Sexting in Teenagers: The Risk of Revenge Porn Threats in a Victimology Perspective

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Abstract: The development of technology in the digital era has brought significant changes in social interaction patterns, including adolescent dating styles. One of the emerging phenomena is sexting, which is sending sexual content through digital media, which often leads to the threat of revenge porn. This study aims to understand the risk of revenge porn victimization in the context of victimology with a qualitative descriptive-exploratory approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with victims, observations, and review of related documents. The results of the study indicate that revenge porn is a form of Online Gender-Based Violence (KBGO) driven by toxic relationships, where perpetrators use the victim's sexual content as a means of control or revenge. These findings also reveal the importance of digital literacy, legal protection, and the role of psychosocial counseling in preventing and handling revenge porn cases. This study highlights the need for a holistic approach involving legal, social, and educational aspects to protect victims and prevent this phenomenon.

Keywords: Online Gender-Based Violence, Sexting, Revenge Porn, Teenager, Victimology

Abstrak: Perkembangan teknologi di era digital telah membawa perubahan yang signifikan dalam pola interaksi sosial, termasuk gaya berpacaran remaja. Salah satu fenomena yang muncul adalah *sexting*, yaitu pengiriman konten seksual melalui media digital, yang sering kali berujung pada ancaman *revenge porn*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami risiko viktimisasi *revenge porn* dalam konteks viktimologi dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif-eksploratori. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap korban, observasi, dan telaah dokumen terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *revenge porn* merupakan salah satu bentuk Kekerasan Berbasis Gender Daring (KBGO) yang didorong oleh hubungan yang toksik, di mana pelaku menggunakan konten seksual korban sebagai sarana kontrol atau balas dendam. Temuan ini juga mengungkap pentingnya literasi digital, perlindungan hukum, dan peran konseling psikososial dalam pencegahan dan penanganan kasus *revenge porn*. Penelitian ini menyoroti perlunya pendekatan holistik yang melibatkan aspek hukum, sosial, dan pendidikan untuk melindungi korban dan mencegah fenomena ini.

Kata Kunci: Kekerasan Berbasis Gender Online, Sexting, Revenge Porn, Remaja, Viktimologi

Introduction

The rapid development of technology in the 4.0 era has brought changes to social interactions, in various fields, especially in dating relationships. With the presence of various technologies, the communication process that occurs is easier. In maintaining a dating relationship, the role of social media is very important because it is a communication intermediary. Unfortunately, this intermediary is often misused by dating styles that are starting to deviate, such as recording when physical contact occurs, to having sexual relations, or even sexting remotely, which then becomes a threat, and points to Revenge porn as a form of Online Gender-Based Violence (KBGO) perpetrators to victims with certain goals.

The practice of revenge porn can occur due to a form of toxic relationship, which dominates one party in a relationship, either with verbal violence, or physical violence, with an attitude of forcing one's will. As a result, victims of revenge porn are unable to speak up, and can only follow the perpetrator's wishes. Silencing the victim and the act of attacking the victim psychologically can endanger the victim, in terms of the environment. Victims of revenge porn practices can target anyone and do not recognize gender, both men and women. Although based on public opinion and data from several agencies, women are indeed more vulnerable than men. However, it is possible that men can also be victims. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), gender-based violence is a type of crime that attacks someone based on their sex or gender (Nadia, 2022). The forms of crime such as violence and sexual harassment or mental violence, forms of gender-based violence initially only occurred in the real world environment. However, now Gender-Based Violence is starting to spread to the virtual or digital world which is widely known as Online Gender-Based Violence (KBGO).

Furthermore, KBGO is understood as a form of violence regardless of gender through online media and is influenced by technological advances. SafeNet also added that there are several forms of KBGO including acts of deception or cyber grooming, cyber harassment, infringment of privacy, malicious distribution, online defamation, or online recruitment (Musyaffa & Effend, 2022).

In addition, in the Study of a Woman as a Victim of Revenge Porn in Pekanbaru by Abdul Munir, M. Krim & Wulan Junaini (2020) through a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach, with an interview method with the victim, family and campus environment. The victimological view and feminist studies on female adolescents who are victims of revenge porn have been rampant in recent years. This is influenced by the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic which requires the use of technology, and is included in one type of cyber crime. Thus, the practice of revenge porn experienced by the victim begins with a deviation in dating style that violates norms in society. The victim also experiences a toxic relationship, in the form of verbal and physical violence, to rape (Munir et al., 2020). Toxic dating relationships are one of the factors that contribute to the emergence of KBGO. Referring to a study conducted by Praptiningsih and Putra (2021) entitled Toxic Relationships in Interpersonal Communication among Adolescents, the damage to mental health in this study was caused by toxic relationships experienced by adolescents in their immediate environment, both from parents (toxic parenting), friends (toxic friendship), and boyfriends (toxic relationship). Not only that, possessive treatment and verbal violence can disrupt the mental health of adolescents, especially if it reaches physical violence to the realm of violence and sexual harassment. Thus, the mental health of adolescents in Indonesia still needs full attention.

The low level of support for victims is a major concern in KBGO. One of them refers to Christianto's study (2020) on the Concept of the Right to Be Forgotten as Fulfillment of the Rights of Victims of Revenge Porn Based on Article 26 of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law. The study uses a normative legal research method through an understanding of laws and regulations related to victim rights, complemented by an understanding of the form of victims as predisposed victims and participating victims. The results are that the legal perspective in Indonesia shows the rights of victims of revenge porn to delete digital traces, due to the perpetrator's actions on social media, as stated in Article 26 of the ITE Law, which explains that victims have the right to be forgotten which is included in human privacy rights. However, there are still changes so that the concept of protection for victims is still limited to electronic information or documents that are not relevant to the victim's losses. This is because the definition of the concept of privacy rights in the ITE Law is still not clearly regulated, including the understanding of someone as a victim is still limited to the scope of civil, not criminal.

In addition to victims, social media aspects also play a major role in understanding KBGO that occurs among teenagers. In a study by Kathryn Branch, Carly M. Hilinski-Rosick, Emily Johnson, Gabriela Solano (2017) on Revenge Porn Victimization of College Students in the United States: An Exploratory Analysis of 470 freshmen teenagers in one of the southern states of the United States from August to December 2015. It was found that the role of social media technology provides a new space for aggressive sexual behavior and sexting of teenagers, thus giving rise to the practice of revenge porn. The results of their study showed that from the samples they took, 10% had personal photos. In addition, there were findings that female teenagers were more vulnerable to becoming victims of revenge porn than males (Branch et al., 2017). The various discussions above underlie this research in focusing on sexting activities among teenagers as a form of risk from revenge porn.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-explorative research type. This approach aims to understand how sexting behavior in adolescents increases the risk of revenge porn threats from a victimology perspective. By focusing on the victim's experience, this study explores the dynamics of lifestyle risk, interpersonal relationships, and the influence of social media on teenager victimization. This research is designed as a case study to explore the experiences of adolescents who are victims of sexting and revenge porn. This study also involves supporting institutions, such as LBH Apik and LPSK, to gain additional insights into legal protection and victim rehabilitation. This research is designed as a case study to explore the experiences of adolescents who are victims of sexting and revenge porn. This study also involves supporting institutions, such as the Apik Legal Aid Institute (LBH Apik) and the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) to gain additional insights into legal protection and victim rehabilitation. The research locus includes the use of social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter, which are often used by teenagers for sexting activities. Primary data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with victims of revenge porn due to sexting, consisting of 3 female teenagers and 2 male teenagers. Interviews with legal experts and counselors from LBH Apik and LPSK to gain professional perspectives on the impacts and solutions to revenge porn. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore victims' experiences of sexting, the threat of revenge porn, and its psychosocial impacts. Researchers also conducted an analysis of adolescent interaction patterns on social media and identified sexting behavior that has the potential to pose a risk of victimization. In addition, researchers also collected data in the form of screenshots of conversations, social media content, and media reports related to cases of sexting and revenge porn.

Data analysis techniques were carried out by identifying key themes such as risk factors for sexting, power relations in interpersonal relationships, and patterns of revenge porn threats. Researchers also compare data from interviews, observations, and documentation to increase the accuracy of the results. Finally, analyze the research results using lifestyle exposure theory to explain the relationship between adolescent lifestyle and the risk of victimization, as well as victimology theory to understand the position of victims in this phenomenon. To ensure the validity of the analysis results, this study uses triangulation of data sources, including the perspectives of victims, legal experts, and secondary literature. Validation of interview results is also carried out through member checking, where the informants are asked to confirm the interpretation of the data produced. The topic of sexting and revenge porn is considered taboo in Indonesia, making it difficult to get respondents, especially among teenage boys. Most victims and their families do not

understand the legal and digital implications of sexting and revenge porn. This methodology supports an in-depth exploration of how teenagers sexting may be a pathway to revenge porn exposure, by providing insights into social dynamics, lifestyle risks, and victims' legal protection needs from a criminological perspective.

Results and Discussions

Pornography in Indonesia is regulated in Law Number 44 of 2008 Article (1) "Pornography is a picture, sketch, illustration, photo, writing, voice, sound, moving picture, animation, cartoon, conversation, body movement, or other form of message through various forms of communication media and/or public performances, which contain obscenity or sexual exploitation that violates moral norms in society" (JDIH BPK RI, 2008). Pornography arises from sexual activity carried out by humans from the age range of adolescence to adulthood. This is because there has been a development of emotional, cognitive, and psychological changes in accordance with age development. Pornography continued until in 1748 the birth of an erotic novel using English entitled "Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure" (Viva.Co.Id, 2010).

In the 1900s to 2000s with the presence of the internet and the advancement of digital cameras, pornographic content was easier to spread and access. This is in line with Downs Encarta, 2005 that in the 1990s, with the development of the internet network, the availability of pornography increased, and began to spread throughout the world (Ajat, 2006). In Indonesia itself, pornography has developed following the development of the digital revolution era. Initially, pornographic content was still through print media, and film screenings, and advertisements carried out by the media since the issuance of the Press Law, after the change in the era of President Soeharto's government in 1998. Along with technological advances, pornographic content has undergone significant changes. With the presence of the internet and social media, pornography can be accessed by anyone and anywhere. This is evidenced by the existence of 1,109,416 pornographic content on the internet in 2021 by Kominfo (now Komdigi) (Raharjo & Prastya, 2021). Meanwhile, for 2022, as many as 5,071 content have been blocked. However, there is still a lot of pornographic content that is not blocked and can be accessed by anyone. The following is one image of content that is spread on the internet.

Pornographic content that is spread via the internet has various types, such as for entertainment, business, hobbies and communities, and is also used as a crime that is classified as KBGO. Revenge porn itself is one of the pornographic contents that is classified as Online Gender-Based Violence (KBGO) which is spread on the Internet through social media. As expressed by (Hwian, 2017) revenge porn is considered as an act of spreading pornographic content that is obtained and has legal material ownership, but the action is wrong because it has the intention of revenge after a breakup. The spread of revenge porn content can spread quickly and can be accessed by social media users both nationally and internationally. The practice of revenge porn on social media is often enjoyed by some circles, and can be freely traded by the perpetrators. Toxic actions in a relationship are caused by conflict conditions so that controlling actions can be carried out by one party against the other party. The conditions that occur in a toxic relationship create uncomfortable feelings between the two parties. This is supported by research conducted by Ulin, et al. 2022 that in uncomfortable conditions, overthinking thoughts can arise that provide control and have an impact on hurting (Ulin et al., 2021).

In a relationship, the presence of this toxic practice is a dangerous and unwanted action, and results in an unhealthy relationship because it has a low level of cohesiveness. The form of toxic actions in a relationship can be physical abuse, and emotional abuse which aims to weaken the intended party, and make the victim helpless. In line with these actions, in his writing, Evendi (2018) provides an explanation in a relationship, that there are two types of violence, namely physical and verbal violence.

1. Physical violence

Typical types of physical violence include physical actions that result in pain, physical injury, such as slapping, hitting or injuring body parts, and even sexual harassment.

2. Non-physical violence

The typical types of verbal violence are divided into 2, namely verbal and psychological. This type of violence, namely by issuing harsh words, cursing and swearing, and can attack the victim psychologically.

These two types of violence have a huge impact on the victim's disclosure due to their helplessness, so that victims of toxic relationships can only remain silent and accept the perpetrator's treatment as a form of love and affection, and protect themselves from being attacked. This toxic relationship is closely related to the practice of revenge porn on social media. This is done by exploiting the victim's weakness when both are still in the process of dating. This exploitation can be in the form of restraint, threats, and even coercion to engage in sexual activity. This sexual activity can be done using 2 methods, namely:

- 1. Sexual activity that is carried out directly, and is usually recorded using a smartphone, under the pretext of personal storage and collection.
- 2. Sexual activity carried out via long-distance sexting.

These two methods are the results obtained in this study. The researcher took primary data based on interviews conducted with 4 victims, with details of 2 male victims and 2 female victims. In this case, the perpetrator used visualization of recorded sexual activity as a form of revenge against the victim by spreading content on social media, to embarrass the victim. This practice in the writing of Abdul and Mulan, 2021 is a new modus operandi in pornography crimes through cyberspace, social media (Munir et al., 2020).

Social media plays an important role in people's lives today. The presence of social media brings a change in the life of social interactions from the real world to the virtual world. This change is what then becomes a new culture that is born, because it has the advantage of freedom coupled with the flexibility factor, thus creating collaboration between the internet and society (Tejo et al., 2020). On the other hand, social media can be accessed by anyone, and can be used via smartphone or PC. However, in daily use, Nafier, 2018 revealed that smartphones have a negative impact because some users cannot control their time, and are too excessive in their use (Rifqi et al., 2020).

Based on the average data of social media users, Indonesia itself is ranked 10th in the world with an average of 3.2 hours per day (Azkiya, 2022) The high use of social media is influenced by several factors both externally and internally. Externally, with the advancement of the times, the use of social media brings people to know the latest information about various things more quickly, and gives birth to a standard of living in various fields to be more updated. With this standard, it slowly encourages internally, so that humans pursue this lifestyle standard. which encourages the presence of a new lifestyle that is recognized as common and natural in society. This is recognized by the victims as a change that must be followed so as not to be left behind.

Based on the average use of social media used by the victims is 5.25 hours a day. With this high usage, the existence of social media is increasingly becoming a daily necessity, because it is a container in the public space. This was expressed by Malllipedi in (Sururin et al., 2022) that the use of social media has also become a habit of posting daily activities. The high use of social media by the victims, brings labeling themselves as users who have the right and power to determine their image, which is obtained based on information from social media. Therefore, social media has now become an effort to always show one's existence as a netizen (Frederick & Krisna Maharani, 2021).

Conclusions

This study highlights the dangers of revenge porn as a form of gender-based violence that often goes undetected but has significant psychological, social, and legal impacts on victims. The rampant practice of sexting among teenagers is a potential pathway to the threat of revenge porn, especially in toxic relationships. This study found that high social media exposure and lack of digital literacy also increase the risk of victimization. From a victimology perspective, revenge porn shows an unequal power relationship, where perpetrators often use the victim's intimate content for revenge or control purposes. To overcome this phenomenon, an integrated approach is needed including digital literacy education, increasing public awareness, strengthening legal protection, and rehabilitation support for victims. The study also underlines the importance of collaboration between authorities, protection agencies and communities to create a safe and inclusive digital environment for all individuals, especially young people.

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