



Analysing the failure of the #MeToo social movement in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background: The #MeToo movement has become a global campaign that provides a space for survivors of sexual violence to share their experiences through social media. This movement does not only aim to punish perpetrators, but also to raise public awareness to be more responsive to issues of sexual violence around them. Indonesia has participated in this movement, although the issue of sexual violence on social media has not received significant attention. **Methods:** This research uses a qualitative approach by analysing the involvement of Indonesian society in the #MeToo movement on social media. This analysis was conducted through a literature review related to connective action, which is political participation in cyberspace that does not require commitment to a particular group, as well as the behaviour of social media users in Indonesia. **Findings:** Despite the massive use of social media in Indonesia, there has been less focus on the issue of sexual violence raised through the #MeToo movement. This is due to the diversity of social media usage patterns and more diverse content in Indonesia. However, social media remains an important platform in connecting individuals involved in the movement and enabling experience sharing and collective identity formation. **Conclusion:** The #MeToo movement in Indonesia is not as popular as in other countries, but it still plays an important role in raising awareness of sexual violence. Although the focus on the movement has not been as dominant, the connective actions taking place online still provide a space for survivors to share their stories and gain support. **Novelty/Originality of This Study:** This study highlights how connective action in Indonesia is related to the #MeToo movement in the context of social media use. The findings provide new insights into the limitations and opportunities of using social media as a platform to voice issues of sexual violence in a country with diverse patterns of social media use.

KEYWORDS: connective action; social media; social movements; sexual violence.

1. Introduction

Although there is no single definition of the concept of social movements as social phenomena, Giddens explains that social movements as a collective effort to achieve common interests outside the scope of established institutions (Giddens, 1993). The development of collective action that opposes or urges change is not always peaceful, although some of the history of civilisation has been through collective actions or social movements. In its own historical track record, this issue once emerged as a form of rebellion and nationalism movement in the early 20th century, until it became a new social movement. Social movements are social activities that can be in the form of movements or actions of a group of people who are informal or organisational, which usually focus on

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social and political issues by rejecting, carrying out or campaigning for social change (Purboningsih, 2015). In this picture, it is able to accommodate and form virtual public spaces such as in the #MeToo campaign movement.

The first #MeToo social media campaign happened when Tarana J. Burke, the humanitarian activist who started #MeToo in 2006, told the story of a 13-year-old girl who was abused by her mother's boyfriend, which left Burke feeling guilty. Then Burke founded the #MeToo Movement with the aim of creating a space for survivors' voices to be heard, with the tagline "empowerment through empathy". Then in 2017, this campaign movement rose to prominence because Alyssa Milano, a Hollywood actress, spoke out for victims of sexual violence, alleging sexual assault harassment by Hollywood producer, Harvey Weinstein, where Milano posted 'if you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write "MeToo" as a reply to this tweet' on her twitter page.

After posting, social media was flooded with stories of harassment experiences with the hashtag #MeToo. The hashtag went viral on social media, with Tarana Burke calling it an international movement in favour of protecting people who feel alienated by their surroundings. This hashtag has not only received responses from women's experiences but also men (Rajawaliputri, 2020).

Based on Tyssa Madelina (2017), men have also voiced their opinions through the hashtag, such as Javier Munoz, an actor known for his role in the Broadway Musical 'Hamilton', also wrote that he had experienced repeated acts of harassment. Which means this hashtag is not only applicable to women but also men. Since then, the word #MeToo has been used as a campaign by survivors who want to expose their sexual violence through social media. Besides aiming to punish the perpetrators, it is also a form of public awareness to try to report cases of sexual violence around them.

In addition, #MeToo is also part of UN Women's campaign to reduce sexual violence experienced by women. In the surveys they conducted before and after the #MeToo movement began, the most consistent mechanism was individuals' understanding that sexual offences are a widespread social problem and a serious act. Then an exploration of how the strength of the movement from survey data from February to March 2019 according to the size of search interest was seen, related to the number of tweets with hashtags per 1000 twitter users in October 2017, this data was collected by Morales Henry and Weintraub.

There are several cases that occurred during the #MeToo era, one of which is the case of Agni (pseudonym), a student of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) who was sexually harassed by his real work study (KKN) friend in June 2017, which was initially revealed by Agni through his social media, then picked up by one of the press so that it grabbed a lot of public attention and formed support for Agni in the form of the hashtags #KitaAgni and #MeToo in each of their posts on social media.

From these cases, it is known that the #MeToo hashtag was once a platform to speak up for victims of sexual violence in Indonesia, whether sexual violence in the form of touching or rape or done only through the perpetrator's mobile phone. However, most of the exposed cases only ended in peace from both parties due to cultural and religious reasons (Fatimah, A, 2022).

Based on the annual record report (CATAHU) of the National Commission on Violence against Women, reports of violence and harassment against women in 2017 (when the #MeToo hashtag was on Twitter) were recorded at 348,466 cases, this number increased for two consecutive years, where in 2018 Komnas Perempuan received complaints of 406,178 cases and in 2019 there were 431,471 cases of violence against women (Komnas Perempuan, 2019). With the increase in sexual violence from year to year, it is enough to be a red thread that the #MeToo hashtag has not been able to reduce the increase in sexual violence from the rampant cases in Indonesia (Kartika, 2019). This research examines the failure of the #MeToo social movement to reduce sexual violence in Indonesia.

2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative method. Secondary data was collected using documents such as books, journals, articles, news portals and library research. The research uses the concept of Connective Action to analyse the #MeToo movement as a social movement. Connective action is a concept from W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg that discusses political participation in cyberspace, where individuals do not need to have a commitment to a particular group. In cyberspace, political activism is fluid, flexible, and non-binding because it is done personally, but connected to each other by a shared concern for a particular issue.

With the concept of connective action in the current era, it is possible to have no leaders, organisational structures, and can easily join or leave an action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012) as well as using individual participation patterns based on technological advances in the form of social media connectivity that have turned reality activities into virtual (Rizki & Khairunnisa, n.d.). This is certainly a caretaker, because the presence of social media technology now plays a major role in providing public space in a pattern that has rarely been done before. There are three main characteristics of Connective action. Firstly, individuals do not have to commit to a particular group. Second, participation in digital spaces emphasises personal expression over group expression. Third, communication networks become the main way to organise a movement on social media, rather than using organisational hierarchies and membership.

The global #MeToo campaign is part of the digital participation actions according to Bennett & Segerberg described in the concept of connective action activism dynamics such as (1) political participation in cyberspace, (2) the circulation of hashtags becomes a common frame as a marker of an issue, although the meaning can be different for each person, (3) communication networks become the main way to organise a movement on social media, rather than using organisational hierarchies and membership.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 *The #MeToo phenomenon*

#MeToo was originally founded in 2006 by Tarana Burke, an American social activist and founder of the youth organisation Just Be Inc. as a movement of local people, especially women from underprivileged communities and victims of sexual harassment. At its inception, #MeToo intended to symbolise a movement of empowerment through empathy by creating a space for victims to come together and build a community of healing and trust (UN Women, 2020). The #MeToo movement gained traction and publicity after one actress, Alyssa Milano posted a short message on social media twitter using the hashtag '#MeToo' in October 2017. In 2017 and 2018, the #MeToo movement went viral on social media as a 'me too' expression of having experienced sexual violence or harassment.

The #MeToo movement was triggered by a spate of sexual assault cases committed by Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein. Seeing many victims starting to speak up and seeing the situation that there are still many victims of sexual violence cases who do not report, one of the Hollywood actresses, Alyssa Milano, pioneered to write a hashtag on social media twitter. She posted the question 'If you "ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write "me too' as a reply to this tweet' and many of her followers gave the answer "me too" as an expression that they had also experienced sexual violence or harassment.



Fig 1. Twitter reveals massive reach of #MeToo movement (10TV.com)

This hashtag indicates that the person saying #MeToo, which means 'me too', has been a victim of sexual violence. Tarana Burke also added that the #MeToo Movement is not only for white women, but for all victims who have experienced sexual offences to speak up (Gill & Rahman, 2020). Thus, #MeToo aims to empower and help women to stand up against sexual violence and harassment. This action is evidenced by various actions that show the problems experienced so that issues can be raised in society.

3.2 Global collective action #MeToo

The #MeToo movement, a 2017 phenomenon in the United States, has sparked strong collective action around the world in an effort to address sexual violence. The #MeToo movement has different implications in different countries. The United States' #MeToo movement seeks to expand international support to pressure the country to reform its federal laws. The country's #MeToo Movement attracted media attention, debates, hearings and meetings about sexual violence in the workplace, which was not initially a public issue. It persuaded the International Labour Organization (ILO) to make an international declaration, demonstrating the movement's success. The movement also influenced domestic policy in the United States through the introduction of the 'Be Heard in the Workplace Act'.

The #MeToo movement has turned individual concerns into social participation. Despite being known as a patriarchal country that upholds tradition (including the division of labour). After evolving from #MeToo to #WeTooJapan, the movement was declared on 3 March 2018 thanks to public support on social media, the movement gained attention, and managed to get international attention as one of the issues discussed in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) agenda by the United Nations (UN) through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Japan's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reviewed by the UN Human Rights Council on 13 April 2018, Japan received 125 recommendations from 106 countries encouraging Japan to implement new policies to protect its people from sexual harassment, discrimination against women, protection of the rights of 'comfort women in Japan', and other policies (United Nations Human Rights, 2018).

The #MeToo movement is an independent activism that invites women to speak out by telling their stories or challenging patriarchy. In China itself, in mid-2022 passed a law aimed at providing protection for women from gender discrimination and sexual harassment. Not only that, the biggest achievement also comes from the civil society movement, where women are encouraged to be willing to speak out against gender inequality and sexual harassment, which is seen from the large number of support for women's rights online, the #MeToo hashtag has positive implications for women in China.

3.3 Indonesia and the issue of sexual violence

Sexual violence is a serious issue in Indonesia, and has been of concern to the public and government over the past few years. In the 1965 tragedy, many women and girls were victims of rape by members of the military and violent mobs. This is a serious problem that requires the attention of various parties, one solution is the Islamic perspective in overcoming this problem. In 1998, after the fall of the New Order regime, the Indonesian government began to recognise the existence of sexual violence as a problem that needed to be addressed. In 2004, the Law on Domestic Violence was issued as an attempt to provide protection for victims of sexual violence and domestic violence.

As Wijayanti said in *Sexual violence in Indonesia: A review of the Literature* that although there are laws that protect victims of sexual violence, there are still many factors that make these cases difficult to resolve. Some of these factors include social stigma, lack of support from the justice system, and lack of awareness about the importance of reporting cases of sexual violence.

3.4 Indonesian phenomenon

The women's movement in Indonesia began with Dutch discrimination against women that limited access to education. R.A Kartini, Dewi Sartika, and Maria Maramis (who are known as pioneering figures in the struggle for women's rights). Their ideas to advance women's rights and dignity began with education as a condition for advancing other people (Wieringa, 1998). The #MeToo movement in Indonesia has received attention and support from some people, especially activists and social workers who have been fighting for the issue of sexual violence.

This movement emerged on social media twitter through women activists and victims who shared their personal experiences related to sexual offences. One of the cases that occurred during the #MeToo era was the case of Agni (a pseudonym), a student at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) who was sexually harassed by a friend from her community service programme (KKN), which was initially disclosed by Agni through her social media, then picked up by one of the press so that it captured a lot of public attention and formed support for Agni in the form of hashtags #KitaAgni and #MeToo in each of their posts on social media.

3.5 Analysing the failure of the #MeToo social movement in Indonesia with connective action

W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg's Connective Action Theory on the use of information technology and social media in social and political change efforts will help to explain how the failure of the #MeToo social movement in Indonesia is analysed. Explains how individuals with similar interests or goals connect to achieve social or political change by utilising digital platforms to communicate, collaborate and act together.

Lack of access and technology to support social media as a #MeToo strategy. In the modern world, problems are often associated with information and communication technologies, including their influence on social movements around the world. Developed countries such as Spain and the United States or developing countries such as Tunisia, Brazil and Egypt are considered countries with intensive use of the internet, including social media. In fact, in recent years, it has been noted that the use of social media has fuelled popular demonstrations (Soares and Joia, 2015).

The sophistication of communication and information technology has changed the activities in society from public space to virtual space. One of the virtual spaces is social media, which is a place where information circulates quickly and briefly, resulting in a tendency for individuals to follow issues based on their tastes. These tendencies become the potential for social movement mobilisation. Starting from a short narrative framing a news story, it can attract public attention and activism efforts can begin from the time the news is shared from individual to individual. A movement on social media can be said to be

successful when it fulfils several things, including a simplified narrative, symbolic representation and low-risk activism.

In #MeToo, the issue is wrapped in a simple, interesting and sensational narrative that makes the hashtag get public attention, and then low-risk activism begins with the act of sharing. Thus, after one of the actresses, Alyssa Milano uploaded a short message on social media twitter using the hashtag '#MeToo' in October 2017, it became global and spread to Indonesia.

In Indonesia itself, according to Andi Saputra, 2019 explained that from 2017 to 2019 revealed that individuals who use the internet in Indonesia are students, 97% of whom use social media. The use of smartphones, which are now excellent, is the most common device used to access social media, with 85% while the other 15% are those using smartphones or laptops to access social media. However, in the midst of the rapid growth of social media, the root cause of the problems that have occurred recently, according to the Katadata Insight Center (KIC) data survey, explains that the internet network is still the main obstacle in accessing digital applications in Indonesia, the percentage even reaches 67%. Not to mention the limitations of payment, gadget capabilities and news dissemination methods.

In addition to network constraints in various regions, social media is also considered a negative impact by some people because of its ability to connect individuals and form a group or network. Its use also affects social life in society, whether it is changes to social balance, values, attitudes, and behaviour of community groups, thus presenting an impact that touches ethnicity, religion, race and intergroup which are considered sensitive and made enemies. The ability of individuals to disseminate messages becomes an obstacle, because the gap in internet access in some areas in Indonesia is still very limited, making the lack of individual access to the latest information and news related to #MeToo.

Diverse and dispersed participants. The success of the #MeToo social movement depends not only on the number of participants, but also on the extent to which the movement has clear goals and effective strategies to achieve these goals. In the #MeToo hashtag, there are a large number of diverse participants spread across different regions, although this diversity can provide rich and representative viewpoints, but without proper organisation and planning, the movement will be directionless. In addition, the adaptation of the various cultural and social communities in Indonesia makes it difficult to be accepted because it does not fit the context of the society it comes from. This can be seen in the stigma that still exists in society about victims of sexual violence. This stigma and fear of victims is one of the consequences of sexual violence always existing, making them ashamed and even afraid to talk about their experiences.

The issue of sexual violence is open and flexible. When discussing the issue of sexual violence, it can be explored from various perspectives and contexts, ranging from understanding the perspectives of victims, perpetrators, psychosocial support, prevention and even legal action. In the #MeToo hashtag circulating on social media, there are many perspectives spread and circulating. Although the goal is to trigger victims to speak out, in its realisation there are many perspectives that cannot be controlled in social media. Diverse participation is also a consideration in the spread of this hashtag to combat sexual violence. not only individuals, both victims and perpetrators, researchers, activists, government and the general public. It is from this diversity that varied viewpoints are often found. Whereas the most needed thing is a collaborative effort in supporting social mainstreaming in responding to the issue of sexual violence.

Complex approach and support needed. Supporting the reduction of #MeToo sexual violence requires complex support, including changes in the legal system, education, public awareness and support for victims. As a country based on the rule of law, we often find that impunity is still rampant, especially when coupled with protection regulations that are still not in favour of victims. Through #MeToo, the women's movement in Indonesia is demanding legal protection for victims of sexual violence, demanding fair and firm legal reforms against sexual violence.

Based on the experiences of victims of sexual violence, there are several things that victims need but are always overlooked. These include providing information related to

offering appropriate treatment, safe spaces as well as recovery and legal or professional assistance. The #MeToo hashtag, which is dominated by responses to experiences of sexual violence, can be a basic knowledge in assisting victims. In addition to siding with victims and fulfilling the rights of victims of sexual violence, perpetrators must also be sanctioned for their actions and given education to perpetrators regarding reflection and learning from their mistakes. In the #MeToo hashtag, lessons are usually given by social media users in the social media movement as social learning for the perpetrator. However, learning does not end there, there must be a deterrent effect and knowledge given to the perpetrator.

Focusing on the need for social change and changes in the way sexual violence is addressed, the movement rejects victimhood and injustice. Based on individual courage in publicly disclosing personal experiences, the #MeToo collective identity seeks to create a comfortable and safe space to talk about experiences beyond the stigma of sexual violence. In addition, the movement seeks to change norms and culture around sexual violence by incorporating individual experiences and pushing for laws that protect against sexual violence.

Challenges in translating online activism into action. While social media can be a platform to raise the issue of sexual violence through the #MeToo hashtag, the real challenge is how this online activism translates into action in the offline world. While the #MeToo hashtag has helped people to speak more openly about their experiences on social media, translating online allegations and confessions into solid evidence through legal action is extremely difficult, as in cases of sexual violence, laws are still being adopted that require victims to provide physical evidence and concrete documentation.

In addition, stigma still haunts victims of sexual violence. This can be seen from the number of accounts that are anonymous or use pseudonyms to reveal the sexual violence they have experienced. This stigma and oppression is the consideration for victims to participate in real action. This also triggers insecurity for victims for reporting the violence experienced, both the potential for revenge and further harassment by the perpetrator. Finally, there is a need to ensure adequate victim protection and laws that favour victims with fair treatment, including listening to and respecting victims' experiences. This also applies to society in how they systemically change how they perceive, treat or prevent sexual violence, which requires engagement in education, policy change and cultural change.

Whereas in Connective action, connected individuals must share a common view and interest to mobilise collective action, Indonesia has a diverse social and cultural context. Community response is also very important to consider. In Indonesia, there is still a strong patriarchal culture that perpetuates stigma against victims of sexual violence, as well as privacy concerns. Building effective networks and safe spaces also requires hard work within the community, with many customs still considered taboo in Indonesia making it very difficult to fulfil. It's not just about building and creating safe spaces, it's also about how we sustain and maintain them, which involves long-term support programmes and the active participation of individuals in the network while ensuring data protection and online privacy.

5. Conclusions

The #MeToo movement is a global phenomenon that demonstrates the power of connective action in the form of community participation in voicing issues of sexual violence and gender equality. Social media became the main platform for connecting individuals involved in the movement, enabling the sharing of experiences, the dissemination of information, and the formation of a collective identity. However, amidst the global success of the movement, challenges unique to Indonesia present limitations in message dissemination, network building, and safe space creation.

Indonesia's strong patriarchal culture and conflicts with existing social norms pose a major challenge. De-stigmatisation and deep mindset shifts are needed to overcome these barriers. The #MeToo movement in Indonesia seeks to create a collective identity that galvanises individual courage in disclosing personal experiences of sexual violence. However, cultural differences and views in Indonesia affect how the movement can achieve its goals. Despite the widespread use of social media in Indonesia, limited access to the internet in some regions and diverse patterns of social media use may hinder the spread of the #MeToo movement's message. The stigma attached to victims of sexual violence and concerns over privacy violations may hinder open participation and disclosure of experiences. The limitations of engaging in collective action connected only through technology and social media mean that the movement may have a more limited impact in the long term in Indonesia.

Although the #MeToo movement has not achieved the same strong impact in Indonesia as in other countries, steps towards gender equality and the elimination of sexual violence are ongoing. Efforts to build effective networks, create safe spaces, and support victims remain necessary. This challenge also reminds us of the complex cultural, social context, and technological barriers that need to be overcome in order to promote gender equality and stop sexual violence in Indonesia.

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