



## Gendered oppression and textual power: A critical discourse analysis of online gender-based violence in the RK case on IDNTimes.com

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*DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61126/dtcs.v3i2.117>*

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Keywords:

critical discourse  
analysis  
online gender-  
based violence  
IDNTimes  
mass media  
Sara Mills

### ABSTRACT

This study addresses the increasing prevalence of Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) in Indonesia, which continues to affect both women and men, although women remain the most vulnerable and disproportionately impacted. Focusing on the case of RK, a public figure whose explicit videos with her former partner were circulated online, this research highlights not only the fragility of privacy and consent in the digital era but also the ideological mechanisms maintained through the media's framing and textual production. The study aims to analyze how media representation shapes public perception, moral judgment, and emotional engagement with RK's case. Employing a qualitative approach and Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis framework, it examines multiple articles from \*Idntimes.com\* to uncover linguistic strategies, power relations, and gendered ideologies embedded in the narratives. The findings reveal consistent portrayals of RK as a passive, powerless, and morally suspect victim, reinforcing a culture of victim-blaming while simultaneously evoking limited empathy. These media constructions mirror broader social, cultural, and structural inequalities in Indonesia's treatment of women involved in sexual scandals. Ultimately, this study calls for more ethical and gender-sensitive media practices that amplify victims' voices and promote empathetic, equitable, and socially conscious public discourse on sexual violence.

### Citation suggestion:

Agdelia, S. P., & Kartika, A. (2025). Gendered oppression and textual power: A critical discourse analysis of online gender-based violence in the RK Case on IDNTimes.com. *Digital Theory, Culture & Society*, 3(2), 70–75. <https://doi.org/10.61126/dtcs.v3i2.117>

Received 12 September 2025; Received in revised form 11 October 2025; Accepted 12 October 2025; Published online 25 December 2025.

## Introduction

Advances in digital technology have had a significant impact on social interaction patterns and the dissemination of information in the modern era. On the one hand, technology has facilitated communication and access to various digital platforms. On the other hand, this progress has also given rise to new challenges, one of which is the increase in digital crime or cybercrime (Muhammad, 2019). One form of digital crime that has been in the spotlight in recent years is Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV), which is violence that occurs in the digital space with women as the main victims. OGBV is not only in the form of online sexual harassment but also includes the distribution of intimate content without consent, hacking of personal data, sexual extortion (sextortion), as well as gender-based insults and threats (Butarbutar, 2023).

According to Utami (2021), OGBV is a form of internet abuse that has serious psychological impacts on victims. Forms of OGBV include the distribution of intimate content without permission, sexual threats, blackmail, doxing, cyber grooming, and Non-Consensual Intimate Images (NCII) (Kusuma & Arum, 2017). OGBV reflects the power imbalance between men and women that has long been rooted in the patriarchal social system. In the digital space, this violence tends to increase because perpetrators feel protected by anonymity and weak legal regulations. OGBV mostly happens to women, as reflected in the 2023 data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women, which recorded 1,801 reports of OGBV cases with the majority of victims being women, showing the high vulnerability of this group.

One case of OGBV that received public attention and was intensively reported by the mass media was the distribution of an

intimate video of a female artist with the initials RK in 2023. Unfortunately, a number of media outlets tended to highlight the sensational aspects of this case, showing the emotional and dramatic sides and even highlighting the victim's body and sexuality. However, IDNTimes.com was considered to have taken a more ethical approach by emphasizing the legal aspects and protection of victims in its reporting. This media outlet has implemented Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for handling sexual violence since 2022 and revised them in 2024 as a form of commitment to gender-sensitive reporting (Wartanusa, 2024).

In this context, the media plays an important role in shaping public opinion. Media coverage is not neutral; it is the result of social construction that is laden with values and ideology (Lubis & Nasution, 2023). Therefore, how female victims of OGBV are represented in the media will greatly determine how society views this violence. This study aims to analyze the representation of female victims of OGBV in digital media coverage, using the case study of the coverage of the RK artist case on *Idntimes.com*. This study uses Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis approach, which examines the position of the subject-object and the reader in the text and media narrative. In addition, this study also uses Janet Saldman Chafed's theory of doing gender to understand how gender identity is constructed and negotiated in the digital public sphere. Thus, this study is expected to contribute to the study of media, gender, and digital violence in Indonesia.

## Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative method to describe and analyze in depth the representation of women victims of online gender-based violence (OGBV) in IDNTimes.

com news articles, particularly in the case of artist RK. The qualitative approach allows researchers to understand the meaning behind social phenomena in a contextual manner, focusing on the perceptions, actions, and experiences of the research subjects (Moleong, 2010). Using Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis, this study examines how the positions of subjects and objects are presented in the text, as well as how readers and writers are ideologically constructed in media narratives (Sara Mills, 2004).

This research was conducted through observation of the digital media IDNTimes.com as the main source of news text data related to reports of Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) experienced by an artist with the initials RK. This selection was based on a progressive approach to the issue of Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV). The research was conducted in May, June, and October 2023.

Data collection was carried out using documentation techniques by compiling documents, notes, books, and archives related to the research subject (Creswell, 2014). Documentation techniques were used to collect and analyze four news articles from IDNTimes.com from May to October 2023.

This research was analyzed using Sara Mills' (1995) critical discourse analysis, highlighting the subject-object position and the reader of the text as part of the power structure that influences the presentation and meaning of discourse. Mills emphasizes the importance of feminist stylistics to reveal the hidden ideology in language and media narratives. The analysis was conducted at three levels, namely words, sentences, and discourse, to uncover the mechanisms of representation and strategies of marginalization of women in the news.

## Results and Discussion

### *Janet Saltzman Chafetz's doing gender theory*

The doing gender theory developed by Janet Saldman Chafed (2017) is a feminist framework that highlights how gender identity is formed and performed through everyday social interactions, as well as how social structures perpetuate gender inequality. Chafed criticizes mainstream sociological theories that ignore the contributions of feminist theory and emphasizes the importance of gender analysis in understanding social injustice. This theory views gender as a social construct that is continuously produced through conversations, social norms, and power relations that favor men. In the context of Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV), this theory is used to analyze how media outlets, such as Idntimes.com, represent women who are victims of OGBV, including in terms of narrative framing, selection of sources, visual language, and gender stereotypes contained in the news. Researchers use this theory to uncover how digital violence against artist RK reflects the reproduction of patriarchal norms and positions women as vulnerable to subordination in the digital space (Chafed, 2017).

### *Critical discourse analysis*

Based on four articles analyzed by researchers, it was found that articles produced by IDNTimes.com were dominated by the artist RK. This can be seen in how the media framed the news by placing RK at the center of the narrative, but in a passive position. Although IDNTimes.com does not explicitly corner RK, they still use stylistics that are laden with sensationalism and gender bias, such as the repeated use of the

term “sex video” and the emphasis on RK’s personal activities on social media. This shows how social media often represents women not only as empowered agents, but as objects of discourse, especially in the context of news related to sexuality and digital privacy.

The position of the object dominated by artist RK is supported by how the news articles published by IDNTimes.com do not include the initials of the victim, while the perpetrator in the news is always given initials. In addition, from the four articles analyzed by the researcher, it can be seen that Brigadier General Ahmad Ramadhan, Head of Public Relations of the Indonesian National Police, was made an active subject in the news as a source who provided the chronology of the case. This shows that the news text reflects gender representation inequality, where RK’s voice as the victim does not appear directly but is mediated by an institution, in this case the police. The positioning of the victim as a subject in the text is found in one of the articles through a paragraph that uses the predicate “I” in the sentence “I have reported this matter to the Criminal Investigation Unit on Monday, May 22, 2023, for handling. For that reason, I leave everything to the police.”

### ***Sara Mills’ and Janet Saltzman Chafetz’s theory in the context of women in Indonesia***

The results of the discussion of Idntimes.com’s digital media analysis of the case of Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) that befell artist RK show that the mass media not only conveys information but also acts as a discourse agent that reproduces patriarchal power structures through the selection of language and unequal gender representation. In the narrative that was formed, RK was more often positioned as an

object that was judged sexually and morally, while the perpetrator was only mentioned briefly without any further elaboration. How the media treated the victim and the perpetrator differently in the texts they produced shows that there is an imbalance in the subject-object structure and a bias in the position of readers who are led to focus on sensation rather than legal substance. The use of the term “sex video” and the repeated mention of RK’s full identity shows that women continue to be burdened with social and moral responsibility, even when they are victims. These findings confirm that Idntimes.com’s journalistic practices are not value-free, but rather reinforce unequal gender norms through gender practices that place women at the center of negative attention in OGBV case reporting.

### ***Gender representation in the media***

Media coverage of the case of Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) that befell artist RK, as analyzed through Sara Mills’ critical discourse approach, shows that digital media such as IDNTimes.com not only convey information but also produce social meanings laden with gender bias and patriarchal power structures. In the narrative that is constructed, subjects such as the police and the media act as controllers of meaning, while artist RK is positioned as an object of discussion and judgment, particularly through the use of diction such as “sex tape” and an emphasis on her physical characteristics, which shows how women’s bodies are represented as visual objects rather than as victims of violence (Mills, 1995). This imbalance is exacerbated by the explicit mention of the victim’s full name, while the perpetrator is only referred to by his initials, without any exploration of his motives or background, thus shifting the focus from the criminal act to moral judgment

of the victim. Within the framework of Janet Saldman Chafed's (2017) theory of doing gender, the media appears to be reproducing traditional gender roles, in which women are required to maintain an image of morality, even in their position as victims. Idntimes.com, through its sensationalist language and framing that emphasizes scandal, has created a reader construct that is directed to judge women based on morality and public image, rather than understanding the context of OGBV as violence that requires legal attention and empathy. Thus, this media outlet is not neutral but rather perpetuates gender inequality and becomes part of the institutions that reinforce patriarchal power relations in contemporary society.

## Conclusion

The results of critical discourse analysis of Idntimes.com's coverage of the case of Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) against artist RK show that IDNTimes.com is not neutral in shaping public discourse, but rather laden with patriarchal ideology. Through Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis, it can be seen that the media positions women as objects that are judged morally and sexually, while male perpetrators receive minimal attention. By choosing sensational diction and emphasizing the victim's body, the media highlights the scandal rather than providing legal education or protection for the victim. This reinforces the patriarchal structure and shows that the media does not side with the victim. Within the framework of Janet Saldman Chafed's theory of doing gender, this report reflects social practices that continue to reproduce unequal gender norms. Women are expected to maintain morality and explain themselves to the public, even when they are victims, while men are free from the pressure of reporting the news, but also play a role in perpetuating

gender inequality through biased and unfair representation in cases of violence against women.

## Declaration of Ownership

This article is our original work.

## Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest to declare in this article.

## Ethical Clearance

This study was approved by the institution.

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