

“WHAT IS THE URGENCY?”: YOUTUBE PUBLIC RESPONSE ON FEMICIDE AWARENESS IN INDONESIA

Hafsha DS

Faculty of Psychology, University of Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

Abstract: Femicide refers to the killing of women due to their gender. The Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) reported hundreds of femicide cases annually in Indonesia from 2021 to 2023. However, the term remains largely unfamiliar within the country, despite being one of the most extreme and brutal forms of violence against women. Raising public awareness of femicide is crucial and can be achieved through educational efforts, including coverage of femicide cases and explanations of the concept. In the digital era, YouTube has emerged as a potential platform for such education. As the third most frequently used social media platform in Indonesia, YouTube has become a primary source of news for many Indonesians. This study aims to describe femicide-related content uploaded to YouTube and to analyze Indonesian netizens' responses to the issue. Using data collected via the YouTube API (Application Programming Interface), the study identified 29 femicide-related videos in the Indonesian language and analyzed 81% comments of all. Using qualitative content analysis for social media, the study revealed two main categories which are Femicide Issue and Netizens' View. Femicide Issue consist of two themes, named causes and prevention that reflect Indonesian patriarchy and religious culture. Meanwhile the category of Netizens' View holds two other themes, judgement and reflection, shows that Indonesians still see femicide as an unimportant issue even though they feel bad about it. The study emphasizes the need for comprehensive strategies and collaboration among various stakeholders to bring this critical issue to Indonesian public attention.

Keyword: femicide, YouTube comment, Indonesia, public awareness, qualitative content analysis
Introduction

Introduction

Femicide is murder committed for gender reasons and is specifically committed by men against women. Data from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNODC & UN Women, 2024) shows that in 2023 femicide happened evenly throughout the world with a total of 51,500 women and children killed by their families or partners. Meanwhile, Asia is the second highest continent for femicide with a total of 18,500 victims.

Data from the Kemenpppa website states that out of a total of 25,798 murder cases that occurred in Indonesia, 22,351 or 87% of the victims were women (Simfoni-PPA, 2024). It further states that the location of the majority of homicides occurred in the domestic environment (61%). Although statistical data shows that the murder of women is quite a large case, the issue of femicide still receives less attention and is considered a common crime. Komnas Perempuan Indonesia noted in more detail that since 2021 femicide cases have reached hundreds each year, namely in 2021 there were 237 cases, in 2022 307 cases were observed, and the last report in 2023 was 159 cases. This data is data processed by Komnas Perempuan itself from the media because the term femicide is still not recognized as a police report.

*Corresponding Author's Email: *deasitihafsha@mail.ugm.ac.id



In terms of perpetrators, the most common femicide cases are intimate femicide or perpetrated by those closest to the victim, namely her partner or ex-partner, either in the context of marriage or dating. Data from Komnas Perempuan shows that in 2023 intimate femicide reached 103 cases or 67% of the total femicide cases. The inequality of power relations between the victim and the perpetrator is one of the main motives in femicide cases. The reasons for heartache, jealousy, feeling that their masculinity is harassed, refusing to take responsibility, sexual violence, or transactional romance can offend male superiority and dominance which triggers aggression to murder.

The results of a study presented by Campbell et al. (2003) state that domestic violence is a major risk factor in femicide cases. This means that the history of a wife who has received violence from her husband has a greater risk of experiencing femicide. In addition, Campbell et al. (2007) added that the husband's access to weapons, seclusion, the presence of stepchildren in the home, forced sex, death threats, and non-fatal strangulation are additional risk factors for femicide in wives. These risk factors need to be realized by many parties. Not only wives, but also medical personnel who treat patients with indications of domestic violence. Unfortunately, at this time society and the law in Indonesia do not recognize the issue of femicide.

Research conducted by Zulaichah (2022) related to femicide law shows that the law used to ensnare femicide perpetrators is the article on ordinary murder in the Criminal Code. This condition is considered to have a less deterrent effect on perpetrators and people who have the potential to become perpetrators. The latest law related to violence against women is the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 20 of 2021 concerning Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence in Higher Education which aims to protect women. However, the articles contained therein give rise to multiple interpretations such as in article 5 the phrase "without the consent of the victim" which implies that violence can be measured on the basis of the victim's consent. These conditions require affirmation from the government regarding clear laws and regulations.

In the absence of a strict law, it is not surprising that the community also has low awareness regarding the issue of femicide. Komnas Perempuan as part of the government has made efforts to introduce this terminology to the public since 2017. Although the impact has not yet reached the masses, it seems that the media in Indonesia are starting to have an awareness of the issue of femicide. Starting from 2021, the media began to raise this issue on YouTube. For Indonesians, YouTube is no longer just an entertainment medium, but also a major source of news. People can directly express their opinions regarding videos uploaded on YouTube through the comments column. From these comments, it can provide an overview of public perceptions related to news.

Comments on social media are an externalization of the user's cognitive process. Valsiner (2013) states that cognition, in addition to affection and behavior, is a form of human existence that is a social product. It is further explained that the social environment creates standards regarding actions, feelings, and thoughts called culture that cannot be avoided by humans as a tool for survival (Valsiner, 2013). With this framework, comments on social media can be considered to reflect the culture that applies in the social environment of YouTube users. Comments cannot be assessed as the

result of individual thinking, but must be seen as a form of internalization of social values called Cultural Psychology.

To be able to explain further about this, the researcher conducted a content analysis on YouTube comments. The use of content analysis (for social media) has at least five advantages, namely 1) minimizing respondent bias because it processes natural data, 2) can integrate comprehensive information compared to quantitative techniques, 3) can identify actions rather than predictive attitudes, 4) this analysis can collect group wisdom and perspectives held by users on certain issues, and 5) is a grounded theory approach that provides space for developing concepts based on field conditions (Lai & To, 2015). Content analysis in this study is an inductive process or concept derived from data to reveal the culture of Indonesian society related to the issue of femicide.

Methods

This research aims to find out information about videos related to femicide uploaded on YouTube and analyze the responses related to these videos. In the midst of limited public information about “femicide” and the absence of a legal umbrella specifically aimed at femicide cases, this research wants to see how the public responds to the issue. For this reason, the researcher considered that this study could be carried out by analyzing the content of femicide videos on YouTube and the responses to the content qualitatively. This is because the use of online media, including YouTube, has become a major source of news for Indonesians (Steele, 2023). One of the advantages of analyzing YouTube videos and comments on them is that it can show people's perspectives on a specific situation and capture their local wisdom (Lai & To, 2015). According to (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), content analysis has three steps to conduct, which are 1) preparation, 2) organizing, and 3) reporting. Even though the concept is similar, this study adjusted the steps to help achieve research objectives into 1) data collection, 2) analysis (captured in this section), and 3) result (captured in the next section).

Data Collection

Data collection from YouTube was conducted through the YouTube Data Tools website which retrieves data through the YouTube Application Programming Interface (API) (Rieder, 2015) on November 15, 2024. There are two stages in data collection. First, researchers filtered data related to videos on YouTube with the keyword “femisida”. This stage used the Video List module and produced data on 50 videos. Even though the word femisida is in Indonesian language, there were 21 videos using another language. The researcher then filtered videos with Indonesian language and obtained 29 videos. The result of this stage will be described later on the Result.

However, since this data only contained the quantitative number of comments, the researcher needed to conduct a second data collection to obtain qualitative data on video comments. After making sense of the result from the first data collection, the researcher chose the video from which the comments will be analyzed further. The researcher used the Video Comments module on the same website as the previous data collection to collect the commentary text of the particular video.

Analysis

In the first data collection process, there were several metadata related to the video, such as channel ID, channel title, video code, publication time, video title, video description, tags, video category ID, video category label, topic category, duration, video quality, language, thumbnail photo address, video viewed frequency, number of likes, number of dislikes, number of favorites, and number of comments. Although "femisida" is an Indonesian language, there are still 21 videos with other languages, such as Italian, Russian, English, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and Turkish. The researcher then filtered the videos using Microsoft Excel so that only videos with Indonesian language were displayed. After that, I sorted the videos based on the highest number of comments.

From the second data collection, we obtained metadata related to the comments of the videos to be analyzed, namely the number of replies, number of likes, publication time, commenter's name, comment text, commenter's channel ID, and the purpose of the reply comment. The researcher focused on the comment text data for content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), while other data will be analyzed as additional data presented in the results. This study applied inductive analysis starting with open coding, followed by categorization, and abstraction. Open coding was done by labeling YouTube comments that shared a common idea or feeling. These initial codes were then categorized based on the similarity of ideas and content. Finally, researchers performed abstraction to produce existing categories into larger themes.

Report

Video Descriptive

Of the 29 videos uploaded related to femicide, it was found that all channels that uploaded the videos were media channels. The types of videos uploaded, 59% were educational videos and 41% were femicide cases. We categorized them into 5 types of media, namely local news, national news, government, university, and independent. Local news is a news channel that uses the name of a city in Indonesia and is generally intended to deliver news from that area, such as Pos Kupang, Tribun Papua Barat Official, and Kompas TV Makassar. National news is a news channel that covers national events, is neutral, and is not focused on just one region, such as CNN Indonesia, Kompas Daily, VOI dot id, Tribun video, NOVA, TVOne Investigations, and Tribunnews. Government media types are media owned by the government, in this case Komnas Perempuan, while University media types are media owned by universities, such as Unair TV, Unhas TV, and the Gender Studies Center of Jember University. Independent media are media that are more critical and have opinions on events, such as Narasi Newsroom, Bincang Muslimah, Parboaboa, Gerakan TurunTangan, Jakarta Feminist, Konde Institute, Healthcare Hacks, and Just Nadinee.

Based on video duration, there are three types of video groupings as shown in Table 1. This grouping is to see the character of each media in making videos. The duration of the video generally affects the interest of the audience and how many netizens watch the show.

Table 1. Video Duration

Media Type	Number of Video	Duration		
		< 1 minute	< 15 minutes	> 60 minutes
Local news	3	1	1	1
National news	7	1	6	0
Government	5	0	2	3
University	3	0	2	1
Independent	11	3	6	2
Total	29	5	17	7

The result of analyzing the data collected in the first stage is the order of videos with the highest comments (see Table 2). The video titled “Femicide: We Are Women, We Are Killed | Narasi Explains” was the video with the most comments, with 150 comments. This represents 81% of the total comments on 29 Indonesian-language femicide-related videos (617 comments in total), so I decided to analyze the comments on this video only.

Table 2. Top 10 Most Commented Videos

Media Type	Duration	Number of Comments
Independent	< 15 minutes	150
Independent	< 1 minute	12
Local news	> 60 minutes	8
National news	< 15 minutes	4
Government	< 15 minutes	3
Independent	< 1 minute	2
Government	> 60 minutes	1

University	< 15 minutes	1
Government	< 15 minutes	1
National news	< 1 minute	1

Comments Analysis

Next, the researcher conducted a qualitative content analysis of the comments on the video. It was found that 35 comments were irrelevant to the video so they were excluded from the data analysis, such as commenting how cool the language used by other commenter, quotes, or the quality of the video that is not substantial to the content of the video. As a result, 115 comments were analyzed. We found four major themes in the discussion that took place in the comments related to femicide, namely (1) the main causes of femicide; (2) netizens' judgment; (3) prevention of femicide; and (4) netizens' reflection. Each of these themes has a number of sub themes that explain the dynamics that occur among netizens related to that theme.

Theme One: Root Causes

The scapegoating dynamic was the largest theme in the discussion on femicide (43%). This theme has eight sub themes underneath it that show the process of netizens discussing who is to blame for femicide. There are three parties mentioned, namely men, women and feminism. The scapegoating discussion has the dynamics of blaming and defending two parties, namely women and men. The following discussion will be organized in order, namely the dynamics of scapegoating women and men.

Negative judgment of women (n = 8)

This sub-theme shows the perspective of netizens that femicide occurs because of women's faults and insinuations against women. Comments that blame women include: 'Girls everywhere are like that, if you are disappointed by a guy, you must say harassment/rape (laughing emot)', while comments that insinuate women are: 'Men should protect women, because women can't protect themselves. Let us have mercy on women, they are weak'.

Defense of women (n = 13)

This sub-theme is the reaction of netizens to the issue of femicide and comments that blame women by providing a defense of women. Examples of comments are: 'Women must be faced with the most unpleasant and painful situation first before they can use violence. That's why women only use violence when defending themselves, or because they are hurt by being harassed for example, so it's more about revenge.'

Women can act (n=10)

In this sub-theme, netizens showed the potential of women who could also be strong and actively act. The following are examples of comments that show the potential strength of women: 'Hahahaha...the definition of strong is not only hard to kill. Your mother endured the pain of 9 months of carrying you is also strong,'. And here is an example of the potential for women to act: 'Women (I'm a woman too), do you know a kitchen knife? The one that we use to cut food like vegetables, onions, etc.? Well, just take that thing out of the house. Later, if you meet men who commit sexual harassment, theft, robbery, and other crimes, just use the kitchen knife that we carry to eliminate the life of the man who committed the crime. We can retaliate,'.

Male Defense (n = 18)

In this subtheme, netizens gave their opinions on why men commit violence and murder against women. Some of the comments included in this sub theme include: 'When a weak man meets a woman who is more than him, jealousy arises and leads to violence,' and 'The hormones of men and women are different. The male hormone triggers a desperate and aggressive nature, that's why men often become criminals, plus many men tend to be dominated by negative thoughts, and the influence of toxic masculinity as well...'.

Second Theme: Netizen Judgement

In this theme, netizens showed their position on the issue of femicide. This theme was the second largest theme discussed by netizens in the comment section (30%).

Femicide Matters (n=12)

The majority of opinions in the second theme were those stating that femicide is an important issue and terminology. As expressed below: 'The importance is for women, just look at the cases of murder of women by male partners for example. This is not normal, how many incidents of women being killed by their own husbands/boyfriends?'.

Femicide is not important (n = 22)

This subtheme shows the perception of the majority of netizens that the issue of femicide is not important. Some doubted the importance of the term femicide to differentiate between female and male homicides, while others thought that the term was redundant because they felt that there were not enough female homicides. There is also a counter to the term femicide, malesida, which refers to the killing of men and shows disapproval of the word femicide. This appears in the following comment: 'It would be nice if we look at the data, and the data (let's say) we don't agree with, is there something odd, it would be nice to stay aware, just stay vigilant,' or 'What is the urgency of special criminal penalties for femicide cases?'

Theme Three: Femicide Prevention

This theme was the subject of 23% of public discussion. There were four subthemes that emerged in netizens' comments on how to prevent femicide in their perception.

Religious Perspective (n=11)

The most common discussion about preventing femicide was from a religious perspective. Warganet argued that if religious teachings are practiced properly, especially Islam, then it can prevent femicide. This argument appears in comments such as the following: 'There must be a paradigm shift regarding the interaction of men and women. Not least in the realm of family. The secular paradigm must be replaced with the Islamic paradigm. The secular system of liberal democracy that has been regulating the interaction of society has been proven to fail to glorify women,' and 'the key is not far from the teachings of religion,'.

Severe Punishment (n=11)

Citizens expressed their disappointment with the punishments received by feminist perpetrators and argued that harsher punishments could prevent feminism from occurring in the future. This was revealed by: 'The death penalty should be more appropriate, and have a deterrent effect...'.

Role of Family (n=4)

According to netizens, the family has a role to play in preventing femicide behavior. This is a reflection of netizens who think that femicide perpetrators are raised in families that normalize violence or are not used to accepting rejection of requests, as revealed below: 'How can the perpetrator's family educate, if the perpetrator becomes such a person because he comes from a family that has also normalized violence against women?'.

Fourth Theme: Netizen Reflection

The Reflection of the Netizens theme is the smallest among the other themes (5%), but it is important because it shows the expression and analysis of netizens regarding the issue of femicide. This theme has three sub themes which will be explained below.

Negative Emotions (n=2)

Netizens expressed their feelings about seeing the femicide issue in the video, namely: "this makes me uncomfortable..." and "scared :("

Compliments on Content (n = 2)

This subtheme shows the appreciation of netizens regarding the femicide video presented. The comments given were: 'Great narrative, continue to provide information that opens everyone's horizons in a simple way (emot kiss)' and '...for the case of narrative exposure, I think it's more to make people aware even though it might be so,'.

Parents' Anticipation (n = 2)

Citizens who acted as parents reflected on the femicide cases that occurred and analyzed efforts to prevent femicide against their children. This can be seen from the following comments: 'yes I have to instill in my daughter to be an independent woman...' and 'this news makes me as a father who has a daughter even more anxious'.

Discussion

This research wanted to see how the Indonesian public responded to the issue of femicide uploaded through YouTube. From the four themes that emerged in this study, the researcher categorized the first and third theme into one bigger categorization named Femicide Issues, while the second and the fourth theme categorized into Netizens' View category. Thus, the overall result of this study about public response on femicide is divided into two big categories with each category consisting of two themes.

The most interesting dynamics of the femicide issue for netizens are the causes and prevention of femicide. The argument about who is at fault and the cause of femicide shows the cultural position of gender. They quickly assess the causes of this murder case, which mostly blame women for their clothes or justify the perpetrator of their aggressiveness. Surprisingly, this condition happens not only in Indonesia but around the world. Aldrete & Fernández-Ardèvol (2024) found that in viewing femicide cases, people in various parts of the world tend to blame the victim and justify the perpetrator. The culture of seeing women as the guilty party in relationships that do not go well between men and women is a patriarchal principle that persists in Indonesia and triggers domestic violence (Hamdy & Hudri, 2022). Patriarchy is a condition where male dominate the authority, obsessed with control and involve women oppression (Johnson, 2005). The final argument that addresses the causes of femicide is the netizens' defense of women and shows that women actually have hidden power. According to Boangmanalu & Nainggolan (2021), the idea of women's resistance to patriarchal culture has been born since the book *Rumah Kaca* written by Pramudya Ananta Toer in 1988. The culture of utilizing the media to show partisanship still continues today. Media, especially social media, is a safe space to express opinions that are considered contrary to Indonesian culture.

"The male hormone triggers a reckless and aggressive nature, which is why men often become perpetrators of crimes, plus many men tend to have negative thoughts, and the influence of toxic masculinity too."

As for the prevention, people see religion and severe punishment as the best way. In Indonesia, religion serves as a moral compass by instilling ethical values and fostering a sense of responsibility towards God as stated in Pancasila, the foundation of the Indonesian state, with the first principle stating "belief in one God" (Siahaan & Ndonga, 2024). This ideology is internalized as a culture that lives in the heart of most Indonesians and makes Indonesia a country with a high level of religiosity. No wonder that it leads them to see every problem with religious perspectives, including finding religion as the problem-solving strategy to prevent such an extreme violation. Indonesian also see that 10 years in prison for the perpetrator that mentioned on the video is too light a sentence. The punishment is not severe enough and does not have a deterrent effect on potential perpetrators (Zulaichah, 2022) so that they demand harsher punishment.

"That's why in religion the interaction between women and men is limited. He who understands how to respect women as taught by religion, how could he dare to do things that are contrary to religious values."

From the category of Netizens' View we can see that the term femicide is still not widely recognized in Indonesia despite its alarming prevalence and how it serves as the most extreme form of violence. Moreover, the majority of the public also think that femicide is not important (65%). Only a third of netizens saw femicide as an important issue to be addressed, especially since it is known that lower-middle income countries have the potential to increase femicide (Whittington et al., 2023). This shows how cultural psychology influences netizen's reactions in terms of cognitive products (Valsiner, 2013) to the issue of femicide.

"What is the urgency of special criminal penalties for femicide cases?"

Netizens also share their feelings after watching the video. Some of them shared their negative feelings towards the video, some others praised the content, and the rest shared their concerns about their children related to the video. Netizens were afraid that such murder would happen to their children in the future. This reaction is normal and happens as an emotion regulation strategy, called the social sharing of emotion. Rimé (2017) said that social sharing of emotion is the urge to communicate openly to others about the emotions felt after experiencing an emotional event (seeing the video). It means that the video activates the emotion of the viewer and invites them to share the intense experience.

"This news makes me even more anxious as a father who has a daughter."

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitation of the analysis. The research relies on qualitative content analysis which subject to the researchers' interpretations and biases, including the set-up of inclusion and exclusion criteria for the comments analyzed. The study was also limited to the content use specific keyword (femisida which means femicide) that is not yet popular term used by the media and thus may not fully capture the broader public perception or discourse on this topic on YouTube.

Implications

The discussion above shows the low understanding of Indonesian netizens regarding the issue of gender-based killings. The discussion about who is guilty in this case is still more dominant than concrete preventive measures. In addition, the majority consider that the issue of femicide is not important. This condition is contrary to the facts on the ground which show serious figures related to the issue of femicide.

To raise awareness of femicide issues among Indonesians, cooperation from various parties is needed. A good first step has been taken by the media, both national, government-owned and independent.

This step needs to be strengthened through cooperation with parties who are considered competent to discuss this issue, such as NGOs or the government. This kind of bottom-up strategy also occurs in the Netherlands, which started a climate change awareness movement from civil society which then triggered government participation (Mees et al., 2019). In addition, utilizing social media is a strategic step to reach the individual level. However, the use of social media can still be maximized by utilizing other platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, or TikTok. Working with influencers from these platforms can also encourage public interest in issues that are quite heavy in a lighter way.

Conclusion

This study highlights the limited awareness of femicide in Indonesia despite its alarming prevalence, as reported by Komnas Perempuan from 2021 to 2023. Femicide, the killing of women because of their gender, remains one of the most extreme forms of violence, yet the term is not widely recognized in Indonesian society. By analyzing 29 femicide-related videos uploaded to YouTube, the study revealed that all videos were produced by media outlets, including national, local and independent channels, and were categorized as educational content and case reports. The study also identified key themes in the comments section, such as the main causes of femicide, netizens' judgment, prevention of femicide, and netizens' reflection. These findings suggest that YouTube serves as an informative platform, offering content and space for public discourse on femicide. However, the limited number of videos and nascent public engagement suggest that awareness about femicide in Indonesia is far from sufficient. To address this, a multifaceted strategy involving various stakeholders-media, activists, educators, and policymakers-is essential. Efforts should focus on expanding educational campaigns and utilizing digital platforms to foster a broader understanding of femicides. This study underscores the urgency of such interventions to bring femicide issues to the forefront of public awareness in Indonesia.

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