Woman and Gossip on Social Media: Between Private and Public

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Abstract. Social media changed human interaction, one of human interaction by gossiping. Gossip becomes a stereotype for women and is often associated with negative things. This article examines how women gossip on social media, whether women can differentiate between gossiping in public spaces, and what changes occur when they gossip on social media. Data collection was conducted by interviewing and observing women social media users in Padang. The design used in this study is a qualitative approach to women's gossiping behavior involving social networking sites. This article argues that gossip on social media is an extension of real-life socialization, while gossiping helps women to maintain contact with their environment and voice their voice over an issue. Gossiping through social media and being able to express oneself also helps to release stress. There is satisfaction when many people know the problem. Nevertheless, offline gossip is preferred when they want to counter or solve problems. Women are also increasingly understanding the boundaries between public and private, especially regarding security and privacy. The number of criminal cases on the internet makes women learn to be more careful in using social media.

Keywords: Women, Gossip, Social-Media, Private Life, Public Life

1 Introduction

The popularity of social media in Indonesia indicates a rise in social media users today. The latest trends suggest that social media refers to the publication of various things that contribute to the development of news and information among the public. The majority of social media users use their social network to meet their needs for news that cannot even be accurately verified. Communities have benefited from media for political and social interests; this is also in line with the efforts to support other fellow users of social networks to politically pressure the government to grant their request (Ambardi, 2014).

Social media is a web-based platform to communicate and form an online network to share information obtained (Junaida, 2018: 436). Examples of these social media are Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. Gossip and social media are determined based on differences in individual occupations and education, so that gossip on social media creates its social classes.

Data from APJII (2020) shows internet penetration in West Sumatra Province is at 91.4 percent, while for Padang itself, 93.3% of Padang residents use the internet. This figure is sufficient to show the number of internet users in West Sumatra, especially in the city of Padang.

The rapid development of internet users in Indonesia also affects how humans interact and communicate, one of which is gossiping.

Gossip becomes a stereotype for women and is often associated with a negative thing. Why do women like to gossip? According to Jones (1980 in Coates, 1993), gossip activities are women's activities in their spare time and become part of women's oral culture. One of the reasons why women gossip in private is because women cannot freely speak in public. With men who appear more in public, women tend not to listen to their voices in public spaces. Therefore, private spaces such as small group conversations are an option with a personal theme.

However, the presence of social media provides opportunities for women to have a voice in a larger environment. Unlike the private room, gossip is done with the closest people they know. On social media, gossip activities are not only often done with strangers. Gossip is an exchange of information that can be positive and negative in a form that criticizes third parties who are not present in the chat (Foster, 2004:79).

Gossip has a primary function in principle, namely as a medium of information. With gossip, someone will be more aware of their environment. Gossip is a very efficient tool in gathering or disseminating information in society. Gossip also has other functions such as entertainment and also making friends. Through this gossip one can also understand the behavior and role of someone in the neighborhood (Meinarno et al., 2011:80). Gossip can happen anywhere, such as gossip on television, gossip on social media and also gossip in everyday life.

Gossip on social media often occurs because it is more effective in exchanging information (Junaida, 2018: 466). Gossip on social media does not need to be met in person, but everything can be done virtually. In addition, gossip on social media is more effective because it is supported by content that can be accessed at any time. Gossip has the advantage of being social control. Even in the virtual world, gossip is needed as a way to establish a friendship. (Meinarno et al., 2011:82).

However, gossip on social media negatively impacts when someone creates content distributed through the WhatsApp story feature. Gossiping is also related to the characteristics of the community. According to Tapsell (2020), social media reflects the condition of the community. Indonesia is more open to sharing information in Southeast Asia- whether the information is accurate or not. Tapsell also emphasized that this culture is reflected in online media behavior, where much private information is shared on social media, which is more open.

Problem Statement
a. The use of social media for gossiping is an extension of gossip in real life. Gossip may be by conveying complaints, talking about other people's misfortunes and affairs involving people they know. Although the impression is negative, gossiping can also help release emotions and, in informal interactions, helps to lighten the mood.
b. The number of criminal cases involving social media makes women more careful in interacting, especially with foreigners. Young people tend to take advantage of features on social media to protect their privacy, image and security. The news about the prosecution for using the ITE Law made women more careful in giving comments.

Research Questions
The research questions in this article are:
1. How do women manage their emotions in gossiping on social media?
2. How do women limit themselves, especially private-public boundaries and also safety in using the internet?

2 Methodology

This article conducted passive observation in which researchers not directly involved in gossiping in social media were examined, the position of the researchers only as observers. The design employed for this research was a qualitative approach to gossiping behaviors of women involving social networking sites—observation data used as background data to know how and what social media is used. Data was collected through interviews, documentation and observation.

First, information from social media was observed and gathered. Then, many informal personal interviews with women who use social media for more than one year were conducted to gain a background understanding about gossiping in social media. As a result, field notes that provide a further understanding of women's relationship with social media and how they had used social media as a tool for gossiping, interaction and other purposes can be collected.

3 Analysis and Discussion

The study was conducted in the city of Padang by interviewing women of various ages and occupations. all of our informants spend more than two hours surfing the internet within a day. One of the informants, Kory (29 years), spends six hours a day. "Usually, it opens once for 15 minutes; if you total it in a day, it can be around six hours". Meanwhile, Fira, a student (19 years old), uses social media for six to eight hours a day, this is in line with the findings of Mc Andrew (2014) and Abraham, L. B., Mörn, M. P., & Vollman, A. (2010), who compared the consumption of Facebook use between women and men. According to him, women spend more time on Facebook than men. With the more accessible and cheaper to access the internet, it becomes normal when the intensity of internet usage time becomes higher.

In addition to filling spare time, social media is a place to find and update the latest information and broader interactions. From the data collected by the author, it can be concluded that the older the informants, the less time they will spend on social media. Particularly for those over 40 years old, who fall into the category of digital immigrants. On the other hand, informants under 40 years old are more familiar with the internet and are called the digital native category. Gossip talk in the media has a different segmentation as well. The segmentation of the difference is determined based on the average age of the media users. An example is Facebook, gossip on Facebook media has an average age of thirty years and over. While Instagram is generally used for gossiping by social media users under 30 years old.

After conducting interviews with informants, there are three major themes to be analyzed: gossip as an Emotions Release, watching a Gossip as Spectator and Privacy, Safety and ITE Law Surrounding Online Gossiping behaviors. Furthermore, the discussion and discussion in this article will be divided according to the three themes found.

Gossip as an Emotion Release

Gossip information develops from one platform to another and often becomes a topic of conversation in real life. Chat applications like WhatsApp are widely used for gossiping. Unlike social media such as Instagram and Facebook, WhatsApp is more private and personal. Informants gossiping to vent their emotions either through direct messages with friends or in the WhatsApp Group. Even if gossiping through Instagram, the informant chose not to do it openly, namely in the form of satire. Expression of emotions through the real world is preferred.

In addition to being more satisfied, interaction with the other person is considered more real. Kory, a private employee (29 years old), expressed his concern about gossiping on social media because it was too open, different from the real world. If the information he discloses spreads, she can trace where the leak source came from; it will be challenging to do if he gossips through social media. "If it is through social media, it is possible to be captured and then shared with other people, so I avoid that".

Some informants have realized the boundary between private and public. They realize that not all information can be shared on social media. This awareness emerged, one of which was the number of fraudulent attempts through social media and also the threat of online loans. One of the other reasons is oversharing social media, which can later lead to a backlash to informants. Resti Ayu (30 years), who owns a small shop, admits the difference in channeling emotions on social media and offline, "If we talk directly, we can see their reactions after hearing our stories, unlike social media, we cannot see the reactions but those who know our problems also more." The awareness of other people monitoring the activities of complaining and gossip on social media also encouraged Resti Ayu not to overexpose her personal life. "When she was young, she often vented on social media; as she got old, these activities were reduced".

In addition to women spending more time gossiping than men, research from (Levin and Arluke: 1987) found that the topic of women's gossip is usually about their family or close friends. In contrast to men, the topics of conversation revolve around themselves, work and relationships. Ferita, a finance officer at a company in Padang, admitted that she used to gossip, especially about her office mates. The office becomes a place of interaction, and also competition, mistakes or scandals from office friends will become a hot topic of conversation in one office.

According to McAndrew and Milenkovic (2002), women are usually more interested in gossiping about other women, especially in their environment, with an age range that is not much different or at the same level as them. One of them is because of the competition between women. News about misfortune or scandal becomes the main ingredient of gossip, and even positive news is also an exciting thing to know. Good news is essential to know, namely to find out the latest updates about competitors or be a whip to be better. For instance, Annisa, a student in Padang, her curiosity about her friends prompted her to explore social media and find out what achievements they have made. This is for her as a spirit to be like them, "even though in the end their achievements become material too".

Still, according to McAndrew, F. T. (2014), the internet provides gossipers to investigate, store and then spread gossip material. Andrew calls it a "gossip seeking behaviour" activity. In contrast to gossip offline, "kepo" or curiosity activities can be done alone by checking the activities and timelines of the rumoured party. This activity does not arouse suspicion from others. On the other hand, gossip material will be more flexible through social media because the evidence is considered more authentic, not just the words.

Watching a Gossip as Spectator

According to Tufekci (2008) gossip on social media is shared by a curiosity about people in the past, what they are doing now and whether they have changed. When they start to compare their lives with the lives of people in their past, nevertheless, the curiosity of the past is not only a stimulus for gossip on social media. Gossip on social media moves the private space of gossip to the public sphere. Gossip, which was initially a private matter, has become public consumption, not just friendship but involving strangers. Platforms like WhatsApp, initially private, have become public consumption because they can be documented, and the content can be shared. Women who previously did not have a voice in public spaces by gossiping on social

media can voice their opinions, feelings, and opinions. However, while sharing private gossip can contribute to maintaining relationships and support, sharing private information can be a backlash. Women's inability to gossip in public spaces such as social media can impact bullying and even law sued.

Apart from being the perpetrators of gossip, another role of internet user is to monitor the latest gossip developments. In gossip accounts of artists such as Lambe turah, sometimes informants leave a trail by pressing the like button. They like and retweet buttons function to track social media activity. Why is the role of the spectator of gossip also important? Besides being necessary for media engagement and stored for big data purposes, especially monitoring the preferences of information liked by users, the like button also plays a role in. Apart from being a gossip monitor, women also like to follow the latest developments from celebrities. Strangers are not welcome, but celebrities are not categorized as foreigners, even though we never interact with them in real life.

Therefore, although informants are selective in choosing friends, usually they do not necessarily accept all friendship invitations, but interactions with artists, either by giving comments or thumbs up, are every day. On the one hand, artists who incidentally are foreigners are not strangers in their eyes. It is the same with the hobby of knowing the lives of artists through mainstream media such as tabloids, magazines and television. Women continue to be curious about the lives of strangers- namely, artists through gossip accounts and the artist's media accounts. @lambeturah is an Instagram account that provides gossip information, especially from celebrities. With more than 10 million followers, every day, there is the hottest and viral gossip through this platform. The lives of celebrities are interesting not only because they are famous and their lives show drama, but we can share gossip about celebrities and become a topic of conversation with friends and family.

Although not all women update the latest celebrity news from social media, they get the latest updates from their closest circle. Dewi Elia (55 years old), who works as a dentist, admits that she does not follow the gossip about artists, "I am old; therefore, I prefer to worship in my spare time. The ones who usually update news about artists are young people, and I rarely do it." Nevertheless, even so, Dewi still follows the gossip through her children who have grown up. In addition to fulfilling the curiosity of their idol's life, gossip is also a topic of conversation to interact with friends and family. This finding is in line with the opinion of McAndrew, F. T. (2017), who stated that in this modern and sophisticated world, celebrities become conversationalists for various interpersonal relationships, office friends, school friends and family.

Especially in the context of informal conversations, conversations about artists can lighten the mood, making it easier for people to get to know and interact. Therefore, it is not surprising that women are usually more flexible when interacting with people they just met. Women are better trained to lighten the mood with the information and informal materials they have. The artist's life is also a projection of the life of neighbors and family. Besides wanting to know the artist's life, they also want to know the life of the people in their environment, starting from school, work and place of residence.

Research on learning from following celebrity gossip news conducted by De Backer, Nelissen, Vyncke, Braeckman, and McAndrew (2007) found that young people could learn life strategies from celebrity role models. According to researchers, apart from learning how to dress, keeping up an artist's life helps young people manage relationships. Fira, a fashion content creator, often refers to celebrities as an idea or material for her social media. "Initial interactions are usually followed up, then proceed to direct messages and continue the interaction".

Privacy, Bullying and ITE Law Surrounding Online Gossiping Behaviours

Indonesia is a society that is more open to sharing information - whether the information is accurate or not. This open culture of sharing information is also the cause of the blurring of boundaries between public and private spaces in Indonesia. Gossip on social media transforms the private space of gossip into the public sphere. Gossip, which was initially a private matter, has now become public consumption, not just friendship but also involving strangers; interaction with foreigners is expanding. Platforms like WhatsApp, initially private, have become public consumption because they can be documented, and their content can be shared. Women who previously did not speak out in public by gossiping on social media can voice their opinions, feelings, and opinions.

However, while sharing personal gossip can contribute to maintaining relationships and support, sharing personal information can be an adverse reaction. Women move private spaces in their daily conversations with their closest circle, but that limit is removed on social media, or women's mops are removed. On the other hand, personal social media is also a social media, on the one hand, is a private space where women have complete control and access, but the inability to distinguish between public and private spaces on social media makes women vulnerable to bullying lawsuits.

Gossip content is often vulnerable to demands for the ITE Law. Unlike offline gossip, online gossip can be captured, stored and then shared. Despite the potential to go viral and damage personal relationships, lawsuits can occur. Some cases that were initially only private and limited, but because they were carried out via social media, eventually became viral and led to lawsuits. Recently, Shandy Aulia, an actress who has an Instagram account follower, plans to sue a nurse for being considered insulting to Shandy Aulia's daughter.

Gossip on social media often leads to lawsuits. Since gossip on social media spreads fast and viral, the content is difficult to remove if uploaded on social media (Junaida, 2018: 444). Women often use gossip on social media because it is considered a social weapon. The social weapon in question is a tool used to control others for self-interest. (Meinarno et al., 2011:84). This fear of lawsuits makes informants careful in giving comments, especially in the gossip column.

Almost all informants use their real names on social media accounts; some use their real names plus their surnames and nicknames. Real names were chosen because they want to interact with people they know so that friends or family can easily find their profiles on social media. In contrast to young people who prefer to use a nickname, Annisa feels that it is more suitable to use her nickname because it has been attached for a long time. If email and Facebook use real names ". In addition, young people usually limit the association.

For example, Annisa, who intentionally never shows her parents on her Instagram feed for reasons of privacy, has even removed her 1000 followers on Instagram because she wants to clean up her social media circle. "I removed them because so far they have not interacted and touched so that it will be better." Fira uses the close friend feature when she wants to convey her complaints on social media.

As a content creator, this feature helps him to be able to vent his emotions but also maintain his image. Young women are more selected and have more control of their social media. They are aware of the dangers and can also better use features to maintain privacy and avoid bullying. Meanwhile, informants who have occupations tend to limit content compared to using restrictive features on social media.

4 Conclusion

Gossiping has become a habit that is quite common in society, regardless of status and educational background. Gossip can be opening the container in warming the atmosphere even though it can have a significant impact not good for the perpetrator's cognitive, affective, and cognitive. With social media, gossip that used to be in interpersonal communication now has been transformed into the realm of mass communication. The three main elements discussed in. This article has a very close correlation, gossip as an outlet for emotions, spectacle, loss of privacy and the consequences of gossip itself.

Furthermore, gossiping itself is currently getting worse since the rise of social media with various themes presented. However, social media is only an intermediary to make gossip and an updated spectacle. The gossip will not appear if there were no provocations from famous people's social media accounts, celebrities, influencers or even social climbers. One of the worst consequences, bullying, which often appears in the comment's column, seems to be a stage in itself from the gossip accounts. There are many solutions offered to overcome this problem. However, according to researchers, the most important thing to optimize is media literacy.

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