Baby Shaming as a Cyberbullying Phenomenon Against Babies Through Social Media

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of baby shaming is common in our society. Baby Shaming is a form of bullying aimed at babies and toddlers. Although the impression of baby shaming only means joking and small talk, in fact baby shaming is a form of verbal violence that comes from words and comments on social media and is included as cyberbullying because it can offend and even hurt the parents of the baby or toddler who is the victim of baby shaming. Using the netnography research method in an online qualitative approach, this article looks at the phenomenon of baby shaming that occurs on the Instagram accounts of Indonesian artists, namely Tasya Kamila and Shandy Aulia. These two artists who have babies/toddlers experience cyberbullying in the form of baby shaming by netizens. Cyberbullying in the form of baby shaming occurs because society has ideal standards that are seen from body parts such as body size (too thin, fat, short, tall), limb shape (stomach, chest, teeth), skin color (black, white), to hair (thin, curly, bald, infertile). Baby shaming in the form of cyberbullying that occurs through social media can be categorized as a criminal offense that has been regulated in Law Number 19 of 2016 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law). This baby shaming will have an impact, especially for the baby's mother both psychologically and socially. There are several things that can be done if you experience this baby shaming, namely not blaming yourself, focusing on child development, and also closing social media accounts and also being ignorant. Whether the comments are in person or through the media, baby shaming can still be categorized as bullying so the culture of small talk that leads to baby shaming must be stopped.

Introduction

All humans desire to have an ideal body image. The ideal body shape becomes a significant assessment of a person even from infancy. This ideal standard can also be seen from body parts, such as body size (too thin, fat, short, tall), limb shape (abdomen, chest,

teeth), skin color (black, white), to hair (thin, curly, bald, infertile). The existence of a body standard that is considered more ideal makes a person able to give an assessment of their own body (body image) and also to others, even the assessment is given to a newborn baby. If the body image does not match the prevailing ideal standards, this can cause embarrassment to yourself and can even become an object of body shaming. (Puspasari, 2019).

In general, the form of body shaming consists of two categories, namely in verbal form and also in non-verbal form (Yarni, 2019). Body Shaming in verbal form is a form of body shaming through speech in the form of ridicule by making certain terms or even equating with certain objects, equating with cartoon characters, and equating with animals. Body Shaming in this verbal pattern is not only spoken directly, body shaming remarks are often made through comments left by netizens in the comment column on social media. The ease of finding data and expressing on social media allows anyone to make opinions and criticisms at will. In addition to verbal forms, body shaming is also non-verbal in the form of direct action against the victim of body shaming, for example, being stared at with a cynical look, breaking up with a girlfriend, not being accepted in a circle of friends and even being rejected when applying for a job. Body shaming is categorized as bullying because it is part of verbal and non-verbal violence.

Body shaming that is directed even from the time a baby is born is often referred to as baby shaming (Siregar, 2022). Baby shaming is a term used to describe body shaming activities directed at toddlers. Body shaming itself is a type of bullying that is attempted by commenting on the physical form of a person and Baby shaming is criticism, sarcasm that contains comments on the physical condition of the child which is often wrapped in a joking tone. Although the baby/toddler still does not understand the baby shaming directed at them, in fact baby shaming can leave heartache and adversely affect the psychological condition of the baby/toddler's parents.

There is not much previous research on baby shaming. Some relevant literature mostly discusses body shaming and mom shaming. Research conducted by Zahira Nisriani Hendriana, for example, on the Mom Shaming Phenomenon as a Form of Cyberbullying Against Mothers in Social Media (Case Study of Instagram Social Media of Influencer and Non-Influencer Mothers) is not explicitly discussed and only occurs within the scope of blog media. With the development of technology, mom shaming can occur within the scope of social media with more diverse motives and forms. Not only related to the mother's employment status, mom shaming in this case can occur due to differences in parenting (Hendriana, 2020).

Research conducted by Karyanti from Muhammadiyah Palangkaraya University in her book on Cyberbullying and Body Shaming explains that social media is a great opportunity for individuals to commit cyberbullying. Comments written or spoken are done by insulting the physical form of others, known as body shaming. Cyberbullying and body shaming create an online environment that lacks empathy, because the cyberbully does not see the victim's reaction directly. Types of cyberbullying and body shaming, two types of online hurting and shaming. This book presents traditional bullying, cyberbullying, body shaming, and online shaming. This Cyberbullying & Body Shaming book contains chapters that deal with the behavior of hurting and shaming individuals online. In general, this book describes the definition, types of bullying and cyberbullying, roles in bullying and cyberbullying events, characteristics of cyberbully and victim, differences between gander bullying and cyberbullying, and body shaming, effects of bullying and cyberbullying, and body shaming (Karyanti, 2019).

Baby shaming behavior towards babies often occurs in everyday life. Even in today's digital era, baby shaming also often occurs through social media through comments left on social media accounts. Baby shaming that occurs through social media can be categorized as cyberbullying (Schoenholz, 2009). Cyberbullying is bullying using digital technology. It can occur on social media, chat platforms, gaming platforms, and cell phones. According to Think Before Text, cyberbullying is aggressive and purposeful

behavior by a group or individual, using electronic media, repeatedly over time, against someone who is considered not easy to resist.

Method

This article attempts to examine the phenomenon of baby shaming as a form of cyberbullying through social media using the netnography method with an online qualitative approach (Bakry, 2017). The basis of this qualitative research is constructivism which assumes that reality has a distant dimension, is interactive and is an exchange of social experiences interpreted by each individual. Truth in this qualitative research is a dynamic thing and can be found only through examining people through their interactions with their social situations. Netnography as part of digital ethnography is used for life situations and virtual world activities built with internet infrastructure and is intended to gain an in-depth understanding of virtual community life from the researcher's perspective. This netnography focuses on internet users in online communities (known as netizens or citizens in the realm of social media) with substantive daily lives. The netnography method in this study looks at baby shaming as a phenomenon of cyberbullying on social media Instagram with a focus on the Instagram accounts of Indonesian artists, Tasya Kamila and Shandy Aulia, who have experienced baby shaming by netizens.

Result and Discussion

The rapid presence of social media has made social media a must-have application for interaction. Social media should be used wisely as a medium that provides information and even a medium that can channel aspirations and creativity. However, social media is also often misused by its users, for example by cyberbullying other users. This often happens because there is an assumption that the perpetrator of cyberbullying is difficult to track, especially if he uses fake accounts and fake identities on his social media, it will be difficult for others to know his real identity information. Cyberbullying is an act of intimidation that occurs in the internet world, especially social media, which harms others both mentally and physically. The form of cyberbullying can be mockery, insults, threats. However, in Indonesia itself, cyberbullying is still considered trivial, without knowing the mental health impact on the bullied. Cyberbullying does not look at gender or even age. Cyberbullying also often happens to babies and toddlers even though the impact is not directly understood by the baby or the toddler. However, parents of babies and toddlers who upload their child's development on social media, then get pressure and can even interfere with the psychological health of the parents of the baby / toddler because they get negative comments. This bullying of babies and toddlers is often referred to as Baby Shaming.

Figure 1. Baby Shaming

According to Annisa Nur Aini, a pediatrician from Brawijaya Hospital and Clinic (akurat.co, 2021), baby shaming is the act of criticizing or insulting the appearance, body shape and behavior of the child. It generally comes from other people, but it can also unintentionally come from parents and family. Baby shaming often occurs without realizing it because some people often consider it as a joke, advice or mere pleasantries. Comments such as "what a snub nose, huh? Not like her mommy" or "looks skinny? Don't eat enough!" are often thrown at the Little One. Although these comments may have good intentions, it can hurt the feelings of the parents as well as the child later if baby shaming is continued until the child grows up. In addition, baby shaming can also cause low self-esteem and depression in parents and children because the long term of baby shaming is the occurrence of bullying against the mother or in this case it is called mom shaming.

One of the Indonesian artists who has experienced baby shaming against her child is Tasya Kamila. The reason is, Arrasya Wardhana Bachtiar, her two-month-old son, received a lot of reproaches from netizens: from the appearance to the weight of the baby being targeted. "The child's forehead is wide." "Squeeze the baby's nose to make it look bigger." "Arrasya is less fattened, still looks skinny." Behind the adorable portraits of her children, Tasya is holding back her frustration. She could not understand why there were people who were so willing to reproach a baby. At the end of the upload, instead of thanking her, she pinned a sarcastic sentence for the attention given to her child. "Thank you for your concern, but my baby is healthy and happy."

Figure 2. Baby shaming Experienced by Tasya Kamila's Child

Tasya Kamila is not the only one who experienced baby shaming against her son. Another Indonesian artist who experienced baby shaming is Shandy Aulia. In Shandy Aulia's upload on her Instagram account (@shandyaulia), a baby is seen fast asleep while smiling. The baby is Shandy Aulia's baby, named Claire Herbowo.In the upload, not a few netizens commented on the baby's anxiety. But different things are actually sent by other netizens with sharp comments.

The netizen commented on Shandy Aulia's baby's physique by saying that the child was malnourished. "The child is thin, malnourished," commented the net citizen. Knowing that her child was thought to be malnourished, Shandy Aulia did not remain silent. She seemed to reply to these comments. "Your mouth and brain are lacking nutrition," wrote Shandy Aulia. In fact, a baby who has a thin body does not always mean that the baby is malnourished. But it can also be due to genetic factors. Some newborns may experience physical conditions with below-average weight and height, but this is generally healthy. To be sure it is good to see the child's growth curve, within plus-minus 2 from the normal point, the baby's weight is still categorized as safe.

Figure 3. Baby shaming Experienced by Shandy Aulia's Child

The experience of baby shaming not only targets celebrity moms like Tasya Kamila and Shandy Aulia, but also mothers in general. The perpetrators of baby shaming may just mean to joke, play pranks, or just automatically, without thinking that their comments will hurt the feelings of parents, especially the mother of the baby. Sometimes, people or in this case netizens or netizens unconsciously produce words that hurt children or other mothers indirectly. Baby shaming that is very often intertwined in our lives such as saying "the child is very thin not like the A" or "wow how dark skin while the father is white" or the A has been able to walk at the age of 11 months how come your child is still creeping.

There are several impacts for parents of victims who experience baby shaming, namely first psychologically, parents, especially mothers, will be prone to depression, anger, anxiety, anxiety and self-harm because mothers who have just given birth tend to experience baby blues syndrome and postpartum depression. Second, in terms of social impact, the mother will withdraw, lose confidence, be more aggressive to friends and family.

Related to baby shaming that occurs through social media, Indonesia already has a number of rules governing behavior on the internet (Argi, 2021; Satyawati, 2014; Rumbay, 2017) such as Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions which later amended some of its provisions in Law Number 19 of 2016 concerning Amendments to Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE Law).

Lately, the issue of criminalizing perpetrators of body shaming on social media has graced the mass media and become a trending topic. In this case, baby shaming is also included as part of body shaming. The term body shaming when referring to the Oxford Living Dictionaries can be defined as a form of mocking/insulting action by commenting on the shape or size of a person's body and appearance. The act of body shaming on the internet can be criminalized if it meets the qualifications of a pre-existing crime. Although it should be noted that there are basic elements for determining the existence of the crime, namely intentionally and without right. In this case, the intent is solely against the law. The same applies to the nature of the offense. Acts that have been regulated as complaint offenses, in the realm of cybercrime, remain complaint offenses.

Article 27 paragraph (3) of the ITE Law stipulates that "Every person intentionally, and without the right to distribute and/or transmit and/or make accessible Electronic Information and/or Electronic Documents that have insulting and/or defamatory content". The provisions in this paragraph refer to the provisions of defamation and/or slander regulated in the Criminal Code (KUHP).

The perpetrators of body shaming can be punished for violations of the Criminal Code (KUHP), Criminal Procedure Law (KUHAP), and ITE Law. Sanctions for perpetrators of cyberbullying are contained in Article 45 paragraph (3), which reads 'Every person who intentionally and without right distributes and/or transmits and/or makes accessible electronic information and/or electronic documents that have insulting and/or defamatory content as referred to in Article 27 paragraph (3) shall be punished with a maximum imprisonment of 4 (four) years and/or a maximum fine of Rp750,000,000.00 (seven hundred and fifty million rupiah)'.

In relation to overcoming baby shaming, generally, humans have a reflex to respond and fight back when something disturbs them. However, doing nothing when people say bad things about your child is the best way to deal with baby shaming. Although it is difficult to refrain from defending or explaining what is on your mind, parents should try to avoid conflict. Try to keep anyone who comments unaffected, until they tire themselves out and stop their baseless remarks. Quoted from halodoc (Halodoc, 2019), there are several things to do if you experience this baby shaming, namely:

1.   Don't blame yourself. Tasya and Shandy and all new moms out there certainly experience a lot of anxiety and confusion in the early days of motherhood. The first two months are also a vulnerable phase for moms experiencing baby blues, so full support and positive comments are actually needed. But if anyone does, don't ever

blame yourself, or feel like a bad mom. Rely on your partner and family, and trust that everything will be okay. No one is at fault, except those who throw bad comments without a second thought.

2.   Be indifferent and focus on the child. In addition to not blaming yourself, mothers also need to increase their focus and closeness to the baby. Remember the happy times when you were pregnant with her, and heard her cry for the first time. Look closely at the child, find happiness and peace from his tiny face. Accept your little one completely, regardless of any flaws that people may comment on. Because no human being is born perfect, right? So all you need to do is make sure they grow and develop well.

3.   Close Social Media Accounts. This is actually a last resort. You can start by reducing the number of photo posts of your child, or not reading the comments on the posts. But if you find these things difficult to do, why not try just closing the social media account? By closing the account, intimate moments with your child may actually be very well developed. After the shaming subsides, the child is older, or after you can build a strong mentality, you can open a new account again.

Baby shaming is sometimes considered a joke and seems like a trite statement, but the sensitivity of humans, especially parents, varies in dealing with such things. This is because baby shaming has been considered to lead to a form of bullying that comments on the physical form of babies who are considered not ideal. Moreover, with the development of the current digital era, these comments can be directly conveyed through social media which can be categorized as cyberbullying. Whether the comments are directly or through the media, baby shaming can still be categorized as bullying so that the culture of small talk that leads to baby shaming must be stopped.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of baby shaming often occurs in society. Baby Shaming is a form of bullying aimed at babies and toddlers. Although the impression of baby shaming only means joking and small talk, in fact baby shaming is a form of verbal violence that comes from speech or comments on social media and is included as cyberbullying because it can offend and even hurt the parents of the baby or toddler who is the victim of baby shaming. Cyberbullying by baby shaming occurs because people have ideal standards that are seen from body parts such as body size (too thin, fat, short, tall), limb shape (stomach, chest, teeth), skin color (black, white), to hair (thin, curly, bald, infertile). This baby shaming will have an impact, especially on the baby's mother both psychologically and socially. There are several things that can be done if you experience this baby shaming, namely not blaming yourself, focusing on child development, and also closing social media accounts and also being ignorant.

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