

Women as Objects of Sexual Harassment on Social Media X (A Case Study of Account X @amndzahra)

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Abstract

The phenomenon of digital and social media has increasingly raised attention to sensitive social issues, including the case of Amanda Zahra who became a victim of sexual harassment. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study analysis method to examine the phenomenon of sexual harassment that occurs on X @amndzahra's social media account using Muted Group Theory as the theoretical basis for this research. The data collection techniques used include non-participatory observation and documentation. The results showed that Amanda Zahrah as a victim of sexual harassment faced difficulties to articulate their discomfort caused by the existence of language dominated by masculine views and social structures that limit women's participation can affect their ability to voice traumatic experiences effectively.

Keyword: Woman, Sexual Harassment, Social Media X

Introduction

Social media, being a manifestation of technological advancements and the digital realm, exerts a substantial influence on society by altering communication and socializing dynamics, offering avenues for individuals to articulate their aspirations, and exhibiting their identity. Social media has evolved into a digital platform where its users may interact via discussions,

exchange information, and participate in activities that ignite their interests (Awad et al., 2020). Transformations are expedited by direct interaction with different cultures, resulting in unregulated cultural blending. The lack of maturity often leads to social media users losing self-control as a result of the boundless information they get (Saadah, 2020).

The duty to offer advice and direction to society to cultivate individuals who act appropriately and align with societal norms and standards. Moral instruction should be commensurate with the prevailing environmental conditions; nonetheless, challenges often arise, such as the lack of exemplary figures for reference or comparison. Consequently, the anticipated moral progress frequently remains unachieved. That detrimental development has become one of the contributing elements to the rise of different types of aberrant attitudes and actions, including sexual harassment (Eviana, 2020).

The emergence of sexual harassment on social media has given rise to a novel issue that gives rise to apprehensions regarding its gradual acceptance as a standard practice among those with a limited comprehension of the concept of sexual harassment. This pertains to nearly all social media platforms, where one can readily encounter different manifestations of behavior that constitute unconscious sexual harassment. A user on X, identified by the pseudonym @amndzahra, has lately emerged as a subject of discussion on the platform. Amanda's habit of regularly sharing images that were considered to "incite" the sexual appetites of males resulted in a significant number of X users, especially male ones, making explicit comments and sexist jokes on nearly every post made by @amndzahra. The limited understanding of sexual education among the general population is a prevalent issue (N. Setyowati & Kurniawan, 2022). This phenomenon has resulted in a significant number of individuals still regarding it as a mere commonplace event and joke. Indeed, act of sexual harassment can have enduring repercussions that encompass psychological and social legal domains.

According to statistics acquired from the National Commission on Women, about 810 instances of sexual harassment on social media were documented throughout the year 2020. A cumulative count of 370 instances encompassed threats in the form of the distribution of personal photographs or videos, succeeded by 307 instances of grooming, 71 instances of revenge pornography, 46 instances of threatening conversations, and 16 instances of sex talking. As per the National Commission on assault Against Women, a victim will be subjected to multiple forms of assault and sexual harassment (Annur, 2021). The proliferation of sexual harassment cases, which have reached considerable proportions, cannot be effectively or systematically addressed. Indeed, research revealed that a significant proportion of victims choose not to

file reports and instead allowed the instances to remain unattended. This is a really regrettable situation, as it can have enduring adverse consequences on the individuals affected (Rahmatina & Yuwono, 2019).

Sexual harassment can be defined as the act of deliberately teasing, touching, or caressing specific body parts without the victim's agreement, making sexist remarks, telling sexist jokes, intimidating, or even committing rape (Jaya et al., 2022). Emerging misuse of freedom of expression on social media is becoming increasingly apparent. Existence of such flexibility leads to the erosion of limitations in articulating viewpoints. Through social stigma, women are perceived as simple objects of men's desires. The persistence of this negative perception in society hinders the progress of women, resulting in an unequal distribution of power between men and women, as well as a glaring gender inequity within the community (Maia et al., 2024). The stigma that first emerged within the commu

nity has now started to disseminate on social media, including online platforms such as X.

The perpetuation of the assumption that women are sexual objects and serve as objects of fantasies rationalizes the sexual harassment, especially directed at Amanda Zahra. Over the previous year, digital phenomena and social media have progressively captured the focus on delicate societal matters. This particular case serves as an illustration of how the utilization of social media platforms for the purpose of sharing personal experiences can evoke a variety of reactions, frequently turning unpleasant. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection has published statistics indicating that 80.2% of women in Indonesia have experienced violence from January 2024 to the present. The majority of reported incidents, totaling 5,631, are cases of violence and sexual harassment (KEMENPPPA, 2024). Within the realm of social media, prevalent manifestations of sexual harassment encompass unsolicited comments containing explicit content, unauthorised distribution of intimate photographs, or unlawful sexual harassment through the use of photographs, films, or audio that rightfully belong to the victim. The phenomenon often known as 'revenge porn' is typically accompanied with doxing, which entails the dissemination of the victim's personal identity for malicious intentions. Lastly, scamming, or fraud, involves the use of photographs of an individual of the opposite gender to the offender.

The correlation between Muted Group Theory and the episode of sexual harassment encountered by Amanda Zahra underscores the intricate nature of gender power dynamics and social frameworks that need to be taken into account in endeavors to advance gender equality and ensure the safety of women. Within the realm of sexual harassment, Muted Group Theory can

elucidate the reasons behind the challenges that victims, especially women, frequently encounter when it comes to reporting or clearly articulating their experiences. The utilization of Muted Group Theory within the realm of sexual harassment also underscores the impact of societal norms that result in the marginalization or disregard of the experiences of specific groups, such as women, on their capacity to express or integrate the pain induced by harassment. One illustration of this is how well-established gender stereotypes in society can downplay or disregard women's grievances over harassment, perceiving them as either inherent to the phenomenon or an exaggerated response.

Considerable study has been conducted on sexual harassment on social media, encompassing a range of topics and areas of investigation. The objective of this study is to investigate instances of sexual harassment that take place on the social media platform X, specifically on the account @amndzahra. The present study will employ a case study approach to analyse the account @amndzahra. The anticipated outcome of this study is to make a valuable contribution to endeavors aimed at mitigating sexual harassment in both community settings and on social media platforms within Indonesia. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this study can foster a society that prioritizes addressing instances of sexual harassment that are typically overlooked.

The researcher identified the primary issue for this study: the types of harassment experienced on the @amndzahra account, and the application of muted group theory to elucidate the community's reaction to this event.

Research Method

The present study employs a descriptive qualitative methodology as a research technique that generates qualitative data in the form of written or spoken words derived from the observed behaviors of individuals in our immediate environment. Qualitative research is a research approach that engages with a natural environment to understand and analyze events using established methodologies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The researcher selects descriptive qualitative research because it is well-suited to the proposed topic, which focuses on the direct conditions in the field and involves describing an event experienced by an individual. This study employs a case study research methodology, which Suharsimi Arikunto defines as a comprehensive and thorough investigation of specific events (Arikunto, 2011). A case study will be undertaken to examine the occurrence of sexual harassment faced by Amanda Zahra on her own social media account @amndzahra.

X, previously referred to as Twitter, has emerged as a highly popular social networking site, particularly among contemporary adolescents. The platform known as X was established in 2006 by Jack Dorsey with the primary objective of facilitating users in sharing information regarding their current activities. Notable aspects of this application include the repost, quote repost, and hashtag functionalities, which enable users to remain informed about the most recent tweets posted by other users. X is seen as having the ability to exert influence on public emotions including of wrath, joy, empathy, and terror (Wili, 2015). At present, Elon Musk is the new owner of X, which is run by X Corp. Users of X can communicate with friends, relatives, and coworkers despite coming from a variety of backgrounds. As a social networking site, X allows its members to write, or send, brief messages that can be up to 280 characters long (including spaces and punctuation). Posts may take the shape of images, videos, or text messages. By exchanging ideas, activities, and thoughts on current events, X members can engage in more intimate communication with one another through these posts. Posts have two viewing options: public or private access for the accounts' followers. When users follow one another, they can view each other's posts. Posts can be used to detect events, like natural disasters, stock market movements, political trends, and the spread of diseases within an area, among other advantages.

Using muted group theory as its theoretical basis, this research aims to elucidate the limited autonomy encountered by women, particularly those who have been subjected to sexual harassment, in expressing their anguish. Kramarae clearly elucidates the existence of two interconnected notions, namely the masculine and the feminine, whereby women are denied the same level of freedom and efficacy in expressing themselves as males. This is due to the fact that men, as the dominant group, establish norms and language (Griffin, 2012).

In qualitative research addressing the sexual harassment incident involving Amanda Zahra on her personal X account, data analysis methods were employed through non-participatory observation and the collecting of documentation. Researchers examined the interactions and comments on X's account, identifying behavioral patterns and community reactions, along with the psychological effects experienced by Amanda. Furthermore, evidence comprising screenshots, comments, and postings pertinent to this issue was gathered to furnish a more profound background concerning the evolution of the scenario on social media. The collected data was further examined by identifying significant themes, including social stigma, public response, and psychological impacts, via a coding method.

Subsequent to the analytical phase, the researcher engages in a conclusion-drawing process by correlating the data with pertinent theories and the wider social context. This conclusion encompasses a comprehensive grasp of the effects of sexual harassment on people and societal reactions to this issue on social media platforms. This research elucidates Amanda's experience while also underscoring systemic challenges that must be addressed in the prevention and management of sexual harassment in cyberspace.

Results and Discussion



Figure 1. Account X of @amndzahra

Amanda Ilysa Azzahra Zahra, commonly referred to as Amanda Zahra, is a highly renowned influencer among users of the X platform. Her reputation rapidly gained prominence when she initiated a discussion on X regarding her husband Guido Ilyasa's extramarital relationship with artist Arawinda on July 6, 2022. She is a graduate of the Faculty of Medicine at Gadjah Mada University, having completed her studies in 2018 (Susetio, 2022).

The sexual harassment phenomena seen on the social media account X @amndzahra has a high degree of diversity. Beginning with victim-blaming conduct, sexist comedy, and rape culture, which normalizes the manifestation of male impulses towards victims who are seen as neglecting their clothing. Amanda's first encounter with sexual harassment can be traced back to a time before she gained recognition on social networking site X, namely during her teenage years. Nevertheless, the sexual harassment she endured escalated as she often shared photographs of herself wearing clothing that members on X considered highly exposing and unsuitable. Amanda explicitly refuted any intention to provoke men's libido, asserting that the photographs she shared were just designed to enhance her self-assurance following her husband's

infidelity. Regrettably, the majority of men inaccurately see this as a gesture of flirtation.

Forms of Sexual Harassment on the @amndzahra Account



Figure 1. Sexual harassment in account @amndzahra

Amanda, being an influencer, frequently shares her engaging in activities through posts on her personal X account. The behaviors she documented through photo or video posts elicited a range of reactions from internet users, who frequently issued inappropriate remarks on her posts. The attachment indicates that on June 22, 2024, Amanda Zahrah posted a self-portrait photograph while dressed in athletic clothing and sporting a white headband. Currently, the post has received 1.2 thousand comments from its online audience. Another user on X, identified by the account @Y_A_B2, also provided a remark on Amanda's article. Regrettably, the comments made are overtly sexually offensive targeting Amanda.

Amanda endured not just overt verbal abuse but also frequent harassment from irresponsible others who subjected her to implicit derogation through ambiguous sexist commentary. One day later, on June 23, 2024, Amanda Zahra once again got derogatory remarks, authored by a user on X using the identity @AanSaputraa_. A research analysis has shown that the choice of attire does not serve as a deterrent against sexual harassment. Therefore, it can be asserted that there are no well defined factors that function as the primary causes for the incidence of sexual harassment. The manifestation of these events is contingent upon the level of abstraction or irrationality in the ideas of the offender, which in turn incites the bravery to engage in such harassment (Olgadelina, 2022).

Sexual harassment encompasses not just behaviors that degrade or degrade someone sexually, but also the phenomena of normalizing and attributing blame to the victim in cases of harassment. The concept of victim blaming refers to the act of attributing responsibility for a negative activity, such

as sexual harassment, onto another person, as if the situation had been caused by their own acts (SACE, 2023). Amanda's photo post on May 1, 2024, featured a mirror selfie accompanied by the statement "I do not miss my long hair at all." A total of 4.7 thousand comments and 77 thousand reposts, including quotation reposts, have been received on this post. One user on X, identified as @anissabayu88, was one of the individuals who replied to the message by quoting and reposting relevant content. From his perspective, it is regrettable that Amanda shares material that she deems sensual and detrimental to her own well-being, as it serves to gratify the desires and fantasies of the male viewers.

Impact on Victim



Figure 2. Thread Amanda Zahra

Since going viral on social media X and getting a range of responses from online users, Amanda has been the target of numerous instances of sexual harassment. Amanda, an influential user on X, replied to this by creating a thread in which she discussed how she handled the harassment that was directed at her. As a victim of sexual harassment, Amanda finds that social media X provide a valuable platform for her to discuss her experiences. She can speak candidly about his experiences on this platform (Hermawati & Putri, 2024). She undoubtedly intends to elicit compassion and support from a larger audience on X by discussing his experiences. She admitted in her thread that she has been the target of a lot of harassment ever since she went through adolescence. According to Amanda, the harassment she endured had a terrible effect on her life, making her view men and lacking confidence (Zahra, 2023).

Manifestations of Societal Reaction to the Occurrence of Sexual Harassment



Gambar 3. Social Responses against Amanda Zahra Thread

In her thread dated April 1, 2023, Amanda expressed her infrequent engagement with comments aimed at her, not out of personal satisfaction or agreement with such unacceptable remarks. Regrettably, after facing significant criticism for her attire and conduct, she continues to be a target of sexual harassment. The comment thread has received several replies from people on social networking site X, with a significant number expressing their apprehension over the unfortunate incidents that have affected Amanda. However, despite being intensified as a means of self-defense in response to sexual harassment, the post still garnered unfavorable reactions from certain irresponsible X users who attribute Amanda's negative experiences to her own errors and perceive the thread as a rationalization for her reckless behavior (Permana, 2023).

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The study conducted by Rosyidah and Nurdin (2018) asserts that instances of sexual harassment on social media are a manifestation of recurrent conduct resulting from the absence of oversight and focused attention from the

immediate surroundings. This lack of supervision and attention has the capacity to incite behaviors that contravene established norms. Sexual harassment has emerged as a widespread manifestation of aberrant conduct resulting from inadequate understanding of sexual education, insufficient parental and environmental oversight, and a limited awareness among adolescents on the responsible use of social media. The reactions to Amanda Zahra's discussion on social media X exemplify the tendency to disregard or exploit women's groups within the realm of sexual harassment for personal gain.

The Significance of Muted Group Theory in Sexual Harassment Case

Muted Group Theory demonstrates that the collective experiences of minority groups are frequently not given due recognition in the prevailing narrative. In this particular instance, Amanda Zahra's experiences may have been construed or diminished to a mere alibi or rationale for actions that provoked controversy or public blame.

According to Amanda Zahra's story, victims of sexual harassment frequently have their voices and experiences ignored or questioned in public discourse. This is evident in both the lack of assistance they receive and the contemptuous remarks or defenses offered by those who engage in such behavior. This phenomena, where the influence and authority of particular individuals on the platform can affect how victims' accounts are perceived or questioned, is frequently seen in comments to Amanda Zahra on social networking platform X. Arguments that minimize or place the blame on the victim rather than focusing on the structural problems with sexual harassment are clear examples of this.

The polarized reaction from the public, consistently aligning with the criminal rather than the victim, exemplifies how Amanda Zahra's voice can be suppressed by the prevalence of narratives that do not show preference for the victim. Hence, it is imperative to modify public communication and social media regulations in order to create a more equitable environment for voices that are frequently marginalized and to tackle prevailing disparities. The integration of this theory into the examination of the sexual harassment encountered by Amanda Zahra in the case study reveals that power disparities and structural dominance exert an impact on both individual encounters and social reactions.

Muted Group Theory emphasizes behavior that is more focused on justice and humanity while offering a solid foundation for comprehending these dynamics. This emphasizes the need for changes to social media and public communication rules in order to overcome current disparities and give

frequently underrepresented perspectives a more equitable platform. Through the integration of this theory with the case study analysis of Amanda Zahra's sexual harassment, it becomes evident that individual experiences and social reactions are shaped by power differentials and structural dominance. The notion of muted groups also draws attention to the power imbalances in communication, whereby dominant groups have the ability to obscure stories and cast doubt on the experiences of marginalized groups.

Victims face a multifaceted dilemma when deciding to reveal instances of sexual harassment on social media. This decision is influenced by various factors, including internal pressure to address the issue, worries about social stigma, the possibility of retaliation from the offender, social exclusion, feelings of powerlessness, and the potential adverse effects on their personal lives and employment security (Malik et al., 2022). A further determinant of the underreporting by survivors of sexual abuse is the presence of secondary victimization during the reporting procedure (Drewett et al., 2021). The concept of secondary victimization refers to a demeaning and exasperating behavior perpetrated by law enforcement and the justice system, resulting in persistent emotional distress suffered by a survivor while reporting instances of abuse (EIGE, 2024).

One of the primary causes of the rise in mistrust toward the legal system and organizations that are meant to offer safety is secondary victimization. Many victims believe that they won't receive justice from the judicial system, or that it might even make things worse. They can be concerned that no one will pay attention to or take their reports seriously, which can make them feel hopeless and prevent them from asking for assistance. This mistrust is frequently made worse by unfavorable past experiences, instances in which justice was not done, and a lack of backing from organizations that ought to treat sexual harassment complaints with the appropriate tact (Maulida et al., 2024). An important influence on the victim's decision not to disclose sexual harassment is psychological in nature. Deep trauma is often experienced by victims, who may feel unprepared or incapable of handling the emotionally taxing and protracted reporting process (Adinda et al., 2024).

Their perception of trauma may worsen as a result of this process, which frequently compels individuals to recollect upsetting incidents. Because of the emotional and psychological strain they endure, victims may feel comfortable sharing their stories with others, even when doing so may prevent them from getting the help and justice they require. Furthermore, it is not unusual for them to be the target of allegations or inquiries that place the blame on them, such as inquiries into the attire they were wearing at the time of the occurrence or the reasons behind their failure to refuse the offender. The belief that victims may

be to blame for what transpired is indicated by the prevalence of secondary victimization, which can exacerbate their circumstances. In fact, victims who are unable to produce solid proof are sometimes thought to be making up their allegations (Lavenia, 2022).

The public's unfavorable reaction to Amanda Zahra's thread detailing her experiences with sexual harassment makes sense when viewed through the prism of muted group theory. According to Kramarae's theory, it might be challenging for members of minority groups to properly express their concerns. In this setting, the language and social structures are dominated by masculine viewpoints, making it difficult for Amanda, a woman closely identified with weak and powerless attitudes, to convey her experiences. In this situation, women are unable to communicate their experiences and sentiments in a way that is deemed legitimate or acceptable by the wider public since the language they use on social media frequently reflects the beliefs and perspectives of men (R. M. Setyowati & Watie, 2022).

Adherent standards and social structures frequently influence adverse reactions to delicate matters like sexual harassment. Due to a lack of information or denial of the problem, many people may feel awkward or unwilling to accept and support the experiences of victims. The negative reaction to Amanda Zahra's thread may, in this instance, be a reflection of the predominance of masculine viewpoints that regard sexual harassment as inappropriate conversation material or even as attention-seeking behavior. This highlights how social structures and accepted norms frequently silence victims' voices and prevent them from getting the assistance they require.

Furthermore, social media frequently becomes entangled in the same power and influence dynamics as conventional media, despite serving as a forum for the expression of ideas and personal stories. This platform frequently mirrors the power disparities that currently exist in society. Victims may feel more marginalized as a result of unfavorable evaluations or condescending remarks. Social stigma and gender prejudice impede Amanda Zahra's efforts to communicate her horrific experiences, making it difficult for the public to comprehend and support her. Conservative or male social media users can react negatively to Amanda Zahra's thread on the platform, even rejecting it, which would just make the victims feel more alone.

Therefore, advancing gender justice and aiding in the attempts to redress social inequalities in modern society require a deeper understanding of how social institutions affect how oppressed groups' experiences are represented and acknowledged. Furthermore, this event shows how people like Amanda Zahra may utilize social media as a tool to challenge the established power structures. While social media presents certain hazards and obstacles, it also gives

excluded groups a forum to speak their own interests, even though there is a chance that their experiences would be ignored or dismissed.

Conclusion

The relationship between Amanda Zahra's exposure of sexual harassment on social network X and the research supporting Muted Group Theory emphasizes the intricacy of female power dynamics in communication. According to the Muted Group Theory, women frequently find it difficult to properly communicate their experiences because of language and social systems that are dominated by masculine viewpoints. In Amanda Zahra's case, societal standards and the terminology that was prevalent at the time may have had an impact on how people saw and interpreted her experience of sexual harassment. This demonstrates how a power imbalance in communication is frequently the root cause of the incapacity to communicate experiences effectively.

The unfavorable reaction Amanda's thread received from the community is indicative of societal norms and mechanisms that often minimize or conceal sexual harassment situations. Many people may react with suspicion or rejection when faced with this topic because they feel frightened or uneasy about it. This supports the claim that victims' voices are frequently ignored or undervalued by current social systems, which makes it harder for them to get the help and understanding they require. This rejection could be an indication of the persistence of profoundly ingrained male viewpoints in society.

Finally, how people respond to delicate topics is greatly influenced by the power relations on social media. Social media gives victims a forum to talk about their experiences, but it is not totally free from societal norms and viewpoints. Amanda may thus combat stigma, spread awareness, and encourage social change by sharing on social media X. But there are risks associated with this use as well, such the possibility of unfavorable public perceptions or unpleasant reactions emerging. However, social media X still has a significant impact on the recovery and self-determination of victims of sexual abuse. This highlights how crucial it is to create a more accepting and compassionate environment in order to effectively hear and value the voices of victims.

The study's limitations encompass a restricted emphasis on particular social media posts, perhaps overlooking viewpoints from additional victim groups. Furthermore, the methodology employed may lack sufficient depth to adequately encompass the subtleties and wider context of sexual harassment events. Future research should expand to encompass a broader array of social media platforms and incorporate varied data collection methodologies,

including in-depth interviews and surveys. This will facilitate a more thorough understanding of the effects of sexual harassment in online.

Moreover, it is essential to examine how variables such as age, socioeconomic level, and cultural background may affect an individual's experience and reaction to harassment. Incorporating an examination of these variables would augment the discourse on limitations and yield a more profound understanding of the underlying dynamics. Extended research is highly advisable to comprehend the enduring impacts of abuse experiences on the mental health and well-being of victims. Consequently, it is anticipated that next research will yield more comprehensive and valuable insights for policy formulation and the implementation of more effective interventions.

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