

Understanding Paralegals of Sexual Violence Victims from the Perspective of Communication Law

^{1**}Yuliyanto Budi Setiawan, ²Endah Pujiastuti

¹*Department of Communication, Faculty of Information Technology and Communication,
Universitas Semarang*

²*Bachelor of Law Program, Faculty of Law, Universitas Semarang
e-mail: yuli@usm.ac.id*

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk memahami aktivitas paralegal terhadap korban kekerasan seksual dari perspektif hukum komunikasi. Penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana interaksi simbolik paralegal terhadap korban kekerasan seksual. Pendekatan penelitian menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologis, dalam hal ini aktivitas paralegal yang dibantu oleh LRC-KJHAM. Analisis data dalam penelitian ini menggunakan model Miles & Huberman. Untuk temuan penelitian dalam studi ini, terdapat dua jalur menjadi paralegal. Jalur pertama melalui 'Sekartaji', di mana kelompok terapis ini memperkuat kondisi psikologis dan mental korban. Ketika korban telah pulih, mereka dapat menjadi paralegal untuk korban lain. Jalur kedua melalui Sekolah Gender. Sebagian besar peserta Sekolah Gender adalah mahasiswa. Alumni Sekolah Gender saat ini menjadi relawan prapelatihan yang membantu korban, mendukung pekerjaan divisi hukum hingga mereka dapat menjadi paralegal di kemudian hari. Berdasarkan tinjauan terhadap penelitian sebelumnya dengan tema serupa, dapat disimpulkan bahwa penelitian ini belum pernah dilakukan sebelumnya, sehingga terdapat aspek-aspek keunikan dalam penelitian ini.

Kata Kunci: Interaksi simbolik, kegiatan paralegal, komunikasi gender, korban kekerasan seksual, Sekolah Gender

Abstract

This study was conducted to understand the activities of paralegals to victims of sexual violence in the perspective of communication law. This study also aims to understand how the symbolic interaction of paralegals to victims of sexual violence. The research approach uses a phenomenological approach, in this case the activities of paralegals assisted by the LRC-KJHAM. As for data analysis in this study using the Miles & Huberman model. For the research findings in this study, there are two pathways to becoming a paralegal. The first path is through the 'Sekartaji', where this group of therapists strengthens the psychological and mental conditions of victims. The second route is through the Gender School. The majority of participants in the Gender School are university students. The alumni of the Gender School are currently prevolunteers assisting victims, helping the work of the legal division until they can later become paralegals. Based on a review of previous research with similar themes, it can be found that this study has never been carried out, so there are points of novelty in this study.

Keywords: gender communication, Gender School, paralegal activities, sexual violence victims, symbolic interaction

INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence is any act that degrades, humiliates, harasses, and/or attacks a person's body, and/or reproductive function, due to inequality in power relations and/or gender, which results in or can result in psychological and/or physical suffering, including those that interfere with a person's reproductive health and loss of opportunity to carry out education safely and optimally. The key word that is an indicator of violence is coercion. Any activity that contains coercion is violence. Based on its type, sexual violence is carried out in: verbal, non-physical, physical, and online or through information and communication technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2021). Komnas Perempuan stated that from January to November 2024, it had received reports of 3.014 cases of gender-based violence against women, including 860 cases of sexual violence in the public/community sphere and 899 cases in the personal sphere. For conditions in Central Java alone, throughout 2022 there were 983 cases of sexual violence. This proves that the rate of violence against women is still relatively high in Indonesia in general and in Central Java in particular.

In response to this high rate of sexual violence, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemdiktisaintek) has even issued a Permendikbudristek on the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence in the Higher Education Environment or Permen PPKS. This step is a serious commitment of Kemdiktisaintek in efforts to prevent and handle sexual violence in the Indonesian education environment to ensure the fulfilment of the basic right to education for all citizens. This is done as a form of realisation of Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 4 on Education and Goal 5 on Gender Equality, by ensuring that efforts to stop sexual violence in the education unit environment run without hampering citizens in accessing and continuing their education.

The year 2022 itself is a historic year for the movement to eliminate violence against women, especially sexual violence in Indonesia. After undergoing a process of approximately 12 years, efforts to provide a better legal umbrella to prevent and deal with sexual violence resulted in Law No. 12/2012 on Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence (TPKS Law). By containing six key elements to eliminate sexual violence, the TPKS Law is expected to overcome various challenges and obstacles for victims to obtain their rights to justice, handling, and recovery.

In line with this, in order to guarantee the constitutional rights of every person (including victims of sexual violence) to obtain recognition, guarantees, protection and certainty of a just law and equal treatment before the law as a means of protecting human rights, the government

seeks to be present to provide legal aid (especially for the poor) as a manifestation of access to justice. However, it is recognised that the current efforts to provide legal aid have not reached all Indonesians due to the limitations of legal aid implementers so that the role of paralegals is needed to increase the reach of legal aid.

This paralegal does not work as an advocate and does not independently assist Legal Aid Recipients in court, but he can be involved in providing legal assistance to the community in accordance with his competence. In addition to providing legal aid, paralegals can also be assigned to provide legal services in the form of policy advocacy for regional apparatus at the village ('kelurahan') level up to the provincial level, assistance for programmes or activities managed by ministries, non-ministerial government agencies, provincial governments, district/city governments, or village governments; and/or work together with legal counselors to form and/or foster law-aware family groups.

It appears here that Paralegals are a very important component in achieving access to justice, especially in terms of providing legal aid and carrying out legal empowerment for the community. Paralegals have a big and crucial role and contribution to the provision of legal aid felt by the community before the legal aid law was passed. Therefore, their ability to communicate is very crucial. Their ability to master the basic concepts of communication, communication that convinces other parties, responsive communication, and draw conclusions from the communication carried out will be a measure of their success in carrying out their roles and missions.

Through this study, the researcher wants to examine how the activities carried out by paralegals in order to assist victims of sexual violence in the perspective of communication law, before and after the enactment of the TPKS Law. In addition, through this study, the researcher wants to examine how symbolic interactions occur between paralegals and victims of sexual violence. Paralegals in the context of this study are those who have legal assistance skills, but are not lawyers. Paralegals can come from victims of sexual violence who have been assisted by non-governmental organisations and who have survived.

Meanwhile, this study has an element of originality, this is based on the state of the art of several previous studies as a guide for researchers on the studies conducted, which previous studies have differences with this study. In this state of the art, several journal articles are presented, as follows: *first*, research (Fattah & Muthmainah, 2021) entitled "*The Role of Paralegals in assisting Victims of Violence against Women and Children in Parepare City* (*Peran Paralegal dalam Mendampingi Korban Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan dan Anak di*

Kota Parepare)” with Authors named Ibrahim Fattah, Muthmainnah ([Jurnal Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Undiksha], Vol. 9 No. 2 (May, 2021)). The methods in this study are: Normative-empirical legal research (applied law research) using a qualitative approach and analysis method that has descriptive analytical specifications. The findings in this study are: The enactment of Law Number 16 Year 2011 on Legal Aid is a government commitment that is highly anticipated by justice seekers, especially those with low income or the poor, which in this study is focused on women and children who are victims of violence. However, the challenges faced in the implementation of this UUBH in the regions, especially in Parepare City, are the limited number of advocates or legal advisors and the limited number of Legal Aid Institutions accredited by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia. There are limited accredited Legal Aid Institutions (LBH) in Parepare City, while there are many legal problems that occur, especially those faced by the poor and people who are physically, psychologically and accessibly helpless, including victims of violence, which are generally experienced by women and children.

Second, research (Sugiartha & Swetasoma, 2022) entitled “*The Existence of Paralegals in Minimising Violence against Women in Tuwed Village, Jembrana Regency (Eksistensi Paralegal dalam Meminimalisir Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan di Desa Tuwed Kabupaten Jembrana)*” with authors named I Nyoman Gede Sugiartha, Cokorde Gede Swetasoma ([KERTHA WICAKSANA: Sarana Komunikasi Dosen dan Mahasiswa], Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 91–97, 2022). The findings in this study are: The results of this study show that the existence of paralegals in preventing violence against women in Tuwed Village, Jembrana Regency is effective, because there has been an increase in legal awareness from the community and socialisation of paralegals and violence against women to the community of Jembrana Regency.

The problem formulation in this study is how the activities of paralegals in assisting victims of sexual violence in the perspective of communication law; and how is the symbolic interaction of paralegals to victims of sexual violence? For the objectives in this study are to understand the activities of paralegals to victims of sexual violence in the perspective of communication law; as well as to understand the symbolic interaction of paralegals to victims of sexual violence.

Meanwhile, the term paralegal first appeared in Indonesia around 1975. Previously, during the Dutch colonial period, paralegals were more commonly known as ‘pokrol’ (*gemachtegde*). This term referred to someone with legal skills who was not a lawyer and

worked under the supervision of a lawyer, or who was deemed to possess the legal competence to apply their skills (lbhapik.or.id, 2021) paralegals are authorized to provide legal assistance through nonlitigation resolutions or out-of-court settlements. In addition, paralegals may provide legal counseling and prepare reports regarding the legal assistance provided (Nusantara, 2016). Paralegals, however, do not have the authority to provide litigation-based legal assistance in the form of: victim support and/or acting as an agent starting from the investigation and prosecution stages, representation and/or acting as an agent during the trial proceedings, or representing and/or acting on behalf of Legal Aid Recipients in Administrative Courts (Noni et al., 2021).

The role of paralegals initially emerged as a response to the inability of the legal system and the legal profession to understand, address, and meet the social needs necessary to realize the rights of the poor, which are clearly recognized by law (lbhapik.or.id, 2021). The role of paralegals is inextricably linked to the provisions of the Legal Aid Act, which broadens the definition of recipients of legal aid to include faculty members, intellectuals, paralegals, and law students affiliated with the Legal Aid Institute (LBH), thereby enabling them to engage in community service and contribute to the advancement of legal scholarship (Rochman & Ratih, 2021). Paralegals play a variety of roles in providing legal assistance, ranging from mediation and resolving industrial relations disputes to providing support for victims of sexual violence, domestic violence (KDRT), and other issues. In the current context in Indonesia, paralegals no longer work solely for their own communities; they also provide assistance to low-income individuals who are registered with legal aid organizations (Isman, 2019; Noni et al., 2021; Rochman & Ratih, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative research. According to (Creswell, 2016), qualitative research is a type of research that explores and understands the meaning of a number of individuals or a group of people who come from social problems. Qualitative research can generally be used for research on people's lives, history, behaviour, concepts or phenomena, social problems, and others (Sugiyono, 2017). The research approach uses phenomenology which focuses on the common experiences of a particular group. This model is to see and understand the meaning of an individual's traumatic experience related to a phenomenon. Phenomenology plays a role in re-examining a person's extraordinary experience but is taken for granted by most people. In other words, phenomenology seeks to reveal, study and

understand individual experiences in a phenomenon along with its unique context to the level of ‘belief’ of the individual concerned (Morissan, 2019).

Data was collected by conducting in-depth interviews. Informants recounted their life experiences when describing the phenomenon. The data collection process took place over a period of three months, and interviews with both informants were conducted on August 15, 2023. The informants in this study include: *first*, Nihayatul Mukharomah (Head of the Legal Aid Division of the NGO LRC-KJHAM). *Second*, Endang Cicik (Paralegal and Head of the Sekartaji Support Group of LRC-KJHAM, as well as an Integrated Service Centre (PPT) Officer in North Semarang District).

The application of the Miles & Huberman data analysis model in this study was conducted interactively and continuously through three stages of activity, namely: *First*, Data Reduction: The researcher summarized, selected key points, and focused on important aspects from the large amount of field data to identify themes and patterns. In-depth interview data regarding the paralegals’ experiences were reduced to provide a clear picture and support the discussion. *Second*, Data Presentation: After reduction, the data were most often presented in the form of narrative text. In addition to narrative text, the presentation may also take the form of graphs, matrices, networks, and charts. *Third*, Drawing Conclusions (Verification): The researcher draws preliminary, provisional conclusions. These conclusions may change if no strong evidence is found, but they will become credible conclusions if supported by valid and consistent evidence upon revalidation in the field. *Finally*, this research has undergone ethical review: the informants have consciously and willingly agreed to have their identities made public, as a reminder to others that victims are not alone and can survive.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

LRC-KJHAM Facilitates Paralegal Training related to Assistance to Victims of Sexual Violence

Legal Resource Center for Gender Justice and Human Rights (LRC-KJHAM) is a social non-governmental organization or social institution that works together with vulnerable and marginalized women's groups (victims of sexual violence), with the aim of advancing, respecting and fulfilling women's human rights in Central Java. One of the activities of LRC-KJHAM related to paralegals is to establish a Gender School. This Gender School was formerly called Kader HAM (School for Gender and Human Rights). This school has been recorded as having been held four times. The first Gender School was held before the

pandemic or precisely in 2018. The second edition was held at the beginning of the Covid pandemic (2020), the third edition in 2021, and the fourth edition was held in 2023.



Figure 1. Researchers with Representatives from LRC-KJHAM

The purpose of this school is to provide information to participants related to issues of violence against women, seen from the gender aspect; including how to handle it during and after violence occurs. Participants are mostly students. *"They/participants of this Gender School are asked to live in/reside in houses/villages that have been assisted by LRC-KJHAM, including: in Grobogan (Wedoro Village, Curut Village), in West Semarang (Krobokan Village), in North Semarang (Bandarharjo Village) and also in Kendal (Tamangede Village),"* said Nihayatul Mukharomah (Head of Legal Aid Division of LRC-KJHAM). In the Grobogan and Kendal areas, it is often related to cases of migration and sexual violence, while in the West Semarang and North Semarang areas it is related to cases of child/women trafficking and also cases of sexual violence.

After participants have received the training materials obtained during their time at the school, then participants are asked to see in the field directly ('live in') what the situation/conditions are like there related to issues of violence against women (FPAR-- Feminist Participatory Research). This type of research goes down to villages or certain areas, looking for and identifying what is happening in the village/place. The research findings are then used to conduct policy advocacy. *"Alumni from the Gender School become pre-volunteers accompanying victims, helping the work of the LRC-KJHAM legal division until they can later become paralegals,"* said Nihayatul Mukharomah.

In addition, LRC-KJHAM also provides assistance to victims when they need medical assistance and when they are in the process of trial. *"In accordance with the institution's vision*

and mission, we strive to provide closer access to legal assistance and other services needed by poor, vulnerable and marginalized women victims. We do focus on complaints from women victims of sexual violence while also providing assistance, according to their needs," said Nihayatul Mukharomah. For example, related to the legal process, LRC-KJHAM provides assistance to victims starting from reporting to the police, the prosecutor's office to the trial, both civil and criminal trials.

For victims who have been declared survivors, LRC-KJHAM facilitates them to be able to provide assistance to other victims. *"When victims need legal assistance services, there is a forum called the 'Sekartaji Support Group' which plays a role in strengthening and recovering the victim's mental health. We also train them (friends in this Support Group) to become paralegals, so that they can accompany other female victims. For example, paralegals include Mrs. Cicik, Mrs. Sumaidah, and then there is also Mrs. Maemunah"* said Nihayatul Mukharomah.

Based on the description of the research findings, there are at least two pathways to becoming a paralegal. The *first* is through the 'Sekartaji Support Group', where this group of therapists strengthens the psychological and mental condition of victims. When these victims have survived, then they can become paralegals for other victims. The *second* route is through the Gender School itself.

Paralegals' Experience in Paralegal Training and also Assistance to Victims of Sexual Violence

Meanwhile, based on the experience of Endang Cicik (Paralegal and Chairperson of the 'Sekartaji Support Group' at LRC-KJHAM, as well as an Integrated Service Center (PPT) Officer in North Semarang District) that LRC-KJHAM has activities in the form of assistance carried out by paralegals to victims of violence. Several members of the 'Sekartaji Support Group' have participated in the Gender/Paralegal School organized by LRC-KJHAM, and some of them have even become speakers and delivered materials at the school. *"I was once asked by LRC-KJHAM to be a resource person at the Paralegal School on the theme of feminist counseling. This feminist counseling is not the usual counseling in general, but counseling that goes deeper into the character of a woman victim. In addition, of course, other training is related to the legal processes of assisting victims,"* said Endang Cicik.



Figure 2. Researcher Interview with the Chairperson of ‘Sekartaji Support Group’

He admitted that he had provided direct assistance to victims all the way to court. *“We are physically present to accompany the victim in court, so that the victim does not feel alone. The Support Group is also tasked with organizing the community, before or after the legal process they undergo, before or after they undergo the process in court or after taking the family process.”*

In 2014 until now, the ‘Sekartaji Support Group’ has organized several members of the Support Group who have survived and who have the ability to assist communities, to areas with high rates of violence against women, for example: in Ngesrep Village (Banyumanik), in Krobokan Village (West Semarang), in Muktiharjo Kidul Village (Pedurungan), and then in Bandarharjo Village (North Semarang). In one sub-district, the paralegal chose one neighborhood with a high rate of violence. *“At that time, I was a facilitator for the community,”* said Endang Cicik.

Currently, high rates of violence are recorded in East Semarang and North Semarang sub-districts. In 2022, 31 cases of sexual violence were recorded in North Semarang (the highest in Semarang City). For the middle of this year (2023), East Semarang had the highest number of violence cases in Semarang City, reaching 32 cases, while North Semarang had around 14 cases.

For the purpose of LRC-KJHAM (through this group of therapists) forming the community is to bring people (women and children victims of violence) who need assistance closer together. There are effects felt by victims of violence with or without assistance from paralegals. *“Yes, there is an effect felt by the victim. When the victim comes alone to the trial, the victim does not have confidence, she feels cornered, even though the judge does not corner them. Moreover, when the victim's opponent in court uses a lawyer, it makes her feel even worse. Meanwhile, when we assist the victim, the victim's spirit appears. When we assist her,*

she is brave enough to face the trial process, even though there are no relatives accompanying her.”

Paralegals try to strengthen the victim to remain strong and patient in facing the trial. The assistance they provide is in the context of the area, for example: there is a victim of domestic violence in Bandarharjo Village, so they help and direct the victim that there are services for women victims and children in the area, so that they do not overlap with the PPT (Integrated Service Center) from the government. Initially, the victim of KDRT in Bandarharjo needed medical services and was accompanied by the community, but was met with resistance/refusal from the medical staff.

They asked who was accompanying them and so on. Meanwhile, when the victim was accompanied by PPT, the medical officer immediately understood that the person accompanying was from the government office. There were differences like that in the beginning. However, the ‘Sekartaji Support Group’ is now well known; including the communities in Ngesrep Village, Krobokan Village, Muktiharjo Kidul Village, and Bandarharjo Village--the assistance branches of the Sekartaji Support Group--also have ‘names’. *“LRC-KJHAM’s involvement in informing relevant parties (including medical authorities) accelerated the recognition of ‘Support Group Sekartaji’ and the community. Victims who have survived have the right to assist other victims,”* she concluded.

When assisting victims, paralegals from LRC-KJHAM are trained to use a victim-centered and trauma-informed approach. Their communication--both verbal and nonverbal--is designed to foster a sense of safety, restore a sense of control to the victim, and prevent revictimization (making the victim a victim a second time). The following is a description of the forms of verbal and nonverbal communication commonly used by LRC-KJHAM Semarang paralegals:

First, verbal communication. Paralegals use phrases that validate the victim’s feelings and experiences, such as, *“I believe your story,” “What you’re feeling is normal,”* or *“This isn’t your fault.”* This is important for countering the stigma victims often face. Paralegals should listen more than they speak. They respond by paraphrasing to ensure understanding--for example, *“So, what you’re saying is ...”*--without interrupting the victim. Paralegals will also ask, *“How did you feel at that moment?”* or *“Can you tell me what happened next, if you’re ready?”* Verbal communication is always aimed at restoring the victim’s autonomy. Paralegals will ask, *“What do you need right now?”* or *“The decision is yours; we’re here to support you whatever you choose.”*

Second, they used nonverbal communication, such as stroking the victim's hair, holding the victim's hand, and even hugging the victim, to help the victim feel calm and gain emotional strength. To minimize the feeling of being interrogated, paralegals often sit at a 45-degree angle (sideways) or sit next to the victim. This position feels more supportive and collaborative than sitting directly across from the victim, separated by a table. Paralegals also maintain eye contact that conveys attention and empathy, but without staring intently or intimidatingly. If the victim looks down or avoids eye contact (which is common among trauma victims), the paralegal will adapt accordingly and not force the issue.

Those who accompany the victims (Paralegals), are labeled by the perpetrators of violence as *"People who make wife become widow"* (*"Orang yang menandakan Istri Orang"*). This labeling arises because these paralegals accompany the victims from reporting the case until assisting them in court. This labeling does not reduce the motivation of paralegals to continue helping and accompanying victims.

Paralegals essentially serve as a key component in assisting the poor and marginalized communities to ensure their well-being and justice. The development of the paralegal profession is viewed as one of the elements expected to ensure equal access to justice. When it comes to issues such as victim support, paralegals play a vital role in the process. According to Rikardo, paralegals play a vital role in facilitating the formation of community organizations, educating, raising awareness, conducting social analysis, advocating, assisting lawyers, mediating, and gathering documentation (Wiratraman, 2016; Sihombing, 2019). In the context of communication law, paralegals play a crucial role in conveying messages directly, whether to individuals or the general public.

Communication law addresses the balance between freedom and responsibility among individuals in the process of conveying messages, whether directly or indirectly (through the media). Its implementation positions communication law as a means of enforcing the law by enhancing the public's legal awareness. Furthermore, communication law serves as a tool to influence the public to comply with the law (Fitra Oktoriny, 2014). According to Muis (1996), the relationship between communication and law gives rise to two concepts: legal communication and the law of communication. Legal communication involves the study of communication and law from a normative perspective, while the law of communication refers to the legal consequences arising from the process of conveying messages between people, including defamation, symbolic violence, and hate speech.

Communication law can also help individuals avoid legal problems by understanding the boundaries of their interactions. These boundaries will enhance the effectiveness of messages aimed at preventing such situations. In dealing with legal victims, communication law can provide comprehensive information to help avoid uncertainty. According to Prijoaksono et al. in (Noni et al., 2021), there are four principles of effective communication. *First*, respect is the attitude of valuing every individual who is the recipient of the message we convey. Respect and mutual appreciation are integral to this principle. *Second*, empathy is our ability to put ourselves in the situation or circumstances faced by others. *Third*, audible means being able to be heard or understood clearly. *Fourth*, clarity, in addition to the message being easily understood, the fourth principle of communication relates to the clarity of the message itself so that it does not lead to multiple interpretations or differing interpretations (Paulus Evert, 2021).

When assisting victims, a paralegal must possess effective communication skills to ensure a clear understanding of legal issues. This includes analyzing the situation, educating clients, raising awareness, understanding social impacts, and advocating on their behalf. The ability to convey messages effectively helps individuals avoid legal problems.

Communication establishes strong relationships that enable paralegals to carry out various actions, including in the context of sexual violence. Paralegals play a role in efforts to prevent sexual violence and provide support to victims. When supporting victims, paralegals can employ a mediation-based approach with families and victims, and expand their network with journalists and media outlets to publicize cases involving severe abuse. As a result, victims of violence may gain the courage to seek support from paralegals and receive proper care (Dharmasatyari et al., 2021; Fattah & Muthmainah, 2021). As part of prevention efforts, paralegals provide education and emphasize that sexual violence is a criminal offense. Sexual violence occurs due to a lack of knowledge and awareness. The presence of paralegals in supporting the community can help reduce sexual violence by raising legal awareness through the outreach efforts conducted by paralegals (Sugiartha & Swetasoma, 2022).

The presence of paralegals can improve access to justice for victims of sexual violence who are reluctant to speak out, particularly women. Women face challenges in seeking justice. Specifically, there are three reasons why the role of paralegals is crucial in helping victims access justice. *First*, paralegals play a role in ‘familiarizing’ people with the legal system. Paralegals make legal rules meaningful in such a way that they can be understood by women through procedures that feel more familiar.

Second, paralegals are more accessible to women's groups. In addition to being easy to find, legal services provided by paralegals are more affordable than similar services provided by lawyers or attorneys. *Third*, paralegals influence power dynamics and the bargaining position of women's groups, as evidenced by changes in the reactions and responses of other parties, including those from government institutions and law enforcement officials (Permata Hartanto & Grahani Firdausy, 2014). Communication enables a victim to openly discuss the issues they face and allows a paralegal to provide information that fosters a sense of trust. In such situations, within a legal context, communication can be effective in addressing sexual violence, both in terms of prevention and victim support.

Furthermore, Symbolic Interactionism emphasizes the relationship between symbols and interaction, and the core of this approach is the individual (Siregar, 2016). According to Herbert Blumer, symbolic interactionism seeks to understand social life as shaped by processes conveyed through words or verbal speech for communication, while nonverbal symbols are cues conveyed not through verbal words, but through body gestures, appearance, eye contact, and so on (Yohana & Saifulloh, 2019). The language used by paralegals is "*we*", "*not you and I*". Paralegals also do not blame the victim. They also used nonverbal communication, such as stroking the victim's hair, holding the victim's hand, and even hugging the victim, to help the victim feel calm and gain emotional strength.

Next, a brief definition of the three basic ideas of symbolic interactionism: *first*, the mind is the ability to use symbols that share the same social meaning, whereby each individual must develop their mind through interaction with others. *Second*, the self is the ability to reflect on oneself from the perspective of others' evaluations or opinions, and symbolic interactionism is a branch of sociological theory that addresses the self and its external world. *Third*, society is a network of social relationships created, built, and constructed by each individual within society, and each of these individuals is engaged in behavior they choose actively and voluntarily, which ultimately leads humans through the process of assuming roles within their society (Siregar, 2016). According to Mead, meaning emerges as a result of interactions between people, both verbal and nonverbal. Through the actions and responses that occur, we ascribe meaning to words or actions, and thus we are able to understand an event in certain ways (Morissan, 2015).

CONCLUSION

There needs to be continuous synergy and cooperation between the government (both central and regional governments), non-governmental organizations/social institutions and the community in general in handling cases of sexual violence, so that each elements becomes more aware/concerned about their environment. With this ongoing synergy, victims will not feel like they are fighting alone in seeking justice for the cases they face, so they will not feel down and will become more confident. This self-confidence is a very important asset to enable the victims to quickly recover and survive again, and it is possible that in the future they will become paralegals who are ready to accompany and strengthen the mentality of other victims.

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