

WOMEN AND CATCALLING: AN ANALYSIS OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND MITIGATING OF VERBAL/NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

Sexual harassment in the form of catcalling is prevalent. This research aims to delve into the factors that contribute to catcalling behavior towards women and develop strategies to minimize its occurrence. Employing a literature review methodology, the study gathers information and data from relevant sources pertaining to the issue. Unlike previous research that solely focused on catcalling forms, this study analyzes contributing factors and mitigation strategies. The findings reveal that catcalling manifests in various forms of verbal and non-verbal communication, including whistling, calling, teasing, touching, and, in the most extreme cases, following, insulting, and assaulting the victim. Analysis of contributing factors highlights the pervasive role of patriarchal culture in society, which places power in the hands of men and objectifies women. Additionally, perpetrators of catcalling are driven by a range of psychological factors, such as attraction, a sense of power over women, self-gratification, and a desire for amusement with friends. Efforts to minimize verbal and non-verbal communication in catcalling, stemming from the understanding that catcalling is a form of sexual harassment, include ignoring the perpetrator and pretending to be preoccupied. While silence can be an alternative, resistance from the victim is more effective.

Keywords: *Catcalling; Patriarchal Culture; Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication; Women.*

INTRODUCTION

Data on sexual violence in Indonesia released by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection shows that in 2023, 18,710 cases of sexual violence will occur with 3,824 male victims and 16,553 female victims, with 10.4% of the perpetrators being female and 89.6% of the perpetrators is male. In terms of the location of the incident, sexual violence occurred in 1,856 public facilities with a total of 2,019 victims (<https://kekerasan.kemenpppa.go.id/ringkasan>).

This data suggests that the perpetrators of sexual violence are dominated by men compared to female perpetrators. In 2014, a video showing a woman being catcalled more than 100 times while walking the streets of New York City went viral and was viewed more than 36 million times in 1 month (Rob Bliss, 2014). This makes women need to be more careful, sexual violence perpetrated in public facilities is also common. This shows that sexual violence can happen anywhere, anytime and can happen to anyone. One form of sexual violence and harassment is catcalling. Catcalling behavior has become a phenomenon that can often be found in society in general. Public places are often places where harassment by strangers occurs, so places such as parks and public transportation are considered less safe for women who often experience catcalls (Eastwood, 2015).

The catcalling phenomenon is a form of verbal and nonverbal communication that harasses the victim. This means that catcalling is a form of communication that harasses both verbally and nonverbally. Verbal communication is communication that uses words in spoken or written form. Verbal communication using language plays a very important role because it is a form of translating one's thoughts to other people or message recipients. Meanwhile, nonverbal communication is a human action sent intentionally which is then interpreted according to the goals of the sender of the message with the potential to obtain feedback. Nonverbal communication can take the form of symbols such as gestures, colors, facial expressions, etc. (Kusumawati, 2019).

Ramadhan states that communication is effective because it can impact changes in knowledge, attitudes and behavior by the recipient of the message (communicant) and the changes desired by the sender of the message (communicator). These changes can be seen from feedback (Ramadhania, 2021). In his research related to catcalling and communication studies, it was found that catcalling occurs in 2 types, namely verbal and nonverbal. Verbal catcalling was found in 7 types, namely seeking out private information, calling based on the clothes worn, under the guise of advice, under the guise of praise, using religious elements, making physical comments and expressing negative invitations to the victim. Meanwhile, there are 2 types of nonverbal, namely the use of body parts and non-body parts.

Iflah in his research stated that catcalling is considered harassment or praise as a form of speech act depending on the interpretation of the recipient (Iflah et al., 2021). The recipients of catcalling feel more uncomfortable than feeling like they are being praised by the perpetrator. The recipient of catcalling cannot tolerate catcalling as a compliment because he feels it is done by a stranger, so catcalling becomes something that is inappropriate for him to do. Although basically, this goes back to the recipient who perceives catcalling as a compliment or even an act that causes discomfort.

Another opinion states that catcalling is part of rape culture. This behavior is at the second layer of the rape culture pyramid. Even though it is actually still at the level of mild harassment, this behavior cannot be considered reasonable or normal. This

behavior will be increasingly difficult to eliminate if society gets used to making catcalling normal (Hidayat & Setyanto, 2020). Afrian & Susanti (2022) stated that the catcalling phenomenon is an act that is not in accordance with moral norms, but this is considered something that occurs spontaneously. Not a few Indonesian people think that catcalling is a joke in interactions so they are not aware that they are the victim or perpetrator of this act.

How to distinguish between catcalling, including harassment or jokes? That, is each individual's perception. So, everyone should avoid catcalling. "Because even if it's a joke, it can make other people feel humiliated," explained Prof. Myrtati. He said that catcalling has no limits, so there should be no negotiation involved. That's why it's best for someone not to catcall. (<https://www.detik.com/edu/detikpedia/d-6706719/sampai-mana-batasan-catcalling-ketua-satgas-ppks-unair-beri-jawaban>). Based on his opinion, it can be concluded that catcalling is a personal act so that the assessment of the act can only be interpreted by the victim, so that individuals who carry out acts of catcalling automatically become perpetrators of sexual harassment. Someone who catcalls is considered a perpetrator of sexual harassment, but society generally believes that this is a normal habit.

Dewi (2019) stated that 83.3% of correspondents who filled out her research survey said there was a need for rules, while 16.7% said there was no need for rules against catcalling. Most of those who say that there is no need for special regulations against catcalling are of the opinion that these regulations could criminalize people who carry out catcalling with the intention of joking, victims should be able to handle it themselves by regulating how they dress and that catcalling is a male instinct. Ethics and norms of politeness are considered to be able to reduce catcalling. One correspondent said that it all depends on women, if they don't like it then there is no need to respond to catcalling, there is no need to make rules because the state does not need to interfere with things like this, because this is an ethical issue and ethics has been taught from elementary school to university. This shows that the victims of catcalling, who are usually women, are only used as "objects" who can be treated as they please. Correspondents in this study consider catcalling to be a common thing, so women who tend to wear revealing clothes are a driving factor for catcalling. Of course, this view is very dangerous because catcalling is an act of harassment that someone should be more restrained in when they want to do it.

The catcalling phenomenon is a form of verbal and nonverbal communication that harasses the victim. This means that catcalling is a form of communication that harasses both verbally and nonverbally. Catcalling is the use of obscene words, verbal expressions and also nonverbal expressions that occur in public places, for example: on roads, sidewalks and bus stops. Verbally, catcalling is usually done through whistling or comments about a woman's appearance. Nonverbal expressions also

include glances or physical gestures that act to provide an assessment of a woman's appearance (Chhun, 2010; Eastwood, 2015).

Thalia & Destiwati (2022) stated in their research that catcalling verbal and nonverbal communication carried out by someone constitutes sexual harassment. Catcalling verbal communication is divided into 6 sub-variables, namely vocabulary, speed, voice intonation, humor, brevity and clarity and appropriate timing. Meanwhile, in nonverbal communication, there are 4 sub-variables, namely, communication atmosphere, elements of self-statement such as touch, touch, body movements and paralinguistic elements (voice characteristics and disturbances). This research also shows that catcalling communication has a high influence on anxiety for the victim.

The catcalling phenomenon in society is a common thing that occurs in everyday life. This phenomenon was initially considered normal, not a taboo, in fact this action was behavior that was usually carried out as an introductory greeting by someone. The phenomenon of catcalling is usually done to someone they don't know and usually occurs in women. Fairchild & Rudman (2008) stated that harassment by strangers is a very real, common and often unpleasant experience in women's lives. Being catcalled, stared at, whistled at, even groped and pulled are monthly, weekly, and for some women, daily experiences. In line with the opinion above, catcalling includes verbal and nonverbal behavior that is unwanted and offensive to women. This behavior includes whistling, staring, physical touching, and/or actual comments and more seriously insulting, stalking or attacking women (DelGreco et al., 2020; Farmer & Smock Jordan, 2017).

According to Walton & Pedersen (2022), research conducted on 258 men showed that 33.4% carried out catcalling. The majority of catcallers stated that the action taken was glancing (looking) as the main catcalling behavior, with 57% of catcallers only glancing and not doing any other behavior; 24.4% reported engaging in leering along with engaging in one or more other catcalling behaviors. Glaring is perhaps the most commonly reported form of catcalling behavior because victims consider it the least invasive, most defensible activity - and least likely to be rejected. Catcalling behavior is not only practiced in the form of things that can directly disturb the victim but also in small things.

Seeing how important the problem of catcalling is, which is considered an ordinary act but is included in sexual harassment behavior, it is very important to write this research with the aim of understanding the factors that contribute to communication harassment, catcalling behavior and efforts to minimize catcalling behavior. This is based on the fact that several studies such as Walton & Pedersen (2022), Rudman (2008), Delgreco et al., (2020), Farmer & Smock Jordan (2017) still focus on the types and forms of catcalling. This research was prepared with the aim that the factors can be understood specifically and comprehensively. Previous studies

still focused on forms of catcalling and did not discuss in depth the factors that can contribute to catcalling behavior in both perpetrators and victims. Apart from that, there is no research that specifically attempts to provide alternative solutions to reduce catcalling behavior.

METHOD

This article was written using the literature review methods, which took data from several published journals and articles and can be accessed via Google Scholar and Publish or Perish. Library research is a way to obtain information or data from sources related to the issues discussed in the research. The data obtained was then analyzed using descriptive analysis methods. The descriptive analysis method is carried out by presenting the facts and then carrying out an analysis that not only describes but also provides adequate understanding and explanation and looks for theoretical references from the cases or problems found. As stated by Creswell, John. W. (2014; 40) that a literature review is a summary written of articles in journals, books, and documents that describe past and present theories and knowledge and organizes the literature into the necessary topics and documents. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification (Sugiyono, 2013).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Patriarchy Culture

Ramadhan et al., (2021) stated that catcalling occurs because women are still objects and not subjects in social life. This research shows that 3.63 percent of Pertamina University students assess the social status of women as very low. All of this cannot be separated from the formation of an Indonesian social structure which still considers women as second-class citizens. Based on the percentage of respondents, 59 percent thought that catcalling was caused by a patriarchal culture that was ingrained in society. The societal stigma that places women as objects is a common reason why women become victims of catcalling. Around 63 percent of student respondents stated that stigma was deeply embedded in society. Interestingly, power is still a key component in how men expect women to react to street harassment. This is born from men's assumption that women basically want to be praised for their appearance and the assumption that women will be pleasant in all interactions (DelGreco et al., 2020; Walton & Pedersen, 2022).

Triyadi (2017) stated that the form of sexual harassment perpetrated by men against women is nothing more than a form of expression of masculinity in relationships with women. From this it is clear that patriarchal power is the main trigger behind discrimination or violence against women. In patriarchal culture, there is subordination and power gaps between men and women as well as domination. Violence against women continues to occur because women with their unique bodies

are seen as secondary creatures, objects, and can be treated as they please and can become property (Whitworth, 2023; Wibben, 2016).

Based on the data above, patriarchal culture is still a strong reason that catcalling behavior is still ingrained in society. This was acknowledged by respondents that stigma is deeply rooted in society so that women's social status is low in the eyes of society. Women are only used as objects, secondary creatures so that sexual harassment in the form of catcalling can be carried out on women

Psychology of The Perpetrator Vs The Victim Psychology of The Perpetrator Vs The Victim

Walton & Pedersen (2022) in their research stated that 44% of catcallers stated that they did not care about feedback, the perpetrators were only looking for satisfaction, including in relation to group dynamics. Factors that are related to the group such as the influence of group norms or opportunities to establish group ties. This is because catcalling has the function of strengthening group cohesion or providing entertainment among friends, which does not depend on a particular response from the target or victim, as well as the purpose of the catcalling being carried out. Additionally, men who catcall with more sinister intentions may enjoy objectifying women and harassing women despite the target's reaction. In contrast, some catcallers endorse self-gratifying motives aimed at improving mood, thus suggesting that it is reasonable to expect that some men catcall out of the hope of receiving a specific and desired reaction that will in turn provide them with satisfaction, such as an ego boost. The perpetrator has a motive of personal satisfaction when catcalling with the aim of improving his heart, getting a response and satisfying his personal ego, but it doesn't stop there. Catcalling behavior is carried out to build cohesiveness between friends in the group with the aim of providing entertainment to each of his friends, even though the victim is not. provide a response to the catcalling that was carried out.

The perpetrator's motivation for catcalling is positive sexual influence, which shows that catcalling is motivated by the desire to express sexual interest in the target who likes the woman and the belief that catcalling is a normal way of flirting. The next motivation falls into the flirting/flattery category with the intention of 'praising a woman' or 'because a woman likes her'. Catcallers find ogling or commenting on their appearance a way of complimenting their targets. Men are more likely than women to interpret catcalling as a compliment. The perpetrators do not think that the effects of catcalling are not appreciated or can have a negative effect on the victim (in Gennaro & Ritschel, 2019; Walton & Pedersen, 2022).

DelGreco et al., (2020) stated that men engage in behavior to express concern or liking, as a motivation to carry out street harassment. Men believe that street harassment is a pleasurable experience. Men do use street harassment as a way to change the behavior of the recipient, but men do not view it as a negative experience

and do not expect negative reactions from women. The majority of men want women to respond to street harassment in more pleasant ways such as smiling, waving, and starting a conversation (Walton & Pedersen, 2022).

After we talk about the psychological side of the perpetrators, the next article will discuss the victim's side. Eastwood (2015) stated that it is very difficult to determine what is meant by catcalling because psychologically women have different responses when receiving catcalling. Some women feel happy, but there are some other women who don't like it. In fact, some women feel sad when they are not catcalled by men.

In line with the opinion above, in other opinions harassment by strangers can cause women to make changes in behavior including changing routes or means of transportation, avoiding certain geographical locations, avoiding going out at night, or avoiding certain people (Livingston 2015). This is because women feel uncomfortable with the catcalling, they receive so they do not want to receive this treatment again. Finally, women as victims prefer to stay away from certain places, times or away from people suspected of carrying out street harassment in the form of catcalling. This also consistently happens to women who wear the hijab based on research from Mulianti & Syukur (2021) which states that female students who wear the hijab try to avoid certain streets in order to minimize the recurrence of catcalling. Some female students become less confident when on the street because they often get catcalling, all they can do is submit and don't want to make eye contact, especially with the opposite sex, then it's awkward to meet new people because they are afraid that new people will do the same as them the person who once catcalled him.

Fairchild (2010) stated that individual differences result in acceptance or rejection of harassment. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that women may enjoy compliments on the first day then be angered by subsequent catcalling. It seems highly likely that the circumstances in which harassing behavior occurs can change the perception and perspective of the target. In certain situations, light catcalling may be considered a threat, but in others it is considered a compliment. McDonald (2022) states that sometimes catcalling is harmless, is not considered offensive or annoying by the target, and sometimes the target may have never been called before and so has not received repeated catcalling. Women tend to accept the first time a woman experiences catcalling behavior, this is because women consider it to be a form of praise given to her, but over the next few experiences, women begin to have different perceptions and perspectives, which causes anger.

In line with the opinion above, Fisher et al., (2019) stated that the impact of catcalling experiences can vary depending on the woman's experience of sexualization. Some women may find sexualization flattering, while others may be offended. This is in line with what Pitaloka & Putri (2021) stated that in their research,

women who had experience of catcalling thought that it was a form of validation of their beauty.

DelGreco et al., (2020) stated that women believe men want a more diverse response to street harassment. Maybe if women know the reaction men want, it will be easier for women to decide whether they want to make efforts to control the situation or not. Additionally, because most women respond to street harassment in a passive manner, it is difficult to distinguish whether they are using counter-control efforts or simply trying not to engage with the harasser. Women believe that men enjoy street harassment, but they also believe that men do it because they have more power or see a change in the victim's behavior. Farmer & Smock Jordan (2017) also stated that women as victims of catcalling prefer to be passive, including ignoring and/or avoiding people who make catcallers.

Women as victims basically do not really know what men want from catcalling, this causes women to prefer to remain silent and walk away and not respond to the harassment they receive. This is simply done in order not to get too involved with the perpetrators of catcalling, considering that this action is not yet fully considered a wrong action by society in general. Catcalling on the same matter as stated above is part of patriarchal culture, so that women as objects choose to just accept it rather than having to deal further because of the power relations between men and women. In line with the opinion above, Qila et al., (2021) stated that the response given by victims was that most of them remained silent. The victims admitted they were afraid and felt that it was the safest thing to do. This catcalling experience has a negative impact on victims who have experienced it, such as feeling traumatized when they are met in similar conditions.

McCarty et al., (2014) stated that victims of harassment have a greater tendency to accept this treatment from known people than unknown perpetrators. This is because the victim feels the need to maintain good relationships at work so that they are more accepting of harassment carried out by people they know. Acceptance by the victim can perpetuate the abuse again because the relationship continues while if it is done by a stranger then it can just go away.

In the opinion above, the workplace setting is a vulnerable place for sexual harassment which can take the form of catcalling. This is because the victim feels the need to consider several things that are considered more important in order to maintain conduciveness when working. The aspect of maintaining good relationships with co-workers is a more priority thing to maintain than responding seriously to the harassment received. Of course, this is the reason why the practice of sexual harassment can "fertile" because there is no resistance so that the perpetrators can continue to repeat their actions until they look for new victims because there is no deterrent effect that arises from their omission.

Efforts to Minimize Catcalling in Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Verbal and non-verbal communication are two important aspects of sexual harassment, including catcalling. Both are used by the perpetrator to harass the victim and cause various negative impacts. Perpetrators of sexual harassment use words or utterances to humiliate, humiliate and intimidate victims. This can be done through sexual comments about the victim's body or appearance, teasing or teasing of a sexual nature, threats of sexual violence, and orders to perform sexual acts. These harsh and degrading words can make the victim feel humiliated, embarrassed, threatened and helpless. As a result, victims can experience long-term psychological trauma.

Apart from words, perpetrators of sexual harassment also use body language, facial expressions and gestures to reinforce their message of harassment. Disrespectful or intimidating stares, inappropriate or intimidating smiles, sexual or threatening body movements, and angry, aggressive, or passionate facial expressions can all make the victim feel uncomfortable, afraid, and threatened. As a result, the victim's psychological trauma can get worse.

Verbal and non-verbal communication in sexual harassment is often used simultaneously. The perpetrator combines harsh words with threatening body language to manipulate, intimidate, and control the victim. For example, the perpetrator makes rude sexual comments while looking at the victim with an intimidating gaze. This combination makes sexual harassment even more severe and traumatic for the victim. Understanding the relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication in sexual harassment is important to raise awareness, prevent harassment from occurring, and help victims who have experienced it. With education, strict regulations and massive campaigns, it is hoped that sexual harassment, including catcalling, can be minimized and public spaces become safer and more comfortable for everyone.

Farmer & Smock Jordan (2017) stated that women can prevent catcalling by trying to divert attention through the objects they carry and the clothes they wear. Choosing to remain silent and ignore the catcalling that is occurring is a "safe" choice because it can reduce the catcalling actions carried out by the perpetrator. Lastly, even though women know that catcalling behavior does not originate from the choice of clothing or mistakes made, blaming themselves is a way to "take responsibility" for the actions that occurred. In addition, women ignore it because they feel that the harassment does not cause physical harm to them. Women internalize the thought that society blames the victim more because of the clothes they wear, women as victims blame themselves in an effort to reduce their negative thoughts (Saunders et al., 2017), then question whether the catcalling that happened to them was physically detrimental with the aim of neutralize his feelings. Women may use avoidance behavior, such as avoiding eye contact, keeping a low profile, wearing jackets or

headscarves to cover themselves, and/or seeking alternative transportation routes or avoiding places suspected of increasing the potential for harassment.

McCarty et al., (2014) stated that acceptance and choosing to remain silent is one of the factors that catcalling can persist in women. This shows that resistance to catcalling perpetrators is one of the efforts that can be made to deal with perpetrators. This is in line with Martin (2008) who conducted an intervention in the form of a women's studies course. This is effective for high school girls who are at risk in the school environment. The students involved in the intervention began to defend and support each other when faced with sexual harassment. Their feminist awareness and identification appeared to increase as a result of the intervention. Female students began to respect themselves and each other more. An increased sense of personal self-worth contributed to a reluctance to tolerate abusive behavior from others after participating in a research intervention with women. These changes may have been attributable to the intervention because the curriculum components fostered a classroom climate that gave adolescent girls a sense of empowerment they had never felt before.

In the school setting, activities and structured methods need to be intensified to increase students' understanding of sexual harassment, specifically catcalling. This is purely because of the high level of effectiveness which has implications for increasing self-understanding in women. The changes that occur can make victims braver in acting against the perpetrators. Victims feel that sexual harassment is something that cannot be tolerated, so they not only try to look after themselves but also try to look after each other. This can also directly reduce catcalling behavior in general. Perpetrators who encounter resistance may think twice about repeating their actions. Perpetrators can become aware if they receive information that catcalling is a form of sexual harassment, thus preventing them from carrying out this act, moreover, this can lead to the perpetrator being subject to legal sanctions, so this can massively reduce actions that lead to catcalling.

Choosing to remain silent (Qila et al., 2021) when facing catcalling perpetrators is one alternative that women who feel afraid can do. This can be done because some perpetrators of catcalling hope to get a response, such as smiling or other positive responses, which are a form of the victim's acceptance of the behavior given (DelGreco et al., 2020; Walton & Pedersen, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Based on the data collected, it can be concluded that catcalling behavior originates from patriarchal culture in society which is related to power in the hands of men. This results in women being the object of catcalling which is considered sexual harassment. The stigma that women are "second class citizens" perpetuates catcalling as a common habit in society. Psychologically, the perpetrators carry out catcalling due to a feeling of attraction, a sense of power towards women or just a sense of self-

satisfaction and as entertainment with friends in their group. Meanwhile, the victims received catcalling with various reactions, from dislike to feelings of joy. Women who don't like it tend to be passive and ignore the treatment and choose to avoid it as an effort to prevent being catcalled. Increasing understanding of catcalling as part of sexual harassment against women and men can reduce catcalling behavior in public places.

Furthermore, in the communication aspect, catcalling is a form of sexual harassment that occurs in public spaces, where the perpetrator uses verbal and non-verbal communication to harass the victim. Analysis of these two types of communication is important to understand how catcalling occurs and its impact on victims. This research has limitations because it only analyzes literature data, so it cannot describe empirical conditions in various life contexts. Further research is needed with various conditions to test the validity of the factors found. The findings of this research focus more on prevention for victims and have not examined strategies to reduce catcalling behavior among perpetrators. Further research needs to test various strategies, such as educational interventions, behavioral therapy, or law enforcement, to focus on reducing catcalling behavior in perpetrators. A multidisciplinary approach combining psychology, communications, and law can provide a more comprehensive understanding of catcalling.

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