

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The unfortunate position that women have been dealing with in society is one of the results of patriarchy. The concept of patriarchy is believed to be the preference of having men be the superior party not only in public but also in the private domain (Sultana, 2010). The power that the patriarchal society has over women could be seen through the strict and specific etiquette for women, gender exclusion, and the ideology that links the moral of a family to a woman's dignity (Hadi, 2017). And due to that belief, it could lead to women being perceived as inferior, oppressed, and vulnerable to harassment that endangers them both in their houses and public places. In their houses, according to Tonsing (2019), domestic violence has an extensive historical origin and it is related to patriarchy which leads to the justification of the dominant behavior of men over women. And once the violence is seen as something acceptable, women are presumed to just accept the violent behavior of men because it is seen to be the common nature of men (Hlavka, 2014).

Violent behavior includes numerous types of mistreatment that are intended to harass or harm someone (Flinck and Paavilainen, 2008). One of the harassment is sexual harassment, which is an aggressive behavior and it is emotionally tormenting the victims (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2018). It is also considered a form of discrimination, a behavior that might include degradation, humiliation, and sexist occurrences (Gruber

and Fineran, 2007; Berdahl and Raver, 2011). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), in 2021, around 53% of women have encountered sexual harassment meanwhile for men, the percentage was 25%. The data shows that women are more vulnerable than men as the number of women who are sexually harassed is twice of men.

In schools and colleges, girls were also proven to be more likely to be harassed sexually than boys (Hill and Kearl, 2011). Sexual harassment could happen in the form of verbal or written statements, making signs or movements, or showing images, and it also contains unwelcomed sexual behavior which could intervene in students' academic opportunities (Hill and Kearl, 2011). Unfortunately, in schools, there is still an absence of specific descriptions and acknowledgment of sexual harassment which leads to the lack of recognition and less support for the victims (Lei et al., 2019). The effects that victims of sexual harassment in schools might get are related to physical health issues, psychological issues, and derivation of educational experiences (Conroy, 2013).

Lately, sexual harassment is getting opposed as the growth of the feminist movement has been expeditious. In real-life circumstances, the opposition is done mainly through formal procedures related to law and inserting the issue into education (Scott and Martin, 2006). It can also be done through social movements such as the #MeToo movement, a movement that is formed by Tarana Burke to encourage victims of sexual harassment to speak up (Gibson et al., 2019). Meanwhile in media

representation, according to Altamir (2020) and Korzec (2007), women characters in the movies have resisted unwanted sexual behavior through some kind of resistance, whether they are armed or not by disguising themselves, and through legal action, also doing immediate confrontation, in which the society sees as the applicable method to respond (Gruber and Smith, 1995). Other than that, the existence of witnesses or bystanders could also be a way of opposing the sexual harassment of women.

According to the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (2019) and Clarkson (1987), a bystander is someone who witnesses an event but does not partake in it. But bystanders could be significant parts of practices of peer exclusion and inclusion because they could just stay still, examining without doing anything or they could intervene (Malti et al., 2015). According to Esquith (2012), some bystanders could offer implicit support toward the harassers, some other bystanders could also put their own lives at risk for the victims, and a number of bystanders have been hidden as the part that gains benefits, not supporters or the enemies of systemic mass violence.

Despite the fact that anyone could be a witness or bystander, not all bystanders would do something regarding emergency events. It is found that gender has something to do with the intervention of sexual violence, which is why women are more inclined to intervene in trying to stop sexual violence (Baillie et al., 2021). But unfortunately according to the Australian Human Rights Commission (2018), in 2018 the bystanders of sexual harassment in the workplace were more than one person out of three but only one-third were found to intervene in the situation. Meanwhile, in the university

environment, the most known obstacle to sexual violence intervention for bystanders was the failure of acknowledging emergency circumstances (Kania and Cale, 2018). The failure of perceiving an event as an emergency might be caused by inattentiveness to surroundings, the fear of getting harassed, and social anxiety.

In Australia, the law about sexual harassment is regulated under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 which covers a list of harassment behavior, stating protection not only for the victim but also for the bystander of sexual harassment (Bacon, 2021). However, the protection did not cover unpaid people who were not employees, which led to the lack of protection for unpaid students who were working in order to fulfill their education requirements (Hewitt et al., 2021). Fortunately, in 2021, there is a change in the Sex Discrimination Act 1984. It is stated that there is an expansion of the protection from sexual harassment, which includes paid and unpaid workers (Bacon, 2021).

Meanwhile in Indonesia, sexual harassment has not been taken seriously in general. There are laws regarding sexual-related crimes, but it has never been specified until RUU PKS or *Rancangan Undang-Undang Penghapusan Kekerasan Seksual* (The Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill). But it took years for RUU PKS to be finally enacted to be UU TPKS or *Undang-Undang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual* (Law on Sexual Violence Crimes) in 2022 as it has been re-constructed and constantly being delayed. Though the bill is focused on the victim, the bill also states the rights and protection of witnesses. Delaying the inauguration of the bill might lead to a lack of

protection for not only the victim but also the witness or the bystander. Since there is a lack of protection, the bystanders might refuse to do something to prevent sexual harassment. The short movie *Locker Room* (2018) is addressing how a bystander could do something regarding sexual harassment of women, presenting how the bystander could help even though there might be difficulties while doing it.

The short movie *Locker Room* premiered on YouTube in 2018. The movie mainly takes place in a school, highlighting the life of students there. As the main character is the only female in the group of four, she feels like she is being left out no matter how close she is to the boys. The conflict arises when the main character, Carla, checks what the boys are looking at when she is not in the same room with them. Carla sees a group chat and the boys are talking about girls, possibly objectifying women, and there is also a video of an unconscious girl being harassed and secretly being recorded by the boys. It makes her a bystander, as she has seen the group chat. Due to her close friendship with the boys, Carla is doubtful and contemplating what to do. Because if she reacts right away and shows opposition against the boys, she might lose her friends. But above anything else, not only she is a bystander, but she is also a woman. The latter thought is what correlates the most with the bond she has with the victim, which is sisterhood.

Locker Room is an award-winning short movie directed and written by Greta Nash. The short movie won six awards from 2018 to 2019. The movie may also show how the female characters have a bond, a sisterhood, which could lead the female bystander to try to fight back. According to Feurer (1988), in the past, sisterhood is a concept that

suggests women a right to defend the other working women opposing men who they perceive as trying to make use of the power of the state to exclude women from trades. Sisterhood conveys the message of shared ill-treatment, victimization, and other solidarity among women (Oyewumi, 2001). It is a bond of solidarity between women in which they share strength and support to fight against sexism, exploitation, and oppression based on the feminist movement (Hooks, 1984). Therefore, this short movie is highlighting Carla's point of view as a female bystander of women's sexual harassment and how she is trying to oppose it with the bond she has with the female victim.

The short movie *Locker Room* (2018) is chosen as the object because the movie portrays an alternative action that a bystander could do regarding the sexual harassment among other common responses. It shows the perspective of a female bystander, how hard the sexual harassment affects her, and how she overcomes it. The short movie does not merely show the awakening moment of the female bystander and how she does not fight against the oppression right away, rather it shows her struggle with acceptance, her decision-making, the factors that effecting her decision, and then her action against sexual harassment. It implies that being a bystander is not easy but it is necessary to step in and try to intervene in the harassment. *Locker Room* (2018) represents a change of attitude from a passive to an active bystander as it shows how a bystander could take action and become a possible significant aspect in sexual

harassment. Through seeing the short movie, it is expected that the audiences would be affected and start implying the action shown in the movie as bystanders.

A study with a similar issue is titled *To Act or Not to Act, That Is the Question? Barriers and Facilitators of Bystander Intervention* written by Sidney Bennett, Victoria L. Banyard, and Lydia Garnhart. It aims to examine the barriers and facilitators of helping behavior done by bystanders regarding sexual violence. According to the study, the intrapersonal variables play big roles in both barriers and helping behavior of bystanders and those variables are applicable to the situational model offered by Latané and Darley, which is bystander intervention (Bennett et al., 2013). Though the study has a similar issue and discusses the same situational model, it merely examines the existed variables of barriers and applies them to the participants to understand the participants' viewpoints. The study takes the social-psychological perspective, however, there is no further analysis regarding bystanders through different perspectives such as cultural perspective.

This study will discuss further the way female bystander attempts to fight against sexual harassment through a bond known as sisterhood and how it represents women's empowerment. In order to analyze the object, the bystander intervention model offered by Latané and Darley will be used along with a narrative non-narrative approach. Through the bystander intervention model, the bystander's action will be divided into several steps in order to be analyzed in detail from a feminist perspective. Then the narrative aspects such as the plot and the dialogue will be studied further. The non-

narrative aspects such as the settings, the camera movement, and the lighting will also be analyzed which will break down the details shown in the data chosen.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The writer will focus on the bystander intervention done by the female bystander in the short movie *Locker Room* (2018). Hence, the writer has constructed a question within the work as follows:

1. How does the female bystander become a significant aspect in opposing sexual harassment of women as portrayed in the movie?

1.3 Objective of the Study

With the statement of the problems above, therefore, the objective of the study is formed as to reveal the attempt that has been done by the female bystander in order to fight against sexual harassment.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The short movie *Locker Room* (2018) is presenting how a bystander through sisterhood could be a potential notable aspect in terms of opposing sexual harassment of women. The result of this study aims to highlight the female bystander's effort to fight against sexual harassment and to fill the gap from the previous researches by offering the idea of sisterhood bond could be a powerful encouragement for a passive bystander to change into an active bystander. By completing the research, it is expected that this research could be a reference for future studies especially studies regarding sexual harassment of women from a feminist perspective. Meanwhile, for the readers

or the society, this research could give an example that could be applied in real-life concerning the behavior of a bystander. For the cultural studies, this research is expected to give more insight and enrich the perspective regarding sexual harassment and sisterhood which could be a significant aspect in preventing or intervening sexual harassment.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

In this study, the writer will highlight the female bystander of women's sexual harassment presented throughout the short movie *Locker Room* (2018) and the sisterhood bond she has with the victim. The analysis will be conducted through the characters' portrayal and behavior using bystander intervention. The focus of the study is the female character's portrayal as the bystander, her behavior which contributes to the women's sexual harassment issue, and the sisterhood bond that the female bystander has with the victim.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

Sexual harassment : It is considered a kind of discrimination, a behavior that might include degradation, humiliation, and sexist matters (Gruber and Fineran, 2007; Berdahl and Raver, 2011)

- Bystander* : Someone who witnesses someone else asking for help but does not partake in it (Clarkson 1987, 82)
- Feminism* : A movement that aims to stop sexism, exploitation, and oppression (Hooks, 2014)
- Sisterhood* : Sisterhood conveys the message of shared ill-treatment, victimization, and other solidarity among women (Oyewumi, 2001)
- Perpetrators* : Men who could not acknowledge their aggressive actions and also who refuse to admit it (Procentese et al, 2020)