

## A Critical Discourse Analysis of Sexual Violence Narratives in *The Jakarta Post*

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the representation of sexual assault survivors in 67 articles from *The Jakarta Post* (2016-2023) using corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis. Employing concordance analysis and sentiment evaluation, the research highlights a notable focus on the ages of victims, particularly teenagers, advocating for victim-centered language in public discourse. The findings reveal shortcomings in sexual and reproductive health services, legal issues faced by teenage victims, and gaps in assistance programs. The study calls for comprehensive support structures and legal reforms to address persistent challenges. Sentiment analysis underscores the deliberate use of negative language, emphasizing the need for objective reporting. Overall, the research emphasizes the importance of unbiased reporting, robust support mechanisms, and legal reforms to address the multifaceted challenges faced by rape victims.

**Keywords:** *critical discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, newspaper, rape victim, sentiment analysis.*

### INTRODUCTION

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), as outlined by Van Dijk (2004), serves as a method to investigate social power dynamics and inequalities manifested through language in social and political contexts. Utilizing tools such as naming analysis and sentiment analysis, researchers, including Risdaneva (2018), Biadi & Fallaki (2023), Gales (2011), Chalimah et al. (2018), and Asad et al. (2021), have applied CDA to explore social actor naming and appraisal analysis.

In the context of CDA, power relations take center stage, with Fairclough (1989) emphasizing the control exerted by those in dominant positions over those in subordinate roles. For example, Risdaneva (2018) employs naming analysis to scrutinize the

portrayal of women in news reporting on sexual violence. Additionally, Leeuwen's (2003) functionalization category, focusing on social roles based on occupation, aids in the analysis of the representation of social actors, as demonstrated by Risdaneva (2018). Setiawan (2011) reveals derogatory descriptions of rape victims in *Suara Merdeka*, contributing to the perpetuation of subjugation and humiliation.

To assess polarity, the methodology of Munandar and Basuki (2021) is replicated in this research. Their study on storms and wildfires reveals the media's use of negative language, shaping a perception of these disasters as adversaries. In line with this, the current research aims to contribute additional evidence to corpus-assisted discourse

studies on the representation of rape victims, with a focus on addressing the impact of media language on public perception.

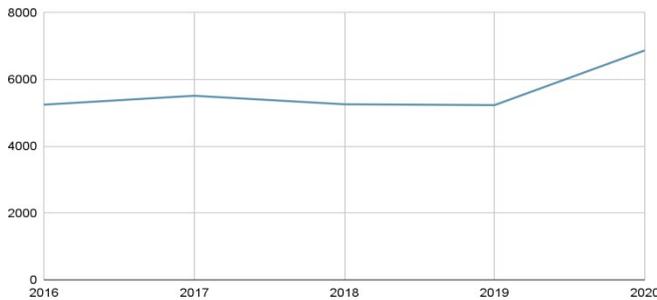


Figure 1. The growth of rape cases from 2016 to 2020 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021)

Illustrated in Figure 1 is a significant increase in decency-related crimes from 2016 to 2020. The study's primary objective is to comprehend how *The Jakarta Post* portrays rape victims through concordance and word-sketch analysis. It delves into issues related to rape victims and seeks to determine the polarity expressed by the newspaper.

The research questions guiding this study encompass understanding how *The Jakarta Post* portrays its coverage of rape victims in the Indonesian context, identifying dominant issues related to rape victims based on word choices, and exploring the polarity expressed by *The Jakarta Post* in depicting rape victims. The study aims to achieve these objectives through concordance analysis, generating word sketches of rape victims, and identifying sentiment words to gauge the newspaper's polarity in reporting rape cases.

This interdisciplinary study combines linguistics and sociology, with a focus on linguistic aspects while incorporating sociological elements. Taking a stance on rape victims as the more powerless party, the researcher aims to provide valuable insights into the discursive construction of rape victims in media discourse.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The intricate web of biases that infiltrates media representations of rape victims significantly molds public perceptions and shapes societal understanding of sexual violence, as expounded by Berns (2004). The media landscape often becomes a breeding ground for the reinforcement of stereotypes,

becoming a conduit for victim-blaming narratives that perpetuate harmful ideologies surrounding sexual assault. Sensationalism, a prevalent bias identified in media portrayals, manifests as media outlets prioritize graphic details in rape cases, amplifying shock value at the expense of exploring broader social and legal implications (Rossy & Wahid, 2015). This sensationalistic approach not only distorts public perception but also steers the narrative towards sensational elements rather than fostering sensitivity and gravity around the issue.

Selective reporting of rape cases introduces another layer of bias, where media outlets disproportionately cover specific incidents based on factors such as the victim's race, socioeconomic status, or the perceived severity of the incident. The pioneering work of Davis (1952) showcases how distorted newspaper reporting can influence public perceptions of changes in violent crime rates, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and reinforcing societal prejudices by distorting the image of a "worthy" victim.

Further complicating the media landscape are representations that perpetuate stereotypes about the behavior or lifestyle of rape victims, as uncovered by Gravelin (2016). The study reveals that physical characteristics, like wearing revealing clothing or having a suggestive occupation, increase the likelihood of victim-blaming. The intersectionality of gender biases becomes apparent, where the provocative nature of clothing interacts with the gender of participants, leading to the reinforcement of gender-based biases and fostering an environment that questions or discredits victims based on their actions or choices.

Addressing biases in the representation of rape victims becomes not just a journalistic responsibility but a societal imperative. Media outlets bear the responsibility to present accurate, sensitive, and comprehensive narratives challenging stereotypes, fostering empathy, and contributing to a nuanced societal understanding and support for victims of sexual violence.

In a broader context, the significance of critically examining media representations through corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) is underscored by studies such as those conducted by Samaie & Malmir (2017) and Venkatesh et al. (2023).

These studies, exploring biases and stereotypes perpetuated by media discourse, lay the foundation for investigating whether instances of rape reported in a specific newspaper are similarly covered with biases and stereotypes.

Drawing inspiration from Gabrielatos & Baker's (2008) critical discourse analysis assisted by a corpus on asylum and immigration, the current study applies similar methodologies to research on the representation of rape victims. Yilmaz & Soruç's (2015) exploration of the practical implementation of concordance in vocabulary instruction, focusing on a data-driven learning framework, provides a guiding principle for the current study's application of concordance and word sketch analysis.

Examining the portrayal of female sexual crime victims, Risdaneva (2018) and Biadi & Fallaki (2023) employ naming analysis techniques, yielding different findings and showcasing the nuanced nature of media representations. Additionally, sentiment analysis, as used by Hossain (2021) and Munandar and Basuki (2021), becomes a valuable tool for extracting sentiment words, with their methodologies shaping the current research's approach.

Jamel's (2014) investigation into the portrayal of male rape in print media brings forth intriguing revelations, illustrating that male rape victims are treated more sympathetically than their female counterparts. Setiawan's (2011) critical discourse analysis focusing on the portrayal of gender-based violence in newspapers uncovers unfair and disrespectful descriptions of women. The quantitative examination of rape reports on Detik.com by Rossy and Wahid (2015) emphasizes the media's lack of empathy and consideration for victims, further highlighting the multifaceted nature of media biases.

The study by Hardjo and Novita (2015) delves into the relationship between social support and psychological well-being in adolescent victims of sexual abuse, contributing valuable insights into the broader psychological implications of sexual violence. Despite the crucial role of news organizations in providing information, a persistent thread of media bias shapes narratives, aspects of rape

victims, and sentiment analysis, perpetuating negative portrayals, as assumed based on previous research. As the current study aligns itself with this rich tapestry of research, it seeks to deepen our understanding of media representations and their intricate role in shaping societal perceptions of sexual violence.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In delving into the multifaceted realm of understanding the theoretical foundations that underpin the critical analysis of discursive constructions and power dynamics surrounding the representation of rape victims in media discourse, one encounters a rich tapestry of scholarly perspectives. Recognizing the paramount importance of theoretical underpinnings in unraveling the intricacies of media portrayals, critical theory emerges as an instrumental lens through which to navigate this complex landscape. Critical theory, as applied to media studies, probes into how power structures and ideologies intricately mold and influence media narratives, offering profound insights into the societal forces at play in shaping the representation of rape victims. Concurrently, the lens of social constructionism casts a revealing light on the socially constructed nature of rape victimhood, emphasizing the role of societal perceptions, norms, and values in crafting and perpetuating narratives around victims of sexual violence.

Moving beyond theoretical contemplation, the study employs the robust framework of corpus linguistics, which systematically dissects linguistic phenomena grounded in real-world language use. This approach, anchored in a corpus-assisted discourse analysis (CDA) paradigm, delves into the intricacies of word sketches and concordances to draw objective conclusions about the discursive constructions surrounding rape victims as depicted in *The Jakarta Post*. The meticulous application of CDA enables an in-depth exploration of linguistic patterns, unveiling the nuances and subtleties that shape the portrayal of rape victims, and shedding

light on the underlying power dynamics inherent in media discourse.

Within the expansive realm of critical discourse analysis (CDA), the research integrates Fairclough's comprehensive framework, offering a lens through which language, power, and ideology in media discourse can be thoroughly examined. CDA, as employed in this research, becomes a powerful tool to scrutinize how language operates as a mechanism either to reproduce or challenge social inequalities, dominant ideologies, and prevailing power structures. By employing the analytical prowess of CDA, the study navigates the intricate terrain of media representations, revealing the interplay between linguistic choices and the broader socio-political context within which these representations are embedded.

Intertwined with these theoretical and analytical frameworks is the incorporation of sentiment analysis, a sophisticated technique designed to ascertain the polarity of expressed opinions within the written text. In the context of this research, sentiment analysis takes center stage as a means of discerning the emotional undertones in news articles related to rape victims in *The Jakarta Post*. Leveraging a lexicon-based method, this approach places a deliberate emphasis on the polarity expressed in the textual representations, avoiding the need for extensive data preprocessing or classifier training. The study's commitment to employing a lexicon of weighted words enhances the precision of the sentiment analysis, offering a nuanced understanding of the emotional landscape surrounding media narratives on rape victims.

In summary, the integration of these theoretical foundations, coupled with the meticulous application of corpus-assisted discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, and sentiment analysis, creates a robust and multifaceted framework for this research. By navigating through these theoretical lenses and analytical approaches, the study strives to unravel the intricate layers of discursive constructions and power dynamics in the representation of rape victims in *The Jakarta Post*. It is within this intellectual landscape that the research unfolds, aspiring to contribute significantly to the broader discourse surrounding media representations and societal perceptions of sexual violence survivors.

## METHODS

The exploration of societal narratives encompassing the intricate construction of rape victims within media discourse stands as a pivotal endeavor, holding the key to unraveling the multifaceted layers that shape social attitudes and significantly impact the experiences and access to justice for victims of sexual violence. This research embarks on a nuanced journey, focusing its lens on the specific context of *The Jakarta Post*, seeking to dissect the complex interplay between media narratives, societal perceptions, and the lived realities of rape victims.

The foundation of this study is anchored in the meticulous examination of a corpus named CoRNeA, meticulously curated to encapsulate 67 news articles sourced from *The Jakarta Post* spanning the years 2016 to 2023. This comprehensive dataset, methodically sorted by relevance, encompasses a diverse array of rape cases, ensuring a representative and comprehensive sample that captures the varied nuances inherent in media portrayals of such incidents. Within the dataset, the inclusion of word sketches, concordances, and sentiment words related to rape victims provides a rich tapestry of linguistic data, offering valuable insights into the semantic landscape and emotional undertones embedded within media narratives.

The compilation of the CoRNeA corpus was an intricate process involving manual curation of articles, precise extraction of relevant text, and meticulous conversion into a .txt file format to facilitate seamless analysis. The data collection journey entailed judicious steps, including the omission of unnecessary sections, systematic organization of texts by year, and the utilization of an online text analysis tool to conduct concordance and word sketch analysis. This methodological rigor ensures the integrity and representativeness of the dataset, laying a robust foundation for the subsequent analytical phases.

The analytical framework of this study unfolds with a detailed exploration, including close reading of clauses explicitly containing the term "rape victim." This meticulous approach aims to unearth nuanced linguistic patterns, summarizing data into coherent paragraphs that serve as windows into the intricate world of media constructions.

Concurrently, words generated from word sketches are systematically categorized, unveiling the intricacies of lexical choices and linguistic nuances within media narratives surrounding rape victims.

Sentiment analysis, a sophisticated technique designed to discern the polarity of expressed opinions within written text, plays a pivotal role in this research. The method involves matching words with predefined lists of positive and negative sentiments, offering a nuanced understanding of the emotional undercurrents embedded within news articles related to rape victims. This corpus-assisted approach is further complemented by the integration of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a robust framework that interprets the intricate relationship between text, interaction, and social context. Through CDA, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how language operates as a tool to construct the representation of rape victims, shedding light on the underlying power dynamics and ideological underpinnings in media discourse.

In summary, this research represents a meticulous and comprehensive exploration into the societal narratives surrounding the construction of rape victims within media discourse, using *The Jakarta Post* as a specific lens. The incorporation of CoRNcA as a rich and representative corpus, coupled with the methodological rigor applied in data collection and the multifaceted analytical framework encompassing close reading, sentiment analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis, positions this study at the forefront of scholarly inquiries into the complex interplay between media representations and societal perceptions of sexual violence survivors.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Portrayal of Rape Victims in *The Jakarta Post* through Concordance Analysis

This section delves into the portrayal of rape victims in *The Jakarta Post* through concordance analysis, uncovering language choices and linguistic representations that may contribute to the objectification of victims. The analysis places particular emphasis on the age of victims,

highlighting teenagers and secondary school students. This portrayal reveals a concerning pattern that underscores the vulnerability of the youngest members of society. Despite their vulnerability, there is a noticeable effort to portray victims as strong and resilient individuals, with news articles strategically utilizing quotations to present diverse perspectives (see Figure 2 for examples of clauses containing the phrase "rape victim"). The chapter also critically addresses the inadequacies of sexual and reproductive health services for rape victims in Indonesia, revealing power dynamics in language choices and the involvement of authoritative figures. This challenges existing systems and advocates for positive changes. The discussion extends to the profound impacts of rape on victims, including unwanted pregnancies, psychological disorders, and even suicide. The chapter concludes by urging a collective commitment to eliminating sexual violence, fostering a more compassionate and informed public discourse, and advocating for meaningful changes to better support and protect victims.

y school students. </s></s>Meanwhile, most rape victims in East Java were female secondary school students  
I just refer to the following words. If you're a rape victim , then you are also a survivor.</s></s>Automatically </s></s>Every second you're living as a rape victim , you are also a survivor.</s></s>Those words are so  
illegal here, except for health reasons or for rape victims .</s></s>The Jambi girl was still charged with a crime  
minor and by her own brother's admission, a rape victim .</s></s>First, it was not incest, it was rape.</s></s>S  
only one where the state and society treat a rape victim not as a victim, but as a perpetrator.</s></s>And for it  
sexual and reproductive health services for rape victims in Indonesia, including access to emergency contraceptives  
>Certainly, a jail sentence is the last thing a rape victim needs.</s></s>Release the girl.</s></s>Reports of a  
I have highlighted the fact that in Indonesia, rape victims often have to bear the consequences alone despite it  
ife.</s></s>The assistance programs for the rape victims -including legal aid, and also medical and psychologi  
the first case that ended in the death of the rape victim .</s></s>In January a rape victim committed suicide. I  
bath of the rape victim.</s></s>In January a rape victim committed suicide in Tambun Selatan, Bekasi, West.

Figure 2. Examples of clauses containing the phrase *rape victim*

Additionally, this comprehensive analysis brings to light the portrayal of rape victims in *The Jakarta Post*, drawing attention to language choices and their potential impact on public perception and discourse surrounding sexual violence.

### Dominant Issues of Rape Victims Generated from Word-Sketch

This section examines the dominant issues faced by rape victims, identified through word sketch analysis. The study focuses on words associated with the phrase "rape victim" in three key aspects: the description of rape victims, the rights of rape victims, and the negative impacts on rape victims.

In terms of describing rape victims, the findings emphasize a significant proportion being teenagers, shedding light on the struggles faced by underage victims. This includes legal consequences for resorting to illegal abortion, with potential repercussions such as depression and tragic loss of life. The chapter advocates for a more compassionate and nuanced approach to address the complexities faced by teenage rape victims.

Concerning the rights of rape victims, key verbs such as "exonerate," "assist," and "protect" signify legal protections for victims. Examples demonstrate the importance of legal aid, medical assistance, and psychological support, reflecting a comprehensive commitment to addressing the complex needs of individuals who have experienced sexual violence. The chapter advocates for a more empathetic legal framework that considers the traumatic experiences of victims.

The negative impacts on rape victims are thoroughly explored, including unwanted pregnancies, trauma, depression, and instances of suicide. The study calls for a paradigm shift in the legal response to rape cases, emphasizing the need for counseling, support, and companionship instead of punitive measures. Efforts to revise legal frameworks should prioritize aligning with the psychological and emotional needs of victims, fostering a more compassionate and victim-centered approach to rape cases.

### Polarity Showed by the Press in Depicting Rape Victims

The section explores the polarity expressed by *The Jakarta Post* in depicting rape victims, focusing on sentiment words in the CoRNeA dataset. The analysis covers nouns, verbs, and adjectives, examining the distribution of sentiment and providing insights into the emotional nuances of the content (see Table 1 for the distribution of sentiment words in CoRNeA).

The dataset contains 783 instances of nouns, with 78.5% conveying negative sentiment and 21.4% contributing positively. Negative nouns, such as "trauma" and "accusation," dominate, suggesting a pervasive use of language evoking distress. Positive nouns, like "protection" and "support," though a

minority, indicate intentional efforts to balance the perspective.

Table 1. Sentiment words in CoRNeA

Word Class	Negative		Positive	
	Token	%	Token	%
Noun	783	78.5	214	21.4
Verb	180	88.6	23	11.3
Adjective	229	61.7	142	32.2

Tables 2 and 3 provide a breakdown of negative and positive sentiment words in CoRNeA, respectively, further elucidating the emotional undertones in the discourse surrounding rape victims.

Table 2. Negative sentiment words conveying negative tone

	Noun	Verb	Adjective		
protection	51	protect	23	good	9
survivor	45	-	-	available	7
support	21	-	-	safe	7
progress	10	-	-	enough	6
supreme	10	-	-	ready	6

Table 3. Positive sentiment words conveying positive Tone

	Noun	Verb	Adjective		
rape	197	rape	92	criminal	22
suspect	97	assault	25	guilty	17
assault	43	abort	23	slow	9
abuse	38	refuse	20	afraid	8
crime	34	accuse	20	harsh	6

In terms of verbs, 61.7% express negative sentiment, while 38.2% contribute positively among the 214 instances. Negative verbs like "abort" and "accuse" signify a predominant focus on adversity, while positive verbs introduce complexity by conveying resilience or positive outcomes.

Adjectives, among 180 instances, show a stark skew towards negative sentiment (88.6%), emphasizing distress or adversity. Positive adjectives, though less prevalent, suggest intentional efforts to inject positivity into the discourse.

The overall sentiment leans heavily towards negativity across all linguistic elements, with

adjectives prominently conveying distressing aspects. The intentional use of negative language may influence public perception, while the inclusion of positive elements raises questions about their impact on shaping a more empathetic narrative.

In conclusion, the sentiment analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of emotional undertones in the discourse surrounding rape victims, emphasizing the gravity of the issues discussed and contributing valuable insights for interpreting language choices and their impact on shaping public perception and discourse surrounding sexual violence. This nuanced exploration of sentiment words offers a deeper understanding of the emotional landscape, advocating for a more informed and compassionate approach in discussions related to sexual violence.

## CONCLUSION

In the extensive exploration of this paper, a disconcerting phenomenon comes to light, shedding a critical spotlight on the pervasive emphasis on the age of rape victims, particularly adolescents within elementary and secondary schools, within media portrayals. Contrary to deeply ingrained stereotypes, this comprehensive study endeavors to reframe the narrative around rape survivors, portraying them not as mere victims but as resilient individuals. It underscores the crucial importance of employing empathetic language within the criminal justice system to influence narratives and public perceptions positively. Going beyond the realms of portrayal, the research delves into the significant inadequacies plaguing sexual and reproductive health services for rape victims in Indonesia. It fervently advocates for comprehensive reforms, recognizing the dire need for systemic changes to address the multifaceted challenges faced by survivors. Exploring the profound consequences of rape, the study courageously addresses a spectrum of issues from the haunting specter of unwanted pregnancies to the complex terrain of psychological disorders and the tragic reality of suicide.

The overarching findings of this paper not only contribute to the existing reservoir of research but also navigate the intricate landscape, both supporting

and contradicting previous studies. In alignment with Biadi & Fallaki's (2023) emphasis on age-related terms in identifying victims, this study challenges the status quo, notably conflicting with Gufran et al. (2021), who argue that mentioning a victim's age may constitute a violation of privacy. This research also aligns with SAKI's (n.d.) nuanced exploration of language use, particularly in the stages from investigation to prosecution. It brings attention to the profound implications of labeling individuals as "victims" versus "survivors," aligning with the growing advocacy for a compassionate and empowering lexicon within the criminal justice system. This emphasis resonates with the broader call for creating a supportive environment for individuals impacted by crime, acknowledging their resilience and agency.

A particularly significant dimension of this research lies in the exploration of sentiment words, facilitated by the CoRNeA dataset. The unraveling of a prevailing negative sentiment in the discourse surrounding rape victims serves as a poignant revelation. The deliberate use of negative language emerges as a powerful tool with the potential to shape public perception significantly. It underscores the gravity of the issues under discussion and accentuates the importance of approaching this discourse with utmost sensitivity. Interestingly, the inclusion of positive elements within this discourse introduces a layer of complexity, prompting thoughtful consideration of their intent and impact on shaping a more empathetic narrative.

In conclusion, sentiment analysis emerges as a pivotal and multifaceted component of this research, offering valuable insights into the emotional landscape surrounding discussions on rape victims. It advocates for a nuanced interpretation of language choices, recognizing the potential impact on public perception and discourse. The imperative for a compassionate and informed public discourse becomes evident, one that not only acknowledges the rights and well-being of rape victims but actively works towards dismantling stereotypes and fostering a society that supports survivors on their journey towards healing. As this paper draws its curtains, it leaves behind a resounding call for a collective commitment to a more empathetic and understanding societal narrative around sexual violence.

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