

# Social Reactions toward Online Disclosure of Sexual Violence

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## Abstract

Many survivors of sexual violence have come forward to disclose their experiences on social media. The disclosure has generated positive and negative social reactions. Social media users either victimize sexual violence survivors or advocate against it, according to previous studies. This study aims to explore Twitter users' social reactions to sexual violence disclosure and their narratives. This study used social network analysis and analyzed 1,678 tweets extracted from the Twitter search function. This study discovers two major themes and twelve subthemes of social reactions. New subthemes emerged: condemnation, curiosity, and sharing experiences (positive social reactions) and humor (negative social reactions). The narratives within negative social reactions brought digital harm to sexual violence survivors with prejudice, hostility, and normalization of sexual violence. Meanwhile, positive social reactions represent resistance by challenging harmful users and the authority and retelling sexual violence experiences to a bigger audience. This study provides input to design policy interventions to guide social media users in responding to sexual violence disclosures.

Banyak penyintas kekerasan seksual yang mengungkapkan pengalamannya di media sosial. Pengungkapan tersebut menimbulkan reaksi sosial positif dan negatif. Penelitian sebelumnya menemukan bahwa pengguna media sosial cenderung menyalahkan penyintas namun ada juga yang mendorong pengguna lain untuk melawan kekerasan seksual. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi reaksi pengguna Twitter terhadap pengungkapan kekerasan seksual dan narasi yang muncul. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode social network analysis dan menganalisis 1,678 tweet yang diekstrak dari fungsi pencarian Twitter. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi dua tema besar dan dua belas subtema reaksi sosial. Terdapat subtema baru, yaitu kecaman, keingintahuan, dan berbagi pengalaman yang diklasifikasikan sebagai reaksi sosial positif, serta humor yang diklasifikasikan sebagai reaksi sosial negatif. Narasi reaksi sosial negatif membawa gangguan digital bagi penyintas dengan adanya prasangka, permusuhan, dan normalisasi kekerasan seksual. Sebaliknya, reaksi sosial positif merepresentasikan resistensi dengan melawan pengguna yang bermasalah serta institusi yang bertanggung jawab, serta dengan menceritakan kembali pengalaman kekerasan seksual kepada audien yang lebih besar. Penelitian ini dapat menjadi masukan dalam merancang pedoman untuk pengguna media sosial dalam merespons pengungkapan kekerasan seksual.

**Keywords:** digital harms; everyday resistance; online disclosure; sexual violence; social reaction

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## Introduction

Sexual violence happens frequently and is often underreported. The prevalence among women aged 15-64 is high at 18.7% (KemenPPPA 2021), which is alarming given its detrimental effects on survivors' well-being. The issue is exacerbated by the reluctance of survivors of sexual violence to report their cases to authorities. Nonetheless, with the vast development of information and communication technology, especially social media, survivors can now disclose their experiences online to bring the issue to the forefront and seek support. Social media platforms allow survivors to share their cases in varying detail, reach larger and more specific audiences, and yet remain anonymous (Bogen, Orchowski, and Ullman 2021).

Many sexual violence survivors choose Twitter as the platform to disclose their sexual violence experience. On 18 June 2022, @UserID posted a thread revealing her experience of sexual violence on the train, which included a video of a man attempting to harass her sexually. She explained that she warned the perpetrator to stop touching her, but he continued to do so. She then reported the assault to the train personnel, who transferred her to another seat while asking the perpetrator to remain in his seat. @UserID's disclosure tweets received over 4,000 replies, 7,000 retweets, and 45,000 likes. Other users expressed support and connected her to responsible institutions, urging them to provide immediate assistance. However, others reacted with victim-blaming and egocentric responses. These polarized reactions align with previous studies' findings, stating that social media users either victimize sexual violence survivors or encourage them to fight against sexual violence

(Keller, Mendes, and Ringrose 2018; Sills et al. 2016).

Studies have identified a range of positive and negative reactions experienced by sexual violence survivors. Ullman (2000) identified three main types of positive social reactions: emotional support, tangible aid, and informational support, and five main types of negative social reactions: victim blaming, distraction, stigmatizing, egocentrism, and control. Likewise, Bogen, Bleiweiss, and Orchowski (2019) classified social reactions online into negative and positive groups but with different components. The negative group consists of egocentrism, victim-blaming, and distraction, and the positive one comprises advocacy/taking responsibility, emotional support, validation, tangible informational aid, and bystander intervention (Bogen et al. 2019). Both studies by Bogen et al. (2019) and Ullman (2000) show that positive social reactions are significantly more prevalent than negative ones.

With the massive responses on social media, survivors sharing their experiences online may be prone to psychological disturbances (Dworkin, Brill, and Ullman 2019). The ability of social media to reach a larger audience generates reactions from other users, which are often mixed. It is true that positive social reactions, which include social support, advocacy, and informational messages (Bogen et al. 2019, 2021), as well as organization and mobilization of collective action against sexual violence, can have a positive impact. In fact, voicing support for survivors and calling out perpetrators can be a form of resistance (Lilja 2022). Many survivors can even connect with other survivors to receive support and validation. Nonetheless, there is evidence of

insensitivity and negative reactions to survivors' posts. With the anonymity allowed by social media, users may post harmful comments, exposing survivors to negative social reactions, such as rape jokes, distraction, and victim-blaming (Stubbs-Richardson, Rader, and Cosby 2018).

In an online context, giving positive social reactions can be regarded as a resistance practice against sexual violence. The concept of everyday resistance suggests that it has been normalized and become embedded into the culture and society (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013). Resistance practice is used by feminist activists to contest the existing gender inequality and prevailing gender disparities, as well as create new power dynamics. Resistance practices are commonplace on social media. For example, the #MeToo campaign, which gained international recognition, is a notable form of resistance on social media. The phenomenon might be conceptualized as a form of resistance that spreads through repetition, duplication, and re-experiencing (Lilja 2022).

Regarding the negative responses, Ullman (2010) categorizes the reactions into: victim blaming, distraction, stigmatization, egocentrism, and control. Negative social reactions could be intentional attempts to hurt victims or unintentional (well-meaning) yet harmful responses (Ullman 2010). Meanwhile, Bogen et al. (2019) classified negative social reactions into: egocentrism, victim blaming, and distraction.

Digital platforms could be particularly hostile toward female users. Feminist scholars argue that technology and digital media are biased in favor of men (Bivens 2015; Marwick 2013). The "normalizing logic" built into digital

platforms shapes the digital environment where sexism, gender-based violence, and other forms of discrimination against women are not only tolerated but applauded (Bivens 2015). Women have voiced their concerns, but their capacity to influence the patterns and regulations related to digital media's hostility is limited (Megarry 2014). Their engagement on social media is often discouraged by gender-based harassment online, which suppresses their voices in public discourses (Megarry 2014).

Considering the background above, this study utilizes social media network analysis to discuss in-depth the social reactions from Twitter users in response to the @UserID thread that described the sexual violence incident she experienced on the train in real-time on 18 June 2022. Social media network analysis investigates the pattern of tweets throughout networks and the users that could influence this pattern (Himmelboim 2017).

In contrast to previous studies that have primarily relied on hashtag analysis to examine online reactions to sexual violence disclosures, this study delves into a specific case study to gain a more nuanced understanding of the nuances and complexities of these reactions. By focusing on a single case, the study is able to uncover subtle patterns and dynamics that might otherwise be overlooked in a more general analysis. This approach allows for a more in-depth exploration of the factors that influence online responses to disclosures of sexual violence, shedding light on the intricacies of online support, activism, and re-victimisation.

This study employs the conceptual framework of social reactions toward sexual violence disclosure as proposed by Ullman (2000) and Bogen et al. (2019), categorizing social reactions

into positive and negative themes. Ullman (2000) categorizes positive social reactions into three: emotional support, practical aid, and informational support (Ullman 2000). Positive reactions can be associated with one's attempts to offer comfort and encouragement to survivors, ease their distress, and facilitate their access to much-needed support. Similar to Ullman, Bogen et al. (2019) classify positive social reactions into five: advocacy/taking responsibility, emotional support, validation, practical informational aid, and bystander intervention.

The collected tweets were coded based on the Social Reactions Questionnaire (SRQ) by Ullman (2000) combined with the Online Social Reactions Classification (OSRC) by Bogen et al. (2019) to discover the patterns in the social reactions to the tweet in question. The coding team consisted of three coders with prior work experience in violence against women's services. The coding team iteratively adjusted new codes to a dataset and then discussed to add or delete codes, thus revising the code definitions (Forman and Damschroder 2007).

Data for the present study were collected from the responses to @UserID's tweets that disclose her sexual violence case posted on 18 June 2022. The analysis seeks to discover the patterns and explain the narratives of the positive and negative reactions.

Data were retrieved from Twitter on 10 August 2022 at 01:15 p.m. (Western Indonesia Time). Data were collected manually through the advanced search feature on Twitter with a query “(@UserID) until:2022-06-25 since:2022-06-18” to capture tweets mentioning @UserID regarding her tweets about the sexual violence incident.

## **Online Disclosure of Sexual Violence**

Antony Giddens defines a social movement as any organized collective effort to promote or counter social change (Roberts and Kloss 1979). A social movement usually aims to voice concerns with a certain policy. In the past, such a movement had to be organized in person. With the development of digital technology, a social movement can now be amplified through social media (Poell 2020). There are new opportunities for dialogue, participation, and public policy development (Steinberg 2016). The public can participate in the movement and become more informed about the issues. They can take action by engaging in posts about the issues (through likes, comments, and shares) and creating content about the issues (Yang 2016).

As the internet and social media transformed, more activists and survivors shared their experiences on social media. However, most sexual violence survivors are still reluctant to disclose their experience—fearing negative social reactions and victimization—and may even blame themselves for the assault they experienced (Carretta, Burgess, and DeMarco 2015). Bogen et al. (2021) identified four reasons that motivate survivors to disclose their experience online: 1) to seek validation that their experiences were sexual assault, harassment, or abuse, 2) to find legal advice from other survivors, 3) to gather support from other survivors, and 4) to drive movements against sexual violence.

In Indonesia, sexual violence survivors who share their stories on social media gain much attention from other users. In this study, the disclosure tweets from @UserID gained a high engagement rate with over 4.000 replies, 7.000

retweets, and 45.000 likes (as of August 2022). The tweets went viral and became a trending topic in Indonesia. Several media outlets also covered this story in articles to raise awareness of the issue beyond Twitter (Elmira 2022; Putri 2022; Santoso and Fauzi 2022). In response to the disclosure tweets and mass report, the state railway company, PT KAI, responded:

“@UserID - Good afternoon. Regarding the report that you sent, Railmin has responded via direct message. Please check the message from Railmin. Thanks.”

A few days later, PT KAI took serious action by banning the perpetrator from the train, as stated on their official Twitter account:

“KAI apologizes and is taking strong action by boycotting the sexual harassment perpetrator. If #SahabatKAI witness/experience sexual harassment in the station and train area, Railmin encourages you to report it to the officer/DM us.”

PT KAI also conducted sexual harassment prevention campaigns on all train trips and at several stations to increase public awareness of sexual harassment and ensure safety for all passengers (Hamami 2022).

Social media have created a platform for sexual violence survivors to disclose their stories and bring the taboo topic to the forefront. As such, the public has become more informed about the reality of sexual violence. Online disclosure of sexual violence helps raise awareness of sexual violence issues by asking for public responses and initiatives (Li et al. 2021). In this study, the survivor experienced sexual violence in a public space, encouraging other users to assist her in obtaining support. Twitter plays a key role in this case by stimulating discussion and interaction among people interested in current social issues (Seelig

et al. 2019). With hundreds of responses received, these tweets created a buzz and sparked user discussion. The discussion around the disclosure tweets has generated a social movement as it influenced other users' views on sexual violence and instigated a change in train services. Indeed, users can contribute to a movement by spreading information, addressing criticism, and allocating resources (Alifiary and Kusumasari 2021). They can engage in the movement by engaging with posts about sexual violence disclosures, as their responses will help bring the subject to the spotlight and make the issue reach a wider audience.

### **Social Reactions to Online Disclosure of Sexual Violence**

This study analyzes 78.6% (N=1,678) of the extracted social reaction tweets (N=2,136). A total of 459 tweets were eliminated, including tweets outside disclosure, mostly not expressed in Bahasa Indonesia. Unclear, emoji, or interjections-only tweets were also eliminated. Two major themes and twelve subthemes emerged in this study (Table 1). The majority of reaction tweets (69.7%, N=1,169) were classified as positive social reactions, and the remaining 30.3% (N=509) were coded as negative social reactions. This finding is consistent with previous research, stating that positive responses to sexual violence disclosure on social media—such as encouragement, positive messages, and calls for action—outweigh harmful responses, such as victim-blaming and egocentric responses (Bogen et al. 2019; Hosterman et al. 2018; Moors and Webber 2013). All tweets were translated from Bahasa Indonesia and slightly altered in accordance with ethical web research's best practices to prevent any reverse identification of

Twitter users (Ayers et al. 2018). The percentages below represent the proportion of tweets in the analyzed dataset (Table 1).

Positive social reactions accounted for most disclosure responses (69.7%, N=1,169). The subthemes include emotional support, informational aid, advocacy and taking responsibility, bystander intervention, sharing experiences, and curiosity. New subthemes not identified in SRQ and OSRC were condemnation, sharing experience, and curiosity.

In this study, tweets classified as bystander intervention garnered the most responses among all subthemes, with 18.3% of tweets (N=307). This finding differs from Ullman’s (2000) SRQ, which identified none. It should be noted that these responses occur exclusively in online environments (Bogen et al. 2019). This kind of tweet is directed at other users who post

negative responses and highlights the inappropriacy of the responses on behalf of the survivor. It directly challenges problematic Twitter users whose content implies victim blaming, humor, promoted rape myths, or other harmful responses. Many tweets were coded as bystander intervention, as one harmful tweet invited dozens of bystander intervention tweets intended as corrective actions. For example, this user responded to a victim-blaming tweet:

“@UserID @UserID - so there are people who still blame the victim’s clothes, yikes.”

Other tweets responded with corrective information, such as:

“@UserID @UserID - Next time, when sexual harassment victims tell their stories, don’t comment like this. Other victims will be afraid to speak up.”

Table 1  
Social Reaction Tweets (N=1,678)

Theme	Subtheme	%	N	Theme	Subtheme	%	N
Positive Social Reactions		69.7	1,169	Negative Social Reactions		30.3	509
	Bystander intervention	18.30	307		Control	7.27	122
	Condemnation	14.42	242		Egocentrism	7.03	118
	Advocacy/Taking Responsibility	11.62	195		Distraction	6.20	104
	Emotional Support	10.49	176		Humor	5.72	96
	Sharing Experience	8.94	150		Victim-blaming	4.1	69
	Curiosity	3.46	58				
	Informational Support	2.44	41				

Many users confront other problematic users who react with victim blaming, humor, or other harmful responses and attempt to educate those individuals. These negative tweets can be emotionally distressing for survivors of sexual violence, activists, and the general public. As a result, many users were called to confront the malicious users and provide remedial information. The nature of social media creates a unique environment for this kind of reaction to arise. Due to the large size of the audience, there is a greater need to intervene in these issues to prevent myths and harmful reactions from being uncontested (Fairbairn 2020). Although bystander intervention tweets are not directed at the survivor, sexual violence survivors who view the tweets may find them cathartic (Bogen et al. 2019). This finding implies that social media, given the right circumstances, can offer safe spaces for sexual violence survivors. There is protection against harmful reactions as activists and the general public have direct access to counter inappropriate responses.

Meanwhile, approximately 14.4% of the dataset of 242 tweets were classified as condemnation. Condemning sexual harassment and shaming perpetrators is considered a positive social reaction and is not included in SRQ and OSRC. Condemnation emerges frequently and illustrates how online users react differently toward sexual harassment disclosure. The sentiment in this subtheme is generally negative. However, they were all directed at the perpetrator. Users clearly stated that they were against the perpetrator and that the perpetrator was to blame for the assault. Many users responded to sexual violence disclosure by shaming the perpetrators, for example:

“@UserID - This guy is seriously mentally ill.”

Other users reacted by censoring sexual harassment, such as:

“@UserID - How can there be lots of sexual harassment on the train? I am pissed.”

Users expressed outrage at the sexual violence incident, implying that the perpetrator was responsible for the assault. Previously, these responses were categorized as egocentric as they were considered self-serving and less helpful for survivors (Lorenz et al. 2018; Ullman 2010). However, in an online environment, naming and shaming perpetrators can be viewed as a “progressive act,” as it shows survivors that people are on their side (Chitsamatanga, Ntlama-Makhanya, and Chair 2021; Page, Bull, and Chapman 2019). Feminists believe that, aside from legal punishment, social sanctions like naming and shaming can be another consequence of sexual violence offenses (Dey 2020). In this case, social media enable users to enforce social punishment—such as by condemning, naming, and shaming perpetrators—and send a message to other potential perpetrators about the consequences of sexual violence. Further research should investigate whether this response is helpful for the survivor.

Subtheme advocacy/taking responsibility is unique to an online setting (Bogen et al. 2019). Responses containing advocacy/ taking responsibility encourage societal change to prevent sexual violence, either as an individual or as a part of a group. The findings in this study show that 195 tweets (11.62%) were classified as advocacy/taking responsibility. Many advocacy tweets were directed toward responsible institutions, mainly PT KAI, such as:

"@UserID @KAI121 - Please include women-only passenger cars for safety. This accident happens a lot. Even though it was quickly responded to, it is still concerning."

"@UserID - Can you assist in reporting to @KomnasPerempuan? Please take action against this inappropriate behavior @KAI121 @keretaapikita."

Bogen et al. (2019) characterized these responses as unique to the online environment. This study found that many users suggested improving the policy and urged service providers and related institutions to assist the victim. Users in their advocacy/taking responsibility tweets tagged key stakeholders' Twitter handles to alert them about the issue. These reactions sparked further discussion among users and put collective pressure on the responsible institutions to change their policies and sanction the perpetrator. Twitter has made it possible for users to share ideas, discuss social issues, take action, and create social change (Li et al. 2021; Sills et al. 2016). Previous research has shown that these actions are promoted through hashtags (Fairbairn 2020; Hosterman et al. 2018; Yang 2016). However, this study discovered that users could also educate other users and promote change by responding to the tweets.

Meanwhile, the emotional support subtheme consists of comforting words, affirmation of the survivor's emotional and psychological reactions, and appreciation and compliments addressed toward survivors. This subtheme accounts for 10.49% of all coded responses (N=176). Many users responded with uplifting words to comfort the survivor, for example:

"@UserID - I'm sorry it's happened to you. I really hope you're okay. Stay safe!"

Many users also expressed gratitude for speaking up and initiating a change, such as:

"Thank you for having the courage to speak up. Thank God PT KAI has implemented a new sexual harassment policy, so I feel more secure when taking long-distance trains."

Emotional support responses could assist survivors' recovery process. It feels empowering for the survivors when other people acknowledge the severity of the sexual assault and commend them for their courage (Hosterman et al. 2018).

Responding to disclosure by exchanging sexual harassment experiences was not identified in the SRQ and OSRC frameworks. In a qualitative study regarding social reactions outside of SRQ, Ullman (2010) identified sharing experience responses as positive social reactions. This study identified around 8.94% of the tweets (N=150) as sharing experiences. Users responded to the disclosure by sharing personal sexual violence experiences to reassure the survivors that they were not alone and were understood, for example:

"@UserID - You did well, sister! This happened to me on a bus once. Rubbing hot balm on his hand did not help, so I begged the officer to ask him to switch seats. Still traumatized me."

Men also their experiences, for instance:

"@UserID - I am a man, and a middle-aged woman groped me on a train. I don't know what to do in that situation. Since I am a man, I would never shout. I feel ashamed."

These reactions can benefit survivors because they feel that other survivors understand what they are going through (Ullman 2010). With victims coming forward to share their sexual violence experiences, other people are to reflect on the extent and reality of sexual



violence. The survivor is likely to feel comforted to know that they are not alone in enduring the impact of sexual violence and that they have a collective voice (Alaggia and Wang 2020). Social media has served as a platform to bring together people with similar values and beliefs, allowing survivors to feel understood and empowered (Li et al. 2021).

Similar to advocacy/taking responsibility subthemes, curiosity responses were not in the SRQ and OSRC frameworks. Approximately 3.46% of tweets (N=58) are categorized as curiosity. These tweets express interest in finding out more about the assault and expressing concern about the current state of the victim. Tweets identified in this subtheme are generally a positive sentiment. Many users expressed their concern about the survivor's condition and the prevention measures, for instance:

"@UserID - Are you okay now? Have you reported it to the officer?"

"@UserID - If we find an incident like this, how do we chat with the conductor?"

Many users were also curious to learn more about the assault and were concerned about the victim's condition. Previous studies did not observe this subtheme as a social reaction (Bogen et al. 2019; Ullman 2000). Twitter has a character limit (280 characters), so users may be unable to publish the entire story in a single tweet. This limitation prompts other users to learn more about the incident and express their concern about the victim's present condition and the aftermath of the assault. This response makes them feel listened to and taken seriously. However, further research is needed to investigate whether this reaction positively impacted survivors.

Next, the informational support subtheme is a response that provides the survivor with informational assistance and resources. Informational support responses appeared on 41 tweets (2.44% of the coded responses). Survivors were provided with a wide range of resources, including links to websites and the profile of support providers. For example:

"@UserID @UserID - usually, the conductor number is displayed on the train. You can report to that number, and you also have the proof of the assault."

"@UserID - to those who often travel alone, this is very useful and easy [link]."

Users were urged to support the survivor by providing necessary information to access assistance and other resources. Twitter makes it possible to give the victims informational support messages that extend traditional information exchange methods (Hosterman et al. 2018).

Online disclosure of sexual violence can be considered a resistance practice as the survivor challenges the silencing nature of sexual violence. This can be regarded as a strategy employed by the survivor and other users to disrupt the repressive dominance (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013). Social media platforms serve as public assemblies and provide a platform for survivors of sexual violence to overcome the difficulties of reporting and requesting public responses and actions. In this study, the sexual violence incidence in a public space has prompted Twitter users to assist the victim in obtaining support and advocating for institutions to hold the perpetrator accountable.

This study has shown how social media has made it easier for sexism and misogyny to be tolerated while simultaneously providing a safe

space for collective action against sexual violence (Sills et al. 2016). Survivors who disclose their sexual violence experiences on social media dismantle the online misogyny. As they feel silenced by the reporting procedure, they turn to social media to reclaim their voices. The disclosure on social media allows other users to read the stories and participate in countering sexual violence by liking, replying, and engaging with disclosure posts, generating a collective call to action (Suran 2014).

Bystander intervention reactions could directly challenge inappropriate negative responses, such as victim-blaming and ego-centric responses, which could be seen as a form of resistance. The bystander intervention tweets outnumbered and overpowered the negative social reaction tweets. These bystander intervention tweets may establish new power dynamics within the disclosure thread. This is consistent with Lilja and Johansson's (2018) assertion that feminist resistance not only breaks gender inequity but also creates new power relations.

Online disclosure is likely to encourage other survivors to share their own experiences. Survivors may find this response empowering, a feeling that may transfer to other survivors. The more survivors share their experiences, the more their voices will be amplified, which increases the chance of denormalizing sexual violence and establishing new norms (Lilja 2022; Lilja and Johansson 2018). Repetitions like this can effectively disseminate and facilitate new discourses (Lilja 2022). Similar to the #MeToo movement, responding to sexual violence disclosure by sharing experiences is a constructive resistance practice driven by repetitions. This repetition resulting from

representations that establish norms generates more repetitions (Lilja 2022).

Social media users challenge authority by responding to sexual violence disclosure with advocacy/taking responsibility responses. Some users also suggest improving the policy and urge service providers and other relevant institutions to assist the victim. In this case, the survivor and other users were engaging in feminist resistance by holding the state institution, PT KAI, accountable, putting it in a position to support the feminist action. Social media users demand that PT KAI adopt state feminism and enforce feminist justice by amending the sexual violence policy and sanctioning the perpetrator. This is in line with Lilja and Johansson (2018), stating that feminism fosters gender equality within the authority through political measures.

To a certain extent, the positive social reactions managed to overthrow the domineering power. The emergence of an opposition group that actively attempts to seize the established power institutions allows such an overthrow to happen, along with the impediments and spontaneity of resistance movements (Lilja, Baaz, and Vinthagen 2013). In this study, users condemned, named, and shamed the perpetrator as a punishment for harassing the victim in a public facility. Although the perpetrator's identity was never revealed, PT KAI blocked his ID, boycotting him from train trips. On the other hand, this case has changed PT KAI's operations. After the issue was brought to the attention of several important actors and organizations, PT KAI changed its policy on sexual harassment by boycotting the sexual violence perpetrator and conducting a sexual violence campaign on all train trips and several

train stations (Hamami 2022). Individual users may not be as powerful in exercising resistance, but collectively, they are powerful enough to pressure institutions to make changes (Steinberg 2016). In this case, PT KAI practiced resistance against sexual violence with state feminism by using its authority to change the current policy and punish the perpetrator. In other words, the resistance exists not only in the grassroots but also within the authority (Lilja and Johansson 2018).

Negative social reactions account for 30.3% of the dataset (N=509). The subthemes include victim-blaming, distraction, egocentrism, control, and humor. Humor was not identified in SRQ and OSRC. Negative social reactions to tweets disclosing a sexual violence incident may cause digital harm to survivors of sexual violence, specifically victim blaming and humor responses.

Controlling responses were included in the SRQ but not the OSRC. In this study, this kind of response is common, which made up 7.27% of the dataset (N=122). This study found that in the online environment, controlling responses dictated what the survivors should and should not do during and after the assault. Controlling responses are generally tweeted with negative sentiment. For example, many users dictated the survivor to fight back:

“@UserID - Just hit him, don’t just stay still!”

Some other users told the survivor to reveal the perpetrator’s identity, which may sound encouraging, but these users conveyed it in a non-pleasant way, for instance:

“@UserID - So disappointed! Don’t be afraid, and just point the camera at his face!”

Many users dictated and prescriptively decided what survivors should and should not

do during and after the assault. Controlling responses are not included as a reaction in an online environment by Bogen et al. (2019), but these responses are common in traditional face-to-face disclosure (Ullman 2000). The online environment allows this reaction to arise because users can react directly to the survivor’s tweets. Controlling reaction may also be possible because, in this case, the survivor shared her experience in real-time, which triggered other users to dictate what she should or should not do in that situation. This is consistent with a previous study, which found that victims who disclosed their victimization shortly after an assault received greater controlling responses (Ullman 2000). Taking control of the survivor may reinforce the survivor’s sense of helplessness, shame, and stigma (Ullman 2010). Receiving controlling reactions was as harmful as symptoms associated with PTSD, depression, and anxiety, engaging more in self-blame, and low self-worth (Littleton et al. 2006; Orchowski, Untied, and Gidycz 2013)

The egocentrism subtheme made up approximately 7.03% of tweets (N=118). Users who responded with egocentric responses expressed their concerns about the impact of the sexual violence on themselves and emphasized their own emotions rather than the survivor’s needs or feelings. Many users responded with what they would do if they were in the survivor’s position:

“@UserID - If that was me, I swear, I would punch him in the face after I recorded it!”

Some users responded to the disclosure tweets with an attached link to promote themselves:

“@UserID - Waiting for people to attack the guy, he’s so dead [self-promotion link].”

Meanwhile, responses that diverted the attention away from the victim and her experience were categorized as distraction subtheme. Distracting tweets accounted for 6.2% of the dataset (N=104). Many tweets in this subtheme were notably positive in sentiment. However, both SRQ and OSRC regarded distracting responses as negative, as they draw the attention away from the survivor's immediate needs (Bogen et al. 2019; Ullman 2000). A large portion of tweets are coded as distraction subthemes because they focus on the characteristics of the perpetrators instead of the assault, for instance:

"@UserID - Why are guys with glasses often turned out to be a pervert?"

Some users are responding with completely off-topic comments, for example:

"@UserID - The only way to soothe the heart is by dhikr."

The survivors might feel invalidated when faced with egocentric and distracting responses. However, these users may be clueless about the negative impacts of these reactions on survivors or were unaware of more effective social support mechanisms (Bogen et al. 2019). However, both reactions were deemed inappropriate, and many other users confronted these responses and highlighted the impropriety.

Next, victim blaming is when the response contains explicit remarks suggesting the survivors' behaviors or characters were responsible for the assault or criticism of the survivors for disclosing the incident online. Victim-blaming tweets accounted for 69 tweets (around 5.9% of all coded tweets). The victim-blaming subtheme was not identified in OSRC but a common negative social reaction in the

traditional face-to-face disclosure (Filipas and Ullman 2001). Several users blame the survivor for not fighting back:

"@UserID - The stupid thing here is the fact that the victim was able to record and humiliate the perpetrator but did not tell him off."

Some tweets criticize the survivor for sharing her experience on social media, for example:

"@UserID - Just some advice. Instead of making content, maybe you could report or shout."

Many users accused the survivor of being assaulted because of the way she dressed and for remaining silent. In an online setting, users also blame the survivor for sharing her victimization on social media and accuse her of sharing the stories for 'content' and 'fame.' Victim-blaming tweets impose on survivors that the assault is their fault. Victim-blaming responses endorse rape culture, excuse perpetrators, and reduce the likelihood of reporting sexual violence (Stubbs-Richardson et al. 2018). Through its design and anonymity, social media increases the chances for trolling. Anonymity diminishes control and accountability, leading users to engage in malicious conduct. Some of these responses were debunked by many other users, which were classified as bystander intervention responses.

Tweets expressing hostile and inappropriate comments, such as rape jokes and rape myths that turned the experience of sexual violence into jokes were coded as humor. Humor tweets made up 5.72% of the dataset (N=96). This subtheme was not identified in SRQ or OSRC. The tweets have negative sentiments and may normalize and tolerate sexual violence. The

results showed that other users considered these 'humorous' tweets problematic and inappropriate. Some examples of the situational jokes are as follows.

"@UserID - If this is a soap opera, both of you may end up dating."

Many other users responded with rape, and sexist jokes, such as:

"@UserID - Just be honest, you actually like to be touched, right?"

Sexual violence has become so normalized in our culture that it is overlooked, delegitimized, and made into jokes. When users throw offensive rape jokes online, the idea that sexual violence is a laughing matter is reinforced. Sexist and rape jokes fuel and perpetuate rape culture in both online and offline settings (Keller et al. 2018; Sills et al. 2016; Thomae and Viki 2013).

The findings demonstrate how negative reactions inflict digital harm on sexual violence survivors, particularly victim-blaming and the use of humor. Digital technology may harm women with prevalent prejudice and hostility (Harris and Vitis 2020). Narratives that blame the victim for how she dressed or for not fighting back when they were sexually harassed were rooted in traditional gender stereotypes. Some responses criticized the survivor's failure to scream or fight back. Others believe that the survivor's capacity to videotape the harassment may have suggested that she did not mind being harassed. Social media creates a space where women are predominately victimized, and their sex and gender are vilified (Easter 2018). The traditional gender roles on online platforms put women to blame for the sexual harassment they suffer, and women are indoctrinated that they have no right to fight back against men (Johnson and Johnson 2021).

Several controlling and egocentric responses expressed hostility toward the survivor. These responses highlight the survivor's passivity in dealing with sexual harassment, which makes other users feel obliged to dominate her. These responses imply that women are inferior, submissive, and weak, which reinstated the traditional gender roles and sexism. Such digital harms reflect that sexism in online media is characterized by behaviors originating from multiple racial, gendered, and socioeconomic entitlements that discriminate against women (Easter 2018).

Other responses emphasized the normalization of sexual harassment by sharing rape jokes and the assumption that the survivor deserved to be violated. The logic of normalization embedded into social media shapes the digital environment and creates spaces where gender-based violence and harassment are tolerated and glorified (Bivens 2015). Some jokes were latent in patriarchal masculinity and objectification of women. When these jokes are repeated, excused, and justified, sexual violence is normalized as humor, which is a step back from challenging and questioning the established discourse (Lockyer and Savigny 2020). This humor can be hostile because they reinforce the belief that males are superior to women and that women deserve to be victims (Gaunt 2013). These beliefs permeate the collective consciousness of society and influence how society perceives sexual violence.

Negative social reactions on social media can have significant bodily and psychological effects. The platforms allow for social ostracism of survivors, which amplifies violations, harassment, and hate speech. Digital harms occur due to the inevitable embodiment of online interactions, which can have physical and

social consequences (Easter 2018). Digital harms are worsened by gender and racial inequalities. They are not restricted to a single part of a woman's life but involve the public, personal, and professional areas and share the same cause, motive, and impact as offline harms (Harris and Vitis 2020).

## Conclusion

The study results have demonstrated the spectrum and complexity of social reactions on social media. Positive social reactions are predominant, which could open opportunities for garnering support for sexual violence survivors. This research identifies two main themes: positive and negative social reactions. The positive social reaction subthemes include emotional support, informational support, advocacy/taking responsibility, and bystander intervention. Meanwhile, the negative social reaction subthemes include victim-blaming, distraction, egocentrism, and controlling behavior.

This study adds subthemes that were not identified in previous research. These newly discovered subthemes are condemnation, curiosity, sharing experiences (all of which are positive social reactions), and humor (a negative social reaction). The narratives in the negative social reactions inflicted digital harm on survivors of sexual violence in the form of prejudice, hostility, and the normalization of sexual violence. Meanwhile, positive social reactions form some resistance by challenging malicious users and the authority and amplifying sexual violence stories so that the issue reaches a larger audience. PT KAI also performed resistance in the form of state feminism by changing the policy regarding sexual violence and punishing the perpetrator.

The responses to the disclosure of sexual violence on social media make survivors of sexual violence, who likely lack support, reachable. Twitter can be an effective medium to reach out to marginalized communities and raise public awareness about current social issues. Moreover, the high engagement on Twitter can mobilize collective action and pressure authorities to improve. The authorities can respond by initiating changes in policy and joining the collective action to resist inequalities. Further research is required to investigate the impact of these responses on the survivors. As the analysis of this study is based solely on the responses toward the survivor's disclosure, the survivor's view on these reactions remains unknown. It is also important to investigate further with different methods, such as fieldwork research, where researchers are involved in the conversation. Twitter data analysis facilitates researchers to investigate public reactions toward sexual violence disclosure. However, the ever-changing Twitter algorithm makes it impossible to acquire the entire content or data from the query. Additionally, some user conversations may have been coded as ambiguous due to a lack of conversational context.[]

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