



Research Article

Addressing Revenge Porn Through Islamic Ethics and Cyber Ethics: An Analysis from A Fiqh Sunnah Perspective

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Abstract. This study delves into the phenomenon of revenge porn in Indonesia, examining it through the lenses of Islamic ethics, cyber ethics, and Fiqh Sunnah. In 2023, revenge porn and sextortion constituted a troubling 40% of gender-based violence against women in the country. Employing a mixed-method approach, which combines library research with interviews of Indonesian victims aged 18 to 36, the findings reveal a stark contradiction with Islamic ethics. Revenge porn violates principles of privacy, decency, trust, and mutual consent, and it neglects reputation protection, endangering

individuals. Notably, the study sheds light on the absence of justice in addressing revenge porn, a significant deviation from Islamic principles of justice and fairness. Additionally, the research underscores how revenge porn contradicts cyber ethics, where perpetrators disregard online responsibility, privacy protection, and respectful online behavior. The study advocates for comprehensive measures to uphold ethical standards, providing support for victims, and fostering a secure digital environment that respects individual dignity and rights. A particular emphasis is placed on the significance of cyber ethics in combating revenge porn and addressing the perpetrators' failure to adhere to responsible online behavior.

Keywords: revenge porn; Islamic ethics; cyber ethics.

INTRODUCTION

In an era of digital transformation, where innovation and connectivity abound, a troubling new problem has emerged: revenge porn. Revenge porn, characterized by the non-consensual distribution of explicit content, has emerged as a global problem, and its shadow has extended to Indonesia. Revenge porn is an act of pornography that utilizes the possession of 'legally' obtained pornographic material but is distributed for the purpose of 'revenge' after a relationship breakup (Matsui, 2015).

This practice haunts a wide range of people, from students, office employees to national celebrities with a wide age range from teenagers to adults. This unethical practice not only violates the privacy and dignity of the victims but also has severe psychological and emotional implications. A study conducted by Samantha Bates revealed that victims of revenge porn experience trust issues, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and several other mental health effects. These findings reveal the seriousness of revenge porn, the devastating impacts it has on survivors' mental health, and the similarities between revenge porn and sexual assault (Bates, 2016).

Revenge porn can also be utilized by perpetrators for a variety of reasons. Some individuals have economic motives, while others are motivated by fame or entertainment (Franks, 2015). In fact, the dissemination of explicit images and videos without consent has a very bad impact on its victims. It can cause prolonged suffering for the victims, ranging from mental illness to difficulties in relationships, finding a university, or employment. The situation is further exacerbated by advances in technology and communication, where perpetrators can operate anonymously from anywhere at any time. Content can quickly go viral, the victim's digital footprint can be tracked, and the perpetrator may not feel guilty at all. Unfortunately, with such a huge impact on the victim, society, both in the digital and real world, still makes use of the content or becomes a consumer of the crime, not just showing a tendency to demonize the victim. More worryingly, most of the victims are women.

Revenge porn, also known as non-consensual dissemination of intimate images (NCII), is part of the concept of non-consensual image-based sexual harassment (IBSA). Image-Based Sexual Harassment is an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of harassment tactics involving photographs, images, videos, or created content. IBSA can be perpetrated by strangers, partners, friends, or acquaintances who are or have been intimate. The concept of IBSA is an initiative

proposed by Clare McGlynn and Erika Rackley in 2017 in response to the rise of revenge porn, which is the distribution of photos or videos containing sexual content without consent. The concept of IBSA covers various forms of technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV), including revenge porn or NCII, deepfakes, sextortion, hacking, upskirting, voyeurism, recording or filming scenes of rape and/or sexual abuse, and editing pornographic images that are considered forms of sexual violence (De Santo, 2018).

Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands spanning the equator, is rapidly embracing the digital revolution. With a population of over 270 million, Indonesia has witnessed an unprecedented surge in online activity, including the alarming spread of intimate content. Currently, according to the We Are Social Report, the number of active social media users in Indonesia is 167 million as of January 2023. This number is equivalent to 60.4% of the population in the country. Meanwhile, the time spent playing social media in Indonesia reaches 3 hours and 18 minutes every day. This duration is the tenth highest in the world (Widi, 2023). As Indonesia's digital landscape evolves, it brings with it ethical and legal challenges, particularly with regard to online offenses, including revenge porn. With the proliferation of social media platforms and the ease of sharing content online, revenge porn has become a pervasive problem that requires immediate attention and effective solutions.

Reporting from the awaskbgo.id website, the increase in the use of technology is in line with the increase in cases of online gender-based violence (KBGO). Komnas Perempuan's Annual Report for the 2018-2020 period shows a spike in cases of online gender-based violence (KBGO), from 65 cases to 97, and most recently experienced a spike of up to 300% to 281 cases. From Komnas Perempuan's Catahu for these 3 years, what is striking is the act of spreading non-consensual intimate content, or what is often referred to as revenge porn. From 33 complaints received in 2017, it jumped to 91 complaints in 2019. In line with this note, SAFEnet, through the Digital At-Risks (DARK) Subdivision and the KBGO Awas Campaign launched since November 26, 2019, saw an increasing trend in case complaints related to the distribution of non-consensual intimate content.

According to Komnas Perempuan's 2023 Annual Report, there were 549 cases of gender-based violence involving female victims with ex-boyfriend status and 10 cases with ex-husbands. In this context, 40% of all violence experienced by women was related to revenge porn and sextortion. It is important to note that this figure represents cases reported by victims of gender-based violence with ex-boyfriend status who reported the incident to Komnas Perempuan. However, there are still many other cases that have not been reported. The high number of cases with ex-boyfriends, in addition to ex-husbands, of violence against women online indicates a serious problem with revenge porn. These acts often begin with sextortion, which is a threat to the victim to re-establish the relationship or perform certain actions desired by the perpetrator, which does not always involve financial extortion. If the victim refuses to comply, the sexually charged material is then uploaded as a form of revenge ("CATAHU 2023 Komnas Perempuan," 2023).

To address this issue, a comprehensive study is needed that draws on the wisdom of Islamic ethics and the principles of cyber ethics. Islamic ethics, which is firmly rooted in the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, provides a strong framework for understanding and regulating human behavior. Analyzing revenge porn from an Islamic perspective can explain its prohibitions and consequences in the context of Islamic teachings. Cyber ethics, a contemporary set of moral principles for online behavior, also plays an important role in combating revenge porn. With the high intensity of using the digital space, it is increasingly urgent to socialize the public regarding digital security and privacy protection as part of citizens' human rights (Sugiyanto, 2021).

Research that discusses revenge porn has been conducted by Wahyuni and Saputra (2022) by linking it to the resilience of victims. The results of the study showed that all informants in the study showed the characteristics of resilience and its factors. Research using a victimology perspective has been conducted by O. Sugiyanto (2021), and the findings show that women in revenge porn cases are latent victims. In addition, research on revenge porn and its relation to criminal law has also been conducted by De Santo (2018). The researcher came to the conclusion that Indonesia needs to consider it as sexual violence under Indonesian criminal law. Cyber ethics and Islam towards revenge porn, which have never been explored before, will be discussed in this research. In addition, this research also links modern and religious aspects. Based on the search results of several previous studies, there has been no research on revenge porn that focuses on analyzing the ethics of the Fiqh Sunnah perspective towards it.

This research adopts a mixed-method approach, combining library research with interviews. Library research, or desk research, forms the foundation of the study, enabling a comprehensive exploration of Islamic ethical perspectives on addressing revenge porn (Non-Consensual Intimate Imagery, NCII) through existing literature, academic sources, and historical texts. Interviews with informants who are victims of revenge porn, residing in Indonesia, aged between 18 and 36, and having experienced the issue within the past year, complement the research. Interviews are conducted using a semi-structured format to elicit real-world insights, personal experiences, and perceptions of how Islamic ethics intersect with revenge porn. Data collection methods during interviews involve a combination of interviewing, observing, and documenting to capture qualitative narratives and informants' perspectives while maintaining ethical considerations.

Throughout the research, ethical principles, including privacy and dignity, are rigorously upheld, aligning with Islamic teachings. Informed consent is obtained from interviewees, ensuring the confidentiality of their responses. However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this mixed-method approach. While interviews offer valuable real-world insights, findings may be context-specific and not universally applicable. The small sample size and geographic focus on Indonesia constrain the generalizability of interview results. Nevertheless, the integration of library research and interviews provides a comprehensive understanding of Islamic ethical perspectives on revenge porn within a specific cultural context.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Islamic Ethics and Revenge Porn

Islamic ethics takes a firm stance against revenge porn, as it contradicts several core moral and ethical principles. Here are the central ideas where revenge porn contradicts Islamic ethics:

a. Violation of Privacy and Decency:

Respecting one's privacy and modesty is a cornerstone of Islamic ethics. This concept is clearly violated when intimate photos are shared without permission, as it exposes a person's private life against their will.

مَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

“He who did not expose (the follies of a Muslim) Allah would conceal his follies on the Day of Resurrection.” (Sahih Muslim 2580)

This hadith emphasizes the importance of protecting the honor and privacy of others, and it is a reminder that Allah will reward those who do so. Revenge porn violates Islamic ethics because it violates the rules of one's privacy and honor. It is very important to remember that Islam prohibits all types of harm to others, including emotional and psychological harm. This is a serious offense in Islam, as revenge porn can seriously damage the psychological and emotional well-being of the victim. Revenge porn can have serious mental health implications for the victims. Victims have to face long-term personal and psychological consequences, given that the photos or videos shared can continue to haunt them throughout their lives (Kamal, 2016).

In an interview with a 29-year-old victim, her profound depression and distress stemmed from the distressing fact that not only were her intimate photos shared without her consent, but also the troubling behavior of others who actively disseminated these private images and sought more. This disturbing conduct left her feeling violated and deeply hurt, as it appeared to disregard her fundamental right to privacy and personal dignity. What compounded the emotional toll was the revelation that these images were deliberately sent to her family members, further eroding her sense of privacy and honor. Additionally, the breach extended beyond photos to include the dissemination of sensitive personal data, such as her workplace and educational history, intensifying the invasion of her privacy.

إِنَّ مِنْ أَشَرِّ النَّاسِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَنْزِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ الرَّجُلُ يُفْضِي إِلَى امْرَأَتِهِ وَتُفْضِي إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يَدْنُرُ سِرَّهَا

“The most wicked among the people in the eye of Allah on the Day of judgment is the man who goes to his wife and she comes to him, and then he divulges her secret.” (Sahih Muslim 1437a)

This hadith illustrates that on the Day of Judgment, the most evil person in the eyes of Allah will be a man who has sex with his wife, and she has sex with him, but then he divulges her secret or privacy. This hadith shows how serious privacy

violations are in Islam. Based on this Hadith, divulging the secrets or privacy of one's spouse is considered a very evil act in the eyes of Allah. This reflects the importance of maintaining intimacy and privacy in the marriage relationship.

In the context of the discussion on revenge porn, this hadith provides insights into the importance of maintaining secrets and privacy in conjugal relationships. Revenge porn, which involves the dissemination of intimate content without consent, can be considered an act similar to divulging the secrets of a spouse, which is condemned in the hadith. This understanding of the hadith can be used to show that the practice of revenge porn not only violates social norms but also involves a serious violation of Islamic values, including maintaining honor and privacy in the marital relationship.

b. Breach of Trust and Consent Violation

Islamic ethics underscore the importance of mutual consent in all aspects of human interaction, including marriage. Revenge porn ignores this principle completely, as it involves sharing intimate content without the informed and voluntary consent of all parties involved, which often involves a betrayal of trust and consent in close relationships.

In the context of Islamic ethics, relationships are emphasized as institutions built on the foundation of consent. This ethic emphasizes the importance of honor, trust, and respect for individual rights in a relationship. One of the key principles in Islamic ethics is informed and voluntary consent in all aspects of human interaction, including marital relationships.

Revenge porn, as a practice that involves sharing intimate content without the clear and voluntary consent of all parties involved, essentially violates Islamic ethical principles. It not only tarnishes the dignity of individuals but also undermines the foundations of trust and consent in intimate relationships.

Furthermore, revenge porn can be interpreted as a form of betrayal of the trust that was once given during the course of the relationship. In the hadith mentioned,

أخذتموهن بأمانة الله

"You have taken them as a trust from Allah" (Sunan Ibn Majah 3074), implies that life partners, both husbands and wives, are considered a mandate or trust that God bestows upon them.

As such, the practice of revenge porn can not only be considered an act of violating social norms but also an act of betraying the trust of God given through the bond of marriage. An understanding of Islamic ethics can serve as a strong foundation to condemn and counter this practice, as well as to promote awareness of the importance of consent and honor in every human interaction, especially in the context of marital relationships.

One interviewee, a 22-year-old from Bandung, shared a harrowing experience as a victim of revenge porn. Her ex-boyfriend and ex-best friend maliciously distributed her intimate photos in a LINE chat group without her consent. The consequences were severe, leading her to delay her thesis defense and graduation due

to overwhelming depression and acute embarrassment. The emotional impact of this violation endured for an extended period, underscoring the long-term effects of revenge porn.

A similar account was shared by Fani from Bekasi, who faced a similar invasion of privacy when her intimate photos were distributed to her boyfriend's group of friends without her consent, at the age of 18. Fani had originally given consent for her boyfriend to view the photos, making the breach of trust all the more distressing. The shock and stress she experienced upon learning of the photo's spread were profound. In the aftermath, Fani contemplated quitting school, unable to face the embarrassment and fear that the news might reach her new campus. The ordeal left her isolated, as she found that many people no longer respected her, and she struggled to maintain friendships.

c. Disregard for Reputation Integrity:

Islamic ethics places a high value on maintaining one's reputation. Revenge pornography, a despicable act, can tarnish one's reputation, which directly contradicts Islam's commitment to upholding the honor and dignity of every person. In the Quran, it is explicitly stated in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:12),

وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا

"And do not spy, nor backbite one another.," which emphasizes the prohibition against actions that damage the reputation of others.

Moreover, the sayings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ recorded in Sahih Al-Bukhari underscore the sanctity of individual reputations within the Muslim community. He asserted that the blood, property, and honor of a Muslim are inviolable, emphasizing Islam's deep commitment to safeguarding the reputation of its adherents. Narrated by the father of Abdurrahman bin Abi Bakrah:

فَإِنَّ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ وَأَعْرَاضَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ حَرَامٌ كَحُرْمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا فِي شَهْرِكُمْ هَذَا فِي بَلَدِكُمْ هَذَا.

"Verily! Your blood, property and honor are sacred to one another (i.e. Muslims) like the sanctity of this day of yours, in this month of yours and in this city of yours." (Sahih Al-Bukhari 67)

In an interview, Dea, a 21-year-old revenge porn victim from Yogyakarta, shared her feelings. According to her, "Revenge porn is horrible, because we, as Muslims, should take care of each other, and revenge porn is exactly the opposite of that." Dea suggested that if someone is ever guilty of exchanging intimate photos, they should stop at that stage. She emphasized the importance of not taking revenge as it can damage one's reputation. Dea, who is an honors student, also shared how her good name was damaged after her photos were shared. Dea felt very sorry for all the victims of revenge porn and advised others, "Don't even think about spreading revenge porn or even being a perpetrator. Keep the good name of your fellow

Muslims." Her statement reflects concern for the negative impact of such acts and emphasizes the value of maintaining a good name within the Muslim community.

The act of revenge porn not only tarnishes one's dignity and violates one's privacy, but also contains elements of spreading adultery. In the context of Islam, this practice is highly emphasized as a very heinous act. Verse 19 of Surah An Nur in the Qur'an explicitly states:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

"Indeed, those who love to see indecency spread among the believers will suffer a painful punishment in this life and the Hereafter. Allah knows and you do not know."

This verse emphasizes that people who deliberately spread vile and harmful acts, especially those related to unfaithfulness in intimate relationships, will face a painful punishment both in this world and in the hereafter. Thus, the Islamic perspective emphasizes that revenge porn not only involves aspects of punishment in this world but also carries severe consequences before Allah ﷻ. A close look at this verse should serve as a serious warning to those who engage in such practices to reflect on the moral and spiritual repercussions that may arise from their actions.

d. Endangerment of Others

Islamic ethics strictly prohibits actions that harm others. Revenge pornography inflicts emotional and psychological harm on the victim, which goes against the Islamic principle of avoiding actions that cause harm or distress to fellow human beings.

There is a ruling in the discipline of qawaid fihiyyah that states, "It is not permissible to do anything that harms oneself or others." This noble guideline is in line with the words of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).

لَا ضَرَرَ وَلَا ضِرَارَ

"There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm." (Sunan Ibnu Majah no. 2340).

This shows that Shariah prohibits dharar (doing harm). As a result, a Muslim is not allowed to act or speak in a way that could harm himself or fellow Muslims without justification. Moreover, this prohibition becomes more severe if it affects family members or others who are required to receive ihsân treatment.

"My ex was horrible, but he wasn't the only horrible person; everyone who knew or was even involved in spreading my video was too; most of them spread it even though it was vague, but it made people curious, and they found out and watched it. I wanted to end my life because of revenge porn. Why? Because the impact was so long-lasting. The images circulated in April, and the impact was long-lasting. My family turned against me the following month, and I was fired from my job the following month. It's horrible, I think." Tasya, a 31-year-old South Tangerang resident

and victim of revenge porn, stated, "I still have to visit a psychologist and am still looking for a new job.

"In my opinion, this is the worst cruelty because the nasty photos are spread to people who shouldn't be able to see them, so they become curious, lustful, and evil because the revenge porn photos are spread, and what's even worse is that these people actually help spread it instead of helping the victim." A similar complaint was made by Kayla, a revenge porn victim from Medan.

e. Lack of Justice

Islamic ethics affirms the fundamental principles of justice and honesty in every human interaction. Revenge pornography, by its very nature, violates these principles as it unfairly subjects individuals to humiliation and suffering without justifiable cause or due process. It undermines the basic values of fairness and honesty embedded in Islamic ethics.

In the hadith, it was narrated from 'Ubadah bin Samit that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) ruled: "There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm." Indicating a principle, that is:

لا ضرر ولا ضرار

This principle emphasizes the importance of avoiding actions that may cause harm or retaliate against harm. Revenge porn, in this context, is a form of revenge that is not only illegal but also exceeds reasonable limits. It is important to note that perpetrators are responsible for their illegal actions, which involve sharing intimate photos or videos without consent, which is a violation of privacy and trust.

It is important to note that revenge porn does not only stem from personal relationships but can also arise from other malicious acts, such as online loan cases. For example, in the case of online loans, victims may experience a loss of justice when personal data, including private photos or videos, is exposed as a form of pressure or threat from the lender. This shows that security challenges in cyberspace are not only related to personal relationships but also cover other aspects of daily life. This reinforces the urgency of keeping personal data safe, managing privacy policies, and being highly vigilant against potential threats in the increasingly complex world of the internet. Self-protection is not just limited to interpersonal relationships but also involves broad caution in dealing with personal information, especially in an era where AI technology can be used for manipulative activities.

One notable aspect that underscores the inherent injustice of revenge porn is the disproportionate burden it places on the victim. In these situations, the victim is the one who faces public shame, emotional distress, and the potential for long-term harm, while the perpetrator often escapes the same level of scrutiny and repercussions. This stark asymmetry in consequences is fundamentally unfair, as it fails to hold the wrongdoer accountable for their actions. Furthermore, it's important to note that engaging in revenge porn is, in itself, a wrongful act, as it involves the sharing of intimate photos or videos without consent, which is a violation of privacy and a breach of trust. Therefore, both the victim and the perpetrator are involved in

the same unethical and unjust act. This further accentuates the need for Islamic ethics to condemn such behavior, as it goes against the principles of fairness, accountability, and the prohibition of causing harm to others.

All the victims of revenge porn interviewed for this study admitted that the revenge porn they experienced was unfair because only the victim was adversely affected. whereas the perpetrator should have been sanctioned too, because he had committed defamation. Besides that, actually, when at a good stage of their relationship, they sent intimate photos to each other, flirting with each other, so why, when revenge porn occurs, only photos of the victim are spread? when the perpetrator has also sent intimate photos. Melinda, aged 26, complained, "It's not fair because, when it's only me who loses, when we were both bad before, why am I the only one who is labeled bad now?"

In essence, revenge porn contradicts Islamic ethical values through: a) disregard for privacy and decency; b) betrayal of trust and violation of consent; c) neglecting the preservation of personal honor; d) endangerment of others; and e) lack of justice. Victims bear the disproportionate burden of shame and suffering, while perpetrators often manage to evade accountability, underscoring inherent injustice. The voices of these victims emphasize the urgent need for robust action to combat such unethical behavior and safeguard the rights and dignity of individuals in the digital era.

It is important to recognize that in Islam, the prohibition against zina, which is sexual intercourse that violates norms and laws, carries profound moral value. The prohibition of zina is not only normative from a religious perspective but also a form of grave sin that harms individuals and society as a whole. By adhering to this teaching, individuals are encouraged to maintain the sanctity of their relationships, safeguard their privacy, and respect the consent of all parties involved, which in turn acts as a protective barrier against the occurrence of revenge porn.

Sticking to this teaching is essential. It needs to be emphasized that those who engage in relationships outside of marriage are actually damaging their own honor. This action can be seen as a consequence of the sin they committed. The words of Allah ﷻ, "Whatever affliction befalls you is because of what your own hands have committed. And He pardons much." (QS. 42:30), serve as a reminder of the responsibility of our actions.

Every individual, without exception, must maintain vigilance and anticipate the potential dangers arising from the documentation of intimate relationships. Even in the context of a legal relationship, such as between husband and wife, this documentation can pose a threat in the future. Marital relationships, although legitimate and carried out wholeheartedly, are not always free from conflict and can even lead to divorce or dispute. The risk of spreading intimate photos or videos is a real threat that needs to be watched out for, considering the serious impact that can harm both parties.

In terms of Islamic values, there is a wise hadith that states,

أحب حبيبك هونا ما عسى أن يكون بغيضك يوما ما وأبغض بغيضك هونا ما عسى أن يكون حبيبك يوما ما

"Love your beloved moderately, perhaps he becomes hated to you someday. And hate whom you hate moderately, perhaps he becomes your beloved someday." (Jami` at-Tirmidhi 1997). This hadith provides a very relevant reminder of the wisdom of conducting relationships with others and maintaining moral values as the main foundation.

Moreover, Allah has explicitly mentioned in the Quran, in Surah Al-Isra (17:32): " Do not go near adultery. It is truly a shameful deed and an evil way." This divine command underscores the gravity of engaging in any behavior that could lead to adultery or unethical sexual conduct. By heeding this guidance, individuals not only avoid committing adultery but also contribute to a society that values modesty, chastity and the protection of personal dignity. Therefore, in addition to addressing the immediate problems associated with revenge porn, emphasizing the importance of avoiding Zina serves as a proactive measure to protect the rights and dignity of individuals in the digital age.

In addition, as a crucial preventive measure, individuals should be firm in refusing requests for intimate photos. Awareness of the risks of revenge porn should be integrated into every relationship. If a partner persists in making such requests, it should be taken as a serious warning sign. Being cautious and setting clear boundaries in the relationship are very important steps to protect oneself from the risk of revenge porn and its adverse consequences. This includes open communication regarding individual comfort and boundaries in intimate matters. Understanding the long-term implications of actions like these can help build collective awareness in society about the importance of ethics and a sense of responsibility in relationships. Thus, prevention efforts rely not only on individuals but also on a shared awareness of the serious repercussions that can arise from privacy violations.

Cyber Ethics and Revenge Porn

Cyber ethics, similar to Islamic ethics, vehemently opposes revenge porn due to its blatant disregard for key ethical principles within the digital domain. The following points highlight the areas where revenge porn starkly contradicts cyber ethics, revealing the ethical breaches that persist in the digital landscape:

a. Contravenes the Principle of Respectful Treatment

Revenge porn, a distressing digital phenomenon, is frequently disseminated through various channels, prominently on social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Reddit, Telegram, and more. In response to this alarming trend, major social media platforms have instituted robust policies to combat the sharing of explicit or non-consensual content, including revenge porn. For instance, Instagram's Community Guidelines explicitly prohibit the dissemination of intimate photos or videos without the explicit consent of all involved parties. Similarly, Twitter updated its rules and behavior policy to tackle revenge

porn, preventing users from posting intimate photos or videos taken or distributed without the subject's consent (Woollaston, 2015). These measures reflect a collective effort to create a safer online environment.

Technology, as highlighted by Sirianni and Vishwanath (2016), has significantly facilitated the spread of revenge porn. Email, social media sites, and text messaging services have become convenient tools for perpetrators seeking retribution, amplifying the humiliation experienced by victims. These technological avenues enable swift and easy dissemination, ultimately providing a gratifying experience for the wrongdoer.

Social media platforms enforce these policies by relying on user reports and dedicated content moderation teams. The substantial volume of user reports and subsequent content removals underscores the disturbing prevalence of revenge porn in digital spaces. This commitment to addressing the issue promptly underscores the platforms' dedication to maintaining a safer and more ethical online community.

Revenge porn blatantly disregards the policies and guidelines set forth by social media platforms, which explicitly prohibit the sharing of explicit or non-consensual content. This non-compliance signifies a breach of ethical conduct within these digital spaces. Moreover, revenge porn contravenes the Principle of Respectful Treatment by subjecting victims to humiliation and harassment. It involves the intentional sharing of intimate or private images without the victim's consent, with the explicit purpose of demeaning and shaming them. Such actions starkly contradict the foundational principle of treating individuals with respect within the realm of cyber ethics. By violating both platform policies and ethical principles, revenge porn underscores its inherently unethical nature, emphasizing the urgency of addressing this issue promptly and effectively.

Leiah, a victim from Surabaya, said she believed revenge porn was very contrary to how people ought to behave online, where one should treat others with respect and safety. She was harassed on Twitter, ridiculed by anonymous accounts, and felt extremely insulted as a person as a result of her photos being shared by her ex. The same sentiment was expressed by other victims, who hoped that the Internet community would one day assist those who had fallen victim to revenge porn and treat others with respect.

b. Defies the Principle of Online Responsibility

Revenge porn constitutes not only a grave violation of personal privacy but also an affront to the principles of online responsibility. Its consequences are far-reaching and profoundly damaging to victims, inflicting emotional trauma, shame, humiliation, and lasting psychological scars. The act of sharing intimate images or videos without consent starkly demonstrates a disregard for the well-being of the victim.

In our digitally mediated world, the principle of online responsibility takes on paramount significance. It calls upon individuals to be acutely aware of the consequences of their digital actions on others and to exercise prudence, empathy, and respect in their online conduct.

Revenge porn fundamentally infringes upon the victim's right to privacy, representing a gross invasion of their personal boundaries, causing significant emotional distress. It often escalates into other forms of abuse, including stalking and harassment, intensifying emotional distress and even resulting in physical harm.

Adding to the distress experienced by victims, those who disseminate revenge porn often hide behind anonymous online identities, evading accountability for their actions. The digital footprint left by revenge porn can persist, with traces resurfacing, causing ongoing anguish for victims.

Victims frequently endure serious emotional and psychological distress, including depression, anxiety, agoraphobia, difficulties in maintaining intimate relationships, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Franks, 2015). The consequences are often devastating, with some victims being stalked, harassed, threatened with sexual assault, defamed as sexual predators, terminated from employment, expelled from schools, or even compelled to change their names. Tragically, some victims have taken their own lives as a result of the relentless torment they experienced (Franks, 2015).

The anonymity afforded by the internet emboldens those who engage in revenge porn, fostering a sense of invincibility and untouchability (Fatem-Zahra, 2018). Perpetrators frequently conceal their identities behind anonymous online profiles, making it challenging to hold them accountable for their actions.

According to a victim from Jakarta, "People who spread revenge porn photos are not very responsible; they create fake accounts, save the intimate videos and photos on Google Drive fake emails, send them in telegram groups using fake names, and dare to hide using fake accounts. In addition, it is irresponsible for those who view the images to take part in their dissemination because it results in sex harassment and slut shaming of the victims." Another victim acknowledged that she experienced intense stress as a result of receiving numerous private Instagram chats from people who wanted to satisfy her, wanted to rape her, and asked her to send pictures to the individuals behind the anonymous account after careless people obtained a link to her intimate photos that were shared without her consent.

In conclusion, revenge porn starkly contradicts the principle of online responsibility by causing severe harm to victims, violating their privacy, and damaging their reputations and relationships. It often escalates into harassment and takes advantage of the anonymity provided by the internet. The enduring digital footprint of revenge porn makes it an especially distressing form of abuse. To address this issue effectively, a commitment to responsible online behavior and unwavering support for victims is crucial.

c. Transgresses the Principle of Privacy Protection:

Revenge porn unequivocally transgresses the Principle of Privacy Protection, constituting a grave infringement upon the fundamental right to privacy of individuals. This unethical practice erodes the trust placed in the digital domain, where the expectation of the confidentiality of private content is paramount, underscoring the critical importance of safeguarding privacy in online interactions.

In the context of revenge porn, privacy is violated in a deeply intrusive manner. The non-consensual sharing of intimate images or videos represents a profound breach of personal boundaries and erodes the foundational trust of ethical online interactions. Victims of revenge porn had a legitimate expectation that their private and intimate content would remain confidential, in accordance with established norms. The betrayal of this trust inflicts profound emotional distress.

Furthermore, revenge porn wrests control over personal information and imagery from the victim. In the digital age, individuals typically retain significant control over the content they share online. However, revenge porn forcibly strips away that control, exposing the victim's most intimate moments to public scrutiny and potential harm. This loss of control amplifies the distress experienced. Compounding this violation, it is often the case that victims may not even be aware that their photos are being circulated (Wanjiku, 2022), adding another layer of intrusion to their privacy.

Real-life experiences exemplify the severe impact of revenge porn. A victim of revenge porn from Makassar expressed her anger about the incident as she had always protected her privacy and it turned out that this incident, which she had no control over, had destroyed her reputation as well as the safe online space that she had worked so hard to create.

Similarly, the victim from Bandung also expressed her sadness that the internet was no longer a place where she felt safe because she was compelled to open a new account after her old social media account was assaulted by those who viewed her revenge pornography. She claimed that although her boyfriend had threatened to disclose the photographs, she initially was unaware that they had been shared until users started direct messaging her on social media.

In essence, revenge porn's disregard for the Principle of Privacy Protection represents a serious ethical transgression. It not only infringes upon an individual's rights but also undermines the foundational trust that underpins online interactions. Upholding the principle of privacy protection is paramount in ensuring that people can engage in online activities with confidence, knowing their privacy and personal boundaries will be respected. Revenge porn's contravention of this principle underscores the urgent need to combat this unethical practice and preserve the sanctity of privacy in the digital age.

In summary, revenge porn constitutes a clear violation of fundamental ethical principles within the digital realm, encompassing the spectrum of respectful treatment, online responsibility, and privacy protection. Its detrimental consequences, inflicting profound emotional and psychological distress, underscore the urgent need to address this unethical practice. Upholding these principles is pivotal in cultivating a safer, more ethical digital environment that respects the dignity and rights of all individuals involved. The battle against revenge porn hinges on a collective commitment to responsible online behavior and unwavering support for victims, ensuring the digital domain remains a space where ethical principles are upheld, and trust is preserved.

For individuals who have already experienced revenge porn, a series of vital actions can be taken. It is crucial to safeguard evidence, preserving all material related

to the incident, including threatening messages, shared content, voice recordings, content links, or social media accounts. Cutting off communication with the perpetrator is essential, achieved by blocking communication, temporarily deactivating accounts, or permanently deleting digital presence to prevent further harassment. Conducting a risk mapping exercise to anticipate potential threats should also be a priority, considering the main concerns and assessing the personal information possessed by the perpetrator. Reporting the incident to relevant social media platforms is another critical step, requesting the removal of the content and suspension of the perpetrator's account. Additionally, consider reporting the incident to the authorities or contacting a sexual violence complaint hotline, as organizations like Komnas Perempuan, P2TP2A KemenPPPA, Puli Foundation, Mental Health Services (SEJIWA), Lembaga Perlindungan Saksi dan Korban (LPSK), and ECPAT offer services and assistance to victims of revenge porn. These measures can help victims seek justice, protect their privacy, and find support in coping with the distressing aftermath of such an experience.

CONCLUSION

Revenge porn starkly contradicts Islamic ethics by undermining the principles of personal privacy, decency, and trust. It violates consent, goes against the Islamic emphasis on trustworthiness and mutual consent, and neglects to protect the reputation of individuals, opposing the Islamic value of safeguarding honor and dignity. Additionally, revenge porn endangers not only those directly involved but also others, violating the Islamic principle of avoiding harm. The lack of justice in addressing revenge porn allows perpetrators to evade accountability, departing significantly from Islamic emphasis on justice and fairness. Overall, revenge porn represents a departure from foundational Islamic ethical principles that prioritize respect, trust, justice, and the preservation of individual dignity and honor.

Similarly, cyber ethics emphasize respectful treatment, online responsibility, and privacy protection, all of which revenge porn disregards. Responsible online behavior and unwavering support for victims are crucial in combating this issue and fostering a safer digital environment that upholds ethical principles and preserves trust. In conclusion, revenge porn's flagrant violations of core ethical principles underscore the urgent need for comprehensive measures to combat this harmful behavior. Upholding these principles in both Islamic and cyber ethics is essential for creating a digital landscape that respects the dignity and rights of all individuals. This necessitates collective efforts to ensure that ethical standards prevail, allowing individuals to engage in online activities with confidence, knowing their privacy and personal boundaries will be respected, and justice and fairness will prevail.

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