcript	Research Subject
1.	Verbal abuse and bullying	*Beberapa kali saya menerima komentar kasar di media sosial.* Several times I received rude and derogatory comments on social media.	Research subject 1
		Saya pernah mendapatkan komentar merendahkan di akun reels Instagram saya.	Research subject 4

		I once got derogatory comments on my Instagram reels account.	
2.	Account hacking	*Akun Instagram saya pernah diretas. Mereka mengunggah konten pornografi di akun saya.* My Instagram account was hacked. They uploaded pornographic content on my account.	Research subject 5
		Saya pernah mengalami peretasan akun Whatsapp, tiba-tiba wa saya logout dan nomor saya tidak bisa saya gunakan lagi. I have experienced a Whatsapp account hack, suddenly I am logged out and I can no longer use my number.	Research subject 6
3.	Cyberstalking	*Pernah ada orang yang selalu mengikuti semua akun media sosial saya, like setiap postingan. Saya merasa sangat tidak aman dan terganggu.* There was people who always followed all my social media accounts, liked every post. I feel very insecure and disturbed.	Research subject 2
4.	Threats of sexual violence	*Ada orang asing yang mengirimkan pesan bahwa dia akan memperkosa saya, saya ketakutan dan tidak bisa tidur berhari-hari.* There was a stranger who sent me a message that he was going to rape me, I was scared and couldn't sleep for days.	Research subject 3

Verbal abuse and bullying are forms of online harassment, as mentioned in a study on female journalists' experiences of online gender-based violence in selected newsrooms in Namibia Journalism (Zviyita & Mare, 2024). Social media is one of the means of gender abuse (Chakraborty, 2022). Sexual abuse and cases of dating violence are increasing through technology, as mentioned in a studi on Gender-Based Dating Violence and Social Media among Spanish Young People: A Qualitative Study (García-Ruiz et al., 2024). One of the challenges that must be faced in the online world is online bullying (Martzoukou et al., 2023). Technology-facilitated (sexual) violence, electronic aggression, online harassment, hate speech, cyber abuse, cyber bullying, cyber harassment, online violence against women are forms of virtual gender-based violence (Kavanagh & Brown, 2020).

In addition to verbal abuse, the findings in this study show that there is an account hacking. Account hacking is the form of online gender-based violence (Zviyita & Mare, 2024). Account hacking has become a digital security problem that has emerged in the online environment (Suma & Madhumathy, 2022). In a study about Linguistic Deception of Chinese Cyber Fraudsters, it was found that account hacking can occur through chat replies (Hua et al., 2017). Account hacking can also occur through in-game cheating (S. J. Lee et al., 2021).

The next type of online gender-based violence found in this study is cyberstalking. Cyberstalking is the form of online harassment (Zviyita & Mare, 2024). Cyberstalking is one of the cyber violence that has recently emerged continuously in Indonesia (Armiwulan, 2021). The European Institute for Gender Equality categorizes OGBV into various forms of cyber harassment, one of which is cyberstalking (Violin & Nafi, 2022). In a study about Towards a research agenda for examining online gender-based violence against women academics, mentioned that increasing numbers of women are reporting incidents of cyberstalking (Kavanagh & Brown, 2020).

Threats of sexual violence are a form of online gender-based violence that is also found in this study. The most frequent forms of violence in young couple relationships are emotional, followed by physical and sexual violence, and emotional violence (Muñoz-Galiano et al., 2024). gender-based violence to refer to

violence against a person's gender, gender, or gender identity and expression, as well as forms of sexual violence that disproportionately affect people of one gender (EC 2021). These include, but are not limited to, physical violence, psychological violence, economic violence, and sexual violence (Pilinkaite Sotirovic et al., 2024). In a studi mentioned that Black male perpetrators have been subject to harsher sentences than their white counterparts while perpetrators of sexual violence against Black as compared to white women have received more lenient treatment (Malinen et al., 2024). The subsequent Action Plan Addressing Gender-based Violence in Higher Education acknowledges that sexual violence continues to occur in university communities at significant rates (Mackinlay, 2024).

Digital Literacy to Prevent Online Gender-Based Violence

This study found that there are several efforts made by victims of online gender-based violence to prevent recurrence of cases. These efforts lead to digital literacy skills carried out when using online media.

Table 3. Interview Results about Digital Literacy

No.	Type of OGBV	Interview Transcript "Efforts to prevent OBGV"	Research Subject
1.	Verbal abuse and bullying	*Untuk menghentikan komentar kasar di media sosial saya blok akun tersebut dan akun media sosial saya setting privat.* To stop abusive comments on social media, I blocked the account and my social media account was set to private.	Research subject 1
		Saya blok akun yang berkomentar merendahkan saya. I blocked the account that commented demeaning on me.	Research subject 4
2.	Account hacking	*Untuk mengebalikan akun Instagram saya yang diretas, saya berupaya untuk mengembalikan akun dengan beberapa Langkah karena dulu pernah menautkan ke email dan akhirnya akun saya Kembali normal.* To reverse my hacked Instagram account, I attempted to restore the account with a few Steps because it used to link to an email and finally my account returned to normal.	Research subject 5
		Whatsapp saya tidak bisa diselamatkan, saya ganti nomor dan menginformasikan kepada kontak yang ada di handphone bahwa noor saya telah ganti. My Whatsapp could not be saved, I changed the number and informed the contact on the mobile phone that my noor had been changed.	Research subject 6
3.	Cyberstalking	*Saya blok orang yang selalu stalking akun saya.* I blocked the person who was always stalking my account.	Research subject 2
4.	Threats of sexual violence	*Saya blok kontak yang menghubungi saya untuk mengancam tersebut, saya rasa itu iseng karena sampai sekarang tidak terjadi lagi hal serupa.* I blocked the contact who contacted me to make the threat, I think it was a prank	Research subject 3

		because until now something similar has not happened again.	

Of the 6 research subjects who were victims of online gender-based violence, all of them have made efforts to prevent the recurrence of cases. The digital literacy ability of each research subject is indeed different, some already have digital literacy skills before the OGBV occurred, such as having activated two-step verification for their Instagram accounts. Other victims, although there had been no effort before OGBV occurred, they tried to secure their various social media accounts by taking steps such as blocking the perpetrator's account and also making their social media accounts private. These measures show that there are efforts to prevent the recurrence of OGBV cases. This shows the existence of digital literacy skills carried out by victims and shows the importance of digital literacy as a form of prevention of OGBV.

One of the pillars of digital literacy is digital safety. The steps that have been taken by the victims who are the subjects of this study are a form of digital safety efforts to prevent the recurrence of OGBV cases. Four pillars of digital literacy can be implemented in the community, namely: digital skills; digital ethics; digital culture; and digital safety (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023). Digital safety messages for specific hazards should be integrated into complementary offline hazard programs(Betts et al., 2024). Digital safety is part of digital competencies which led to digital citizenship (Jarupongputtana et al., 2022).

Conclusion

This study found several types of online gender-based violence experienced by victims. These types of online gender-based violence are verbal abuse and bullying, account hacking, cyberstalking, and threats of sexual violence. The victims already have digital literacy skills to prevent recurrence of cases. Digital literacy in question is in the form of an effort to maintain digital security on the social media accounts used. Research on the digital literacy of social media users in preventing online gender-based violence in Indonesia faces several significant limitations. The rapidly changing dynamics of online are also challenging, as research findings can quickly become obsolete as technology evolves and new forms of online violence emerge. The sensitivity of this topic adds complexity in conducting in-depth research, while language gaps can limit access to knowledge for local researchers. Research on the digital literacy of social media users in preventing online gender-based violence in Indonesia has made a significant contribution in several important aspects. First, this research helps to improve understanding of the dynamics of gender-based violence in Indonesia's digital space, which has a unique socio-cultural context. These findings are an important basis for the development of more effective and appropriate policies and intervention programs in accordance with local conditions. Second, this research contributes to identifying digital literacy gaps in various community groups, enabling the design of more targeted and inclusive educational programs. Furthermore, the study helps uncover the relationship between digital literacy levels and individuals' ability to identify, report, and address gender-based violence online. This encourages the development of a more comprehensive empowerment strategy for social media users. The research also contributes to mapping specific patterns of online violence in Indonesia, assisting social media platforms and policymakers in designing more effective protection mechanisms. Finally, the contribution of this research can also be seen in increasing public awareness about the importance of digital literacy in the context of online security, encouraging wider discussion in the community and supporting advocacy efforts to create a safer and more inclusive digital environment in Indonesia.

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