



Women Journalists in the Era of Hustle Culture on Social Media

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Abstract. The prevailing understanding of gender roles within society today often conflicts with the popular culture currently prevalent among young people, particularly those belonging to the millennial generation. This generation is currently immersed in a culture that can be described as "hustle culture." The phenomenon of "hustle culture" is becoming increasingly prevalent in the digital realm. This culture of competition encourages individuals to present themselves and their achievements in a way that is open to critique. Previous research has indicated that women journalists frequently encounter attacks in cyberspace, which can take various forms. Consequently, it is pertinent to inquire whether these woman journalists also experience the pressures of the "hustle culture" as they navigate the digital landscape, despite the potential for online attacks. This study employed a descriptive qualitative methodology, augmented by ethnographic analysis, to examine the experiences of woman journalists in Semarang. Eight informants were identified, and their social media accounts were subsequently examined, after which interviews were conducted. The findings of this study indicate that woman journalists continue to encounter restrictions when presenting themselves on social media. However, these limitations are largely self-imposed, shaped by the diverse social pressures women journalists face. The existing self-presentation tends to align with traditional gender roles, often portraying woman journalists as wives, educators, or family economic managers. Only a few choose to present themselves as critical thinkers, a quality that is more closely associated with the journalist profession.

Keywords: Women Journalists, Hustle Culture Era, Social Media.

1. Introduction

The issue of gender has been a persistent challenge for decades, not only in Indonesia but across the globe. It is regrettable that gender issues have not yet been adequately addressed. As documented in the 2023 Annual Note by Komnas Perempuan, new gender-related issues continue to emerge. This document states that based on the type of violence, there were 15,466 forms of violence out of a total of 13,428 cases reported by service agencies and

Komnas Perempuan. The highest number of cases involved physical violence, with 6,784 cases representing nearly 44% of the total.

In complaints submitted to Komnas Perempuan, cases of sexual violence constituted the majority, with 2,228 cases out of a total of 5,831 cases by type of violence, representing 38% of the total. The third most common form of violence was psychological violence, with 5,137 cases documented. Complaints filed with the National Commission on Violence against Women indicated that psychological violence was the most prevalent type of violence reported in cases of violence in the private sphere, with a total of 1,494 cases. Given that psychological violence can have psychological consequences, it is crucial for relevant experts and policymakers to identify and address the psychological impact promptly. (Komnas Perempuan, 2023).[1]

In her research, Dwi Astuti identified three categories of gender issues commonly found in society. The first category pertains to the continued misunderstanding of the meanings and concepts of gender and sex. Secondly, societal structures continue to perpetuate gender bias, and thirdly, instances of gender injustice remain prevalent.[2]. The terms "gender" and "sex" are often used interchangeably in society, which subsequently affects the distribution of roles, which appear to be dichotomous. Women are typically assigned the role of mothers and other domestic responsibilities, while men are regarded as protectors and breadwinners for their families. The experience of gender issues is not exclusive to women; men also encounter these issues. In some cases, men experience gender-related difficulties when they are unable to perform their roles in accordance with the expectations associated with gender roles in general society. The role of men is often defined by expectations that they will lead, be dominant, and be stronger than women. These demands are often instilled indirectly since childhood, through media publications consumed by children. For example, research on Bobo magazine found that the magazine's short stories consistently present idealized versions of masculinity, influencing how young boys and men understand and present themselves as men. [3]

The conjunction of the dichotomy of gender roles based on sex and the current popular culture, known as "hustle culture," gives rise to gender bias. Hustle culture is defined as a productive discourse that entails continuous work without cessation.[4] The concept of a "hustle culture" refers to a social environment that fosters a mindset of hard work and personal growth, encouraging individuals to challenge their perceived limits and embrace a lifestyle that is publicly displayed and perceived as admirable.

Faradilla Tita's research indicates that the practice of pursuing and showcasing productivity in a hustle culture can be observed in the campus environment and student social media. This phenomenon, observed among students, contributes to the formation of their identity. [5] In addition, the concept of "hustle culture" is illustrated by the findings of Annisa Alyah Lazuardi and colleagues, which indicate that this phenomenon is reflected in advertisements for Le Minerale. These portray female advertising models who are compelled to reduce their time with their families due to their professional commitments. [6]

The preceding explanation indicates that the culture of hustling and its associated implications suggest that gender roles are not fixed but rather fluid. In the context of hustle

culture, the roles of all genders are not constrained by traditional boundaries. The traditional delineation between the roles of breadwinner and caregiver, along with the associated domestic responsibilities, has become less rigid. The prevailing expectation is for individuals to be productive, and for those who are to be even more productive. This is because productivity is highly valued, and a workaholic culture is often admired.

However, it is important to consider whether this is truly reflective of reality, particularly for women in workplaces that are still strongly dominated by men and live in environments with a strong patriarchal culture. It is imperative that the pressure of the "hustle culture" be taken into account when considering the experiences of woman journalists. Furthermore, the current climate of "hustle culture" also encourages journalists, including women, to demonstrate their performance and achievements within the field of journalism. One such competition is the Anugerah Utama Journalistic Work & Citra 2024 Competition, which assesses journalists based on their historical uploads. Another is the 2024 Journalistic Writing Competition from Bank Mandiri, which similarly requires participants to upload their work on social media. Nevertheless, in practice, when these women journalists are obliged to demonstrate their achievements and performance, they also encounter social pressure, including threats to their safety. This is evidenced by the findings of previous researchers, as documented in the journal article entitled "Muted Group Theory: Anomalies in Online Gender-Based Violence Experienced by Women Journalists" which shows that the intimidation and coercion experienced by women journalists impedes their ability to speak out and pursue legal action against these threats. Consequently, they refrain from taking meaningful action to challenge these violations. [7].

The objective of this research is to ascertain the role shown by woman journalists utilize social media in the context of the contemporary "hustle culture," and the various forms of pressure they encounter, including social pressure and threats to their personal safety.

2. Method

This research is conducted in Semarang from April to June 2024. It employs descriptive qualitative research methods, which entail an examination of the status of human groups, objects, conditions, systems of thought, or classes of events in the present. Qualitative research aims to understand the experiences of the research subject holistically, and these experiences are described in the form of words and language. [8]

The objective of descriptive research is to gain an understanding of the situation at hand. This entails a multifaceted approach, encompassing the description, documentation, analysis, and interpretation of the subject matter under investigation. The descriptive qualitative approach allows for the comprehensive examination of a given problem or social situation. The objective of this research is to obtain a description of the manner in which woman journalists present themselves on social media. It is reasonable to hypothesize that this will have an impact on how their role as a person is perceived by their social media followers. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will demonstrate how women are

portraying themselves in the context of the contemporary social media landscape, which is often characterized by a fast-paced and competitive environment.

The present study focuses on eight social media accounts of woman journalists. The selected accounts are observed and subsequently coded in order to obtain the results of the observations. With regard to the account criteria, the following aspects are taken into account:

- a. Ownership by Indonesian women
- b. The account owner is a woman member of AJI.
- c. The account has been active for at least three months.
- d. The account owner is between 25 and 45 years old.

Furthermore, interviews were conducted with the account owners to corroborate the findings of the observations and to compare the data with other related literature. The social media account observed is an Instagram account, as Instagram is the social media platform with the most users after WhatsApp in 2023.

3. Result and Discussion

In the context of the contemporary era, characterised by a culture of expediency, social media offers a platform that is well-suited to meeting the needs of those seeking to navigate the demands of modern life. This assertion is supported by one of the defining characteristics of social media, namely its interactive nature. The capacity to engage in interactive interactions renders social media a more expedient avenue for the construction of a desired self-identity.

However, within the context of social media, there is an ongoing issue pertaining to gender-based violence, namely the occurrence of online-based gender violence directed towards woman account users. In this particular instance, woman journalists from AJI Semarang city have been subjected to such violence. The violence in question encompasses a range of forms, including threats perpetrated by hacking into the personal social media accounts of woman journalists, online harassment, and the use of obscene language through chat applications.[9].

The condition of threat of violence is what triggers problems in women's appearance, where on the one hand they are encouraged to continue to present themselves in the era of hustle culture, but on the other hand they face various problems in online activities. Woman Members of AJI, who are independent woman journalists, are the subject of this research because in the era of hustle culture, woman journalists are also encouraged to be able and continue to show their competence as journalists, considering that they work in a very patriarchal field of work, but in doing activities in social media, they also find obstacles, one of which is gender violence as described earlier.

Based on the observation stage, it appears that the research sources in their uploads on social media from 8 sources, where there are a total of 3261 uploads, can be divided into 3 groups of uploads, namely

- a. Display of critical thinking skills
- b. Satisfying information needs
- c. Display of self-actualization, where this display also includes a display of activity in activities related to self-actualization.

Based on the group of upload categories that have emerged, it is found that the largest upload category is in the self-actualization display. Based from this self-realization display data, it turns out that 90% of the uploads, or 2935 uploads, are not uploads related to work activities and achievements as a journalist. They are more about sharing travel and other experiences.

In the interview results, it was also found that the explanation was consistent with the observation results, as almost all interviewees emphasized that they deliberately did not identify themselves as journalists on social media. The reasons given varied, but the main ones were related to the privacy and safety of themselves and their families. Specifically, 37 out of 52 statements made by the interviewees, or about 71%, indicated that the interviewees' use of social media was to showcase their accomplishments, but they did not want to associate the display of these accomplishments with their profession as journalists.

Paul Virilio emphasizes in his book that the display of one's self-identity is part of the process of the fusion of space and time in the life of an individual and society in cyberspace [10]. The fusion of space and time in cyberspace is driven by technological developments that accelerate the exchange of information, which in turn creates pressure for social media users in cyberspace. In contrast to this process of fusion of space and time, the process of fusion is not a pressure for women journalists. The main pressure for almost all women journalists is how to cover and hide themselves from their profession as journalists. The condition of social pressure and its relationship with the peace of life for themselves and their families makes women journalists hide themselves in their profession as journalists. They consciously live a subdued role and choose to submit to existing social pressures and norms beyond the general expectation that journalists should be able to show their critical thinking.

In their research journal article, Rao and Taboada elucidate that women are disproportionately represented in the news as subjects of stories pertaining to lifestyle, healthcare, and sexual crimes and violence. In the news, women's voices are often confined to the domestic sphere and traditional female-dominated areas [11]. Furthermore, Rao and Taboada's findings align with the pressures women journalists face, beginning with the pressure of gender stereotypes. Women are expected to embody meekness, while the profession demands that woman journalists possess fortitude and resilience. Social expectations dictate that women prioritize their families, yet they must also fulfill the demands of a profession that often requires them to be away from their loved ones. This creates a challenging balance between work and family.

The aforementioned pressures on woman journalists result in a proclivity towards displaying neutrality. Even when they do display their potential and achievements, it is not a potential or achievement that is markedly divergent from the standard demands of society.

The majority of woman journalists consciously eschew displaying themselves in relation to their profession as journalists, instead exhibiting non-journalistic activities.

The conditions experienced by woman journalists align with the tenets of performativity theory. In this theoretical framework, Butler posits that an individual's identity is shaped by a series of actions that align with social expectations, potentially leading to the subjugation of one's natural inclinations. It is plausible that the emergence of such suppressive social constructions may be attributed to the influence of certain power structures [12]

The selection of woman journalists is a consequence of social construction embedded in each member of the social community. The social construction and pressure faced by these women journalists result in their decision to refrain from highlighting their work and achievements in the field of journalism. Issues regarding the safety and security of women journalists also contribute to the decision of women journalists to refrain from displaying their achievements and work on social media. This reality presents a significant challenge for women's careers in journalism.

For woman journalists, the use of social media is primarily for the purposes of sharing, showcasing, and disseminating experiences. The following illustration demonstrates the visualization in the figure.1 created with the NVivo 12 Pro program, which pertains to the emphasis of the messages conveyed by woman journalists. These messages were obtained from the results of interviews and indicate that social media is primarily utilized by woman journalists for sharing, showcasing, and sharing experiences.

Women journalists' use of social media is not primarily driven by the same motivations as their male counterparts. In the final analysis, the culture of competition has little impact on the self-display of woman journalists on social media. This is somewhat ironic, given that journalists are the ones who have the power to produce messages through the media. However, woman journalists appear to lack the confidence to display their achievements. Instead, they tend to present themselves as fulfilling traditional domestic roles, such as wives, educators for their children, and economic managers in the household.

4. Conclusion

The Hustle Culture ethos demands that all those engaged with it be capable of demonstrating their full range of abilities, attainments, and contributions. It should be noted, however, that this does not apply to woman journalists who are members of AJI. Social pressure prevents them from displaying their role as carriers of critical thinking. Similarly, the presence of threats to the safety and security of themselves and their families further suppresses women journalists from displaying their potential. Self-achievement is demonstrated from another perspective, namely the opportunity to engage in numerous activities, interact with and meet a diverse range of individuals, serve as an exemplary mother figure, and, of course, the experience of exploring unique locales and enjoying the distinctive offerings of these places.

The findings of this study indicate that woman journalists are more inclined to prioritize domestic roles over other roles. When viewed through the lens of the Five Dharma Wanita, it becomes evident that woman journalists exhibit three out of the five roles, namely:

- a. As a wife
- b. As an educator for their children.
- c. As an economic organizer within the domestic sphere.

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