



Verbal Sexual Harassment in Indonesian Language on Social Media: A Forensic Linguistic Perspective

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ABSTRACT: This study examines verbal sexual harassment on social media specifically in TikTok comments, particularly comments directed toward female Sales Promotion Girls (SPGs) appearing in promotional content. The study addresses the occurrence of sexualized and gender-based language in social media comments and aims to identify and classify the forms of verbal sexual harassment found in the selected comments based on Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) framework. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to analyze 40 TikTok comments identified as containing verbal sexual harassment. The data were collected from publicly available comments on the @goodponse1 TikTok account and analyzed based on three dimensions of sexual harassment proposed by Fitzgerald et al. (1995): gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. The findings show that all three dimensions were identified in the analyzed data. Unwanted sexual attention was the most frequently identified category, comprising 20 data (50.00%), followed by gender harassment with 18 data (45.00%) and sexual coercion with 2 data (5.00%). The findings indicate that verbal sexual harassment in the analyzed comments was expressed through appearance-based evaluations, gender-based labeling, degrading expressions, and transactional or suggestive language. Overall, the study concludes that Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) framework can be applied to identify different forms of verbal sexual harassment in TikTok comments. The study also demonstrates that such harassment is not limited to explicit sexual propositions but may occur through various forms of gendered and sexualized language in digital communication.

KEYWORDS: Verbal Sexual Harassment; TikTok Comments; Gender Harassment; Unwanted Sexual Attention; Sexual Coercion.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The growth of social media has transformed the way people communicate, share information, and express opinions. TikTok, one of the most popular social media platforms, allows users to create and share content and interact with others through comment sections. Although these features facilitate communication and engagement, they can also provide opportunities for harmful behavior, including verbal sexual harassment. Unlike face-to-face interactions, online communication may enable users to express their thoughts with a perceived degree of anonymity and reduced social accountability, potentially contributing to the occurrence of harassment. Women featured in social media content are particularly vulnerable to comments that focus on their physical appearance, sexuality, or gender rather than the content itself. Such practices reflect broader patterns of gender inequality and the objectification of women in digital communication. Sexual harassment can be defined as unwanted sexual behavior that causes discomfort, humiliation, or intimidation to the targeted individual (Anwar, 2022; Davis et al., 2024). This phenomenon has been extensively studied in various settings, including workplaces and educational institutions (Akpambang, 2022; Amarnes et al., 2023a). However, the development of digital communication has expanded the contexts in which sexual harassment can occur. Social media platforms have become spaces where women may be subjected to objectifying, sexualized, and gender-based derogatory comments. These forms of communication may affect individuals who are targeted and contribute to the normalization of discriminatory attitudes toward women in online communities. Therefore, examining the linguistic construction of sexual harassment in digital discourse is important for understanding how gender based harassment is expressed and reproduced through language. From a forensic linguistic perspective, the language used in online interactions can be examined to identify the forms, meanings, and potential implications of problematic expressions. In this context, the Sexual Harassment Framework proposed by

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Fitzgerald et al. (1995) provides a theoretical foundation for classifying verbal sexual harassment. Although the framework was initially developed to examine sexual harassment in organizational settings, its categories can be applied as an analytical framework for investigating sexually harassing expressions in other social contexts, including online communication. Fitzgerald et al. (1995) categorize sexual harassment into three major dimensions: Gender Harassment, Unwanted Sexual Attention, and Sexual Coercion. These categories provide a systematic basis for identifying different manifestations of sexually harassing behavior in linguistic interactions.

Gender Harassment refers to verbal or nonverbal behaviors that express insulting, hostile, degrading, or discriminatory attitudes toward individuals based on their gender. This form of harassment does not necessarily involve sexual advances or requests for sexual activity. Instead, it may be manifested through stereotypes, derogatory labels, objectification, and expressions that demean individuals because of their gender. In online communication, Gender Harassment may appear in comments that portray women as inferior, reduce them to sexual objects, or reinforce negative gender stereotypes.

Unwanted Sexual Attention involves unwelcome verbal expressions, remarks, or behaviors that communicate sexual interest toward an individual. Such attention is neither requested nor desired by the recipient. This category includes comments that focus on an individual's physical attractiveness, body, sexuality, or sexual appeal rather than the primary purpose of the interaction. In social media environments, Unwanted Sexual Attention may be expressed through sexualized compliments, suggestive remarks, and comments that shift attention from the content to the physical appearance of individuals featured in videos (Ammar et al., 2024).

Sexual Coercion refers to attempts to pressure, persuade, manipulate, or compel an individual to engage in sexual activity or interaction, either explicitly or implicitly. This category may include sexual propositions, requests for sexual activity, or statements that suggest sexual access in exchange for benefits or other outcomes. Within Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) framework, Sexual Coercion represents a form of harassment involving pressure or attempts to establish sexual interaction without the target's consent. In online communication, such expressions may be identified through linguistic constructions that imply or directly communicate sexual demands or transactional expectations.

Previous studies have examined sexual harassment and sexualized expressions across various social media platforms. Maulana and Dharma Putra (2024) investigated verbal sexual violence in TikTok comments from a forensic linguistic perspective. Their study found that sexual harassment was realized through words, phrases, and clauses, with comments generally containing negative and objectifying representations of women. This study is relevant to the present research because both investigations focus on sexual harassment in TikTok comments and the objectification of women. However, the present study extends this line of research by classifying verbal sexual harassment into Gender Harassment, Unwanted Sexual Attention, and Sexual Coercion based on Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) framework. Widuhung and Pranawukir (2024) examined sexual comments directed at women on TikTok and found that non-sexual content could also become a space for sexual harassment through explicit sexual invitations, vulgar expressions, and sexual references. This finding is relevant to the present study because the videos uploaded by @goodponse primarily contain promotional content, yet the female sales promotion girls (SPGs) featured in the videos may become targets of sexualized comments. However, the previous study did not provide an in-depth linguistic analysis of the comments or examine their potential legal implications. Similarly, Khairani and Aji (2022) investigated sexual expressions in Instagram comments and found that sexual meanings could be conveyed indirectly through conceptual metaphors. Their findings are relevant to the present study because some comments examined in this research also convey sexual meanings indirectly through slang, wordplay, and transactional expressions. Nevertheless, their study focused on conceptual metaphors rather than the classification of sexual harassment or forensic linguistic analysis. Furthermore, Abdullah et al. (2019) examined sexual harassment against women on social media and identified written, verbal, visual, and real forms of harassment. Their study demonstrates that social media can function as a space in which sexual harassment against women occurs. However, it did not specifically examine the linguistic meanings of harassment-related comments or apply Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) classification.

Although previous studies have demonstrated that sexual harassment in social media can be expressed explicitly or implicitly through objectification, sexualized language, and indirect expressions, research examining verbal sexual harassment in Indonesian TikTok discourse through Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) classification remains limited. In addition, further investigation is needed into how the linguistic forms and meanings of sexualized comments emerge in promotional content featuring female sales promotion girls.

The present study focuses on verbal sexual harassment in the TikTok comment section of the account @goodponse. The account regularly uploads promotional content featuring female SPGs, and some comments appear to direct attention toward the women rather than the products being promoted. These comments provide relevant linguistic data for examining how verbal sexual harassment is constructed and expressed in online interactions. By adopting a forensic linguistic perspective, this study analyzes the linguistic characteristics and meanings of the comments and classifies them according to Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) categories of Gender Harassment, Unwanted Sexual Attention, and Sexual Coercion. The study also considers the potential implications of the expressions within the context of digital communication, without determining legal liability.

II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate forms of verbal sexual harassment found in social media discourse. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to identify, classify, and interpret linguistic expressions of sexual harassment based on their contextual meanings rather than to test statistical relationships between variables (Creswell, 2014).

The data source consisted of comments posted on the TikTok account @goodponсел between January and December 2025. The account was selected because its promotional videos frequently featured female Sales Promotion Girls (SPGs), which attracted numerous audience comments directed toward the women appearing in the content. The research data were limited to comments containing indications of verbal sexual harassment. Through the data collection process, a total of 40 comments were identified as relevant to the research objectives. To protect the privacy of TikTok users, the usernames or account identities of the commenters were not included in this study. The analysis focused solely on the linguistic content of the publicly available comments relevant to the research objectives. The comments were presented without identifying information, and any references to commenter identities were omitted to minimize the potential identification of individual users.

Data were collected using non-participant observation and documentation techniques. The researchers observed comment sections of videos uploaded by @goodponсел and documented comments that contained linguistic indications of sexual harassment. Comments unrelated to sexual content or gender-based expressions were excluded from the dataset. To ensure data organization, each comment was coded according to its date of collection and thematic category.

The data were analyzed using the Sexual Harassment Framework proposed by Fitzgerald et al. (1995), which classifies sexual harassment into three categories: Gender Harassment, Unwanted Sexual Attention, and Sexual Coercion. The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, all collected comments were read repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of their contextual meanings. Second, comments containing indications of verbal sexual harassment were identified and extracted from the dataset. Third, each comment was classified into one of Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) categories based on its linguistic characteristics and communicative intent. The classified comments were interpreted to explain how verbal sexual harassment was constructed and manifested within the TikTok comment section.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, the categorization process was conducted systematically by referring to the operational definitions of each category proposed by Fitzgerald et al. (1995). Representative examples from each category were analyzed in detail to illustrate the linguistic features underlying the classification. The results were then presented descriptively through frequency distributions and qualitative interpretations of selected comments.

III. RESULTS

Based on the thinking categorized by Fitzgerald et al. (1995), the comments found on the TikTok account @goodponсел contained indications of verbal sexual harassment. The forms of sexual harassment found in the comments section of the TikTok account @goodponсел have been summarized and can be observed in the following table.

Table 1: Distribution of Verbal Sexual Harassment Kinds in @goodponсел TikTok Comments

No.	Category	Number of Data	Percentage
1	Gender Harassment	18	45.00%
2	Unwanted Sexual Attention	20	50.00%
3	Sexual Coercion	2	5.00%
	Total	40	100.00%

1. Gender Harassment

The analysis shows that sexual harassment does not always aim to initiate sexual relations. It can also take the form of attitudes or statements that insult or position women as inferior objects in the comment section of the TikTok account @goodponсел. This section presents several data examples representing the category of gender harassment along with their analyses.

Data 1

“tuhhh kan bener cewe bisa di beli 🤔🤔”

(See, I told you so! Women can really be bought 🤔🤔)

The comment is unrelated to the promotional purpose of the content uploaded by @goodponсел. The video features two female Sales Promotion Girls (SPGs) dancing while wearing promotional Tokopedia attire designed in the form of dresses. Based on the caption, the purpose of the content is to inform TikTok users that the gadgets sold by @goodponсел can be purchased through the Tokopedia online shopping platform. Although the content is clearly related to product promotion and purchasing services through Tokopedia, the comment shifts the focus toward the women appearing in the video. The statement “cewe bisa di beli” (women can be bought) positions women as something that can be “purchased.” The word “cewe” refers to women in general; therefore, the

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comment is not limited to the two SPGs appearing in the video but also creates a generalization about women as a group. The use of the word “*dibeli*” (bought) is significant in this context. Lexically, “*dibeli*” refers to obtaining something through a transaction or payment. When the word is associated with “*cewe*” (women), women are positioned as commodities that can be acquired through a transaction. Thus, the statement constructs a representation of women as objects possessing exchange value and as something that can be traded.

The use of the 🤔🤔 emojis at the end of the comment creates the impression that the statement is intended as a joke. However, the humorous form does not eliminate the degrading meaning contained in the statement. Instead, presenting the statement as a joke may make the degrading representation of women appear less serious, even though semantically it still positions women as objects that can be purchased. Although the comment does not contain a direct sexual proposition, the statement “*cewe bisa dibeli*” can be interpreted as gender-based harassment because it represents women as entities that can be obtained through transactions. The lexical association between “*cewe*” (women) and “*dibeli*” (bought) constructs women as objects of exchange rather than as individuals. In the context of the video, such representation shifts attention away from the SPGs’ professional role as promotional workers and toward their perceived exchange value. Based on this analysis, this data can be categorized as gender harassment according to Fitzgerald et al. (1995). This categorization is based on the degrading statement about women in general and the construction of women as objects that can be traded or obtained through a transaction.

Data 2

“*min jual hp atau jual lc* 🤔”

(Admin, are you selling phones or selling lady companions? 🤔)

The comment is showing inconsistency to the promotional purpose of the content uploaded by @goodponсел. The content aims to provide TikTok users with information about the gadgets sold by @goodponсел and its Cash on Delivery (COD) service, which allows consumers to make payment after receiving their purchases. Instead of responding to the purpose of the content, the comment shifts attention from the products and services being offered to the woman appearing in the video. The commenter asks the @goodponсел administrator whether the account sells mobile phones or “LC.” The term “LC” stands for Lady Companion, which, in certain social contexts, refers to women working as companions or guides in entertainment venues. In common usage, the term may also carry negative connotations because it can be associated with women working in nightlife environments and services with sexual connotations. In the context of the video, there is no information concerning the sale or provision of LC services. Instead, the video features a woman working as an SPG at @goodponсел. Therefore, the use of the term “LC” can be understood as a form of association or labeling of the woman in the video with an occupation unrelated to her actual role. The question “*jual hp atau jual lc*” (are you selling phones or selling Lady Companions?) indirectly positions the SPG as an object that can be associated with a commodity or service rather than as a worker performing promotional activities.

The interrogative form of the statement does not remove its implied meaning. Although it is expressed as a question and accompanied by the 🤔 emoji, which may create a humorous impression, the comment still associates the woman appearing in the video with an occupation carrying sexual connotations. Consequently, the statement can be understood as a form of gender-based labeling that is unrelated to the SPG’s actual role in the promotional content. Although the comment does not contain a direct sexual request or proposition, associating the SPG with an occupation linked to companionship services and sexual connotations reflects a form of gender-based stereotyping. The statement assigns a label unrelated to the woman’s identity or professional role in the video. Therefore, according to Fitzgerald et al. (1995), the comment can be categorized as gender harassment because it contains degrading language based on gender-related labelling and stereotyping.

2. Unwanted Sexual Attention

The analysis identifies forms of sexual harassment involving unwanted and unreciprocated sexual attention, expressed either verbally or nonverbally. This section presents data representing the category of unwanted sexual attention and its analysis.

Data 3

“*bil ... makin sini makin hottttt*”

(Bil ... [you are getting] hotter and hotter as time goes by.)

This comment is unrelated to the promotional purpose of the content uploaded by @goodponсел. The content aims to provide information about the online shopping services offered by @goodponсел through the Tokopedia platform. However, the comment shifts attention away from the shopping service and toward one of the female SPGs appearing in the video, namely Bila. The name “*bil*” refers to Bila, the SPG appearing in the content. Meanwhile, the phrase “*makin sini makin hottttt*” functions as an evaluation of Bila’s physical appearance rather than a response to the promotional message delivered in the video. In this context, the word “*hot*” is commonly used to describe someone as physically attractive or sexually appealing. The elongated spelling “*hottttt*” further intensifies this evaluation.

As a result, the attention expressed in the comment is directed toward the SPG’s attractiveness rather than toward the information about Tokopedia’s shopping services. The statement makes Bila’s appearance the primary focus of evaluation and shifts attention away from her role in the promotional activity. Although the comment does not contain a direct sexual proposition, it focuses on

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the woman's physical attractiveness and directs personal attention toward her. Therefore, the comment can be categorized as *unwanted sexual attention* according to Fitzgerald et al. (1995), because it expresses sexualized attention toward the female SPG rather than engaging with the purpose of the content.

Data 4

“dpt mbak nya aj juga enk” (👉 “#\$%&”

(Getting [to have] the woman herself would also be nice 🤔).

This comment demonstrates attention suggestive of sexual interest toward the SPG appearing in the promotional content of @goodponsel. The content was created to provide information about the GOOD SPIN IS BACK event, a promotional lottery program offering consumers the opportunity to win an Android TV for free. The comment does not respond to the information concerning the promotional program. Instead, the commenter shifts attention toward the female SPG appearing as a model in the video through the statement “dpt mbak nya aj juga enk.” The word “mbak” refers to the female SPG, while “dpt” (get) indicates the commenter's desire to “obtain” the SPG. The word “dapat” (get or obtain) positions the SPG as something that can be acquired by the commenter. Meanwhile, the word “enak” (pleasant or desirable) does not refer to the quality of a product but functions as an expression of attraction toward the woman being referred to. The comment redirects attention from the purpose of the content, namely the promotion of a lottery program, toward the female SPG appearing in the video. The combination of “dapat” and “enak” frames the SPG as the focus of personal attraction rather than as a participant in the promotional activity. Although the statement does not explicitly express a sexual proposition, it conveys sexualized attention toward the SPG and places emphasis on her desirability rather than on the promotional message. Therefore, the comment can be categorized as *unwanted sexual attention* according to Fitzgerald et al. (1995).

3. Sexual Coercion

Sexual coercion is a form of direct harassment involving pressure to engage in sexual cooperation in exchange for a reward or to avoid a particular threat or negative consequence. According to Fitzgerald et al. (1995), sexual coercion occurs when an individual is pressured to provide a sexual response in order to obtain a benefit or avoid negative consequences related to employment or social position.

Data 5

“beli 1 gratis iclik” (👉)

(Buy 1, get iclik [an encoded slang for sexual intercourse] for free 🤔)

This comment is unrelated to the purpose of the content uploaded by @goodponsel. The content discusses the Cash on Delivery (COD) service available through the Tokopedia online shopping platform. However, the comment contains a sexually suggestive expression through the use of the term “iclik” which is a Javanese slang term referring to sexual activity. The term is etymologically associated with “kiclik,” referring to masturbation, and subsequently developed into “ngiclik,” referring to sexual intercourse. The form “ngiclik” was later shortened in informal usage to “iclik.” Its use therefore demonstrates how regional vocabulary can function as a sexual expression in informal social-media communication. The comment also contains the word “gratis” (free), creating the construction “beli 1 gratis iclik” (buy one, get sexual intercourse for free). In relation to the video, which features two female SPGs, there is no information indicating that any sexual service or activity is offered for free. Therefore, the construction can be interpreted as a linguistic play that connects the purchase of a product with a sexual reward represented by the term “iclik.”

The comment implicitly positions the SPGs appearing in the video as individuals who could supposedly provide sexual activity as an additional benefit after a product purchase. Thus, the comment creates a transactional relationship between purchasing a product and receiving a sexual activity. It also demonstrates the objectification of women because the bodies and presence of the SPGs are positioned as something that can be associated with a benefit or sexual reward within a transaction.

Based on this analysis, the comment contains a sexual expression accompanied by a transactional construction. The phrase “beli 1 gratis iclik” links the purchase of a product with a sexual reward represented by the term “iclik.” Rather than functioning as a direct sexual request, the comment constructs a relationship between consumption and sexual activity through the language of exchange and reward. This transactional framing forms the basis for categorizing the comment as *sexual coercion* within Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) framework, as the sexual reference is presented in connection with the provision of a benefit or reward.

Data 6

“Mau dong aku sama kamu, bayarnya pake iPhone 17 Pro Orange, gimana???”

(I want to be with you; what if I pay [you] using an iPhone 17 Pro [Cosmic] Orange, how about that???)

The comment indicates sexual harassment that can be categorized as sexual coercion. The statement “Mau dong aku sama kamu” (I want to be with you) is directed toward the Sales Promotion Girl (SPG) appearing in the video because no other subject is shown besides the SPG of @goodponsel. The statement expresses the commenter's desire to be with the SPG. This desire is reinforced by the statement “bayarnya pake iPhone 17 Pro Orange, gimana???” (I'll pay with an iPhone 17 Pro Orange, how about it?), which

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presents an iPhone 17 Pro Orange as a form of compensation. The use of the word “*bayarnya*” (the payment) creates the impression of a transaction between the commenter and the SPG. The word positions being with the SPG as something that can supposedly be obtained through payment or the provision of a particular reward. Thus, the statement not only expresses attraction toward the SPG but also constructs the relationship in terms of an exchange or transaction. The transaction proposed in the comment carries sexual implications because the offer of an iPhone 17 Pro Orange is associated with the commenter’s desire to be with the SPG. Although the specific activity is not explicitly stated, the phrase “*bayarnya pake iPhone 17 Pro Orange*” introduces a material reward into the interaction.

By linking a valuable item with access to the SPG, the commenter frames interpersonal access as something that can be obtained through compensation. This transactional construction aligns with Fitzgerald et al.’s (1995) description of *sexual coercion*, which involves the use of rewards or benefits in relation to sexual or romantic access. Furthermore, the statement represents the SPG as someone whose attention or companionship can supposedly be obtained through payment. Consequently, the comment contains not only a sexually suggestive offer but also a transactional representation of the woman involved.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that verbal sexual harassment in the TikTok comment section of @goodponsel occurs in three forms identified through Fitzgerald et al.’s (1995) framework: unwanted sexual attention, gender harassment, and sexual coercion. Among the 40 comments analyzed, unwanted sexual attention was the most frequently identified category, accounting for 50.00% of the data, followed by gender harassment at 45.00% and sexual coercion at 5.00%. This distribution suggests that the harassment identified in the dataset occurred predominantly through sexualized attention and gender-based degrading language rather than through comments involving explicit transactional sexual propositions.

The dominance of unwanted sexual attention indicates that the comments are frequently directed to the physical appearance and perceived attractiveness of the female SPGs rather than toward the products or promotional information presented in the videos. Comments such as “*hottttt*” and “*dpt mbaknya aj juga enk*” illustrate how the focus of interaction can shift from the commercial purpose of the content to the women appearing in it. This finding is consistent with Dewanty & Saryono (2024), who identified sexually explicit verbal violence and appearance-based harassment as prominent forms of harassment on TikTok. The present finding further demonstrates that appearance-based comments can emerge even when the primary purpose of the content is commercial promotion. In this context, the professional role of the SPGs as promotional workers becomes less prominent in the interaction, while their physical appearance becomes the primary subject of evaluation.

This finding is also related to the concept of sexual objectification discussed by Khairani and Aji (2022). Their study demonstrates how women’s bodies may be represented through language as objects of sexual attention. In the dataset presented, the comments do not necessarily refer to specific body parts, but they similarly shift attention from the women’s professional roles toward their perceived attractiveness or desirability, demonstrate how comments can shift from the commercial purpose of the content toward sexualized attention to the women appearing in it. Rather than demonstrating that all TikTok users engage in such behavior, the finding shows that sexualized attention constitutes a substantial pattern within the specific dataset examined in this study.

The second most frequent category was gender harassment, which accounted for 45.00% of the data. The comments categorized under this dimension included expressions such as “*cewe bisa dibeli*” and the labeling of an SPG as “LC” (Lady Companion). These comments do not primarily express sexual interest in the women but instead construct gendered representations through degrading associations. This comment “*cewe bisa dibeli*,” represents women through the semantic association between women and something that can be purchased, while the use of “LC” associates the sales promotion girl with an occupation that is unrelated to her demonstrated professional role in the video. These linguistic constructions demonstrate that gender harassment in the dataset operates not only through explicit sexual language but also through the assignment of degrading meanings to women. This finding is consistent with the character-based discursive violence identified by Dewanty and Saryono (2024), in which language can be used to construct negative representations of women in digital spaces. It is also relevant to the Critical Discourse Analysis perspective discussed by Hartutik & Sayuti (2023), particularly regarding the way discourse can position women through particular linguistic representations. In the present study, the comments construct women through labels and descriptions that are unrelated to their professional activities as SPGs. Such representations shift the focus of the comments away from the women’s professional roles toward gendered or sexualized descriptions.

The high percentage of gender harassment also indicates that sexual harassment in digital spaces does not necessarily require an explicit sexual proposition. A comment can contribute to harassment through labelling, stereotyping, or degrading representations of women. This observation is consistent with Dinanti & Sunesti (2023), who found that women may experience verbal harassment in public spaces regardless of how they dress. Widuhung (2024) documented obscene comments directed toward a female host in the Kinderflix account despite her wearing modest clothing and a hijab. These studies suggest that the occurrence of verbal harassment cannot be adequately explained by the target’s appearance or clothing alone. In relation to the present findings, the comments analyzed were directed at women performing professional or public-facing roles, indicating that their participation in a public or commercial environment does not prevent them from becoming targets of gendered verbal harassment.

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The third category, sexual coercion, accounted for only 5.00% of the dataset. The two comments classified in this category used transactional language that connected the presence or attention of the female SPG with a material benefit or reward. The expressions “*beli 1 gratis iclik*” and “*bayarnya pake iPhone 17 Pro Orange*” construct sexual or romantic access through the language of exchange. This pattern differs from the more frequent categories because the comments do not merely evaluate the women’s appearance or assign gendered labels; instead, they introduce a transactional element into the interaction.

The use of “*iclik*” is also significant because it demonstrates how informal or regional vocabulary can encode sexual meanings in social-media communication. In combination with “*gratis*,” the expression creates a linguistic construction in which sexual activity is represented as an additional benefit associated with purchasing a product. Similarly, the reference to an iPhone 17 Pro Orange introduces a material object as a form of payment in relation to the desire to be with the SPG. These findings demonstrate that sexualized communication on social media can employ indirect or coded expressions rather than relying exclusively on explicit sexual vocabulary.

The categorization of these comments as sexual coercion should, however, be understood specifically within the operational framework adopted in this study. Fitzgerald et al. (1995) conceptualize sexual coercion in relation to pressure involving sexual cooperation and rewards or consequences. The comments analyzed here contain the transactional element of a sexual or romantic offer associated with a material benefit, but the dataset does not provide evidence of an actual interaction in which the targeted women were pressured to accept or reject such an offer. Therefore, the present findings demonstrate the use of coercive or transactional sexual language rather than establishing that an actual coercive encounter occurred. This distinction is important because the analysis is based exclusively on publicly available comments and does not include responses or experiences reported by the women targeted by the comments.

Taken together, the distribution of the three categories reveals a notable pattern. Unwanted sexual attention and gender harassment account for 95.00% of the analyzed comments, whereas sexual coercion accounts for only 5.00%. This indicates that the dominant forms of verbal sexual harassment in this dataset are unwanted sexual attention and gender harassment rather than comments categorized as sexual coercion. The findings therefore suggest that verbal sexual harassment in TikTok comment sections may operate through ordinary-looking evaluations, jokes, labels, and suggestive expressions that redirect attention from the content’s intended purpose toward the women appearing in it. In the dataset examined in this study, promotional content featuring SPGs constituted a context in which gendered and sexualized language appeared in user-generated comments. This pattern is relevant to previous research concerning the migration of sexual harassment into digital communication environments. Praminatih & Nafiah (2022) discuss how sexual harassment can occur through digital platforms rather than being restricted to physical or workplace environments. The present findings provide a specific example of this phenomenon in the context of TikTok promotional content. The SPGs in the dataset were performing a visible professional role, yet some commenters responded to their presence through sexualized attention, gender-based labelling, or transactional sexual expressions. Thus, the findings extend the discussion of digital sexual harassment by demonstrating how professional promotional content can become a context in which gendered and sexualized language emerges in user-generated comments.

The findings may also be interpreted in relation to the role of digital communication characteristics. Previous research has associated online environments with reduced interpersonal cues and greater opportunities for users to communicate without immediate face-to-face feedback. Rahmawati et al. (2025), for example, discuss the relationship between online communication and reduced digital empathy. In the context of the present study, however, the data do not directly measure anonymity, disinhibition, empathy, or the psychological motivations of the commenters. Therefore, these concepts are better understood as possible contextual explanations identified in previous research rather than as causal findings of the present study.

Other previous studies have reported psychological consequences associated with experiences of verbal and digital harassment, including discomfort, anxiety, fear, reduced self-confidence, and emotional distress (Amarnes et al., 2023; Rakatiwi et al., 2023; Sundari et al., 2025). These consequences are relevant to understanding the broader significance of sexual harassment. Nevertheless, because the present study analyzes comments rather than the experiences of the targeted SPGs, it cannot establish whether the individuals represented in the dataset experienced these particular psychological or physical effects. The present findings therefore provide evidence of the linguistic forms of harassment, while the consequences reported in previous studies provide a broader context for understanding why such forms of communication may be socially significant.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Fitzgerald et al.’s (1995) framework can be applied to identify different forms of verbal sexual harassment in TikTok comments. The analysis shows that unwanted sexual attention was the most frequent category, followed by gender harassment, while sexual coercion occurred least frequently. The findings also demonstrate that sexual harassment in the analyzed comment section was not limited to explicit sexual expressions. It also appeared through evaluations of women’s attractiveness, gender-based labelling, degrading representations, and transactional language. These findings highlight the importance of examining the linguistic form and contextual meaning of social-media comments when identifying verbal sexual harassment in digital spaces.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, verbal sexual harassment in the TikTok comment section of @goodponse1 was identified through three dimensions of Fitzgerald et al. (1995): gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion. The findings show that unwanted sexual attention was the most frequently identified dimension, followed by gender harassment and sexual coercion. This distribution indicates that the comments analyzed in this study predominantly involved sexualized attention and gender-based degrading language, while comments containing transactional sexual expressions occurred less frequently. The findings also demonstrate that verbal sexual harassment in the analyzed TikTok comments was expressed through different forms of language, including appearance-based evaluations, gender-based labelling, degrading expressions, and transactional or suggestive language. Therefore, the occurrence of verbal sexual harassment in the dataset was not limited to explicit sexual propositions but also appeared through language that directed attention toward the women as targets of gendered or sexualized comments.

Overall, the study demonstrates the applicability of Fitzgerald et al.'s (1995) framework for identifying and categorizing forms of verbal sexual harassment in the analyzed TikTok comments. However, the findings are limited to the comments examined in the @goodponse1 account and do not establish the intentions of the commenters or the experiences and effects of the comments on the targeted SPGs. Further research may examine a larger range of TikTok accounts and incorporate the perspectives of individuals who experience such comments to provide a broader understanding of verbal sexual harassment in digital communication.

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VII. DISCLOSURE

The author reports no conflicts of interest in this work.

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