

Investigating Women Leadership Construction in New Media: Indonesia's Context

Nadia Faradila Rinjani¹, Kanti Pertiwi²
{nadia.faradila01@ui.ac.id¹}

Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia^{1,2}

Abstract. The view of women who say that leadership is not part of their life experiences has shifted, even though they have to cross various boundaries and obstacles. This change was accompanied by discourses on leadership and women in popular new media. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore and interrogate the construction of women's leadership in new media. This research uses critical discourse analysis as a method. By borrowing critical paradigms of leadership by Alvesson & Spicer, it will explain the positive enabler and barriers, which is attributed to women leaders. As the result, new media has become a tool for women to provide post feminism discourse about themselves as leaders in public. Findings show that woman's femaleness and the behaviors that are judged as leader behavior will determine how women are in the field of leadership. The data also highlight barriers that women face when it comes to competing for leadership positions. Patriarchal gender roles shaped work-home pressures, culturally constituted organizational perceptions of women and their leadership potential. Women are subjected to gendered prejudices about their ability to lead. Furthermore, women lack ambition and self-confidence so that they inhibit themselves, thereby limiting their leadership chances. This research concludes that gender capital creates the illusion of women's progress while limiting their progress. Finally, there are some practical implications for gender-equality campaigning, as well as for the larger policy community.

Keywords: Women Leadership, Gender, Indonesia, New Media, Qualitative

1 Introduction

Throughout human history, the depiction of women and leadership tends to be negative. Many assumptions say that leadership is not part of their life experiences. Through this suspicion and stigma, women are only considered capable of completing domestic roles. Despite working outside of this often-given reality, women only have few options [1][2]. Over time, the views above have shifted. Many women work professionally. Unfortunately, some women have to face various obstacles, for example, glass ceiling [3], glass cliff [4], and labyrinth [5].

Socio-economic changes in Asia have resulted in several obstacles for women to gain equality in the workplace and their ability to continue working after marriage and having children [6]. In the Indonesian context, especially in the pre-reform era, the reality of women can be seen through the perspective of social class. Middle-class women's involvement in economic activities tended to be less or less visible than upper-class women [7]. In addition,

socio-cultural assumptions played a role in shaping women's character, for example, the expression of '*Manak, Masak, Macak*', which explained the domestic role of women [8].

Entering the 21st century, the meaning of Indonesian women has shifted. This is indicated by the Indonesian Gender Gap Index which ranks 85 out of 153 countries in gender parity [9]. This shift has been accompanied by discourses on women produced by various media in Indonesia. At least, a limited understanding of how and where the progress is made, including the degree to which women are recognized and identified as leaders, has emerged as a discourse. Various studies have explored how the media constructions have a 'reciprocal relationship' with the role of women in the workplace [10][11][12]. In addition, the critical leadership paradigm has developed. The main focus of critical studies on leadership is the idea of gender. This paradigm emphasizes the idea of gender. Gender dialectics plays a role in shaping the women's leaderships who are present in the media [13][14].

In the last three years, the flow of media discussing women and their leadership has become increasingly visible and has appeared in spaces for public discussion. For instance, the discussion of women in particular in the big headline *Lead the Fest* spearheaded by *Pemimpin.id* [15]. We see that this discourse works to connect the socio-cultural assumptions and the position of women in leadership roles. This study seeks to critically explore and interrogate the construction of women's leadership in new media. Our contributions draw attention to the broader socio-cultural relationship that differs through popular culture and women's advancement. Therefore, the research question asked is how new media describes women leadership.

2 Method

In this section, the researcher describes the research method that will be used. The researcher used a critical discourse analysis approach to collect data and listen to categorical themes from the data collected from women speakers whose messages had never been discussed before in the literature. The data were coded using themes determined from the use of initials and descriptive coding. Finally, the results from the data are documented and show possibilities for future research.

The type of data to be studied is video content. The selection of videos to be studied is attempted to answer three questions raised by Macnamara [16] regarding the selection of qualitative research samples, namely videos that generally appear on women's leadership, videos that are contrary to the ones that generally appear regarding women's leadership, and videos that do not consistent or very unique in presenting messages about women's leadership.

This video collection uses the search function on YouTube. The search used several keywords, including *women leaders*, *women leadership*, *women's empowerment*, and others. Data collection was carried out from November 2020 until January 2021. Based on this explanation, 40 videos were found. However, researchers limit it to only videos published in the last 1 year so that the context is suitable for the present time. Then, videos that are more than 10 minutes long will be analyzed. The goal is that researchers can understand the context as a whole and have sufficient data to be analyzed. Based on these limitations, the following videos were selected:

Table 1. Video resources

No	Video title	Publication Date	Duration	Channel	Number of Viewers
1.	Perempuan dan Kepemimpinan (Parts 1 & 2)	12 July 2020	43 Minutes	BWM Records	22.100
2.	Kuliah Kepemimpinan “Pendidikan, Etika, dan Kepemimpinan”	7 August 2020	2 Hours 37 Minutes	PKN STAN	25.000
3.	Kepemimpinan Perempuan di Indonesia dan Dunia	15 August 2020	1 Hours 41 Minutes	Pemimpin.id	1.600
4.	Girls Leadership Class	20 December 2020	2 Hours 50 Minutes	Kemenkeu RI	2.800
5.	Perempuan Bergerak, Mengubah Kehidupan Sosial	22 December 2020	1 Hours 29 Minutes	KompasTV	27.000

(Processed by researchers)

In collecting the data, the videos obtained were about 10 hours long. Then, the 100-page video transcript was used as a data source for analysis. In analyzing qualitative data, four processes are starting from assembly data, data reduction, display data, to data verification. Assembly data is the process of collecting data from various sources, such as interview or observation notes, researcher reflections, various supporting theories, photos, sound recordings and transcripts, video recordings, and recordings made by participants [17]. The amount of data that has been obtained is quite a lot. Therefore, the researcher summarizes, selects the main things, and focuses on important things to find themes and patterns of data. This process is called data reduction. Data reduction can be assisted by providing code (coding) in certain aspects [18].

After data reduction, then the researcher can make display data. Data display is the process of summarizing and presenting the structure of previously collected data. where the researcher makes connections between different pieces of data. The data can be in the form of a graphic format, a box containing a summary of the problems that arise and connected with arrows as an interconnection pointer, or a verbal quote to describe the problem [17]. Furthermore, the last stage in the qualitative data analysis process is data verification. In this stage, the researcher searches for alternative explanations from other sources or theories related to the processed data. Thus, the conclusions put forward are credible [18].

Therefore, the validity and reliability of the data in qualitative research use the trustworthiness concept. Criteria for achieving trustworthiness are divided into two criteria, namely credibility and transferability. Besides, other criteria need to be considered in qualitative research, namely saturation and triangulation. Saturation is a criterion for judging when to stop taking data sampling in the absence of any extras that could develop a research-related category. This is illustrated when researchers listen to answers or comments that are

repeated even though the data range obtained is very wide [18]. Triangulation is a process that facilitates data validation through cross-verification which is carried out by comparing different types of data (e.g. dialogue with photos) and different methods (e.g. observation by interview) to allow for reflection on how much evidence can be corroborated and what constitutes causes of difference [17]. This research triangulation utilizes articles or news journals related to women's leadership and gender.

3 Results & Discussion

Based on the discourse construction of women's leadership in new media (hereinafter written only as 'media') in Indonesia, three major themes emerged, namely; 1) Women leaders are Figures who emphasize women and prioritize gender equality; 2) Barriers to women leadership; 3) The role of the media as postfeminism discourse.

3.1 Women leaders are Figures who emphasize women and prioritize gender equality

The discourse in Indonesia's new media constructs women leaders as leaders who make women's aspects and gender equality an enabler. Women can be leaders like men because of their ability as a mother who creates certain abilities. Women are considered more patient and strong because they are used to multi-role. This discourse is driven by the condition of women who have to make milk and change children's diapers. Women are also considered strong enough to withstand the pain of having to breastfeed, get pregnant, and give birth. Then, women are also considered capable of building a team because of their motherly nature,

From being pregnant, breastfeeding, to being a woman, it's like giving birth, it's quite painful if I feel it. But women are strong. Women are stronger with pain. (Video 3, Nurhayati)

... this is the strength of women so we as women don't have to take the masculinity of men so that we look great. We already have these values and skills that can make us have an impact. So, it's not important about being masculine. The important thing is you just being you as a woman (Video 3, Aloysia).

Based on the quote above, the value of women's leadership lies in the subject of women themselves. This discourse tries to reject masculinity as the goal of being a leader for women. This discourse is far from the ancient view where women are considered as the other group (The Other) who are powerless and detrimental. In other words, this discourse assumes that 'being a woman' is an advantage for women themselves in carrying out various things, including in the realm of leadership.

This finding also supports data from Hofstede Insights [19]. Indonesian culture is collectivist with a high power distance. Indonesia has a masculinity level of only 46%, which means that Indonesian people have a higher level of femininity such as high empathy and sympathy, friendly, and nurturing.

Women's leadership develops into leadership that is driven by women and is 'femaleness'. That is, women who become leaders should use their 'subjects as women' and 'attributes of femaleness'. Gender leadership explained how femaleness as a form of contained cultural capital is associated with leadership. It describes subtle changes in women's social position as leaders [14].

However, discourse still provides space for men to do things that women cannot (probably) do. by providing an understanding of gender equality. Gender equality between women and

men is analogous to left and right shoes. This leadership role is also considered a cultural role, so opportunities in any field should be equal. The only difference is the means of reproduction.

Yes, men and women are like left and right shoes. You can't walk in your right shoe, can you? So that should be leveling. Because if the men's right shoes are higher, the women's shoes are lower, so the way is not good. (Video 4, Sri)

We must realize that the position between women and men is equal, no one is creating something new for us, but is maintaining what we have achieved that men and women are not different, we are the same, the only difference is that reproduction only. So I think the opportunity for men and women in any field is very wide open... (Video 5, Indah)

Based on the research findings, the attribution of leadership to women in this context is based on women. This certainly provides legitimacy for female leaders to enter the realm of male-dominated leadership. Taken together, the assessment of women's leadership is an implicit comparison with masculine leadership.

3.2 Barriers to Women Leadership

The obstacle most often felt by women leaders is the situation/organization theory [20]. Such cultural stereotypes and socialization affect their self-confidence, career aspirations, work-life balance goals, and belief in their leadership potential [21]. Women leaders also still feel underestimated by those around them due to stereotypes related to femaleness that women have.

On the one hand, women must be firm if they want to be leaders. However, if you are assertive, it will be considered "fussy", "emotional", or "nonsense". If it is not supported by other aspects, it seems that women are appointed to be a failure/rise to fail. As a result of stereotypes, women have to try twice as much to be recognized for their abilities.

If you want to find someone to be given a continuous assignment, this woman is firmly said to be wow, this is a 'talk too much' ma'am. This person is just nagging, bossy. If a man is firm, they say, wow, he's this firm. So, we see that stereotyping women causes them to have the same qualifications, she described, their attributes are different. That again was in an atmosphere that is male-dominated (Video 4, Sri).

Along the way, in my life and career as a woman, you have to show twice as good as a man to get the same position. If you are the leader but you are a woman, people will ask "can she be a woman or not?". But if you try that the male choice doesn't come up with that question, then if you become a female class leader, you have to work hard to show that you can (Video 4, Sri).

The next obstacle is social role theory [20]. Their leadership can be hampered because of conflicting roles as wives and mothers. The perceived barriers can be described in the metaphor of the maternal wall. This metaphor provides a clear picture of how women's careers are negatively affected by women's need for a break in work which is necessary for motherhood [22].

Family and work are equally important for us. In the end, there is a work-life balance. So maybe we sacrificed a lot, maybe when you were single you could do it, but once you commit to another person to form a family and you know that you have, commitment come the consequences right (Video 5, Sri)

In Indonesia, women have double burden activities. Do not be considered luxurious, because on the one hand we are required to take care of our husbands, to take care of our children, but this must be kept perfect (Video 1, Motik)

The dual role of women does not only come from the organizational environment where women work. However, it is in the regulations. Marriage Law Number 1 of 1974 article 31 paragraph 3 explicitly states that the husband is the head of the family, while the wife is the housewife. The husband is obliged to protect his wife and the wife is obliged to manage the household as well as possible [23].

The findings show that the dual role narrative leads to the construction of the figure of a "good female leader." This woman is described as being able to carry out her functions and duties as a good wife without neglecting her responsibilities in the realm of leadership. This supports previous research. Gender-specific roles (breadwinner vs housewife) are ascribed to both men and women. Each forms their behavioral expectations and beliefs about their talents and skills.

Other obstacles felt by women leaders also often come from themselves. This is called person-centered theory [20]. This situation occurs when women lack ambition and self-confidence, thus hindering themselves.

Because we sometimes feel that for example there is an opportunity, yes, we are like "ah no, I'm not ready" like that. "Ah no, maybe later I might fix myself first, prepare this, prepare it. (Video 3, Ayu)

Sometimes the woman tends to be like "I've been helping, the important thing is the program is done, the important thing is the organization is running, the important thing is the job is done." Sometimes we, as women, hesitate to appear in front of us to show that I am the one in charge, and then we divide the task for those people. (Video 3, Aloysia)

The patriarchal discourse considers women to be unable to become leaders because of their culturally naturalized role as wives/mothers/caregivers [24]. Women feel they have to fit in, so they discriminate against themselves. For example, choosing to quit your career to prioritize family. From the findings, one of the informants chose to be resigned.

So after I had 3 children, I had a little trouble leaving because the factory was on the Bogor highway. Finally, I chose to resign (Video 3, Nurhayati)

This belief shows that women will face more consequences if they pursue a career. The informants finally chose to prioritize family and the responsibilities within it. This also complements the research from Smith et al. [25], which states that there are two beliefs of women where they believe that there are obstacles they face during their careers. This belief will affect the attitude taken, the attitude of acceptance and resignation.

3.3 The Role of The Media as Post feminism Discourse

Every message carries an implication, something implicit [26]. Herein lies an analysis of the ideological dimension of the message. Each text structure (media content) has an "underlying" meaning, opinion, and ideology.

In this research, women leaders argued that the difference in choosing public and private roles was a conscious choice of women. Women must have the same opportunities or access as education, self-actualization, and taking part in society. If all access has been opened, it will create equality between men and women to be able to take part in the public sector. They are

trying to transform traditional gender roles along with the increasing proportion of women in leadership [23].

The narrative describes the ideology of postfeminism wrapped in gender equality. Gender equality reflects a concern that women and men have equal opportunities to make choices and work. Postfeminism is a symbol of women's freedom and independence from patriarchal oppression and has begun to show true women's honesty without pressure and dictation from anyone [27].

The involvement of women leaders in webinar activities to empower fellow women allows the spirit to change traditional gender roles. Their involvement in communication in this public space at least shows the 'gaps' that women take to change the patriarchal culture [28].

The channels in this research (Kemenkeu, Kompas TV, CXO Media, Leader.id, PKN STAN, and BWM Records) play an important role in disseminating changes in cultural values including gender roles (gender mainstreaming). They do so through female leaders. The transmission function (socialization and education) is a function that shows the power of the media in influencing audiences [29]. How leaders are constructed in the media will have an impact on the audience and affect the 'acceptance' of women as leaders [14].

4 Conclusion

Based on this research, several conclusions have been obtained. First, women's leadership develops into leadership that is driven by women and is 'femaleness'. That is, women who become leaders should use their 'subjects as women' and 'attributes of femaleness'.

New media actively represent, promote, shape, and influence the understanding of women's capital, the arena of leadership, and even participate in the process of creating women's perspectives themselves. The existing Youtube channels also invite and strengthen the norms or values that exist in society. Empowerment and support through webinars delivered by women leaders are believed to be able to help Indonesian women to be strong in facing their problems, especially competition in the leadership arena. With the power of women, without trying to borrow the ways of men and be hostile to men.

The obstacles faced by women leaders include the following. Gender stereotypes and patriarchal culture lead society to believe that men perform better than women in higher positions. This stereotype also results in the emergence of gender role expectations. Working women are required to do domestic work perfectly. As a result, women experience role conflicts due to double burdens. This is exacerbated by organizations that discriminate against women with limited facilities and policies that are not in favor of women. With such a huge burden in all aspects, women often burden themselves and try to adjust to what is around them.

The main theoretical contribution of this research is to advance research on gender leadership. Previous research has shown how female and feminine capital can be associated with women and how women become agents in the use of this capital [14]. This research extends this understanding by illustrating how forms of gender capital operate dialectically. The media use feminine capital to promote women as leaders but use women's capital as a constraint. Women are described as being able to take advantage of feminine capital to be identified as leaders. They continue to be marginalized through the attribution of women's capital. Implicitly, gender capital creates the illusion of women's progress while limiting their progress.

The researchers realize that there are still shortcomings in this study. Therefore, the researchers suggest the need for other research in exploring the construction of women's leadership in new media. More research needs to be done on people who consume text in new media. This is expected to be able to see whether the construction of women's leadership in this new media affects the leadership aspirations of the women who watch this show. This research focuses on the intertextual analysis of one platform. Perhaps the next researcher can explore women's leadership patterns in various other platforms.

References

- [1] E. Reuben, P. Sapienza, and L. Zingales, "How stereotypes impair women's careers in science," *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.*, vol. 111, no. 12, pp. 4403–4408, 2014.
- [2] A.-S. Chaxel, "How do stereotypes influence choice?," *Psychol. Sci.*, vol. 26, no. 5, pp. 641–645, 2015.
- [3] G. N. Powell and D. A. Butterfield, "Investigating the 'glass ceiling' phenomenon: An empirical study of actual promotions to top management," *Acad. Manag. J.*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 68–86, 1994.
- [4] M. K. Ryan and S. A. Haslam, "The glass cliff: Exploring the dynamics surrounding the appointment of women to precarious leadership positions," *Acad. Manag. Rev.*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 549–572, 2007.
- [5] A. H. Eagly, L. L. C. A. H. Eagly, L. L. Carli, and L. L. Carli, *Through the labyrinth: The truth about how women become leaders*. Harvard Business Press, 2007.
- [6] L. Shangbo, "Study on the employment of female college graduates in an age of employment equality," *Japanese Econ.*, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 30–48, 2012.
- [7] L. Wright and V. C. Tellei, "Women in management in Indonesia," *Int. Stud. Manag. Organ.*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 19–45, 1993.
- [8] B. Sarwono, "Pemaknaan karir politik presiden perempuan dalam masyarakat patriarki: analisis pemaknaan ibu rumah tangga kelas menengah di Jabotabek tentang Megawati Soekarnoputri," 2004.
- [9] World Economic Forum, *Global gender gap report 2020: Insight report*. Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2020.
- [10] J. Hellgren, L. Lillienberg, J. Jarlstedt, G. Karlsson, and K. Torén, "Population-based study of non-infectious rhinitis in relation to occupational exposure, age, sex, and smoking," *Am. J. Ind. Med.*, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 23–28, 2002.
- [11] B. Czarniawska and C. Rhodes, "12. Strong plots: Popular culture in management practice and theory," *Manag. Educ. Humanit.*, vol. 195, 2006.
- [12] S. Mavin and G. Grandy, "A theory of abject appearance: Women elite leaders' intra-gender 'management' of bodies and appearance," *Hum. relations*, vol. 69, no. 5, pp. 1095–1120, 2016.
- [13] M. Alvesson and A. Spicer, "Critical perspectives on leadership," *Oxford Handb. Leadersh. Organ.*, pp. 40–56, 2014.
- [14] C. Elliott and V. Stead, "Constructing women's leadership representation in the UK press during a time of financial crisis: Gender capitals and dialectical tensions," *Organ. Stud.*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 19–45, 2018.
- [15] Pemimpin Indonesia, "Kepemimpinan perempuan di Indonesia dan dunia," *Youtube*, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXu0pWcv1k0&t=1406s>.
- [16] J. R. Macnamara, "Media content analysis: Its uses, benefits and best practice methodology," *Asia Pacific Public Relations J.*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 1–34, 2005.
- [17] N. Malhotra, D. Nunan, and D. Birks, *Marketing research: An applied approach*. Pearson, 2017.
- [18] H. Lune and B. L. Berg, *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Pearson, 2017.
- [19] Hofstede Insights, "Country comparison," *Hofstede Insights*, 2021. <https://www.hofstede->

- insights.com/country-comparison/indonesia/.
- [20] R. E. Kiaye and A. M. Singh, "The glass ceiling: a perspective of women working in Durban," *Gend. Manag. An Int. J.*, 2013.
 - [21] U. Koura, M. Sekine, M. Yamada, and T. Tatsuse, "Work, family, and personal characteristics explain occupational and gender differences in work–family conflict among Japanese civil servants," *Public Health*, vol. 153, pp. 78–90, 2017.
 - [22] M. K. Ryan, S. A. Haslam, M. D. Hersby, and R. Bongiorno, "Think crisis–think female: The glass cliff and contextual variation in the think manager–think male stereotype.," *J. Appl. Psychol.*, vol. 96, no. 3, p. 470, 2011.
 - [23] D. P. K. Putri and S. Lestari, "Pembagian Peran dalam Rumah Tangga pada Pasangan Suami Istri Jawa," *J. Penelit. Hum.*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2015.
 - [24] D. Dutta, "Women's discourses of leadership in STEM organizations in Singapore: Negotiating sociocultural and organizational norms," *Manag. Commun. Q.*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 233–249, 2018.
 - [25] P. Smith, P. Caputi, and N. Crittenden, "A maze of metaphors around glass ceilings," *Gend. Manag. an Int. J.*, 2012.
 - [26] T. A. Van Dijk, "Principles of critical discourse analysis," *Discourse Soc.*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 249–283, 1993.
 - [27] C. K. A. Pertiwi, "Representasi perempuan postfeminis dalam majalah perempuan online," Universitas Indonesia, 2015.
 - [28] N. D. Affiah, *Islam, kepemimpinan perempuan, dan seksualitas*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2017.
 - [29] T. Flew, *New media*. Australia & New Zealand: Oxford University Press, 2014.