

## MUTED GROUP THEORY ANOMALIES IN ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN JOURNALISTS

**Retno Manuhoro Setyowati<sup>1</sup>, Errika Dwi Setya Watie<sup>2</sup>**

*Universitas Semarang, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia  
retnomanuhoro@usm.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, errika@usm.ac.id<sup>2</sup>*

### ABSTRACT

Research conducted by PR2Media at the end of 2022 found that 82.6% of 852 female journalists who were study respondents in 34 provinces reported having experienced sexual violence, including Central Java province. However, the research did not specifically discuss KBGO specifically for each region. In fact, digital violence targeting female journalists falls into the category of Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV), namely acts of violence through internet technology to harass victims. The urgency of this research is to reveal Online Gender-Based Violence experienced by female journalists in Semarang as the capital of Central Java. The purpose of this study is to find out how the experience of OGBV that occurred during their profession, as well as to find out the types of OGBV that have been experienced. This research uses a qualitative method with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observations, surveys and literature studies, which are then described descriptively. The findings of this research show that the type of GBV experienced by female journalists in Semarang is cyber harassment (46.7), and the attitude taken by female journalists who are victims of online gender-based violence is to refuse to remain silent, an anomaly of Muted Group Theory.

**Keywords:** *online gender-based violence, digital violence, online harassment, women journalists*

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### INTRODUCTION

According to the results of a joint survey conducted by the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) and PR2Media in 2022, as many as 82.6% of the total 852 female journalists who were respondents to the study in 34 provinces reported that they had experienced sexual violence. Although the research was conducted involving female journalists respondents in Indonesia, it has not specifically addressed online gender-based violence that may be experienced by female journalists in Central Java, especially in Semarang as the provincial capital (TimPR2Media, 2023). Based on the results of this research, the purpose of this research is to find out more about online gender-based violence against female journalists that occurred in Semarang, as the center of government in Central Java Province. The author wants to know the experiences of women journalists related to Online Gender-Based Violence. Previously in 2020, there was a significant increase in complaints to Komnas Perempuan regarding online gender-based violence, reaching 235%, from 281 cases in 2019 to 942 cases in 2020. In 2021, the number of reports continued to increase to 1,721 cases, or an increase of 83%. This change is closely connected to advances in information and communication technology (ICT) and the increasing number of social media users in Indonesia (Lintang dkk., 2022)

UNESCO also conducted a survey in 2021 which was attended by 901 female journalists from 125 countries. As a result, as many as 75% of female journalists have experienced online violence, which is as many as 18% in various varieties. This online violence is closely related

to human rights policies, namely women's race, religion and sexual orientation. Unfortunately, only about 25% of female journalists dared to report their cases to their superiors, and not all of them received a response. Even sadder, female journalists who experience violence and dare to report to their superiors are accused of being provocateurs. There are also those who dare to report to the legal process and get follow-up, but of the 11% who report, only 8% get treatment. Online Gender-Based Violence also has an impact on mental health disorders, disruptions in doing daily work, and may even trigger women to resign from the institutions where they work (Yentriyanti, 2022). Seeing the developments that occur and also considering the current situation, this research is important to get the daily reality of female journalists in Semarang as well as an understanding of the trend of violence in cyberspace against women journalists, as well as the impact experienced personally, in the surrounding environment and in carrying out their journalistic work.

Although it also affects women journalists who work on multi-platforms and mult issues, Online Gender-Based Violence (KBGO) has been targeting journalists who actively work for alternative media who vocally fight for the rights of women and minority groups. Such attacks can be personal or aimed directly at the media platform used, as experienced by Magdalene.co and Konde.co. Both of these media outlets reported incidents in which their websites and social media accounts were targeted so that they could not be accessed. Magdalene.co experience a DdoS (distributed denial-of-service) attack, an action that involves flooding internet traffic on servers, systems, and networks, rendering sites inaccessible. Meanwhile, Konde.co suffered a digital attack on October 24, 2022, after publishing a news story about a rape case at the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (Asumsi, 2023).

The topic of female journalists is especially worthy of discussion because the journalist profession is identified with the male gender. In the book "Journalists in Indonesia: Between Autonomy and Intervention", Masduki and Nurhaya Muchtar (Masduki., 2021) depicting Indonesian journalists in various media in Indonesia is generally male, in his thirties. They are individuals who have completed undergraduate education, with the majority of them having degrees in communication sciences. As many as 81.4% of respondents have an S1 degree, while 5.6% have an S2 degree. Of the total respondents who had a bachelor's degree, about 63.1% did not have a special specialization in communication studies or journalism, while 16.8% had a specialization in journalism, and 10.9% obtained education in other communication fields. Of the total 633 research respondents, about 4.8% had attended education at the undergraduate level or equivalent programs, but did not complete their studies. In terms of employment status, most journalists (69.2%) have permanent worker status. The rest work part-time, become freelance journalists, or act as correspondents for print, broadcast, and cyber media. The research above confirms that the journalist profession in Indonesia is very synonymous with men. Meanwhile, based on data from Konde.co said the number of female journalists in Indonesia was only 25% of the total journalists (Adinda, 2021). Other research says it only reaches between 5-10% of the total journalists, although this number continues to increase. One of the consequences of this unequal numerical condition is the weak socio-political bargaining power of women journalists in the workplace. This position exacerbates the general condition of women's employment discrimination in newsrooms rooted in gender bias. Women journalists still find it difficult to build their careers and are often

assigned to cover topics that are considered "women's" issues or issues that fall into the soft news category (Sutarso, 2012)

International Media Support compiled a report published in 2019 titled *The Safety of Women Journalists: Breaking the Cycle of silence and violence*. This report was obtained from data processing violence experienced by female journalists in nine countries including Indonesia. According to STIs, types of violence can be divided into three types. First, physical security, which is a condition where female journalists are more vulnerable to sexual harassment than male journalists, so training and implementation of gender-oriented media policies are needed. The second type of violence involves verbal abuse and data hacking that occurs in the digital world, such as the publication of irrelevant personal identities as a form of pressure. Third, there is sexual violence and social discrimination that occurs in the work environment or media companies in various forms (TimPR2Media, 2023). This STI report proves that violence against women is cultural and structural (Masduki., 2021).

The use of the term Online Gender-Based Violence (KBGO) is also known by another term, namely Gender-Based Cyber Violence (KSBG). Meanwhile, Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Sexual Violence is known as Electronic-Based Sexual Violence (KSBE). The difference in these terms is not a matter of debate, because they all refer to the same meaning. Online gender-based violence (KBGO) or technology-facilitated KSBG, just like gender-based violence in the real world, the act of violence must have the intention or intent of harassing the victim based on gender or sexual. If not, then the violence falls into the category of general violence in the online sphere (SAFENet, 2020). Looking back at the 2022 Komnas Perempuan Annual Record (CATAHU), the findings regarding KBGO have increased where in that year there were 1,721 cases, and compared to the previous year, this figure increased by 83% (Perempuan, 2022). Meanwhile, the Online Gender-Based Violence used is in accordance with what is summarized by Komnas Perempuan based on report data entered since 1025 until today, then reformulated by SAFE Net, an organization that fights for digital rights in Southeast Asia. The forms of Online Gender-Based Violence in question include approaches to deceive (cyber grooming), online harassment (*cyber harassment*), hacking (*hacking*), illegal content (illegal content), *invasion of privacy* (infringement of privacy), threats of distribution of *personal photos/videos* (malicious distribution), defamation (*online defamation*), online recruitment) (SAFENet, 2020). The forms of online gender-based violence are also described in various derivative categories, and until 2023 Komnas Perempuan still receives cases of complaints regarding KBGO in the category of *sextortion* or extortion with sexual purposes (Perempuan, 2023)

Another previous research that has been conducted and reviewed literature is a research from Silvia Ng and Ignatius Haryanto entitled "Digital violence against women journalists in Indonesian feminist media: a case study on konde.co and magdalene.co" (Ng & Haryanto, 2022), Depicting digital violence in the era of digitalization in female journalists specifically magdelene.co and konde.co media. The result of her research is that the cause of digital violence experienced by both feminist alternative media Konde.co and Magdalene.co is the difference in views between feminist media and civil society. The next journal that became the author's literature belonged to the results that there was gender discrimination from the media studied, including sexual harassment, reporting burden, menstrual leave, availability of lactation rooms, career paths, and availability of daycare rooms (Hafifah Dinda Pratiwi dkk.,

2021). Next is a joint research from SAFENet, the Alliance of Independent Journalists and IMS entitled "Research Report on Sexual Violence against Indonesian Women Journalists". The results of this research stated that 82.6 percent of 852 respondents claimed to have experienced sexual violence throughout their journalistic career (TimPR2Media, 2023)

Researchers also use a literature review, namely *Muted Group Theory*. This theory states the practical ways of a dominant group in an attempt to suppress, silence, and denigrate the words or ideas of the subordinate group (LittleJohn dkk., 2021). Muted Group Theory states that in societies, language tends to be created and governed by more powerful or dominant groups. This theory suggests that women's groups or groups with lower social power often feel marginalized or "muted" in using the language. In this context, there is an assumption that language generally reflects the experiences and perspectives of men, and therefore, it is difficult for groups of women to fully express or articulate their experiences and views. This assumption reflects power inequalities in social and cultural structures, where more powerful groups tend to dominate the creation and control of language.

Furthermore, the Muted Group Theory, developed by Cheri Kramarae, states that in society, the more powerful or dominant group has greater control over language and communication. In "*Women and Men Speaking: Frameworks for Analysis*" written by Cheri Kramarae and Dale Spender in 1981, it is stated that for less powerful groups, such as women, the use of language is often a tool to stifle or limit their expression and experience. Muted Group Theory defines language literally as a man-made construct, and Kramarae highlights how language can be a tool of power and control used by dominant groups to silence less powerful groups (RM Girsang, 2018). Cheri Kramarae views women as part of a minority group that does not have the ability to express their thoughts as men who can freely express their opinions. There are three methods applied by the patriarchal system to suppress women's voices, namely through ridicule, control, and humiliation (Bahari Simeon, 2022).

## **METHOD**

This research uses qualitative methods. Samples are taken *purposively*. In-depth interviews were conducted to find out the experiences and views of informants regarding their daily experiences while serving as journalists, and what types of KBGO were experienced, including the development of interviews to what steps and strategies were carried out by female journalists when facing KBGO. The addition of questionnaires was carried out to determine the experiences of respondents related to 8 types of online gender-based violence. The use of questionnaires in qualitative research can add an interpretive and in-depth dimension to the answers given. This is also related to ethical aspects and the protection of the identity of informants because informants are voluntary and must be protected confidentially. This is in line with Ahmad Rijali's explanation in the UIN Antasari Journal regarding qualitative data collection techniques through questionnaires. A "table" was created to gather facts from various informants present in society (Rijali, 2018).

The summary in the form of a diagram or table, then must be interpreted, interpreted and then concluded by considering certain calculations, and it is a concrete form of reality. In qualitative research the "table" is an event in the daily reality of society, not listed on paper as in quantitative research.

The subjects of this research are female journalists who work for various mass media in Semarang. This subject is intended to find out about experience and knowledge about KBGO during work through in-depth interviews. The criteria for research subjects are: journalists who have worked for at least 1 year, journalists whose working areas include Semarang City, Semarang Regency and surrounding areas, journalists from various mass media platforms and journalists who have special experience related to KBGO.

As primary data, various techniques are carried out, namely, observation is an effort to collect data carried out when researchers directly go to the field to observe the behavior and activities of individuals at the research location (Creswell, 2016). Then also through in-depth interviews, to get information from data sources directly through conversations or questions and answers (Sugiyono, 2017). Meanwhile, to strengthen and complete primary data, researchers also use questionnaires or questionnaires that must be interpreted, or translated in order to find useful meanings. Qualitatively, the use of data from questionnaires or questionnaires in qualitative research does not always have to be numerical because it is a concrete form of reality (Rijali, 2018).

The primary data that has been obtained is then supported by secondary data in the form of collecting qualitative documents in the form of public documents such as media coverage or private documents. The necessary data is then examined intensely so that it can support primary data (Creswell, 2016).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

After the data collection process was carried out through in-depth interviews and questionnaire distribution, the next step was qualitative coding of data in the form of transcripts of in-depth interviews that had been conducted with female journalist informants with work areas in Semarang City. There were fifteen (15) informants who answered the questionnaire and 7 informants who were willing to be interviewed in depth on two different occasions.

In-depth interviewers opened up about their experiences related to Online Gender-Based Violence during their journalistic activities. They were interviewed through a Forum Discussion Group with the theme "KBGO on women journalists", and also through exclusive interviews at a place outside the media office environment where she worked. Each informant produces different data according to the experience they gain related to KBGO.

This interview then became primary data reinforced by the questionnaire distributed. The contents of the questionnaire are about journalistic career, position in the newsroom, age and experience of KBGO in detail. This questionnaire helps researchers obtain data because not all KBGO experiences can be told openly and in detail. It is associated with memories of bad experiences that can trigger mental and traumatic discomfort.

The transcribed interviews were then coded following coding principles in qualitative research and reinforced with the help of NVivo as a tool for data categorization and visualization.

The following is an example of a coding process that begins with transcribing the interview results followed by looking for themes on the transcript sheet.

Table 1. Sample transcript of an interview that has been conducted

<b>Researcher / Informer</b>	<b>Interview transcript</b>
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<b>Researchers</b>	<b><i>Have you experienced online gender-based violence during your duties as a journalist??</i></b>
Report 4	In the group anyway.. that's usually in the WA Group, people who are actually professionals and educated are just the same. There is a porn sticker war in WAG, I am uncomfortable and don't like it
<b>Researchers</b>	<b><i>If online gender-based harassment or violence has never been experienced?</i></b>
Report 6	Never got IG DMs and even open comments on my posts. I was surprised, the photos I uploaded on IG were polite photos, photos that were dressed in whole covered and used to pose, but suddenly there were comments that led to lewd and harassing "ih your hair is cute makes me lust

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After the transcript process, researchers mark on data that researchers find interesting or interesting findings and are related to the pressure point / focus of the study. This is done to identify what is expressed by the participants, which is a picture of the phenomenon both feelings, understanding, and points of view of participants. The next step is to carry out the theme process or code which is then developed into themes. The material or information that has been obtained from informants is selected according to the purpose of the study, then the researcher interprets it. The coding process is done using the Nvivo tool, however, coding is absolutely done by researchers first so this is not a technical part of what Nvivo does. Coding is needed to process data, which was previously initiated by an analytical thinking by the researcher. The process of coding a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph that represents the code is called coding (Agustinus, 2019). Through the help of Nvivo can accelerate the work to the next stage, namely linking emerging themes, until the final stage of the analysis is looking for patterns that arise between cases / informants.

From coding through nodes in NVivo, large themes or message content can be generated which is the essence of the interview from the informant. The themes of the message that emerged were:

1. Types of KBGO
2. Impact of KBGO victims
3. Handling of KBGO victims

The first theme is types of Online Gender-Based Violence. This theme was obtained from repeated statements related to online threats, hacking of personal social media accounts of female journalists, online harassment and obscene expressions through *chat* applications. The second theme that patterned up from the interview was the psychological and physical impact suffered by female journalists who experienced KBGO cases. Feelings of discomfort, shame, inferiority, and even slump surfaced in every in-depth interview session with informants. The third theme in general is the handling of victims of Online Gender-Based Violence. This is built from a series of statements regarding the absence of protection from media companies related to the handling of KBGO cases that occur to female journalists, also not all colleagues or editorial members and even media companies have procedures in handling KBGO cases that happen to their female journalists.

### **Types of Online Gender-Based Violence experienced by Semarang women journalists.**

Based on the analysis of the data that has been taken, the researcher recorded statements from the real experience of informants who had experienced KBGO. The researchers' primary data was also obtained from questionnaires filled out by respondents as many as 15 female journalists who met the criteria. It begins with data on age, coverage area and position in the newsroom. Here is a summary of the contents of the questionnaire:

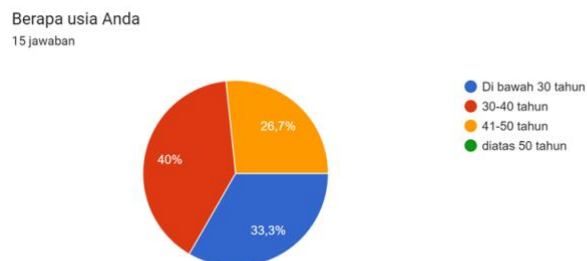


Figure 1. Percentage age diagram of female journalist respondents

Source: data processing researcher

The diagram above shows that female journalists as respondents, are in the age range of 30 to 40 years as much as 40%, then under the age of 30 years as much as 33.3% and 26.7% are female journalists aged 41 years to 50 years. These ages, according to the National Central Bureau of Statistics, are included in the productive age category. According to BPS, 15 to 65 years is the productive age (Ema Tusianti, S.ST., S.AB., M.T., M.Sc., I Gusti Ngurah Agung Rama dkk., 2022). As for the distribution of coverage areas, respondents answered that more than 50% were in Semarang City and Semarang Regency. For this coverage area, the distance is not close, but so far the process of dividing work areas is often not carried out based on distance. Semarang City as the capital of Central Java is used as a homebase for media companies in Central Java, so the position where female journalists live does not have to be the same as their coverage area. This answers the percentage of 4.7% of female journalists outside Semarang but still within the scope of Central Java.

Furthermore, regarding the career position of female journalists who were respondents, as many as 46% were in positions as reporters. For the position of editor and managing editor as well as broadcaster, content creator and other positions the percentage is the same at 13.3% and for freelance journalist positions as much as 20%. While the position of correspondent and editor-in-chief is 6.7%. The number of processes at various career levels in the media industry also does not guarantee different treatment of KBGO risks. Online harassment and other forms of online violence are experienced by both senior journalists and those who have recently worked as professional female journalists.



Figure 2. Diagram of the position of women journalists in Semarang  
Source: data processing researcher

The types of KBGO experienced by Semarang female journalists are: cyber harassment (46.7%).



Figure 3. Diagram of the percentage of cyber harassment experienced  
Source: data processing researcher

This online violence is experienced by female journalists with any perpetrators, even sources from educated circles and community leaders have also carried out KBGO to Semarang female journalists, as stated by informant 1.

"At that time I did a phone interview related to the COVID-19 pandemic, I interviewed a public official whose formal education was high, he graduated from S3. Now in the middle of the interview, suddenly my source the public official uttered a very inappropriate, disrespectful sentence – I can't say it here because I think it is very harassing to me and my profession as a journalist."

Informant 1 stated that he had tried to divert the conversation so that the source he was interviewing by telephone returned to the subject. However, for the umpteenth time, the source repeated inappropriate remarks to informant journalist 1. Fortunately, informant 1 always carried out the Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) interview by always recording the conversation, so that he had evidence of a KBGO incident against him. This online harassment also includes sending pornographic texts and harassment from anyone.

Here is the experience of informant 4 who reviewed the incident of online harassment, where informant 4 said he could not avoid being in a work-connected group and network that supported reporting.

"Di grup sih.. itu biasanya di WA Grup, orang-orang yang notabene seorang profesional dan berpendidikan kok ya sama aja. Ada perang stiker porno di WAG, saya risih dan nggak suka."



Informant 7 also revealed her experience of online harassment she received through a social media Direct Message from a source she had interviewed. The Direct Message contains an invitation to take a spa bath together after the interview session.

"For me it's very sickening, even though he's a respectable person, a public figure and an educated person. The text in the DM hurt me a lot as a human being and my profession as a journalist."

In line with the other informant, informant 3 stated that he had received a voice message on the WhatsApp chat application he used daily from a colleague he had just met. The voicemail was packaged jokingly but informant 3 judged it to be a very harassing voicemail.

"At first he laughed and then he made a short story ending with the affirmation that my chest was big. It was too much, and I was furious as hell."

### **Impact of victims of Online Gender-Based Violence**

Being a victim of KBGO is certain to experience an impact and this also affects daily life. KBGO victims not only experience psychological losses, social alienation, economic losses, limited mobility, to self-censorship, it can even lead to disruption of physical health. Research conducted by SAFE Net states that generally, KBGO victims are prone to fear, anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts (SAFENet, 2020). Furthermore, the social impact felt by victims is experiencing social alienation, withdrawing from the environment, and their mobility is increasingly limited. This is based on the decision of victims to withdraw from offline or online activities on social media because they continue to be humiliated after their photos and videos are spread without consent. This is also felt by informants when experiencing KBGO as developed by informant 5.

"As a result of that incident, I was down, I was shaking, unable to sleep, shaken. Amazingly, the culprit never apologized and took it for granted."

The following is a visualization of the psychological impact experienced by female journalists victims of KBGO using the NVivo tool with *word frequency function*.

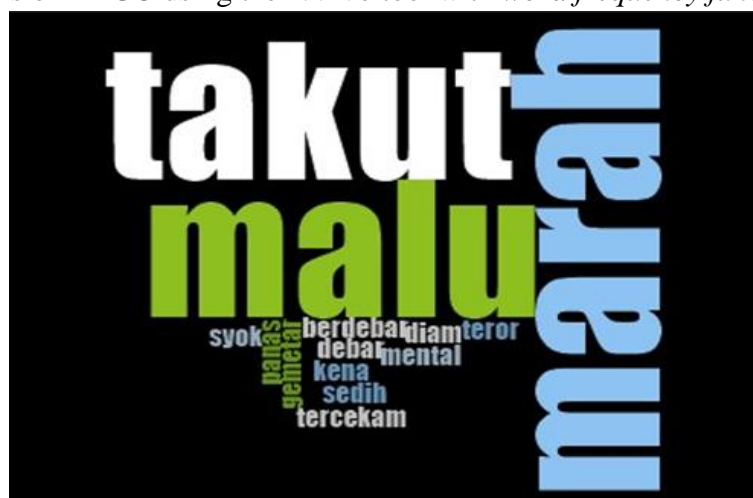


Figure 4. Visualization of the physical and psychological impacts suffered by KBGO victims  
Source: data processing researcher

As recorded in *word frequency*, the words with the largest font size were the ones that appeared most frequently expressed by informants. The more to the edge, the less it is called.

Of course, this *word cloud* is one of the guidelines or understanding of existing data, not the final result of the analysis. Anger about the situation was also felt by informant 2 who stated that his anger did not get a response from the perpetrator or those around him. This makes him feel more emotional and has an impact on the health of the body.

"Acid reflux, I know this must be the result of my pent-up anger. How to deter this perpetrator and do not let the victim appear again."

### **Tackling Gender-Based Violence Online**

Based on in-depth interviews with informants and questionnaires given to them, it is known that only one (1) media company provided assistance to its female journalists at the time of the KBGO case. The media company is a mainstream media that has previously also provided briefings on initial training on employment contracts, basic knowledge of KBGO to journalists and real handling for the physical and psychological recovery of victims. This is also a motivating factor for the courage of KBGO victims to report themselves to the media company where they work.



Figure 5. Diagram of the percentage of readiness of media companies in SOPs for handling sexual violence.

Source: data processing researcher

The importance of the role of media companies in providing support to victims of KBGO becomes clear, given the psychological impact that women journalists can experience. Most informants stated that media companies have not been fully responsive to KBGO cases, even though in writing companies already provide Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) for handling KBGO cases. However, not all media companies and their workers are quick to respond. Informant 6 stated that he had told a case of social media hacking but the response from the media company seemed to ignore his complaints.

"What happens sometimes is even a cynical response if someone tells the KBGO incident to the editorial board or in the news room. They seem to take this KBGO lightly."

Semarang female journalists who have been victims of KBGO refuse to be silent, are more courageous in speaking out, and are more proactive in finding solutions and recovery efforts. Although they refused to remain silent, they chose not to report directly to the press council, and company associations or trade unions. They are more entrusting to share stories with coworkers or trusted friends. For women journalists who are members of journalists' associations, they are more courageous to report their cases to the Alliance of Independent

Journalists because of the high trust factor in the efforts made by their journalists' associations. The Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) is known to have a sufficient level of understanding about the rights of women journalists and actively educates fellow female journalists to increase knowledge about KBGO.

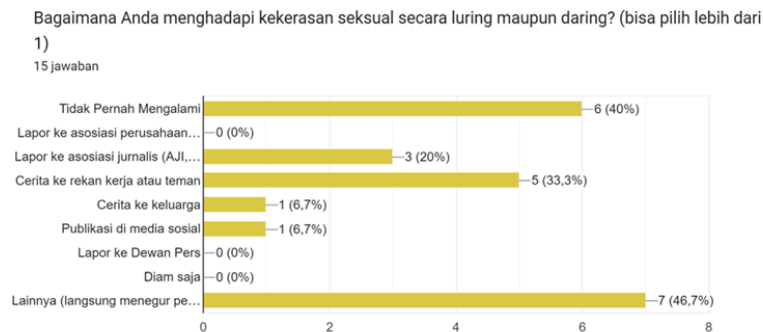


Figure 6. Diagram of the efforts of women journalists in the event of KBGO.

Source: data processing researcher

Positively, the findings show that Semarang female journalists who are victims of KBGO show a strong and proactive attitude in dealing with the situation. They refuse to be silent, become more courageous to speak out, and are more active in seeking solutions and recovery efforts. Informant 6 expressed her courage in voicing the Online Gender-Based Violence she experienced in the newsroom.

"We must fight sexist news rooms smartly. But if our resistance as women journalists has not succeeded, dare to speak out by not engaging in sexist jokes. To me, sexist jokes are very harassing."

Informant 6 even dared to take an extreme step, namely he decided to leave work from a media company that he considered very unsupportive of gender justice. Luckily, in the online media that houses him today, he does not find sexist jokes that are done offline or online.

Informant 6's statement was corroborated by informant 2 who said he was not afraid to speak up and fight back in the event of a KBGO case. This informant 2 has even been intimidated by KBGO perpetrators and did not get real support from the media where he worked.

"Don't be idle! Women journalists must not be silent, if they are silent when they get KBGO, the perpetrators will continue to terrorize and others will not know that the behavior is very hurtful to others."

In news policy, informants have also made a kind of resistance, especially the selection of news topics related to women's identity. Informant 6 shared her experience when she dared to debate her boss both face-to-face and online in an editorial group.

"In an office WhatsApp group, I once questioned an order from an editor asking journalists at the life style desk to cover physically beautiful women. I then questioned that, and the answer was that I was bullied together in the WA group and even accused of being a feminist."

Some of the experiences shared by these women journalists show that victims of KBGO have the potential to contribute to overcoming this problem. They also have a high initiative to become agents of change to deliver the mission of education even in the midst of an unsupportive environment. This is also an anomaly to Muted Group Theory. This theory

suggests that women's groups or groups with lower social power often feel marginalized or "muted" in using the language (LittleJohn dkk., 2021).

While there are still media companies that have not provided support and solutions for their female journalists who experience KBGO, it can be said that these organizations or companies still do not use a gender perspective in their management. Companies that are "ignorant" of KBGO still consider that women in the workplace are often considered one of four gender stereotypes that seem to be "normal" or generally accepted in society. In the context of organizational communication, the position of women still stops as sex objects, which is closely related to women in the workplace, especially in media organizations, perhaps viewed primarily from their sexual dimension or physical appearance. Then the next stereotype is women and the functions of the mother, which perceives that women are automatically identified as mothers, with all aspects of responsibility and stereotypes associated with motherhood. Women are also labeled as "sweet and obedient women" i.e. women are perceived as weak or dependent, perhaps viewed with a paternalistic or protective mindset. Another stereotype is that women are highly competitive, independent, and full of ambition, who can sometimes be seen as a threat by a work environment dominated by masculinity (Hafifah Dinda Pratiwi dkk., 2021). Therefore, the struggle of female journalists to fight stereotypes that are considered "as if they should or normal" still requires more effort. Looking at the data and analysis of the informant interviewed above, there are two different interests that are equally strong. Media companies that still do not take sides and provide protection and solutions for their female journalists are on average dominated by patriarchal perspectives. Muted Group theory prevails in a workspace that is sexist and ignores gender justice. They hold the view that women are part of a minority group that does not have the ability to express their thoughts as men who can freely express their opinions. Therefore, patriarchal methods of suppressing women's voices through online harassment and mocking hacking, in order to lead to control and perpetuate the humiliation of women as fellow human beings. On the contrary, women journalists who fight for justice, equality and gender perspectives in this case in Semarang choose not to be silent. Psychological and bodily health disorders as a result of Online Gender-Based Violence experienced, are not enough to silence their voices to dare to fight, at least voice for the sake of the mission of educating the community. The statement of informant 3 which affirms that women are also human beings who have equal rights is a red line for the attitude of female journalists to refuse silence. This is in line with the principle that human rights apply universally to everyone. This means that all people have the right to the protection of their human rights and freedoms. In addition, everyone should obtain the fulfillment of his rights equally and free from discrimination (International, 2021).

## **CONCLUSION**

The type of KBGO experienced by Semarang female journalists is cyber harassment (46.7). This reflects the complexity and variety of KBGO phenomena that need serious attention by media companies and other related parties. Not all media companies provide adequate support and facilities when cases of Online Gender-Based Violence (KBGO) occur even though there are actually handling mechanisms in the form of SOPs. Handling KBGO victims requires assistance in recovering from psychological attacks as a result of KBGO. So far, there have been media companies that provide treatment to female journalists affected by KBGO, but this

is done by mainstream mass media companies that are already large in the industry and have awareness of journalists' rights as part of the company's human resource system. This conclusion confirms the importance of media companies to implement policies that support the safety and well-being of women journalists in the face of KBGO threats.

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