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Computer-mediated social support for sexual harassment victims: the case of Sororitas in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to design a computer-mediated social support platform for women in Indonesia who have experienced sexual harassment. In doing so, the following are the research questions that had to be answered: What types of social support are most needed by women victims of sexual harassment? What are the most effective ways to communicate with women victims of sexual harassment? And, what features are most necessary in a CMSS platform for women sexual harassment victims? In-depth interviews with representatives of four organizations that deal with victims of sexual harassment, as well as a survey on 278 Indonesian women were conducted. Data was analyzed through the lenses of the CMSS and Barbee and Cunningham's Support Activation Behavior Coding System (1995) theoretical framework. Findings showed that: Legal and psychological support are the types of support most needed by sexual harassment victims; The most effective ways to communicate with the victims of sexual harassment are by giving assurance of anonymity; allowing them to tell their story uninterruptedly; communicating through an advocate or companion, when needed; getting the family on board; campus visits and campaigns; and, using online tools, and; The most important features in a computer-mediated social support online platform for sexual harassment victims are: Easy accessibility, information, anonymity, means of catharsis, and referral to other organizations. Sororitas was designed based on these findings. However, some tasks still need to be done before launching, including establishing the standard operating procedures, fostering collaborations with partner non-profit organizations, and recruiting website administrators and volunteers. Regular monitoring and evaluation must also be conducted to measure its effectiveness. The healing process for every victim varies greatly, and Sororitas may only be a miniscule part of that process, but the objective is to provide support.

KEYWORDS

Computer-mediated social support; sexual harassment; Indonesian women

Introduction

The level of gender discrepancy, pervasiveness of sexual harassment and rape, and the views on violence against women differ significantly around the globe (World

Economic Forum, 2017; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2019). However, one thing commonly found is that sexual harassment and rape disturbs the harmony between women and men, thus emphasizing these inequalities (Searles, 1995). Aside from the historical, traditional, and economic causes, gender inequality is mainly sustained by the viewpoints that support it (Chapleau & Oswald, 2014). Sable et al. (2006) posit that there is a paradoxical correlation between gender equality and reported rape—higher reported rape in countries with greater equality—which indicates that women are less likely to report rape in countries with greater inequalities due to the hostile attitudes toward victims of rape (Sable et al., 2006).

Such hostile attitude is quite noticeable in Indonesia, where the Elimination of Sexual Violence bill, drafted by the National Commission on Violence against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*) and the Service Provider Forum (*Forum Pengada Layanan*) was proposed on January 26, 2016. The bill centers on preventing sexual violence, granting more rights for victims, and acknowledging marital rape. However, in July 2020, Indonesia's People's Representative Council dropped the deliberation of the bill on grounds of "difficulties" to further discuss it (Sagala, 2020). To this day, the bill proposal remains a controversial debate, leading to mass protests by both supporters and opponents of the bill. At the time when this article was finalized, the bill was yet to be passed.

The #MeToo campaign rallied millions of women worldwide to raise awareness about the prevalence of sexual harassment. The campaign was successful in putting into effect real punishment for sexual offenders as well as raising awareness and supporting survivors to report their personal experiences of sexual assault (Rhodan, 2018; Seales, 2018). Indonesian feminist Tunggal Pawestri, started the #SayaJuga movement, but this movement has not been as fruitful in Indonesia. Kartika (2019) blames it on Indonesia's deeply rooted patriarchal culture, ultra-conservative Muslim principles, and gender-discriminating law enforcement practices. The latter often causes victims to hesitate reporting sexual harassment to law enforcement (Kartika, 2019). Qibtiyah (2009) suggests that one essential factor in Indonesia's gender equality movement is the progressive Muslim movement, "the modernist *santri* or neo modernist/*pembaharuan* (renewal) movement" (p. 23), which argues that Muslims should learn from and adopt the progresses in education, science, and politics of the West in order to develop and modernize the Muslim community.

According to Indonesia's National Commission on Violence against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*), sexual crimes can be classified into fifteen categories, which are: (1) rape, (2) sexual intimidation, including threats or attempted rape, (3) sexual harassment, (4) sexual exploitation, (5) trafficking of women for sexual purposes, (6) forced prostitution, (7) sexual slavery, (8) forced marriage, (9) forced pregnancy, (10) forced abortion, (11) forced contraception and sterilization, (12) sexual torture, (13) inhumane and sexual nuanced punishment, (14) traditional sexual nuanced practices that endanger or discriminate against women, and (15) sexual control (*Komnas Perempuan*, 2015). Acts of sexual harassment among adolescents are increasing, evidenced by the increasingly rampant number of cases of sexual violence. Moreover, the National Commission for the Protection of Indonesian Children (*Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia*) (2014) found that from 2014 to 2019 there were

21,869,797 cases of children's rights violations, and 42% to 58% of these violations were of sexual nature. From 2013 to 2019 the number of sexual harassment cases rose by 100% (Choirunnisa et al., 2020).

The effects of sexual assault include physical and mental health problems. Numerous studies indicate that social support greatly impacts the physical and psychological health of the victims. Social support can also be explained as any type of communication and relationship that support and help individuals during times of a felt need for managing a situation (Shahali et al., 2019). Studies show that high levels of social support are associated with better wellbeing, which includes higher feeling of hopefulness, better adjustment, and lower levels of depression and stress. Levels of social support are also linked to self-esteem. This is essential as sexual violence impacts mostly the victim's self-esteem, causing them to not only have low self-esteem, but also low assertiveness, and high social anxiety (Budd et al., 2009; Teoh, 2010). Like social support, the right level of self-esteem is also beneficial (Shahali et al., 2019). Today, the internet has become the main source of information and support to many. There have been several studies on computer-mediated social support (CMSS), and several studies on sexual harassment victims. However, few researches have focused simultaneously on CMSS and sexual harassment victims.

The objective of this research is to design a computer mediated social support platform for women sexual harassment victims in Indonesia. In doing so, the following questions had to be answered:

1. What types of social support are most needed by women victims of sexual harassment?
2. What are the most effective ways to communicate with women victims of sexual harassment?
3. What features are most necessary in a CMSS platform for women sexual harassment victims?

Literature review

As the objective of this research is to design a CMSS platform for women who have experienced sexual harassment, this literature review highlights previous studies on how social support impacts the victims of sexual harassment. Moreover, it also highlights research findings that show how factors such as empowerment, anonymity, and privacy make CMSS in various sectors, such as medical and educational sectors, effective and thus could be similarly effective for offering social support to sexual harassment victims.

Social support for victims of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment, including sexual violence, affects its victims both psychologically and physically. Some of the effects include: Anxiety, anger, mental breakdown, fear, frustration, feeling of helplessness, withdrawal, loss of self-confidence, guilt, self-blame, self-hatred, and generalized hatred toward those of the same sex as the

perpetrator (Kelly, 1998). Even though technically men and women can both become perpetrators as well as victims of sexual harassment, statistically, nonetheless, most perpetrators are male, whereas most victims are female (Februanti & Kartilah, 2019).

Social support is the way people offer support to others within a social network. The communication of support within these networks can reduce the level of uncertainty and thus establish assurance. A social network may therefore become a center where people support and provide help to each other in various causes. There are four types of support that families of victims of sexual violence can offer, according to Februanti and Kartilah (2019):

1. Informational support, which includes sharing responsibilities, providing solutions to problems, providing advice, and suggesting doctors and therapies.
2. Assessment support, which includes helping the victim comprehend symptoms and sources of depression and how to cope with stressors.
3. Instrumental support, which includes providing tangible support such as financial and material support.
4. Emotional support, which includes giving comfort and love, as well as showing empathy, attention, and trust to make the victim feel valuable.

More often than not, however, the level of effectiveness of such support depends on the victim's willingness to seek and receive social support. Not many studies have been conducted on support seeking, and the existing ones have concentrated mostly on individuals seeking support in distressing situations (Maestre et al., 2018). Support seeking is the intentional communicative activity that aims to obtain support from others (MacGeorge et al., 2011).

Barbee and Cunningham's Support Activation Behavior Coding System (1995) suggests that there are two forms of strategies in seeking support. One form is the direct strategy, in which individuals explicitly explain their problems in details and straightforwardly ask for help. Research shows that support providers are more likely to respond to these direct strategies with supportive responses and approach instead of with avoidance (Maestre et al., 2018). The other form is the indirect strategy, in which individuals may vaguely complain or drop clues about a trouble, play down a problem, or even avoid the topic. This, in turn, may cause the support provider to be unconfident or hesitant about how to provide support because of the unclear nature of the request. As a consequence, research shows that direct support seeking strategies lead to better quality support provision (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995; Derlega et al., 2003).

According to Barbee and Cunningham (1995), the traits of support seekers and support providers, as well as and the context and environment of the interaction can affect impact the level of directness of the support seeking. Factors such as self-esteem, face threatening situations, social status, gender, and the anticipation of rejection—which is largely related to perceptions of stigma—for instance, can result in indirect support seeking (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995; Maestre et al., 2018).

This theoretical concept is important in this study because it serves as a guidance about the types of support that can be offered to victims of sexual harassment. While it is understood that direct seekers usually receive better support, still there may be

various factors that prevent support seekers from being direct. Some of these factors may include shame, fear of being judged, and feelings of guilt. Therefore, if the support-seeking process could be anonymous and private, sexual harassment victims may be more willing to seek support. While it is difficult to offer anonymity and privacy in a face-to-face environment, a computer-mediated social support platform excels at these attributes.

Social support through computer-mediated communication

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is a method of conveying social messages, including social support, using computer tools. Recent research shows that computer-mediated social support gives access to information to people, particularly individuals with health issues or stigmatized conditions. These people may otherwise have difficulties in finding information and establishing offline relationships with others who are experiencing a similar situation. For instance, findings from an empirical study on the use of CMC for students—with and without learning disabilities—show evidence that CMC is useful for mutual social activities and support, leading to heightened positive support and more interactions among students, which may also lead to more proactive coping strategies (Eden & Heiman, 2011).

Moreover, a research involving diabetes patients in Korea shows strong links among the online community activities of the diabetes patients, perception of social support, feeling of empowerment, and willingness to communicate actively with their physicians. The higher the engagement of diabetes patients in online community activities, the greater their perception of social support from the other community members. Feeling of empowerment is considered the underlying mechanism through which the patients' perceived CMSS affects their willingness to communicate actively with their physicians (Oh & Lee, 2012).

Apparently, the attributes of anonymity and privacy offered by computer-mediated platforms are positively linked to self-disclosure, which in turn motivates individuals to seek support while avoiding being judged, victimized, and/or isolated (Bockting et al., 2013; Rains, 2014; Zhang et al., 2018). Therefore, CMC participants who post and read messages are more likely to accept their condition and feel more empowered because they could find the resources and social support that may otherwise be more difficult in offline settings. This sense of empowerment helps them deal with their condition and enhances their overall wellbeing (Lawlor & Kirakowski, 2014).

The type of support messages posted in online platforms are also correlated with the risk of dropout from the support group. Research shows that the higher the exposure to emotional support, the lower the risk of dropping out. On the other hand, informational support does not have the same correlation with member commitment (Wang et al., 2012). Yet research shows that the most common type of support interaction found in online platforms are informational support, followed by emotional support (Rains et al., 2015).

This theoretical concept is essential as it provides guidance about the types of support that will be most effective for the victims of sexual harassment. While research findings show that CMSS is effective in encouraging individuals to seek support

without being afraid of judgment, victimization, and/or isolation, different types of support lead to different results. Therefore, having gathered secondary data, it is important to gather primary data about the types of support most needed by victims of sexual harassment from both the support providers as well as the support seekers.

Methods

In order to answer the research questions, this study sought inputs from both experts in the field of sexual harassment victim advocacy (support providers) as well as prospective consumers of the CMSS platform (support seekers). To obtain expert opinion about communicating social support with sexual harassment victims, in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of four organizations that deal with sexual harassment victims:

The Commission for the Protection of Indonesian Children is an independent commission established in 2002 with the aim to: (1) Increase the effectiveness of supervision of implementation fulfillment of children's rights; and, (2) If necessary, the regional government may establish a regional child protection commission or other similar institutions to support the supervision of the implementation of child protection in these regions (Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia, 2020).

The National Commission for Eradication of Violence against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*) is an independent state body for the enforcement of women's rights in Indonesia. Established in 1998 through Presidential Decree, it initiated as a response to society's demands for the government to take responsibility for the cases of sexual violence against women (UN Women, 2016).

The Indonesian Women's Association for Justice (APIK) was founded in 1995 by seven female lawyers in Jakarta. Eventually, its members from various regions established the APIK Legal Aid Institute (LBH APIK), which currently has 16 offices in various cities in Indonesia. In 2012, it changed its name to the Indonesian APIK LBH Association. Its main mission is to provide legal assistance for women experiencing injustice, violence and different types of discrimination; Implement and encourage changes in policies and legal systems that are gender-just; and, empower legal resources in the community (Asosiasi LBH APIK Indonesia, 2019).

The Pulih Foundation (*Yayasan Pulih*) was founded in 2002, during an alarming state of Indonesia, marked by an increase in violence and crime. Its 6 activist founders felt that society needed psychological services for victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, or political conflicts, as well as humanitarian assistance to workers who are susceptible to overwork, exhaustion, and trauma. The Pulih Foundation offers psychological services, training, as well as empowerment and recovery programs (Yayasan Pulih, 2017).

The following is the profile of the respondents:

ES: Commissioner of the Commission for the Protection of Indonesian Children

TI: Commissioner of the National Commission on Anti Violence Against Women

UP: Legal Service Division Coordinator of the Indonesian Women's Association for Justice Legal Aid

DI: Executive Director of the Pulih Foundation

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted online via Google Meet between September and December 2020, and lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. All sessions were recorded for later transcription, and respondents were willing to be contacted for further clarifications. All interview respondents have given their verbal informed consent on the record about their participation in this research and how data would be treated. The transcripts were then analyzed to explore the themes of social support communication and CMSS traits, particularly the most needed types of social support, the most effective ways of communicating social support, and most important features and traits in a CMSS platform.

Based on the in-depth interviews, it was decided that the main targeted audience of the CMSS platform would be adult Indonesian women who have experienced sexual harassment, and/or people who seek information to support an acquaintance who has experienced sexual harassment. Therefore, in order to understand the point of view of those considered the prospective consumers of the CMSS platform, a descriptive quantitative survey was conducted on a sample of Indonesian women ages 18 and older. The questionnaire was designed based on the results of the in-depth interviews. According to Hair et al. (2006), the minimum sample size for research that consists of two or more variables is a 5:1 ratio, meaning that the number of errors maximum is 5%, and each 1 item of question is multiplied by 5. The questionnaire used in the survey consisted of 19 multiple-choice questions. Nineteen multiplied by 5 equal 95, thus the minimum sample size is 95 respondents. The survey was conducted online using a non-purposive snowball sampling method by initially sending the survey link to staff and students of Swiss German University, asking them to participate in the survey and distribute the link to their female acquaintances aged 18 and over. The survey obtained 278 respondents from 33 different cities.

Upon analyzing the findings from the interviews and the survey, a preliminary design of the CMSS platform was then developed, putting into consideration the types of social support most needed by the victims of sexual harassment, the best way to communicate with them, and the features that the CMSS platform must offer. All of the respondents from the previous survey were then contacted again via email and were given a link to an online survey. The respondents were instructed to view the online prototype and were asked to rate their levels of satisfaction on the website's design, functionalities, and usage. Unfortunately, only seven people responded back and gave positive reviews. Still, the findings from the previous in-depth interviews and survey were rich and complemented each other well, which enabled the final design to be developed.

On both online surveys, all participants were briefed about this research and how data would be treated, in the introductory part of the online survey, and have given their informed consent by clicking "Yes." All necessary ethics approvals were given by the Central Research Fund 2020 Committee under the Academic Research and Community Service Directorate of Swiss German University.

Findings and discussion

In-depth interview results

Because the objective of this research project is to develop a computer-mediated social support online platform for sexual harassment victims, the first element that

had to be identified was the types of support that sexual harassment victims needed the most. All respondents agreed that legal assistance was what was most needed:

Legal assistance. Indonesian people are afraid of the police because they don't understand the legal process. The second type of support they need is a truly comprehensive counselling. Not just a visit ... but one that follows through until the end. Usually, we could only visit them a few times, this is mainly due to limited resources, but sometimes also because the parents of the victim feel that the visits are no longer needed. There are so many parents who give up midway because they are embarrassed when their children are exposed for too long ... Let's not forget about Indonesia's small communities. In Jakarta you and I would not know whether our neighbors are being abused, but in the suburbs when something happens, the whole village knows. (ES)

As a seasoned legal attorney who regularly handles clients who have experienced sexual harassment and violence, respondent UP agrees:

The legal process is very tedious. In domestic violence cases, most victims if they were given the choice of getting a divorce or going through a domestic violence legal process, they would choose the divorce, which doesn't take years, and once it's over, she will have a legal status as a divorcee. But a domestic violence legal process requires two pieces of evidence, and then she must convince two people to testify as witnesses, and these witnesses must not have a family relationship with her, but must really have witnessed the event as it happened. So, if there was no witness, how will she be able to prove it? That's why, in most of the domestic violence cases we receive at LBH APIK, the client chooses divorce. Now, what if it's a case of incest? Let's say the father raped his daughter, or the brother raped his sister. This will most likely be unreported because it's considered a disgrace to the family. Or when the perpetrator is the boyfriend. This would be difficult to prove because it will most likely be regarded as consensual ...

When it comes to making the decision to report sexual harassment, aside from Indonesia's legal system, there are also psychological and emotional obstacles preventing the victims from doing so. The following are the main obstacles according to the respondents:

When something major happens in our lives, it takes time for us to get out from the shell, not to mention about healing, but just to be in a sane mental state takes time ... It's even worse when the perpetrator is someone close to us, there are feelings. Severe fear ... hatred, sadness, guilt ... it's the worst situation to be in and you are basically a victim in need of support. But in Indonesia parents may be sad and cry, wanting to get angry when their child becomes a victim. Some feel shame, some are afraid that as parents they would be blamed, and some fear that their child will never marry ... So they no longer seek justice, but there is something heavier. Being a victim eventually appears to be more preferable than the disgrace and social pressure of the exposure. That's how strong social pressure is in Indonesia. (ES)

Victims of sexual violence, especially rape, often blame themselves before blaming the perpetrator for what has happened. Then, they feel ashamed, and fear that they will become a victim for a second time, because not only does she blame herself, but her community could blame her too. The burden is quite heavy for a victim to want to open up. There's the psychological obstacle, and then there's the obstacle from the environment, which will usually blame the woman on what she was wearing, how late she was out, and other things. (DI)

They are usually afraid, because during the pandemic, the perpetrators are at home, so it would be very difficult to contact and ask for help ... But, victims would usually request help from the local government, like the neighborhood association, so the community is usually the closest group that could help the victims. Other obstacles include shame, especially in cases of sexual violence... It's not easy, especially in cases of dating violence. Often when they've already had sex ... living together, they fear being stigmatized as bad women, loose women... Another reason is the religious interpretation that one must not publicly discuss one's own or one's family's disgrace. From a religious perspective, that's a sin. (TI)

There are many cases in which the victim files a report, and for lack of information, she does not receive a proof of report receipt, and then when she wants to follow up on her case, she will not have any documents on her hand showing when, where, and to whom the case was reported. She would have to start from zero because the police did not give her a receipt document the first time ... Our legal system does not support victims of sexual harassment cases that are difficult to prove, so these cases cannot be categorized as sexual harassment, and will simply be regarded as objectionable acts. That's why we're pushing for the Draft Law on the Elimination of Sexual Violence (RUU PKS). The obstacles that the victims face are so long and many. (UP)

Based on these responses, it can be concluded that not only can sexual harassment be a traumatic experience, but reporting and taking action may result in more traumatic experiences as well. Legal support and psychological support are clearly identified as the most needed types of support. Therefore, it is essential to know how to communicate with the victims. According to the respondents, some of the best ways to communicate with sexual harassment victims are:

Give a guarantee... If we simply force them to talk to us, they will fear that they will be reported, and this will not motivate them to speak up. We must tell them, "You need to step up, we will be there for you ... there's no shame in it, we'll be there throughout your struggle ... your pain is our pain." This connects with the victim better ... if you can guarantee security and then you can guarantee that their name will not be exposed. The first step is that they build trust with you as a friend or counselor. When that trust is there, I think the chance of convincing them to report a past sexual harassment is higher. (ES)

At Komnas Perempuan, we cannot process a case if there is no report ... So, convincing the victim to report is the job of the advocate, or people who are closest to her ... So usually we communicate through this advocate. (TI)

At LBH APIK, when the victim comes for a consultation, we look at the situation, we ask her how she's doing. If she wants to speak then we listen to her. But if she has already prepared the written chronological report, then we simply read it and confirm some details, so she wouldn't have to repeat her story. And if she hasn't made the chronological report, we ask her to tell us her story without us interrupting her, because it's not an easy thing to do ... we let her finish, and then we confirm the important details such as time and place. It is harder when the cases involve families, like incest, where the majority of the perpetrator are the father, and then brother or uncle. But we cannot simply dismiss it. We need time to convince the family, especially the mother, and that's not easy. We tell them that if we let this slide, there will be other victims and that this must be stopped because this is a crime against humanity. Our job is to be brave and speak up, even though it's not easy, because often when the perpetrator is the father, he's the breadwinner. And because the mother doesn't work, they worry about how they're going to eat ... how the kids will get their education, and this adds on to their stress, but we must really convince them that this cannot be ignored. (UP)

Some communicate with us via Pulih's Instagram DM, Facebook, or Twitter. Some contact us through email, and then message us via WhatsApp. We also had an interesting experience with a client who experienced sexual violence in college. She was raped by her boyfriend, and decided that her life was worthless and wanted to drop out of college. Then, last year she came to Pulih and told us that she was healed by Pulih through our campus roadshow campaign, after which she decided to seek help from a Pulih psychologist, and she felt that she was healed through counseling. When the victim is a little child, whose long-term memory has not yet developed, often it becomes burdensome for the parents, because the child herself cannot yet comprehend. The parents are sometimes confused by the child's behavioral change, not knowing that a tragedy had just happened ... the child may feel hurt physically but psychologically still cannot understand what she's experienced, so the parents are the ones communicating with us. (DI)

Because the aim of this research is to offer social support via an online platform, therefore these communication elements have to be encompassed within the platform through the features it offers. When asked about some of the most important features that the CMSS platform must offer, the respondents suggested that there must be a code of conduct that administrators and volunteers must adhere to. The platform must be easy to access, and also provide information and referral to other organizations that offer such services as legal and psychological counselling:

If you want to offer support by giving a channel to counselors ... then you will have to have a partnership with another organization, or get two psychologist acquaintances, should be enough ... the counselling can be done online ... you can actually become the agent who connects the victims to the counsellors. (ES)

First, the platform must be easy to access, and we know that Indonesia is not Jakarta or Java alone, there are many remote areas like Maluku, where there are over a thousand islands that do not have direct access to the capital, Ambon. There are many victims from remote islands and advocates find it difficult to reach them, they have to rent a boat because there's no public transportation to the psychological or physical service facilities for violence victims. Since the platform will be online, this will be helpful. We at Pulih used to only be able to conduct our counselling in JABODETABEK (capital area), but during this pandemic, we have been conducting most of our counselling online and have been able to reach all of Indonesia. So, my hope for this platform is that it is easy to access, offers fast response, and is directly connected to other service units. (DI)

In Indonesia there is the P2TP2A (Integrated Service Center for the Empowerment of Women and Children), which can be accessed directly by the victim, but only via telephone, not social media. So, they offer some type of emergency response for victims of violence. So, what is still lacking is, first, easy access, and second, anonymity. The "do no harm" principle must be upheld so that the victim will not be a victim a second time. Then there has to be a code of conduct. We [at Pulih] have a code of conduct that must be followed by everyone starting from the administrative level. (DI)

... [Information on] what to do if you experience sexual violence, how to report it, where to go, you should provide links to whom they could contact, for instance Pulih Foundation, LBH APIK, and others. Also, a flow chart detailing the steps. For the victims this would help them understand better what to do. And for non-victims, this would also serve as information. (UP)

That highly depends on the victim ... there are two types of services, legal and psychosocial. It's up to them which they want to use. We just provide the services.

There is an organization that makes an app, and has volunteers who can help the victims immediately. Any volunteer, wherever and whoever, could get into this application, but he or she must fit certain criteria so not all volunteers may be accepted there. We cannot know if the volunteer is mentally ill, or is a psycho, so that must be filtered. But the idea is that the volunteer gives immediate response to the victim. If the chosen mechanism is referral, then the next step is monitoring. Our mechanism at Komnas Perempuan is referral, we refer the victims to certain organizations. (TI)

Moreover, the respondents also suggest that the CMSS platform must offer anonymity and serve as a means for catharsis:

If possible, anonymity. I've only encountered few people who are brave to report within one or two years. Most people wait until four to five years, when the case has already surfaced and there have been other victims coming forward, and then they will feel safer. If you can put in there something like, "we are here for you, we guarantee anonymity, we don't want to know who your parents are, we just want to listen, we want to give you comfort we will support you, you do not need to reveal anything ... as you feel good" maybe it will make them feel safe ... You have no idea, you should see my Instagram, there are a lot of people who are just there for catharsis. Offering words such as "Yes, I am here" will be very helpful and immediately beneficial. But if you want to go further, you can connect with another organization. Links and infographics are also very good in raising awareness. That's already being an agent of change without having to handle it one-on-one. (ES)

Based on the findings from the interviews, it is concluded that the main type of support needed by victims of sexual harassment, according to the respondents, is legal support followed by psychological support. There are internal and external obstacles preventing sexual harassment victims from speaking up and reporting the case. The internal obstacles are the psychological and emotional, including shame, hatred, sadness, and guilt. Shame is also commonly felt by the family members of the victim, which often makes it an even bigger obstacle for the victim. The external obstacle is the Indonesian legal system, which is not supportive to victims of sexual harassment and requires the victims to provide evidence that is often impossible to prove. In fact, the initial plan was to develop a CMSS platform for adolescent sexual harassment victims. However, based on the interviews, it was concluded that, technically, adult women needed the social support more because there is currently no legal protection against sexual harassment. All types of abuse against minors would fall under the jurisdiction of child protection. On the other hand, Indonesia's House of Representatives has yet to approve the Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill (RUU PKS), which has been postponed several times since it was proposed in 2016.

Nevertheless, because of its online nature, the CMSS will still be available for anyone seeking support related to sexual harassment. In regards to the CMSS theoretical framework, the legal support suggested by the respondents fall under both categories: Emotional support and informational support. The support-seeking individuals not only need thorough guidance about Indonesia's legal system when it comes to sexual assaults, but they also need advocacy and companionship in going through the legal process. The best ways to communicate with sexual harassment victims, according to the respondents are:

1. By giving assurance/guarantee of security and anonymity

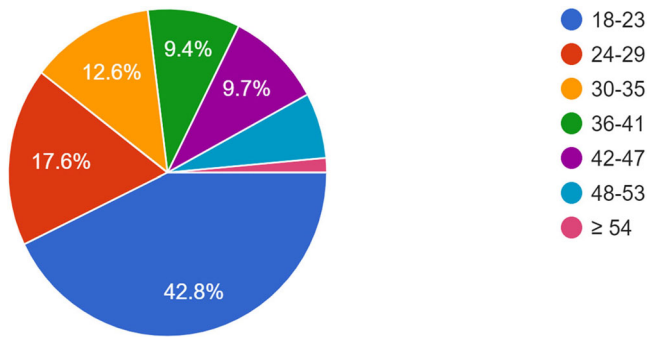


Figure 1. Age distribution of respondents.

2. By allowing the victim to tell her story without interruptions
3. By communicating through an advocate or companion if the victim is not ready to report the case
4. By convincing the family—especially the case of incest—that reporting the case is the right thing to do in order to prevent future cases.
5. Through social media and email—especially for victims who are willing to take the initiative to seek help
6. Campus roadshow campaigns

In developing a CMSS platform for sexual harassment victims, according to the respondents, traits and features that must be included are:

1. Easy accessibility
2. Code of conduct
3. Information
4. Anonymity
5. Means of catharsis
6. Referral to other organizations

In regards to Barbee and Cunningham's Support Activation Behavior Coding System (1995), the CMSS could encourage direct support-seeking, as it leads to better outcomes for the individuals seeking support. Therefore, it is important that the CMSS platform particularly offers anonymity and privacy to the sexual harassment victims seeking support.

Survey results

Aside from the expert inputs from representatives of different organizations that deal with sexual harassment (support providers), it was also important to obtain inputs from the prospective end-users of the CMSS platform (support seekers). Therefore, a quantitative descriptive survey was conducted on a sample consisting of 278 Indonesian women aged 18 and up, from over 33 cities. **Figure 1** shows the age distribution of the respondents.

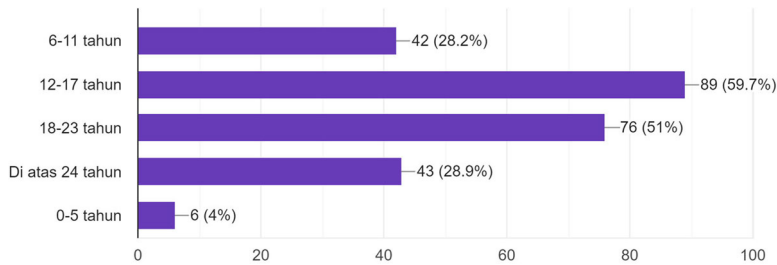


Figure 2. Age of respondent at the time of sexual harassment.

The majority (42.8%) of the respondents are between 18 and 23 years old. With that age range, 39.1% of the respondents are students; 25.4% work in the private sector; while 9.4% of the respondents are teachers or lecturers and another 9.4% are homemakers. When it comes to the highest level of education achieved, 43.8% of the respondents have a Bachelor’s degree; 31.5% had a high school degree; and 14.5% had a Master’s degree. The majority (65.5%) of the respondents are not married, while 33.7% are married.

When asked whether they had ever experienced sexual harassment, the majority (53.6%) answered yes. And, when asked whether they know anyone who have experienced sexual harassment, 65.5% answered yes. Out of the people who have experienced sexual harassment (n = 149), 81.2% have experienced it more than once. Figure 2 illustrates the age range of when these sexual harassment experiences occurred. Data shows that the majority (59.7%) of respondents experienced sexual harassment between the ages of 12 and 17 years, and 28.2% of the respondents experienced it between the ages of 6 and 11. This means that the majority of the sexual harassment experiences occurred to the respondents when they were minors.

Out of the 15 actions that are considered as sexual harassment by Komnas Perempuan (2015), the following are the seven types of sexual harassment most experienced by the respondents:

1. Unwelcome touching, kissing, stroking (n = 107)
2. Whistles or catcalls that are sexual in tone (n = 102)
3. Receiving disrespectful stares (staring at breasts or buttocks) (n = 93)
4. Jokes of a sexual nature (n = 55)
5. Letters, notes, emails & phone calls of a sexual nature (n = 54)
6. Display of masturbation (n = 36)
7. Display of sexually explicit/pornographic images (n = 36)

And, when asked about the locations where they experienced sexual harassment, the following are the seven top answers:

1. On the street (n = 100)
2. At school/on campus (n = 53)
3. At a shopping center (mall, supermarket, etc.) (n = 37)
4. At a recreational place (movies, amusement park, etc.) (n = 33)
5. At work/office (n = 27)



Figure 3. Sororitas front page.

6. At home (n = 19)
7. In a public transportation (n = 17)

This shows that the respondents were sexually harassed while doing mundane daily activities, like walking on the street or going to school. The top seven perpetrators according to the respondents are:

1. A stranger (n = 118)
2. A friend (n = 61)
3. A coworker (n = 22)
4. A teacher/lecturer (n = 18)
5. A boyfriend (n = 17)
6. A family member (n = 14)
7. A supervisor/boss (n = 10)

When asked about the person to whom they reported the sexual harassment, 88 respondents (59.1%) said that they never reported it to anyone. The main obstacles preventing them from reporting the sexual harassment were:

1. Shame (n = 67, 45.6%)
2. No guaranteed solution (n = 56, 38.1%)
3. Did not understand that it was sexual harassment (n = 49, 33.3%)

Reasons number one and two are in line with the findings from the in-depth interviews. Reason number three is not surprising, as the majority of these cases happened when they were minors. Of all the respondents who have experienced sexual harassment (n = 258), 86.3% have never sought support online, yet 83.3% said that they would be interested in an online platform that offered social support for sexual harassment victims. This shows that there is a high chance that the CMSS platform will be used by the target audience as long as it fulfills their needs.

According to the survey results, the top five types of support needed by sexual harassment victims are:

1. Psychological support
2. Moral support
3. Advocacy
4. Legal support
5. Information

While the most important traits that the CMSS must possess are:

1. Cathartic, provides a means for catharsis
2. Fast response
3. Anonymous
4. Easily accessible
5. Informative, provides information

And the most important features that the CMSS platform must offer are:

1. Psychological consultation
2. Links to relevant organizations
3. Support group
4. Info about report procedure
5. Real-time response

Similar to the findings from the in-depth interviews, the survey results are in-line with Barbee and Cunningham's Support Activation Behavior Coding System (1995), which suggests that direct support-seeking will result in better outcomes for the support seekers, and the support providers will also be able to provide optimal support without confusion. The top traits and features shown in the survey results indicate that the prospective users of the CMSS platform intend to use a direct approach in seeking support, and also expect direct support from the support provider. Moreover, based on the CMSS theoretical framework, emotional support lowers the risk of the support seeker dropping out from the group—in this case, the online platform—whereas informational support does not have such effect.

While the in-depth interview respondents emphasized the need for legal support, the survey respondents emphasized the need for psychological and emotional support. The reason for this difference may be their standpoint as support providers and support seekers. The support providers see the need for legal assistance based on their experience on the field dealing with victims who have already taken the first step, which is to seek support. They understand that the most tedious process is the legal process, thus naturally emphasized the importance of legal information and support. On the other hand, the majority of the survey respondent are women who have experienced sexual harassment but have never told anyone about this experience due to feelings of shame, guilt, distrust, and pessimism. Therefore, naturally they emphasized the need for psychological support.

However, even though they emphasized different needs, findings from both the in-depth interviews as well as surveys show that victims of sexual harassment need both

Table 1. Summary of findings.

	In-depth interviews	Quantitative survey (In numerical order based on responses)
Most needed type of support	Legal support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psychological support 2. Moral support 3. Advocacy 4. Legal support 5. Information
Main obstacles for speaking up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Internal: emotions and psychological obstacles (esp., shame) *External: Indonesia's legal system 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shame 2. No guaranteed solution 3. Did not understand that it was sexual harassment
Best way to communicate with victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Guarantee/assurance of security and anonymity *Allow victim to tell her story without interruptions *Communicate through an advocate or companion if the victim still refuses to report the case *Convince the family that reporting is the right thing to do *Social media and email *Campus roadshow campaigns 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social media 2. Website 3. Application
Important features and traits for CMSS platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Easy accessibility *Code of conduct *Information *Anonymity *Means of catharsis *Referral to other organizations 	<p>Features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psychological consultation 2. Links to relevant organizations 3. Support group 4. Info about report procedure 5. Real-time response <p>Traits</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cathartic 2. Fast response 3. Anonymous 4. Easily accessible 5. Informative

emotional and information support. Therefore, the CMSS platform should provide both informational tools, such as articles, how-to guidelines, and links to related organizations; as well as emotional tools such as discussion threads, hotline, and a sharing forum.

According to 50.7% of the respondents, social media is the best platform to seek online support for coping with sexual harassment—with Instagram being the social media they mostly use—and 32.7% said that a website is a better option. Nevertheless, even though half of the respondents chose social media as the best platform, anonymity has been an important factor based on the interview and survey findings. Therefore, it was decided that the platform for the CMSS will be a website.

Table 1 summarizes the findings from the in-depth interviews and the quantitative survey.

Based on the findings from the in-depth interviews and survey, a preliminary design of the website was made to test. The website is named Sororitas (Latin for sisterhood) to portray the woman-to-woman support that the platform seeks to provide.

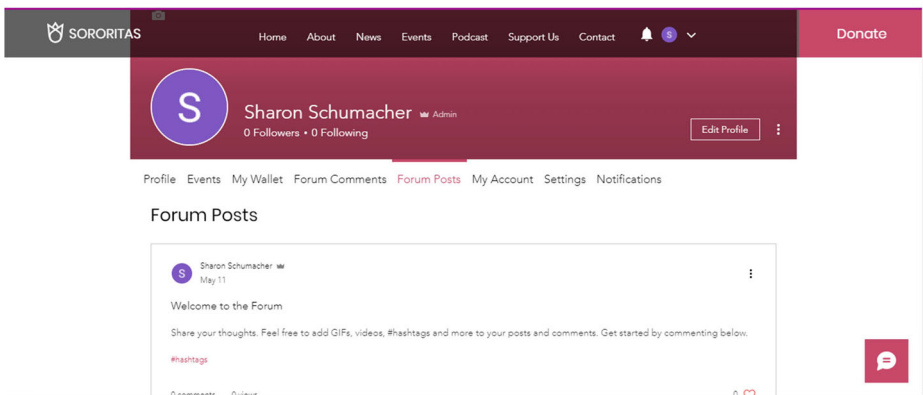


Figure 4. Anonymous forums.

Participants of the previous survey were then contacted again via email and were asked to view an online prototype of the website and rate their levels of satisfaction with the design, functionality and perceptions of usefulness of the platform. Unfortunately, only seven people responded. While they rated the prototype positively and gave feedbacks such as: “Easy to navigate”; “Informative and beneficial platform”; and, “At least I know that in the future, I could give a reference if I see a friend or relative who experiences sexual harassment,” these responses cannot be considered representative of all the participants of the previous survey. Nevertheless, the initial in-depth interviews and survey already provided sufficient data upon which to base the final design of Sororitas.

CMSS platform final design based on interview and survey results

Based on the survey results, 87% of participants have shown an interest in using an online platform that offers support to sexual harassment victims, and the most important traits are: Cathartic, fast response, anonymous, easily accessible, and informative. The most important feature that was suggested by the participants was the importance of providing psychological consultation. After making a preliminary design and asking prospective consumers to test the product and give their comments on the platform, a final design was made.

Based on the in-depth interview and survey results, the CMSS platform must be cathartic and anonymous. In this case, catharsis occurs when victims have a place to discuss and share experiences related to sexual harassment. This is done by providing anonymous forums as one of the website features, as shown in [Figure 4](#).

Findings from the interviews show that one of the best ways to communicate with sexual harassment victims is through people who are close to them, especially when these victims are not yet ready to take action and report the case. Therefore, this website is not only for those who experienced sexual harassment firsthand, but also for their advocates, including family and friends. In the forums, users can make an account and begin creating threads and forums to discuss and share issues related to sexual harassment. Victims have the ability to join using a pseudo profile and maintain anonymity.

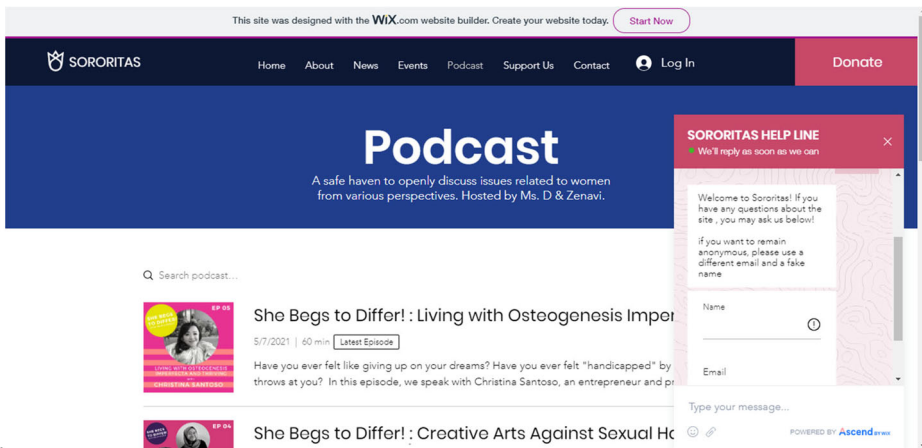


Figure 5. Information and resources.

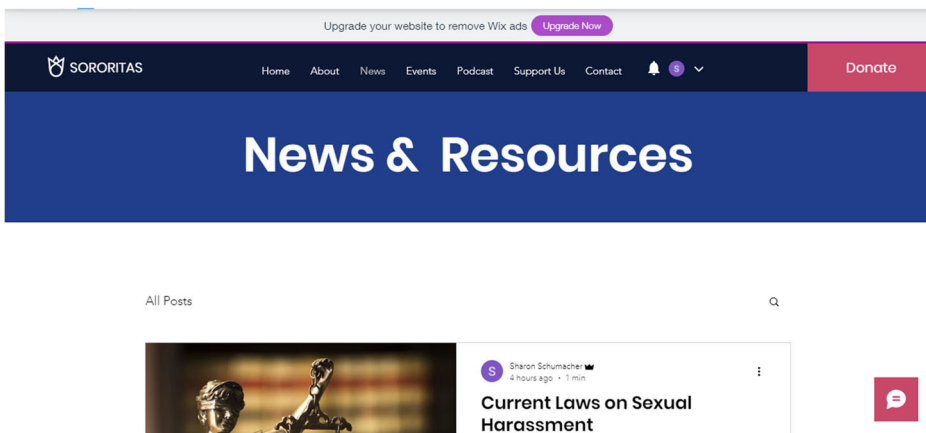


Figure 6. News and resources.

In order to provide a fast response, Sororitas provides a 24-hour hotline chat where users could easily contact a Sororitas volunteer who can assist in answering questions and providing support. This chat platform can help support victims in a variety of ways, ranging from giving assistance on how to report sexual harassment to directing where to find specific types of help, e.g. legal or psychological help.

Information and resources are important features based on the interview and survey findings, whereas legal and psychological support are the types of support that are most needed. Therefore, the website provides links to specific organizations catering to the different needs of the victims. These organizations include the organizations represented by the interview respondents: National Commission on Violence against Women (*KOMNAS Perempuan*), Commissioner of the Commission of the Protection of Indonesian Children (*KPAI*), Pulih Foundation (*Yayasan Pulih*), and Indonesian Women's Association for Justice Legal Aid (*LBH Apik*).

This design encompasses the most needed type of support, best way of communication with sexual harassment victims, as well as most important features and traits

according to the findings from the in-depth interviews and survey. The next steps include to establish the standard operating procedures, foster collaborations with partner non-profit organizations, recruit website administrators and volunteers, and launch the website.

Conclusion

This article has discussed the types of social support that are most needed by women who have been victims of sexual harassment; the most effective ways to communicate them; and, the features that are most necessary in a computer-mediated social support online platform for sexual harassment victims. The final outcome is the design of such an online platform.

Findings from in-depth interviews with representatives of four organizations that deal with victims of sexual harassment, as well as a survey on prospective consumers of the CMSS show that:

1. The type of social support most needed by women who have been victims of sexual harassment legal and psychological support.
2. The most effective ways to communicate with the victims of sexual harassment are by giving assurance of anonymity; allowing them to tell their story uninterruptedly; communicating through an advocate or companion if the victim refuses to report the case; convincing the family that reporting is the right thing to do; through campus visits and campaigns; and, using online tools such as social media, website, or an application.
3. The features that are most necessary in a computer-mediated social support online platform for sexual harassment victims are: Easy accessibility, information, anonymity, means of catharsis, and referral to other organizations.

Both the findings from the in-depth interviews as well as the survey results are in-line with Barbee and Cunningham's Support Activation Behavior Coding System (1995), which suggests that direct support-seeking results in better outcomes for the support seekers, and thus enabling the support providers to provide optimal support without confusion. The top traits and features shown in the survey results indicate that the prospective users of the CMSS platform intend to use a direct approach in seeking support, and also expect direct support from the support provider. Moreover, based on the CMSS theoretical framework, emotional support lowers the risk of the support seeker dropping out from the support group, in this case, Sororitas, while informational support does not necessarily lead to long-term use of the CMSS. However, findings from both the in-depth interviews as well as surveys shows that victims of sexual harassment need both emotional and information support. Therefore, Sororitas is designed to provide both informational tools, such as articles, how-to guidelines, and links to related organizations; as well as emotional tools such as discussion threads, hotline, and a sharing forum.

Sororitas was designed based on these findings. However, there is still some work to do before it could be published and introduced to the audience. Some of the tasks

that still need to be undertaken include establishing the standard operating procedures, fostering collaborations with partner non-profit organizations, recruiting website administrators and volunteers. These steps are underway at the time this article is being finalized. All of this will require careful planning and execution, as well as funding in order to ensure sustainability. Moreover, regular monitoring and evaluation must be conducted in order to measure the effectiveness of this CMSS platform.

Lastly, even though the design of Sororitas is in line with the findings from interviews with experts who regularly deal with sexual harassment victims, and a survey on prospective users of the platform, this platform will not be a one-stop solution for women who have been traumatized by sexual harassment. The healing process for every victim varies greatly, and Sororitas may merely be a very small part of that process, but the aim is to offer social support to these women, especially since it remains unclear when—if ever—the Sexual Violence Eradication bill will come to pass.

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