The impact of technology-enabled disinformation towards the victims of sexual objectification as portrayed in *Photocopier* (2021) movie

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Abstract. Technology abuse is rising in an age where communication technology is used daily. This can happen through social platforms, media, and even represented in streaming platforms. Some people can be affected by technology abuse, including sexual objectification victims. This study investigates the impact of disinformation represented in the movie, Photocopier (2021). Therefore, it aims to find the impact of technology-enabled disinformation and how society plays a role in the digital era concerning a sexual objectification case as portrayed in Photocopier (2021) movie. The information is gathered from dialogues and scenes in the movie and then analyzed using cascading theory and sexual objectification theory. The study used a qualitative approach to achieve its goals. The findings suggest that technology has a negative impact on sexual objectification victims due to the rapid transmission of important records, which leads to victim blaming. Furthermore, society purposefully disseminates confidential sexual objectification documents without sympathizing with the victims. Therefore, it can be said that disinformation caused by technological advancement happens and impacts some people negatively. Society must be aware and play a more supporting role, thus resulting in a sustainable society living with technology for more beneficial effect.

1 Introduction

Women are seen as the inferior gender compared to men that are seen as the superior gender [1]. And because of the assumption that women are inferior, women have to struggle and face difficulties in several aspects of life. Women are not treated as equal as men in education, work, law, society, and even family [2]. However, in the present time, the number of people who are aware of gender issues are increasing due to feminism movement [3]. It is a movement to fight for gender equality; that all genders should have equal rights and opportunity.

One of the themes explored in feminism is sexual harassment that has been a major issue these past years [4, 5]. Since the issue has been going on for decades, many forms of sexual harassment emerged. One of which is sexual objectification. Reference [6] states that objectification is defined as treating a person as an object and that objectification is the central idea for feminism theory.

As a subset of objectification, sexual objectification is described as the act of treating a person as an object to fulfill sexual desire. Reference [7] explains that “sexual objectification occurs when a woman’s body or body parts are separated from her as a person and she is viewed mainly as a physical object of male sexual desire”. However, in today’s society, sexual objectification is not only experienced by women, but also men [8].

The victims of sexual objectification have to struggle with the problems that occur within themselves, such as shame, anxiety, unipolar depression, sexual dysfunction, and eating disorders [9]. Moreover, sexual objectification victims may also have to struggle to fight against the society that views them badly. People blame the victims more due to the people “withdrawing attributions of mind and restricting their moral concern” when women are objectified [10]. In addition, objectification may significantly affect the way society views and treats the victims of sexual harassment, "as well as other forms of de-humanizing mistreatment" [10].

The society in the era where technology is used massively communicates and interacts using information and communication technology [11]. And due to the substantial use of information and communication technology, misuse of technology especially social media networks increases [12]. Consequently, it might cause negative impacts. A negative impact refers to damage to or impairment of objects or individuals [13]. One of the negative impacts of the rapid use of social media is disinformation. Disinformation refers to false information that is shared intentionally with the aim of deceiving people [14]. Moreover, rapid use of social media can result in the

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occurrence of sexual harassment. This statement is in accordance with the results of a research [12] which found that sexual harassment in social media can happen directly or indirectly, and the factors that lead the digital society to harass the victims are attention seeking as well as the contents or caption which leads the digital society to harass. Digital technology as a tool for spreading information can also link to sexual objectification which encourages sexual harassment. Reference [15] mentions that the characteristics of social media which require an open audience to exchange information might widen the spread of episodes, images, and words that sexually objectify women.

Thus, as the misuse of technology can result in society sexually harassing and objectifying the victims, especially women, based on the findings above, this research is conducted. And in order to examine the impacts of technology in the sexual objectification case more clearly, an Indonesian movie entitled Photocopier (2021) by Wregas Bhanuteja will be used as an object in this research. The awareness toward sexual objectification must be raised because when sexual harassment is discussed, sexual objectification is rarely mentioned, especially in Indonesia. Moreover, information dissemination related to sexual harassment and sexual objectification must also be discussed as the use of information and communication technology is growing rapidly. Therefore, we propose two research questions as follows:

1. How does technology give a negative impact in a sexual objectification case as portrayed in Photocopier (2021) movie?
2. What is the role of society in the digital era in a sexual objectification case as portrayed in Photocopier (2021) movie?

2 Literature Review

In this chapter, theories and previous research from scholars and experts will be explained in order to support this research.

2.1 Cascading

Cascading is one of the methods of information dissemination in social media or communication technology. The cascading theory examines how the information, content, or message spread in social media [16]. The concept of spreading information on social media has been described in a publication [11]. It explains the concept of cascading. Cascading refers to the process where an information or message is passed from one person to another person who passes it to another one, and so on until the information or message is spread and an extensive network is constructed. In the same paper, two types of cascades are elaborated; content-based cascades and time-constrained activity cascades. Basically, both types of cascades are similar. However, content-based cascades focus more on the content. The content or information is shared without strict time restriction. As it is a content-based cascades, it emphasizes on whether what is shared is the same content. Thus, it usually happens in email spreading, URL forwarding, retweeting on Twitter, fanning on Facebook, and Flickr picture spreading.

On the other hand, time-constrained activity cascades focus more on the behavior of the user instead of the content. Social media enables its users to share contents, so, the users carry out spreading behavior. time-constrained activity cascades reveal how and how frequent the users exchange information. Although both types have different focus, the content still matters in both types. Reference [11] provides an example of a Facebook user who likes a Facebook page. By liking the page, that user not only spreads the content of the page, but also sets the spreading behavior which can be followed by other users. It makes the ‘liking’ behavior more common between the users “even if they end up liking completely different pages”.

The same research also explains factors that might influence cascading. Far-reaching connectivity is one of the factors that encourages cascades. For instance, a user who has a significant number of audience or followers such as celebrity or social media influencers can drive their audience to involve in the activity of cascading and spread the content or information that is passed by the user with high numbers of audience or “super-spreader”. Another factor which encourages cascading exists. A group of users who have smaller networks that spread the information within the small networks might generate larger cascades. So, continuous information spreading in small groups of users can influence larger cascades.

In addition, due to the growth of technology, the cascading behavior allows technology users to spread misinformation [14] without the spreader being aware of whether the content they share is true or false. Due to the large number of people producing content in this digital era and the large amount of information circulating, it is difficult for people to differentiate between true and false information [14].

2.2 Feminism

Feminism is the movement that was created to fight gender issues caused by inequality in society [17]. This movement began when they felt they were not treated as equal as men in many aspects such as education, politics, society, and family. Feminism refers to believing in the equality between two sexes in social, economic, and political aspects [2]. The issues discussed in feminism include discrimination, objectification, oppression, patriarchy, stereotyping, art history and contemporary art, and aesthetics.

A French philosopher, Simone de Beauvoir [18] who is famous for her work The Second Sex (1949) argues that women have been considered as “the other” in society, and it contributes to women’s continuous oppressions. What she meant by the other is that women are not equal to men, “women need to fight to seek equality with men” [19]. Women are always seen as the “inessential, the object” (p. 17), when men are seen as the subject, “the essential” (p. 17) in society. She stated
that “the two sexes have never shared the world in equality” (p. 19).

2.3 Sexual Objectification

Sexual objectification is a concept under feminism. According to reference [6], Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher, MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, anti-pornography feminists, sexual objectification is closely related to inequality because “there is the powerful objectifier on the one hand, and on the other hand there exists his powerless victim. Due to their unequal power, the former objectifies the latter.”

Sexual objectification “occurs when a woman’s body, body parts, or sexual functions are isolated from her whole and complex being and treated as objects simply to be looked at, coveted, or touched” [9]. It is proven that sexual objectification towards women can affect their mental health. The effects include habitual body monitoring that increases shame, anxiety, reduces opportunities for peak motivational states, and decreases awareness of internal bodily states. Moreover, the use of substances, unipolar depression, sexual dysfunction, and eating disorders can also happen to women who experience sexual objectification [9].

Sexual objectification occurs when a woman’s body or body part is exiled and separated from her as a human being, and her status is reduced to a mere “physical object of male sexual desire” [7, 20]. Moreover, reference [20] described the concept of sexual objectification as a process and sexual objectification as an outcome. As a process, sexual objectification is the act of “symbolically separating the sexual parts of a person’s body or her sexual functions” (p. 310) from her as a person, while sexual objectification as an outcome refers to the act of treating a person merely as an object.

The environment can be a potential cause of sexual objectification [7]. The criteria of sexually objectifying environment is an environment where “traditional gender roles exist, a high probability of male contact exists (male-dominated environment), women typically hold less power than men in that environment, a high degree of attention is drawn to sexual/physical attributes of women’s bodies, and there is the approval and acknowledgement of male gaze.” [7]. The role of culture on sexual objectification has also been studied. Exploring sexual objectification in seven nations, the research reveals that “culture did affect self- and other-objectification” [21].

2.4 Previous Research

The first research entitled “Analysis of Sexual Objectification in Lan Fang’s Potion and Paper Cranes” was conducted in 2018 [22]. This study examines sexual objectification towards three main women characters in the novel titled Potion and Paper Cranes by Lan Fang. Finding the forms of sexual objectification, the impacts of sexual objectifications, and how women characters deal with their sexual objectifications are the objectives of this paper. The method used is a qualitative method by analyzing the story of the novel. From the analysis, the author finds that the three women characters experience sexual objectifications in the forms of rape, marital rape, and prostitution. The main characters also experience physical and mental sufferings. In addition, how each character deals with sexual objectification is different.

The study titled “Assessing the Online Sexual Harassment Experiences of Female Students at a South African Institution of Higher Learning” [23] is focused on the issue of sexual harassment and other forms of abuse happened in social media platforms. This research aimed to identify the forms of online sexual harassment do female students experience at the selected South African IHL, what specific online platforms does the sexual harassment take place at the selected institution of higher learning, and what coping strategies do female students at the selected institution of higher learning employ to deal with online sexual harassment. Using qualitative exploratory design, the results of this study found that the form of sexual harassment at the IHL is mostly in the form of soliciting and sending of inappropriate pictures and videos to the victims. It also revealed that the main platforms where online sexual harassment took place were WhatsApp and Facebook. Moreover, the main strategies of coping with online sexual harassment were blocking of harassers and complete disregard of the harassers.

The last one is a paper conducted in 2021 [24] titled “Examining the Females’ Objectification in Music Videos from Martha Nussbaum’s Perspective”. The issues brought out by this paper is females’ objectification in music videos. The purpose of this research is to examine the prevailing sexual objectification of women in popular music videos. The data gathered from 177 videos indicated a repeated sexual objectification in the music videos. It was analyzed using a quantitative content analysis method. This research found a strong, significant relationship between music videos and the sexual objectification of women. It indicated strong compatibility with the objectification described by Nussbaum (1995). And the most repeated form of objectification in the music videos is instrumentality. Moreover, silencing, extreme focus on body shape and body parts are explicitly visible in the sampled music videos. In addition, the lyrics of music content were also objectifying.

From the previous studies, it is shown that technology and media can link to sexual objectification and influence sexual harassment. However, the research mentioned above did not specify the impact of technology for the victim of sexual objectification and the role of digital society in the case of sexual objectification. Thus, this research would fill the gap by discussing the effects of technology and the role of society in the digital era.

3 Methods

This research is qualitative that uses content analysis methods to identify the impact of technology in a sexual objectification case as well as the role of digital society.
based on a literary work. As the object of this research is a movie titled *Photocopier* (2021), the data are obtained from the scenes in the movie. The analysis focuses on the main characters who are the victims of sexual objectification and the use of technology in the movie. In addition, library research methods will also be used in order to gain information regarding sexual objectification that can support the analysis.

The data will be collected from dialogues and scenes in a movie titled *Photocopier* (2021) by Wregas Bhanuteja that aired on streaming platform Netflix. The movie follows Suryani, a college student who lost her scholarship after her drunken selfie went viral on social media. She then tries to uncover the truth with the help of a friend who works in a photocopy shop. However, Sur found the fact that she actually had been sexually harassed by someone who has a power named Rama. Later, Suryani finds out that she is not the only victim, there are more victims. There are several steps that have to be done in order to collect the data. The first step is observing the characters and the scenes in the movie.

After that, the next step is selecting the important scenes and dialogues which indicate the use of technology and the role of the users. This step is essential to find relevant data. The last step is collecting dialogues by taking notes. After the data is collected, the next step is analyzing the data based on the cascading theory of reference [9] and sexual objectification theory of reference [11].

### 4 Results and discussion

This chapter contains the analysis and discussion about the problems of research. To find the impacts of technology in a sexual objectification case as portrayed in *Photocopier* (2021), this chapter will be divided into two parts. The first part is going to describe the impact of technology for the victims of sexual objectifications. The second part will analyze the role of digital society or the people who use digital media and instruments in a sexual objectification case.

#### 4.1 The Impacts of Technology in Sexual Objectification Case

This part examines the impacts of technology towards the victims of sexual objectification as portrayed in *Photocopier* movie (2021). The technology shown in *Photocopier* (2021) movie is mostly digital technology such as social media, because the time setting in the movie is set in the 21st century where social media is extensively used. This can be seen from the continuing use of social media by the characters.

In *Photocopier* (2021) movie, digital technology is portrayed to impact the victim in negative ways most of the time. How digital technology affects sexual objectification victim can be seen in minutes 1:25:40 – 1:36:58 during the climax part of the movie. The data, which has been gathered from dialogues and scenes, is presented below in an ordered manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Stamp</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:28:43 – 1:29:56</td>
<td>The documents are sent to the ethics board for investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:29:57</td>
<td>The ethics board staff deliberately disseminates the documents through social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:29:57 – 1:30:23</td>
<td>The documents go viral in social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30:49 – 1:31:25</td>
<td>Rama, the perpetrator, is labeled as a rapist. Thus, Suryani is blamed by Rama and is reported for defamation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:31:55 – 1:35:25</td>
<td>Suryani is forced to apologize by Rama, her father, and the deans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:35:28 – 1:36:58</td>
<td>Suryani apologizes to Rama in public.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the sequence of events where the documents evidence related to sexual objectification case made by the victim goes viral because an ethics board staff deliberately disseminates it. The victim is blamed for defamation by the perpetrator, and as a result, the victim is forced to apologize publicly.

The following dialogue between Suryani and the campus deans also indicates that Suryani is reported for defamation by Rama due to the virality of the evidence documents she makes.

(1:30:49 – 1:31:25)

Dean 1: “These documents, did you make them?”
Dean 2: “Rama Soemarno called us. He’s on the way here with his lawyer. He wants to report you to the police for defamation.”

Suryani: “Wait, what is this about, sir?”
Dean 1: “These documents that you made have gone viral on our campus. That’s why Rama will file a lawsuit against you.”

Suryani: “Sir, I never made them go viral. I gave them to the ethics board for investigation. They should be held responsible for this!”

In this movie, the evidence presented by the victim is considered weak and not true as the victim gained the evidence through hacking. Moreover, the perpetrator holds more power than the victim. Thus, most of the characters in that scene do not believe the victim’s claims.

The dissemination of Suryani's evidence documents can lead to speculations made by the public about victims and perpetrators. As the evidence gathered by the victim has not been proven true, the society can blame the victim. On the other hand, people who are on the victim’s side can label the perpetrator as a rapist, creep, and pervert thereby destroying the perpetrator’s reputation. In addition, the name of the perpetrator mentioned in the documents is tainted because the public believe that the perpetrator is guilty. This action also leads to victim blaming because the victim is blamed by the perpetrator for accusing the perpetrator and making the evidence documents although she is not the one who disseminated the documents.
One of the reasons why the victim is blamed even though she is the one who is harmed is the existence of the patriarchal society and male-dominated environment in which she lives. The environment where women hold less power than men and the traditional gender role exists can cause women to be objectified [7]. So, it can be concluded that the document's dissemination harms the victim either way. That scene indicates how technology-enabled disinformation spreading has serious effects [14].

From the scene above, it is shown that social media as the digital technology allows users to share information quickly which enables information to spread extensively and rapidly. The documents that are shared by one person to another person can go viral in minutes. In the movie, the evidence documents are shared by one of the ethics board staff. The position of ethics board is considered high in the campus as they hold the power to take action on students. The evidence documents go viral because an individual who has larger networks disseminates the documents. It is in line with a study [11] which found that local leaders, who have larger connectivity, may trigger large cascades. This statement proves that evidence documents spread by the ethics board can certainly go viral.

4.2 The Role of Society in the Digital Era in Sexual Objectification Case

This part analyzes the role of society in the digital era as described in Photocopier (2021) movie. From the movie, it can be seen that society lives in the digital era as the characters use digital technology in most of the scenes.

Several scenes in the movie illustrate that society in the digital era can easily spread confidential information. One of the scenes shows how the public shares Suryani’s evidence documents which Suryani aims to use for investigation done by the ethics board. The first person to share the documents is ethics board staff. The person who receives the documents from the ethics board staff then passes it again to another person until it is spread.

From Figure 2, it can be seen that the society disseminates confidential documents without knowing that the documents are sensitive and are not allowed to be shared. However, they still spread the documents. This action can harm the people involved in the information, especially the victims as the victim of sexual objectification may experience shame and affect their mental health [9].

Although the intention of spreading disinformation is varied and complex as it is evolving [14], the reason for which society spreads information is closely related with emotions or sentiment. If the information triggers certain emotions and offers stimuli, people will likely share it and the information, content, or message has a higher possibility to go viral [11]. Moreover, the document in that scene is shared through acquaintances, which means the receiver recognizes the sender since it is shared through messaging applications such as email and WhatsApp. Social media users put their trust on content shared by their friends [14]. In addition, people pay more attention and believe information that confirms something they tend to believe, this behavior is called “confirmation bias” [14].

Another characteristic of society in the digital era is presented in Photocopier (2021) movie. When Suryani, Farah, and Tariq, who are the victims of sexual objectification, are having a discussion, Tariq utters following narration:

What if we still lose? And those videos go viral? Our naked bodies will be out there for people to see forever! And the campus? They’ll certainly back the bastard up! And see what our friends did! They shared our videos instead of helping us! (1:53:50 – 1:54:10)

From Tariq’s utterance above, it can be concluded that the society in the digital era does not sympathize with the victims, and they keep sharing the video evidence where the victims are harassed instead of helping the victims. The dissemination of the videos where the victims are harassed can have negative impacts on the victims such as shame and ostracizing. He also states that the campus will back Rama up and not stand with the victims. Therefore, society in the digital era does not provide protection and a safe environment for the victims.

5 Conclusions

The presumption that men are superior compared to women who are inferior causes women to struggle and face difficulties in several aspects of life such as in education, work, law, society, and family. There is a movement to fight for equality between both genders called the feminism movement [1-3]. One of the issues of inequality that feminism wants to fight is sexual harassment. The action that could trigger sexual harassment is sexual objectification. It is the act of treating a person as an object [4, 6]. In the digital era, sexual objectification victims can also be affected by technology as the use of technology increases. The effects of technology in sexual objectification are depicted in a movie titled Photocopier (2021) directed by Wregas Bhanuajeta.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the impacts of technology towards the victims and the role of society in the digital era in the sexual objectification case as portrayed in Photocopier (2021) movie. To address

The results have shown that technology has negative impacts towards the victims of sexual objectification in Photocopier (2021) movie. As digital technology allows information to spread quickly, confidential documents created by the victims containing the evidence of sexual harassment done by the perpetrator can spread and hard to stop. As a result, the victims are prone to be blamed for defaming the perpetrator due to the virality of confidential documents on social media. Moreover, people who do not believe the victim’s claim might also blame the victim for spreading disinformation as the documents have not been proven true.

It is also found that the society in the digital era deliberately spreads confidential information related to a sexual objectification case without realizing that their action could affect the victims negatively. In addition, society living in the digital era does not sympathize with the victims of sexual objectification and does not provide protection and a safe environment for the victims. Instead, they share the videos where the victims are being harassed.

This research is made to raise the awareness of the issue of inequality especially sexual objectification, as well as to introduce the impacts of information dissemination related to sexual harassment and sexual objectification as the use of information and communication technology is growing rapidly. This study also shares information about the difficulties faced by the victims of sexual objectification. In addition, this paper is also made to appreciate Indonesian movies that raise the issues of feminism, sexual objectification, and technology.

Further research related to the impacts of technology towards the victims of sexual objectification needs to be done because the object of this research is a movie and the analysis is limited to the main characters. The research on actual events happening in the real world might result differently. Besides, the author faced some obstacles in writing this paper. The difficulty of finding relevant information and studies about the adverse effects of dissemination of information in social media that supports this paper can result in the lack of information presented in this paper.

For future research, it is suggested to develop this paper further by comparing the issues presented in literary works with issues that occur in the real world related to sexual objectification and technology so that the issues described in literary works can be proven correct. In addition, examining the issue of sexual objectification from another perspective as well as combining other relevant theories to analyze sexual objectification in literary works can also be done in the future.

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