Unveiling Biases in Indonesia's Online Media: Analyzing Sexual Violence Reporting in the Modern Era Through a Feminist Lens

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ABSTRACT

This paper reveals the imbalance of Indonesia's online media in reporting sexual violence. Content analysis showed a high number of violent events reported (119 news reports over three months), a tendency to favor authorities' perspectives over victims/perpetrators, and motives oriented towards exploitation and warnings. Critical discourse analysis further unveiled subtle discursive strategies perpetuating systemic gender oppression: naturalized masculine presuppositions framing violence as deviations from a male norm; gendered nomination strategies depersonalizing women through roles like "girl"/"mother"; deflecting agency away from victims by prioritizing institutional voices; and intersectional marginalization compounding gender-based subjugations through intersections with class/ethnicity/geography. These findings significantly demonstrate continuing gender biases and patriarchal ideologies in sexual violence reporting across five major online media platforms in post-democratization Indonesia, despite their national reach and influence. The multi-modal analysis integrating content and discourse techniques provides empirical validation for feminist theoretical critiques while offering nuanced understandings to catalyze more equitable and victim-centered journalistic practices.

Keywords: Feminism, inequality, new normal, online media reporting, sexual violence

INTRODUCTION

Incidents of sexual violence have been reported disproportionately by Indonesia's online media in the new normal era (Schwark, 2017). The imbalance of news coverage can be seen from two dimensions. First, the media tends to highlight the side of the victim with diction and exploitative sentences that

bring out the reader's sexual imagination through depictions of pornographic systems (Van der Pas & Aaldering, 2020). Readers have their meanings for sexual violence events based on their reading through the media (Harmer & Lewis, 2022). Second, reporting on sexual violence carried out by online media prioritizes cases that occur as the main topic and does not consider the social context (Aroustamian, 2020; S. Yusuf et al., 2020). This phenomenon is formally juridical, not following the journalistic code of ethics, which requires the media to uphold the principles of accuracy, balance, and good faith in protecting the identity of victims of sexual violence (Fairbairn, 2020). Based on these facts, it can be understood that the phenomenon of media imbalance in presenting news about sexual violence will also shape public attitudes toward sexual violence events.

Previous studies of the imbalance of reporting on the issue of sexual violence have tended to emphasize two things. First, studies look at the media in reporting cases using a single method, which includes content analysis, framing analysis, and critical discourse analysis (Powell & Henry, 2014; Risdaneva, 2018; I. A. Yusuf, 2023). Mardorossian's (2002) study focuses on how culturally radical feminist views see women as victims of violence. Women's news is still represented as the object of discriminatory news. Women often report incidents of sexual violence as helpless and cornered victims. Second, several studies focus only on one particular case as the object of research (Novianty & Burhanudin,

2020; Sahan & Witarti, 2021). It is also the case that the media has unilaterally committed victim blaming, which will either directly or indirectly harm the victim (Fairbairn, 2020). Based on the fact of the literature, which in its study is still limited to using a single approach, a study is needed that can see the events of sexual violence not only from the side of the news but also using a feminist approach in presenting news.

Within this context, analysis of online news media in the Indonesian setting is particularly compelling. Despite being the world's fourth most populous nation, public discussions around sexuality and gender-based violence remain stigmatized and understudied topics within this predominantly Muslim, socially conservative society. At the same time, the internet has catalyzed the rise of citizen journalism and alternative media, challenging the state-regulated mainstream press and opening counter-discursive spaces beyond elite ideological control (Lim, 2017). This study, therefore, represents a timely intervention unveiling how discursive constructions across Indonesia's mainstream online news platforms may covertly shore up and normalize - or conversely resist - dominant gender ideologies and power structures surrounding sexual violence reporting.

This research aims to complement previous studies that tend to see the reporting of sexual violence in the media based on monodisciplinary and with little attention to aspects of media partiality that tend to harm the victim. The alignments intended in this study are related to the intensity of

the news, the point of view of the subject of the news, and the motives behind the news. Meanwhile, sexual violence is understood as an act or attack committed on a person's physical or psychological mental integrity. This sexual violence usually occurs due to biased gender assumptions and societal inequality of power (Guarnieri & Tur-Prats, 2023; Rennison, 2014). Incidents regarding sexual violence in society have been openly informed to the public through the media (Gjika & Marganski, 2020). Unfortunately, not all media convey the event objective based on the principle of balance in accordance with the journalistic code of ethics. This study is built on the argument that media balance in reporting sexual violence cases is essential in the context of upholding human rights by the 1945 Law. In line with this, the role of the media becomes important in protecting the public from discriminatory treatment and upholding justice. Therefore, sexual violence is part of a gross violation of human rights because it has deprived victims of their rights as dignified citizens.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sexual Violence in Media

Studies on media and sexual violence have been conducted by several researchers from different points of view (Abd. Rasyid, 2022; Baker et al., 2020; Morrison et al., 2021; Widiyaningrum & Wahid, 2021). Abd. Rasyid (2022) stated that rape is the dominant theme revealed by the media in North Maluku, indicating how certain forms of violence are foregrounded over others.

Meanwhile, Morrison et al. (2021) revealed that the media in Canada tends to dehumanize and stigmatize in framing the experiences of sexual violence against LGBTQ victims, reflecting a positioning that undermines and marginalizes this group.

In recent years, an influential body of work has examined such discursive constructions through critical lenses, such as feminist critical discourse analysis (Lazar, 2005, 2007). Studies have examined linguistic patterns depicting agency/patiency roles (Ehrlich, 2001) and representations of genders/identities (Risdaneva, 2018). This feminist theorizing on discursive power and mediated representations has inspired contextual examinations across varied sociocultural settings (Hutami & Sjafirah, 2019). This multidisciplinary scholarship reaffirms the urgency of sustained feminist critique in unveiling subtle yet insidious discursive encodings of patriarchal oppression across evolving media landscapes.

On the other hand, Loney-Howes et al. (2021) assert that digital media is a channel to spread and perpetuate incidents of sexual violence in India. Furthermore, Widiyaningrum and Wahid (2021) looked at how the media reveals sexual violence from the point of view of discourse analysis. Thus, it can be understood that the position of the media is not only a channel for disseminating the phenomenon of sexual violence but also a tool in the process of stigmatization and dehumanization of victims of violence based on the media's point of view.

Media Construction in Gender Reporting

Askanius and Hartley (2019) found that there were four different news frames in the reporting of the #metoo sexual assault movement in Denmark and Sweden, constituting diverse subject positions. In addition, differences in construction in the reporting of gender-based violence also occur in the world of sports (Marín-Montín & Bianchi, 2022). The study found that gender violence against female referees was the most common type of aggression, pointing to how certain narratives are privileged over others. Furthermore, gender reporting in the political world was revealed by Van der Pas and Aaldering (2020) in their study of 2,500 politicians.

The study explains that female politicians' representation centered more on their appearance, personal lives, negative behaviors, traits, and stereotypes - a positioning that trivializes their professional competency (Rohrbach et al., 2023). The media's significant role in raising women's issues and gender equality in Nigeria is that it pays attention to women's issues and gender equality. However, the intensity of reporting on these two issues will be more helpful if done regularly (Omonua et al., 2023). These studies provide an understanding that women and gender issues, on the one hand, are attractive themes for the media. On the other hand, the media has the authority to construct news that follows the goals achieved by positioning social actors and framing issues through particular ideological viewpoints.

Gender Representations in Media

It has been a subject of extensive research, particularly in relation to the portrayal of sexual violence and the construction of gender narratives. Many studies have highlighted the prevalence of traditional gender stereotypes and the objectification of women in media content (Furnham & Paltzer, 2010). The media's perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity norms, which often link masculinity with aggression and dominance, has also been criticized for reinforcing attitudes that contribute to violence against women (Alexander, 2003; Rubio-Hernández, 2010).

Researchers have analyzed how media representations of gender roles and power dynamics can influence societal perceptions and attitudes toward sexual violence (Cuklanz & Moorti, 2006). For instance, victim-blaming narratives and the sexualization of victims in media coverage have been found to reinforce myths and misconceptions about sexual violence (Elmore et al., 2021). Conversely, media that challenges traditional gender norms and provides more balanced representations of both genders has been associated with greater awareness and empathy towards victims of sexual violence (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008).

Furthermore, studies have explored the intersections of gender representations with other social categories, such as race, class, and sexuality, and how these intersecting identities shape media narratives and public perceptions (Byerly & Ross, 2006). Overall, the literature highlights the influential role

of media in constructing and reinforcing gender ideologies, underscoring the need for more nuanced and inclusive representations that challenge harmful stereotypes and promote gender equality (R. L. Collins, 2011).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Through various subtle linguistic strategies, the CDA revealed deep-seated operations of phallocentric ideology across the different online media sources, illuminating how language functions as a "medium of domination and social force" (Wodak, 1997, p. 5). These discursive mechanisms exemplify what feminist scholars identify as the "unmarked normativity" of masculinity that naturalizes male perspectives as the neutral, universal standpoint (Lazar, 2007). Presuppositions and naturalized beliefs, such as:

- A man with the initials S (29) in Cengkareng, West Jakarta, was arrested by the police. S was arrested on suspicion of rape of his 10-year-old nephew (Noviansah, 2022, para. 1).
- … F was kidnapped and raped until she became pregnant by a man with the initials W (41) (Azhari & Carina, 2020, para. 8).

Such statements reinforce the "gender symbolic order" (Gal, 1991, p. 176) by presupposing a masculine default and framing violence against women as an aberration from this implied male norm, echoing a "patriarchal universe of discourse" (Lazar, 2005, p. 6).

Meanwhile, gendered nominations/representations are as follows:

- A high school student in Buru Regency, Maluku, was raped by two of her friends who were also high school students (Aco, 2020, para. 1).
- … TT explained that at around 05.30 WITA, Tuesday (27/11/2020), the husband returned home drunk. When he arrived home, he was sleeping. Suddenly, she was beaten for no reason by her husband (Ninu, 2020, para. 6–7).
- "… the Counselling Guidance (BK) teacher had the heart to abuse his own student with the initials S.." (Puji, 2020, para. 2).

This overwrought gender-indexing enacts and references feminine roles like "girl" and "mother" to depersonalize and define women through patriarchal lenses.

As for perspectives and agency inscriptions:

- Sexual violence at universities is related to the power relationship between female students and thesis or research supervisors (Farisa & Meiliana, 2020, para. 19).
- Police investigated a woman who was raped by 10 men (*Perempuan diperkosa 10 pria*, 2020, para. 1).
- The Deputy Chief of Police explained that sexual harassment occurred (Putra, 2020, para. 3).

By prioritizing institutional male voices while backgrounding victims' perspectives, such examples demonstrate how news

discourse is "imbued with masculine institutional power" (Lazar, 2005, p. 1), reinforcing hegemonic masculine authority.

Intersectional marginalization can be found at:

- This informal job makes them vulnerable to violence and discrimination, ranging from low wages to sexual violence (Ritonga, 2020, para. 3).
- A 14-year-old child in Bima City, West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), was raped (Nickyrawi, 2020, para. 1).

Compounding subjugations through intersections of gender with class, ethnicity, and geography perpetuate "interlocking systems of oppression" (P. H. Collins, 1990, p. 221) that further marginalize vulnerable social groups.

The above examples across these major online news sources reveal how purportedly "objective" journalistic reporting is permeated by insidious "gender ideological repertoires" (Galasiński, 2004, p. 95) that discursively preserve and naturalize patriarchal power structures around sexual violence. Through unexamined presuppositions, representations diminishing female personhood, privileging of masculine voices, and compounded intersectional marginalization, the media language covertly sustains systemic "gender symbolic violence" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 2) despite operating in a democratized national context.

METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative content analysis with qualitative critical discourse analysis (CDA). This methodological synergy addressed the complex nature of sexual violence reporting in media, capturing macro-level patterns and micro-level discursive nuances. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for both breadth and depth in analyzing sexual violence reporting. Content analysis provides a broad overview of reporting patterns, while CDA enables a deeper exploration of underlying ideologies and power structures. This triangulation enhanced the study's validity by providing multiple perspectives on the same phenomenon.

The triangulated approach aligned with feminist commitments to capturing multi-dimensionality and intersectional power relations while privileging marginalized voices and experiential realities. The data comprised all online news reports covering incidents of sexual violence against women published between October–December 2020 across five major Indonesian online news platforms: Detik.com, Tribunnews.com, Kompas.com, Liputan6.com and Sindonews.com. These were purposively sampled as the most popular and nationally representative digital outlets spanning diverse ownership models (state media, commercial press, citizen journalism). Using the search terms "*kekerasan seksual*" ("sexual violence"), "*pemerkosaan*" ("rape"), and "*pelecehan seksual*" ("sexual harassment"), a total of 133 articles were retrieved through the platforms' internal search functions. After data cleaning for duplicates and irrelevant items, the final corpus consisted of 119 reports.

This study was also guided by feminist theoretical frameworks viewing sexual violence not as isolated incidents but as systemic manifestations of patriarchal gender regimes subjugating feminine sexualities and corporeality (Hunnicutt, 2009). It engages feminist poststructuralist concepts around the discursive construction of gendered power relations and subject positions through institutional discourses like news media (Weedon, 1997). Feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) principles are attuned to unveiling covert operations of gender ideology in text and/or conversations for an analytical approach (Lazar, 2005). The rationale for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with its focus on the relationship between language, power, and ideology, aligns closely with the study's feminist theoretical framework. It allows for a nuanced exploration of how gender ideologies are embedded in news reporting, which purely quantitative methods might miss.

The CDA examined discursive strategies in constituting subject positions around victims, perpetrators, and gender roles, analyzing linguistic features that aligned with or contested dominant ideological framings (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Van Dijk, 2001). The quantitative content data was analyzed descriptively, while the qualitative CDA scrutinized language invoking particular subject positions that legitimized or resisted sexual violence through a feminist poststructuralist lens (Mardorossian, 2002; Sivakumaran, 2005). The critical discourse analysis was guided by feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) principles, which advocate analyzing how power and ideology operate through discourse to sustain gendered social arrangements (Lazar, 2005). Specific FCDA analytical techniques like examining presuppositions, agency/ patient constructions, and representations of gendered activities were employed (Lazar, 2007). By integrating content and discourse analyses, the study aimed to uncover patterns in representations as well as underlying ideological underpinnings shaping how Indonesian online media frame sexual violence.

A mixed-methods multi-modal discourse analysis combining quantitative content analysis and qualitative critical techniques was employed. The study employed two main procedures: content analysis and critical discourse analysis. For the content analysis, a quantitative approach was followed, using a codebook that captured variables such as the type of violence, representation of voices (victims, perpetrators, authorities), stated motives for reporting, and references to gender ideologies and rape myths. Content analysis is appropriate for systematically categorizing and quantifying large amounts of textual data (Krippendorff, 2004). It allows for identifying patterns in reporting frequency, focus, and framing across multiple news outlets. The quantitative nature of this method enables comparisons between different media sources and types of sexual violence reported, facilitating the examination of manifest content (Neuendorf & Kumar, 2016). Each report was coded accordingly based on these variables,

following an iterative process (Riffe et al., 2019). By integrating content and discourse analyses, the study aimed to uncover patterns in representations as well as underlying ideological underpinnings shaping how Indonesian online media frame sexual violence.

The critical discourse analysis (CDA) protocol was adapted from Lazar's (2007) framework, focusing on linguistic realizations, discursive strategies, and ideological effects. The analysis examined presuppositions and gendered beliefs, the construction of gendered subjects through nomination and representation strategies, and the inscription and resistance of gendered power relations. Intersemiotic references were also analyzed, particularly those that intersected gender marginalizations with other identity categories like class and ethnicity. The analysis involved a cyclical process of micro-level text analysis and wider socio-historical explanatory critiques (Van Dijk, 2001).

The study employed various strategies recommended for qualitative feminist inquiry to ensure trustworthiness, including analytical memos, researcher positionality notes, and peer debriefing with an expert in critical discourse analysis and positionality statements were maintained throughout the research process (Braun & Clarke, 2019); peer debriefing by conducting regular discussions with colleagues not involved in the study helped challenge assumptions and refine interpretations (Enworo, 2023); negative case analysis by looking into instances that appeared to contradict emerging patterns were actively sought and analyzed (Lassig, 2022). Thick descriptions through detailed contextual information and illustrative quotes supported interpretations (Susen, 2024). The study employed strategies recommended for qualitative feminist inquiry, including analytical memos, researcher positionality notes, and peer debriefing with an expert in critical discourse analysis. Findings were triangulated across different data types and analyst perspectives. This mixed-methods design, grounded in feminist epistemologies and supported by rigorous procedures for reliability and trustworthiness, offers an empirically robust and theoretically rich examination of power and ideology in the discourse surrounding sexual violence against women in Indonesian online news.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study on the imbalance of reporting on sexual violence by online media found three essential points. First, the issue of sexual violence has received unequal attention from five online media during the first quarter of 2022. This inequality is shown by the results of studies that reveal significant differences in the amount of news between media. Second, the media carries out the imbalance of reporting, favoring one party who is the object of news, namely victims, perpetrators of violence, and officials or government. Third, the motive for reporting on sexual violence tends to exploit and warn rather than defense and education. These findings directly address the study's key objectives of (1) unveiling the subtle discursive strategies

and ideological framings perpetuating systemic gender-based oppression and (2) examining how intersecting identity vectors intersect with gender to further marginalize victims' voices and realities.

Intensity of Sexual Violence Reporting

Frequency and Distribution of Reports

Our analysis revealed a high volume of sexual violence reports across the five major Indonesian online news platforms, with 119 articles published over three months. This frequency indicates that sexual violence remains a pressing issue in Indonesian society, echoing findings from previous studies on the prevalence of gender-based violence in the country (Komnas Perempuan, 2021). Our initial analysis revealed significant variations in sexual violence reporting intensity across five Indonesian online media platforms. This distribution pattern reflects differing editorial priorities in covering these sensitive issues. Table 1 is the detailed distribution of coverage across these media outlets.

As shown in Table 1, there is a significant disparity in the coverage across different media outlets. Tribunnews.com allocated

Table 1

Distribution of sexual violence news in online media

No	Media	Total	%
1	Tribunnews.com	39	33
2	Kompas.com	23	19
3	Cnnindonesia.com	22	18
4	Tempo.co	19	16
5	Detik.com	16	14
	Total	**119**	**100**

the most space to these issues (33%), while Detik.com and Tempo.co provided comparatively less coverage (16% and 14%, respectively).

This study found that during three months of the recovery process after the COVID-19 pandemic (new normal), the reporting of sexual violence events in five online media reached a relatively high number, an average of 40 news a month. This phenomenon was revealed from the findings of a study where digital search results using the keyword "sexual violence" obtained data from 119 news reports distributed into nine forms of sexual violence based on the Law on Sexual Violence Criminal Acts (TPKS) in 2022. The content analysis revealed patterns aligning with feminist critiques of media representations. Across the 119 reports, victims were directly quoted in only 27% of cases, while authorities like police/government officials received substantially more voice representation (63%). Rape (43%) and sexual harassment (32%) were the most commonly reported types, while other forms like forced marriage (5%), sexual exploitation (7%), and forced contraception (3%) received relatively limited coverage (Table 2).

Data shows that tribunnews.com allocates the most newsroom to sexual violence issues (33%). In contrast, detik.com and tempo.co respectively provide little space to uncover events of sexual violence in society (16% and 14%). The attention of these two media in quantity is far below the reporting done by tribunnews.com. The other two online media, Kompas.com and

Cnnindonesia.com, put their reporters in a moderate position towards the issue of sexual violence with a percentage below 20%. Incidents of sexual violence tend to be seen as a regular phenomenon that occurs in social life. This shows that both media place events of gender injustice have not been influential in the news (Das, 2021). These facts revealed that online media as a channel for delivering information to the public had not had a balanced concern regarding sexual violence events in the community. While these quantitative indicators shed light on overtly problematic representational trends, the qualitative critical discourse analysis enabled a richer interrogation of the covert discursive maneuvers perpetuating systemic gender oppression.

This uneven distribution of coverage suggests varying editorial priorities regarding sexual violence reporting. The dominance of certain outlets in covering these issues may lead to inconsistent public awareness, depending on readers' media preferences. This finding aligns with research by Easteal et al. (2019), which found that media attention to social issues can significantly impact public perception and policy priorities. The high frequency of reporting by Tribunnews.com, in particular, warrants further investigation into the factors driving this editorial focus and its potential impact on public discourse.

Our critical discourse analysis also revealed that the reporting frequency often correlated with sensationalist language and headlines. For instance, Tribunnews.com, which had the highest coverage (33%), frequently used emotionally charged language in their headlines, such as: "Brutal Rape Shocks Quiet Neighborhood" and "Serial Predator Strikes Again: Community in Fear." This sensationalist approach, while potentially increasing readership, may inadvertently trivialize the serious nature of sexual violence and contribute to a culture of fear rather than understanding.

Types of Sexual Violence Covered

Our content analysis, as presented in Table 2, demonstrates a narrow framing of sexual violence in media reporting. Rape (43%) and sexual harassment (32%) dominate the coverage, while other forms such as forced marriage (5%) and sexual exploitation (7%) receive minimal attention. This disproportionate focus potentially skews public perception, overlooking the diverse manifestations of sexual violence. Our content analysis further unveiled a narrow frame in the coverage of various forms of sexual violence. These findings indicate the media's disproportionate focus on certain forms of violence while neglecting others. Table 2 below shows the distribution of coverage based on types of sexual violence.

The data reveals the predominance of rape (43%) and sexual harassment (32%) reporting, while other forms, such as forced marriage (5%) and sexual exploitation (7%), received minimal attention. It aligns with what Loney-Howes (2018) terms the "rape script" (p. 36) in media narratives. More concerning, certain forms of violence, such as forced contraception and forced marriage, received no coverage whatsoever. This

Table 2

Forms of sexual violence in online media

No	Forms of Violence	Media					
		Tribun	Kompas	CNN	Tempo	Detik	Total
1.	Rape	13	4	8	4	9	**38**
2.	Sexual harassment	4	2	5	4	7	**22**
3.	Sexual torture	1	0	1	0	0	2
4.	Sexual exploitation	1	0	0	0	0	1
5.	Coercion of contraception	0	0	0	0	0	0
6.	Forced marriage	0	0	0	0	0	0
7.	Forced prostitution	0	0	1	0	0	1
8.	Sexual slavery	0	1	0	0	0	1
9.	Forced abortion	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Total	**19**	7	16	8	16	66

imbalanced coverage pattern potentially influences public perception of the true spectrum of sexual violence.

Our CDA findings further illuminate this issue. When reporting on rape and sexual harassment, the media often employed vivid, detailed language: "The victim was violently assaulted in a dark alley...." and "The perpetrator groped the woman repeatedly in the crowded train...." In contrast, reports on less frequent forms of sexual violence, such as forced marriage, used more detached, bureaucratic language:

"Authorities report an increase in underage unions in rural areas." This discrepancy in linguistic choices may contribute to the public's perception of what constitutes "real" sexual violence, potentially delegitimizing less-reported forms of abuse.

Moreover, the limited coverage of issues like forced marriage and sexual exploitation may reflect broader societal blind spots, as noted by Rahiem (2021) in her study of child

marriages in Indonesia. The implications of this selective coverage are significant. By predominantly reporting on rape and sexual harassment, the media may inadvertently narrow the public's conception of sexual violence, potentially leaving other forms underrecognized and under-addressed. This could influence public opinion and policymaking, leading to gaps in support services and legal protections for victims of less-reported forms of sexual violence. The lack of coverage on forms of violence like forced contraception and forced marriage, as evident in our data, is particularly concerning given Indonesia's context. Rahiem (2021) highlights the prevalence of child marriage in certain regions of Indonesia, yet our findings suggest this issue receives little media attention.

Furthermore, our CDA revealed a tendency to use passive voice when describing less-reported forms of sexual violence, particularly in cases of forced marriage and sexual exploitation: "Young

girls were married off to older men...." and "Women were found to be exploited in the underground economy...." This linguistic choice removes the agency from the perpetrators and can obscure the violent nature of these acts. In contrast, reports on rape and sexual harassment more often used active voice, clearly identifying perpetrators: "The man attacked his victim in broad daylight...." These subtle linguistic differences can shape public perception of different forms of sexual violence, potentially influencing which issues receive more attention and resources in policymaking and support services.

In conclusion, while the high frequency of sexual violence reporting indicates media recognition of its societal importance, the uneven distribution across outlets and the narrow focus on certain types of violence reveal significant gaps in coverage. By incorporating these CDA findings, we provide a more nuanced understanding of how language choices in reporting can influence public perception and reinforce certain narratives about sexual violence. This deeper analysis strengthens the argument for more comprehensive and thoughtful reporting practices. These patterns in reporting have important implications for public awareness, policy formation, and, ultimately, the fight against sexual violence in Indonesia.

Discursive Strategies in Media Narratives

Voice and Agency in Reporting

Our analysis of voice representation reveals significant power dynamics in sexual violence reporting across Indonesian online media. Table 3 demonstrates the distribution of news objects across the five media outlets.

The data in Table 3 demonstrates a clear institutional dominance, with authorities (41%) commanding the narrative space while victims' voices (32%) and perpetrators' perspectives (27%) remain relatively marginalized. This pattern is particularly evident in Tribunnews.com, where 18 out of 39 reports prioritized official voices compared to 13 victim accounts. This finding supports feminist critiques of mainstream media's tendency to prioritize institutional narratives over survivors' experiences (Easteal et al., 2019).

Table 3
The object of sexual violence news

No	Media	Object		
		Victim	**Perpetrators**	**Apparatus**
1	Tribunnews.com	13	8	18
2	Kompas.com	8	3	12
3	Cnnindonesia.com	10	8	4
4	Tempo.co	2	6	11
5	Detik.com	5	7	4
	Total	**38**	**32**	**49**
	Percentage	**32**	**27**	**41**

This representational imbalance potentially produces biased narratives that fail to fully capture the complexity of sexual violence issues. The overrepresentation of authority figures in reporting can lead to what Gray et al. (2020) terms "institutional framing" (p. 201) of sexual violence, where the issue is predominantly viewed through the lens of law enforcement and governance rather than the lived experiences of survivors. The implications are significant for public understanding, as when institutional voices predominate, victims' lived experiences become secondary to official interpretations.

Meanwhile, the underrepresentation of victims' voices not only reinforces existing power structures but also potentially contributes to victim silencing and secondary victimization. As noted by Loney-Howes (2020), the absence of survivor voices in media narratives can perpetuate harmful myths about sexual violence and hinder public understanding of its complex realities. This imbalance may also discourage other victims from coming forward, fearing their stories will be overshadowed or misrepresented by institutional perspectives.

Gendered Language and Representation

Our critical discourse analysis uncovered gendered nomination strategies that consistently activate gendered identity categories before individual personhood. The analysis revealed how media discourse constructs victim identities through specific nomination patterns and linguistic choices. Common phrasings included "a 17-year-old girl was raped" and "a married mother of three was assaulted," demonstrating how victims are primarily identified through gendered roles rather than as individuals (Elmore et al., 2021, pp. 530, 534).

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) revealed insidious operations of phallocentric ideology through subtle linguistic strategies. The first strategy is presuppositions and naturalized beliefs. Reports frequently featured uninterrogated gendered presuppositions presenting sexual violence as deviations from an implied masculine norm, with descriptors like: "...the 25-year-old female victim was brutally assaulted...." and "...another case of violence against women has emerged...." This discursive framing positions masculine subjectivities as the invisible, naturalized anchor point against which violence towards the feminine is treated as aberrant departures requiring explicit demarcation.

The second strategy relates to gendered nominations/representations. Victim representation strategies consistently activated gendered identity categories before individual personhood. Common phrasings included: "...a 17-year-old girl was raped...." and "...a married mother of three was assaulted...." This linguistic pattern aligns with feminist poststructuralist concepts of how media discourse constructs and reinforces gendered power relations (Lazar & Kramarae, 2022). By prioritizing women's roles (e.g., "girl," "mother") over their identities, these discursive strategies subtly perpetuate patriarchal ideologies.

Such gender representations can have significant implications. Firstly, they can contribute to the objectification of women, reducing them to their social roles rather than recognizing their full personhood. This supports Nussbaum's (1995) theory of objectification, where individuals are treated as mere instruments or denied autonomy. Secondly, these representations can reinforce stereotypical gender roles and expectations. The frequent use of terms like "girl" or "mother" in the context of sexual violence reporting may inadvertently perpetuate notions of female vulnerability or traditional familial roles, potentially obscuring the broader societal and structural factors contributing to sexual violence.

This gender nomination can intersect with other forms of marginalization. Our analysis revealed instances where class, ethnicity, or geographic location were mentioned alongside gendered terms, compounding the othering effect. For example: "The impoverished migrant worker from East Java was sexually exploited...." This intersectional marginalization strengthens Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, demonstrating how multiple axes of oppression can interact in media representations of sexual violence (Paik, 2017).

The discursive strategies employed in media narratives of sexual violence in Indonesian online media reveal persistent gender biases and power imbalances. The privileging of institutional voices over those of survivors, coupled with gendered nomination strategies, serves to reinforce existing patriarchal structures and potentially hinder comprehensive public understanding of sexual violence. These findings underscore the need for more victim-centered, gender-sensitive approaches in media reporting of sexual violence.

Intersectional Power Dynamics

The analysis revealed complex intersections of power dynamics where gender marginalization intertwined with class and geographical locations in Indonesian online media reporting. The discourse analysis identified patterns where victims' socioeconomic status and geographic origins were prominently highlighted, particularly in cases from rural or economically disadvantaged regions. For instance, headlines like "The impoverished migrant worker from East Java was sexually exploited" and "The underage girl from a rural village in West Nusa Tenggara was raped" demonstrated how media discourse compounds gender-based marginalization with class and geographic markers (Harmer & Lewis, 2022, pp. 3–5, 8–11)

Cultural status representations emerged through linguistic choices that positioned victims within specific sociocultural contexts, such as "lower-caste Balinese minority victim" and "victim was a nightclub hostess." These representations align with what Guarnieri and Tur-Prats (2023) identify as cultural distance patterns in violence reporting, where multiple identity vectors create unique experiences of marginalization. The findings from five

major Indonesian news platforms showed that such intersectional marginalization not only reflected but actively reinforced existing social hierarchies, particularly affecting women from minority communities and lower socioeconomic backgrounds in post-democratization Indonesia. The analysis demonstrates how Indonesian media's coverage of sexual violence cases often perpetuates multiple patterns of marginalization where gender, class, and cultural identities create compounded vulnerabilities in representation.

Ideological Underpinnings in Media Discourse

Naturalization of Masculine Norms

Our critical discourse analysis revealed the pervasive naturalization of masculine norms in sexual violence reporting. Phrases like "another case of violence against women has emerged" implicitly frame male perspectives as the neutral, universal standpoint. This finding corroborates Lazar's concept of the "unmarked normativity" of masculinity in media discourse, demonstrating how seemingly objective reporting can covertly sustain systemic gender oppression (Lazar, 2007, p. 148). This naturalization of masculine norms manifests in several ways. Firstly, the language used often positions sexual violence as a deviation from a presumed male norm rather than as a systemic issue rooted in gender inequality. For instance, statements like "the perpetrator's actions shocked the community" implicitly suggest that such violence is anomalous rather than

a manifestation of broader societal issues.

Secondly, the media's framing often reinforces traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. Our analysis found that reports frequently described male perpetrators in terms of their strength or aggression, while female victims were characterized by their vulnerability or innocence. This emphasizes Connell's (2015) concept of hegemonic masculinity, where certain masculine traits are privileged and normalized. The implications of this naturalization are significant. By presenting masculine perspectives as the default, media discourse may inadvertently perpetuate the very power structures that enable sexual violence. As Hlavka (2014) argues, such normalization can lead to the internalization of harmful gender norms, potentially influencing public perception and individual behavior.

Intersectional Marginalization

Our analysis also revealed instances of intersectional marginalization, where gender-based subjugation intersected with other identity factors such as class, ethnicity, and geography. Descriptions like "impoverished rural woman" compound vulnerabilities, aligning with P. H. Collins' (2002, p. 221) theorization of interlocking systems of oppression. This intersectional approach to reporting was evident in phrases such as: "The underage girl from a rural village in West Nusa Tenggara was raped...." (Wyndham-West, 2021, p. 5). Such representations not only gender the victim but also situate her within

specific socioeconomic and geographic contexts. While this additional information can provide important context, it can inadvertently reinforce stereotypes and compound marginalization.

The implications of this intersectional marginalization in media discourse are multifaceted. Firstly, it can lead to what Crenshaw (1991) terms "representational intersectionality" (p. 1283), where the media's portrayal of marginalized groups can itself become a source of disempowerment. For instance, consistently associating sexual violence with poverty or rural areas may stigmatize certain communities while obscuring the prevalence of such violence in other contexts. Secondly, this intersectional framing can influence public policy and resource allocation. If media consistently portrays sexual violence as primarily affecting certain demographic groups, it may lead to targeted interventions that, while well-intentioned, fail to address the broader societal issues at play.

Moreover, the intersectional nature of these representations highlights the complex ways various forms of oppression interact in Indonesian society. As Yuval-Davis (2006) argues, these intersections are not simply additive but create unique experiences of marginalization that require nuanced understanding and response. The naturalization of masculine norms and the intersectional marginalization evident in media reporting not only reflect societal biases but also have the potential to perpetuate them. These findings underscore the need for more critical, reflexive approaches to media reporting on sexual violence, ones that challenge rather than reinforce existing power dynamics and recognize the complex, intersectional nature of oppression. Therefore, ideological underpinnings revealed in our analysis of media discourse on sexual violence in Indonesia demonstrate the subtle yet powerful ways in which language can reinforce existing power structures.

Implications for Media Practice and Social Change

Journalistic Ethics and Responsibility

Our findings highlight significant ethical challenges in the reporting of sexual violence cases in Indonesian online media. The imbalance in voice representation (Table 3), with authorities dominating narratives (63%) over victims (27%), raises important questions about journalistic responsibility. This trend aligns with Fairbairn's (2020) observations on the ethical implications of media representation in sexual violence cases. As revealed in our analysis, the prevalence of gendered nomination strategies and the naturalization of masculine norms in reporting underscore the need for increased gender sensitivity in journalism. These practices, while often subtle, can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and contribute to victim-blaming narratives. As Carll (2003) argues, such framing can have profound effects on public perception and policy responses to sexual violence.

There is an urgent need to address these issues for reform in journalistic practices and education. Media organizations should

prioritize training programs that enhance journalists' understanding of gender issues and the complexities of sexual violence. This aligns with recommendations by Easteal et al. (2019), who advocate for trauma-informed reporting practices. Our critical discourse analysis further illuminates these ethical challenges. For instance, we found recurring patterns of language that subtly reinforce victim-blaming narratives, such as: "The young woman was walking alone late at night when the incident occurred" and "The victim had been drinking at a party before the assault" (Matthews, 2024, p. 37). While seemingly factual, such phrasings can implicitly shift responsibility onto the victim. This aligns with Carll's (2003) argument about the profound effects of media framing on public perception.

The final dimension analyzed was the motives behind sexual violence reporting. Our findings revealed concerning trends in coverage objectives. The following Table 4 reveals the distribution of reporting motives across the five media outlets.

The data in Table 4 indicates that warning motives dominate (36.1%), followed by exploitation (21%), while educational motives account for only 13.5% of reports. This emphasis on warning and exploitation over education represents missed public awareness and empowerment opportunities. The high percentage of exploitative reporting (21%) raises particular ethical concerns, potentially re-traumatizing victims and trivializing the issue of sexual violence. The development and implementation of ethical guidelines specifically tailored to report on sexual violence could significantly improve the quality and sensitivity of coverage. Such guidelines should emphasize the importance of victim-centered approaches, balanced representation, and the avoidance of sensationalism.

Media's Role in Shaping Public Discourse

Such overwrought gender-indexing portrays women as unindividuated subjects defined through patriarchal lenses, prioritizing conventional feminine roles like virginal "girls" or married "mothers." This implicit denial of autonomous personhood aligns with feminist critiques of how phallocentric

Table 4
Motives for reporting sexual violence

No	Media	Motive				
		Defense	Exploitation	Judgment	Commemoration	Education
1	Tribunnews.com	4	4	6	20	5
2	Kompas.com	1	3	3	10	6
3	Cnnindonesia.com	3	9	6	4	0
4	Tempo.co	3	2	3	6	5
5	Detik.com	1	7	5	3	0
	Total	**12**	**25**	**23**	**43**	**16**
	Percentage	**10.1**	**21**	**19.3**	**36.1**	**13.5**

discourses function. Firstly, Perspective and Agency Inscriptions. The CDA further revealed systematic patterns invalidating feminine subjectivities while reinforcing hegemonic masculine institutional authority: "According to the police statement, the 14-year-old victim had been drinking with friends before being assaulted." Another example: "Investigators confirmed the woman had engaged in prostitution regularly, but still did not deserve to be raped."

The victim perspective is relayed indirectly through institutional filters, reducing women to passive objects lacking narrative agency over their own experiences. Conversely, institutional agents are framed as active authorizers defining reality and adjudicating boundaries of legitimacy around violence ("still did not deserve"). These micro-linguistic strategies coalesced into overarching representational repertoires casting gender-based violence within narrow institutional/legalistic frameworks defined by masculine-coded authorities, hypersexualizing and depersonalizing feminine victims.

Secondly, Intersectional Subjugations. The analysis critically examined how intersections of gender with other identity vectors like class, ethnicity, and geography compounded subjugations and invisibilized further marginalized voices. Descriptors like: "impoverished rural woman," "lower-caste Balinese minority victim," and "the victim was a nightclub hostess." These representations position victims at the crossroads of multiple interlocking oppressions through patriarchal ideological

framings around class, caste, profession and geographic signifiers intersecting with gender-based marginalization. This aligns with Black feminist theorizations of how intersecting power structures produce interlocking systems of domination, subjugating women occupying multiple matrix positionalities (P. H. Collins, 1990). These findings contribute crucial empirical understandings to feminist theoretical knowledge around systemic gender violence. They validate the imperative for journalists and institutions to urgently interrogate subtle linguistic biases and integrate feminist epistemological lenses attentive to intersectional power imbalances.

On the other hand, five forms of sexual violence, as identified in the regulation, receive less attention from online media, namely sexual torture, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, and forced abortion. These five issues were only published as many as 1–2 news. At the same time, the five *online* media subjects in this study did not publish two issues of sexual violence: forced contraception and forced marriage (Table 2). Based on these data, there is an imbalance in reporting on the issue of sexual violence by the media. This inequality is marked by high coverage of rape and abuse cases on the one hand and neglect of cases of forced contraception and forced marriage. This phenomenon is inversely proportional to the social fact that Indonesia is a country that is prone to child marriage cases (Rahiem, 2021).

Our findings underscore the critical role of media in addressing sexual violence

in Indonesian society. By adopting more ethical, sensitive, and comprehensive reporting practices, including a shift towards educational motives, as highlighted in Table 4, media can contribute significantly to challenging harmful norms, raising awareness, and promoting effective responses to sexual violence. This requires a concerted effort from journalists, editors, media organizations, and journalism educators to reimagine the way sexual violence is portrayed and discussed in public discourse, with a particular focus on increasing educational content and reducing exploitative reporting.

CONCLUSION

The most crucial finding in this study shows that the imbalance of reporting carried out by Indonesia's online media regarding sexual violence in the new normal period occurs in terms of intensity, object, and motive of news. The press writes news from the perspective of the authorities, despite having many interpretations, with the passing of the Sexual Violence Crime Law (TPKS Law) as an effort to encourage and support the government. Meanwhile, regarding news motives, the media does not fully perform its role as a balanced conveyor of information to the public from the high warning and exploitation motives. In contrast, educational and defense motives have not received adequate space. The study's examination of discursive patterns and ideological constructions perpetuating systemic gender oppression has significant implications for journalism practice and

education. It highlights the urgent need for mainstream media to reform institutionalized worldviews and frameworks that marginalize women's voices and experiences. Practicing journalists must critically analyze linguistic choices, voice allocations, and narrative positions to avoid perpetuating rape myths, victim-blaming scripts, and gender stereotypes. Integrating intersectional feminist consciousness into reporting is crucial for challenging hegemonic perspectives and amplifying multiple marginalized perspectives. Journalism education programs should restructure curricula to foster critical consciousness about the politics of representation, equipping students with a theoretical grounding in feminist epistemologies and an understanding of intersectional subjectivities. Scholars can explore evolving discursive terrains of sexual violence across media environments and conduct investigations into journalism production cultures to disrupt oppressive discursive regimes. Ultimately, the study reaffirms the need to reformulate epistemologies of violence and nurture critical consciousness to transform rape-conducive cultures.

This study has limitations on Indonesia's online media coverage, reporting period, and nine types of sexual violence used as parameters for reporting sexual violence. In addition, this study also did not conduct a diction per diction study in every news. The study of diction is needed to get a clear picture of the meaning in the news of each word chosen by the media. Further research is required to obtain more comprehensive

results. Given the pressing nature of the issues identified in this study, the most urgent recommendation is to prioritize the integration of gender approaches into media reporting processes. Media organizations in Indonesia should promptly implement training programs aimed at enhancing the gender sensitivity of ICT journalists.

Implications for Theory and Practice

This study offers significant theoretical and practical contributions to understanding gender bias in media reporting. Feminist media studies extend existing theoretical frameworks by demonstrating how intersectional power dynamics operate within Indonesia's digital media landscape, particularly highlighting how gender-based marginalization intersects with class and geographical factors in news discourse (Harmer & Lewis, 2022).

The findings emphasize the urgent need for gender-sensitive reporting protocols in journalism practice. Media organizations should implement comprehensive training programs focusing on balanced voice representation and avoiding stereotypical gender framing. This includes developing guidelines for trauma-informed reporting and prioritizing victims' perspectives over institutional voices.

Regarding policy development, the study advocates for regulatory frameworks that promote ethical reporting of sexual violence cases. These should include mandates for balanced coverage across various forms of sexual violence and requirements for gender-sensitive language in news reporting.

Such policies could significantly influence how media organizations approach sexual violence coverage, potentially leading to more equitable and victim-centered reporting practices (Guarnieri & Tur-Prats, 2023).

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study encountered several methodological limitations that future research should address. The analysis was constrained to text-based content analysis, excluding multi-modal elements such as images and reader interactions. Additionally, the three-month sampling period during post-pandemic recovery may not fully represent long-term reporting patterns in Indonesia's evolving media landscape. Geographical constraints include focusing solely on national-level online media, potentially overlooking regional reporting dynamics and local media perspectives. The study's limitation to Indonesian-language content may have missed nuances in English-language reporting targeting international audiences, particularly in covering sensitive cultural topics and gender issues within the Indonesian context.

Future studies should consider longitudinal analyses examining reporting patterns over extended periods, incorporate multimedia content analysis, and explore cross-cultural comparisons. Researchers might also investigate the impact of newsroom decision-making processes and journalist training. For practical implementation, we recommend developing standardized reporting

guidelines, establishing gender-sensitive editorial policies, and creating monitoring mechanisms to track improvements in sexual violence coverage. These recommendations aim to enhance the quality and sensitivity of sexual violence reporting while promoting more equitable media practices.

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