



BARRIERS TO CAREER ADVANCEMENT OF FEMALE JOURNALISTS IN INDONESIA

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Keywords:

*gender; journalism;
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Abstract

Male journalists were considered to advance in their careers easier than their female counterparts due to the heavy fieldwork and irregular working hours. Determining whether this assumption remains relevant, this study maps the proportion of female and male journalists in ten Indonesian mass media organizations while also exploring the factors that contribute to the condition. This research applies quantitative and qualitative mixed methods, involving journalists in 10 media (n = 811) at both the reporter and managerial levels, and a focused-group discussion (FGD) with 14 female editors. At the reporter level, there are 64% male and 36% female journalists. At the managerial level, the figures change to 77% (men) and 23% (women). The three factors that hinder the career of female journalists are a double burden (career and household), mental barriers, and 'masculine' office politics.

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Abstrak

Kata kunci:

gender; jurnalisme;
kepemimpinan;
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Jurnalis laki-laki dianggap lebih mudah mengembangkan karier dibandingkan dengan jurnalis perempuan karena pekerjaan lapangan yang berat dan jam kerja yang tidak teratur. Untuk memahami apakah asumsi ini masih terjadi, studi ini memetakan komposisi jurnalis perempuan dan laki-laki di 10 media massa di Indonesia, sekaligus menyelami faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap kondisi tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran kuantitatif dan kualitatif, melibatkan jurnalis di 10 media (n=811) baik di tingkat reporter maupun manajerial, beserta diskusi kelompok terarah (FGD) dengan 14 redaktur perempuan. Di tingkat reporter, ada 64% jurnalis laki-laki dan 36% jurnalis perempuan. Di tingkat manajerial, angkanya berubah menjadi 77% (laki-laki) dan 23% (perempuan). Tiga faktor yang menghambat karir jurnalis perempuan adalah: beban ganda (karir dan rumah tangga), hambatan mental, dan politik kantor yang cenderung maskulin.

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INTRODUCTION

The rise of the study on barriers to women's career in various fields show that this phenomenon occurs in almost all public sector, ranging from academic, business, and the health industry (Kalaitzi, Czabanowska, Fowler-Davis, & Brand, 2017). In this case, the press industry is not spared from this issue. Based on the data, the Alliance of Independent Journalists (*Aliansi Jurnalis Independen/AJI*) reported among the ten journalists. Otherwise, there will be at most only three female journalists (*Aliansi Jurnalis Independen*, 2012). Moreover, in terms of media content,

it may also indicate the same thing. In collaboration with the Tempo Data and Analysis Center 2018, research from the Tempo Institute states that women only appear in 11% of sources in mass media reporting (Maryani, Janitra, & Rahmawan, 2019). These results were obtained through research on seven print media and three online media. The rubrics specifically researched are directed at headlines, politics, national, economics, and law—in short, public issues involving common interests. Indirectly, this figure can illustrate how women have not been seen as parties with expertise in the public sphere, mainly discussing topics unrelated to domestic themes, such as household and children.

Apart from not being shown more in the public sphere, the representation and description of women in the media also find an interesting point when it is associated with a number of reported cases that are identical to the subordinate treatment of women. This can be seen from the practice of language that supports mass media representation to strengthen the discourse in providing subordinated treatment to women (Hadiati, Abdullah, & Udasmoro, 2013). As a result, the space for women tends to be limited. On the contrary, men can obtain a more expansive area through media representations.

Another depiction is also found in several religious-themed news-related information. It may not be separated from the media editorial role in the selection and filtering of news information. Moreover, a dichotomy emerged over the arrangement of the gender hierarchy between women and men, resulting in the construction of news becoming less balanced. For example, women are often judged inferior and unfavorable, become victims, are considered the weakest, and even helpless through media coverage (Maulina, 2017).

The media industry is unique because the work of journalists is often considered identical and dominant, with heavy fieldwork with

irregular working hours. Male journalists are also considered to be more suitable and able to be advanced in journalistic careers. Compared to their female colleagues, at least before these female journalists have families and become such, as well as being busy with household matters and the perceived ‘obligation’ to take care of children—compared to men—man or husband.

Taking the dichotomy phenomena in the realm of work as a starting point, the following argument will discuss the frequently occurring gaps. Why is there a difference in salary received for women and men? Or why are women considered challenging to reach decision-making positions? This is due to the existence of job differentiation based on gender. Women will be given jobs in the domestic sphere, which tend to be low-paid than men placed in the public sphere. The assumption is that women are seen only as supporters and not workers in the main (Melati, 2019).

Numerous studies on the professionalism of female journalists demonstrate that female journalists can and do believe they are afforded the same opportunities as male journalists, that there is no gender-based division of labor, and that they experience and accept equal responsibilities and work hours (Bire, Mas’amah, & Hana, 2019), except for some risk considerations (Karliani et al., 2020). However, research on the mental condition of married female journalists shows different situations that require women to commit to challenging work as journalists and be consistent in their responsibilities towards their dual role (Ulhaq, 2020). This means that, even though they are given the same opportunity in the newsroom, female journalists still have to maintain their performance in the private sphere, namely the family.

A female journalist is considered successful if she succeeds in both contexts, i.e., if she is able to work professionally in the media industry while also being a good wife and housewife (Karliani et al., 2020). In other words, if a woman works and is married, then the next woman has

two statuses and roles, a worker as well as a wife. Moreover, if a woman receives a promotion to her position, then she cannot ignore her status as a wife and mother in the household (Melati, 2019).

This double burden often makes women give in to not being too ‘advanced’ in their careers. Female journalists, especially married ones, often lose the energy to pursue career paths to top leadership positions, such as editor, managing editor, and so on until editor-in-chief (Stellarosa & Silaban, 2019). This is reminiscent of one of the previous studies of Utari & Nilan (2008), which states that women at a young age will feel more enthusiastic about a career in the media, both in presenting news, meeting sources, and writing articles on various interesting topics. However, after a few years, they will realize that the expectations of working in the media and communications industry are seen as far from ideal. This work is a challenge confirmed by the notion of the socially perceived ‘nature of women’ that labels women’s domestic roles as God-given.

The existence of a conservative discourse about women and work appears in representing the New Order ideology which reinforces that the ideal woman is a woman who is at home. This context gives rise to a re-image of the innate nature of women who prioritize being at home and carrying out their domestic responsibilities (Oey-Gardiner, 2002; Utari & Nilan, 2008). Women are also indirectly faced with a choice, whether their energy will be dominantly used in pursuing a career or choosing to stay at home, and usually, they will choose the second one. Especially for a few years ago, the number of women with communication degrees in Indonesia is relatively large, and it is not comparable to the number of female media workers who can be absorbed in the media industry (Utari & Nilan, 2004).

The condition of women journalists in several other countries is relevant to the phenomenon that happens in Indonesia. Although mass communication is an option for female students in Nigeria, a

recent study found that only a few female graduates chose to pursue a career in journalism and media (Chioma, Okere, Alao, Atakiti, & Jegede, 2015; Abati & Ayoola, 2019). In India, the latest research analyzing the opportunities, challenges, and social life of women journalists in the media industry in India (Pathak, Bhawalkar, Sharma, & Saxena, 2018; Afsar & Kumari, 2020a; Afsar & Kumari, 2020b). Further findings emerged in research in Bangladesh, where media journalism was initially stated to be a challenging job for women. They were not supported to work outside the home. However, in its development, many women have contributed to aspects of economic welfare and development and are actively involved in journalism. However, there are still certain stereotypes that tend to corner women, unfair treatment arises, and even some forms of harassment from male co-workers so that this causes female journalists to give up their profession (Safa & Akter, 2015).

Recent research on the topic of female journalist leadership also expresses the findings from a different perspective. The results show that female journalists who are able to move up to managerial positions or decision-makers will tend to be more gender-sensitive in giving special treatment (affirmative action) related to women's natural matters, such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding. (Sunarto, Nurul, & Amida, 2020). This means that the more women journalists take on leadership positions, the more they will have the opportunity and more flexibility to develop their careers. Research on the tendency of female journalists in Semarang local media, for example, also shows that although they 'adopted' masculine values, such as courage, independence, responsibility, and the courage to take risks in pursuing a career, once they reach a leadership position, they actually include feminine values in the resulting policies (Sunarto, 2020).

This research intends to add to the excitement and at the same time complement the discourse on the career development of women journalists

in Indonesia. The patriarchal structure in practice has been embedded in Indonesian society in such a way that it takes a lot of research, initiatives, and messages that are delivered continuously to review this matter. It is important for women journalists to continue to be present in the media industry so that the point of view presented to the public is not only based on one masculine point of view and ignores femininity.

Research on *Kompas* senior journalist, Maria Hartiningsih, shows that female reporters tend to be more sensitive to covering issues regarding women, children, and poverty (Ritonga, Murwani, & Ritonga, 2017). Although often considered less flashy than the themes of politics, war, or technology, the themes of humanity are those that are closest to everyday life and should not be missed. Gender inequality and violence against children, for example, are taken for granted as part of a culture that places women and children in a vulnerable position. Precisely because this has been deeply rooted, the presence of women journalists is increasingly important to continue to echo the emergence of changes in the adjustment of media viewpoints. The emotional factor that is seen as thick in women also does not prevent them from remaining professional in addressing sensitive cases, such as violence against women (Al Mushi, 2018).

This research then includes three media platforms, namely online, print, and broadcasting (radio and television), to be followed up on the gender composition of journalists. This research also seeks to involve public broadcasters, such as RRI (*Radio Republik Indonesia*). By doing so, the researcher hopes to get an overview of the composition of female and male journalists on various media platforms in Indonesia today, both as a whole and at the structural level. Suppose the results show a wide gap between female and male journalists, especially at the decision-making level. In that case, the researcher wants to know what factors might hinder the careers of female journalists themselves. From this aspect, various ideas on solutions are expected to make the work environment more conducive to career female journalists.

The context of work in media is actually inseparable from the production process and the consumption of reality on the resulting news products. In this case, Nasution (2017) explains that ideological interests in several media which tend to be different will result in the packaging of the resulting reality being able to influence the manifestations formed by the media. This focus indirectly affects the people's thoughts behind the media to think in line with the ideology adopted by the media. For example, most communication researchers' way the media works will describe people, groups, organizations, labels (stereotypes), or structures that move ideologically. This media depiction can be an identical symbolic power and reflect the character of a medium. Therefore, the media has the concept of representation and symbolic power as the main characteristics of the media in packaging an understanding of how a media works (Murtiningsih & Advenita, 2017). There are no exceptions to the way the media builds and represents women, both in terms of reporting and the work environment that exists and is a part of media life.

According to the media's representation of reality, the media plays a critical role in delivering or disseminating communication messages to the general population. In this aspect, the media, particularly the mass media, are mediums that are designed to disseminate message information while also allowing the audience to obtain that information (Tamburaka, 2013; Saputra, 2020).

There are three features of the mass media that are generally dominant: corporate focus, technological development, and a reflection on how people's lives are shown (Anggraeni, 2018). One could argue that the mass media operates on an industrial level that is inextricably linked to business matters and is also evolving in tandem with technological advancements to enable the dissemination of information to a broad audience, ensuring that information messages are consumed not only privately, but also widely and publicly accessible. Everything represented

by the mass media in various conditions also describes people's lives through the constructions they build (Wahid & Pratiwi, 2018). This is defined by Okoro & Chinweobo-Onuoha (2013) specifically through the way journalism works as an information tool that functions in socialization, social movement (mobilization), and control. Therefore, conveying messages through the media and journalism levels is essential as public education and training sensitivity to problems in society.

Returning to the initial question in this study, the researcher used a survey method to collect data on the names of journalists listed on the mastheads of each media regarding the effort to find the gender composition of the journalists in it. For media that does not include the name of a journalist on the masthead - his, researchers sent a letter to the editor of a direct appeal. Meanwhile, in order to answer the question further, researchers followed a group discussion pitch direction (focused-group discussion/FGD) held by the Association of Development of Media Nusantara (Perhimpunan Pengembangan Media Nusantara/PPMN) by inviting 14 women journalists who were on a structural level in their respective media. This is done so that researchers can focus on the obstacles and challenges experienced by women journalists who have succeeded in reaching leadership levels in their careers.

The main limitation in this study is the uneven distribution of data, especially in the data for the category of broadcast media. Except for *RRI*, media included in the broadcasting media category only include data on journalists at the managerial level. The absence of data on the level of a reporter on the broadcast media in his position making does not reflect the proportion of research data. It shows significantly regarding the reality of the real in these media.

Some print and electronic media also do not distinguish between the positions of reporters and editors. In this case, all names at the editor and reporter level are counted as reporters. The data contained in the

media's official mastheads may also not accurately represent the media's tasks and levels of decision-making authority. For example, *Kompas Daily* which includes all journalists except editors, managing editors, and editor-in-chief (of which there are only three people) as reporters. In cases like this, researchers still include findings in accordance with those contained in the official masthead in order to maintain the originality of the data.

METHODS

This study uses a mixed-method (mix methods) quantitative and qualitative in a convergent mixed-method approach. This mixed-method is used by processing and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously, at the same time (Creswell, 2016; Chih-Pei & Chang, 2017). Specifically for the acquisition of quantitative data, and data collection is conducted via a survey method, namely by mapping the number of female and male journalists employed in ten media outlets (n=811), both at the non-managerial level (which will be referred to as reporter) and at the managerial level (editor and above to chief editor/editor). Ten media organizations have been chosen to represent the three types of media, online, print, and broadcasting). They have met the criterion of having a high level of news content and large audience consumption. Additionally, researchers select media that have the highest number of visitors to a website (for online media), the most increased circulation (for print media), and the highest viewing level (viewership) for the broadcast media category.

Based on the mapping of the criteria and characteristics above, the media organizations were selected to be part of the data in this study, namely: *Kompas*, *Jawa Pos*, *Republika*, *Tempo* (criteria for the type of print media, obtained from various sources), *Tribunnews.com*, *detik.com*, *Okezone.com* (for online media criteria, obtained from the Alexa traffic counter website in March 2020); *CNN Indonesia*, *Metro TV*, *RRI* (type

of broadcast media, obtained from January-May 2018 data) (KataData, 2018). Especially for the type of broadcast media, RRI is not included in the list of media with the highest viewing rate. However, the existence of RRI is included in the category of representation of public broadcasting institutions in Indonesia. This is due to RRI's history and role as a means of communication for Indonesian independence, which was administered exclusively by the government following the declaration of independence (Tapsell, 2018). Additionally, the total number of journalists analyzed in this research is 811 from ten different media organizations.

The data is grouped into the reporter level and the managerial level (editor, executive editor, to the editor-in-chief). This classification follows a similar study in the UK that places positions ranging from editors upwards at the decision-making level (Women In Journalism, 2017). In addition, in the business world in general, an employee is said to be at the managerial level if there are subordinates who report to him. He is called non-managerial if his party only carries out functional work without having structural subordinates (Rawes, 2018). Each name is then assigned a male or female sign. Furthermore, the researcher also recap the composition of the total number of female and male journalists, both at the reporter and managerial levels.

Meanwhile, in the processing of data on the type of qualitative research is done by using the method of phenomenology that aims to pull a red thread and determine the relevance of the various experiences of individuals on a given topic (Creswell, 2016). In this case, the presence of the individual referred to refers to the 14 chief editors and managing editors of women who come from the following media: *The Jakarta Post*, *popmama.com*, *Tabloid Kontan*, *tirto.id*, *RTV*, *KBR*, *Tempo*, *Rakyat Merdeka*, *net.id*, *Liputan 6*, *Magdalene*, *Global TV*, and *CNN Indonesia/News Trans*.

Furthermore, the data collection session was carried out through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) forum. The FGD session was held on

Friday, March 6, 2020, at the Go Work Millennium Centennial Center, 38th floor, on Jalan Jend. Sudirman Kav. 25, South Jakarta 12920. In the process, the researcher was present and followed the whole discussion. The entire process of data collection was carried out in Indonesian. Qualitative data obtained from FGD results were transcribed verbatim. This data is then analyzed using the Miles & Huberman interactive analysis model, which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comparison Of Male Vs Female Journalists

Based on data from the 811 journalists surveyed, as many as 543 journalists manifold male (67%) and 268 female (33%). This figure shows that in terms of quantity, the number of male journalists is stated to be higher than that of female journalists who work in the media. Data acquisition is also divided according to the level of work, namely male journalists at the reporter level amounting to 396 people (64%) and female journalists as many as 225 people (36%). Meanwhile, the distribution of media workers in the level managerial (editor upwards), data showed the number of male journalists reached 147 people (77%) and journalist women as much as 43 people (23%). Furthermore, the actual data can be reviewed in the following table:

Table 1.
Details Of The Composition Of Journalists In 10 Media Based On Gender

Type	Media	Reporter		Managerial		Total		Total	Notes
		M	F	M	F	M	F		
Online	<i>Okezone</i>	25	12	9	6	34	18	52	
Online	<i>detik.com</i>	74	45	12	3	86	48	134	Do not separate reporters from editors
Online	<i>Tribunnews.com</i>	57	22	40	2	97	24	121	<i>Tribun Jatim</i> Does not separate reporters from editors
Print	<i>Tempo Magazine</i>	9	5	34	12	43	17	60	
Print	<i>Kompas daily</i>	105	54	2	1	107	55	162	
Print	<i>Jawa Pos</i>	28	15	22	8	50	23	73	
Print	<i>Republika</i>	77	62	5	2	82	64	146	
Broadcasting	<i>Metro TV</i>	Null	Null	9	1	9	1	10	Does not provide reporter data
Broadcasting	<i>CNN TV Indonesia</i>	Null	Null	5	6	5	6	11	Does not provide reporter data
Broadcasting	<i>RRI</i>	21	10	9	2	30	12	42	
	Total	396	225	147	43	543	268	811	

Male journalists regularly outnumber female journalists, regardless of the type of media or structural positions held in the editorial ranks. However, the comparison figures tend to have gaps, namely from the reporter level as much as 64:36 to the managerial level, which reaches 77:23, further confirms that there is a leadership gap that can be achieved

between male journalists compared to women. The number of male and female journalists may have almost the same quantity at the beginning of their careers. However, with the passage of time and increasing tenure in the media world, there may be competition for a higher position, which has resulted in many women journalists being displaced and out of the competitive arena.

This figure is in line with similar studies on the distribution of the number of media careers for male and female journalists worldwide. For example, in the United States, male journalists dominate with by-lines in print media by 59%, TV by 63%, internet by 60%, and news agencies by 69% (Women's Media Center, 2019). In Kenya, there are as many as 66% of journalists who work are male (Ireru, 2017). Even globally, at the managerial level, jobs are occupied by men reached 73%, while for women only at a point 27%. Additionally, two-thirds of journalists are men, while women remained steady at 36%. However, in several other countries, the tendency appears to be in the opposite direction. For example, in South Africa, the percentage of female journalists who enter and participate in decision-making might reach 79.5 percent, while in Lithuania, women dominated junior reporter positions with 78.5 percent and senior reporter positions with 70, 6 percent (Byerly, 2011).

Based on the distribution and findings of the data above, two possibilities can be analyzed. *First*, there is a woman journalist who resigned after she has married, so the talent pool for women journalists who could be promoted to head to the managerial level is not available much. If this is the case, there is a severe infrastructure and climate work problem in the mass media. Women tend to have difficulty harmonizing between career and professional journalists who lived in the household. Additionally, it is possible for the emergence and use of patriarchal values in society, which they confirmed contributed to the narrowing of women's space as a result of the dual role that must be fulfilled, whether at work

or in burden households, where both responsibilities should be carried out concurrently. *Secondly*, a sufficient ‘talent pool,’ but the quantity of women journalists who are considered worthy or ready to be promoted to a managerial level is not much. This can mean that there is a gender bias problem in viewing the social roles of women and men. This gender bias can come from promoters who feel that women are not worthy of moving up to a managerial level or women journalists who think they are not even worthy of holding leadership positions. As a result, both are equally problematic.

Referring to the two tendencies above, the analysis in this paper is then based on the ‘*ways in*’ aspect in the perspective of contemporary feminism, which places more emphasis on the position of women in cultural and scientific production (Oren & Press, 2019). The emergence of marginalization experienced by women in almost all fields started from the exclusion of women in the production of ideas and public works. Construction in society forms areas seen as ‘men’s fields’, and women are required to try to enter areas that are not intended for themselves. In class and social identity, women’s position will impact their work (Melati, 2019). When associated with women’s careers in the media, this patriarchal aspect hinders access and equal rights, especially in achieving higher job positions. This is also supported through the explanation of the *Handbook of Contemporary Feminism*. The fields of study used to discuss contemporary feminism problems are *science, technology, engineering, mathematics* (STEM) and the *game* industry. However, it is very possible that this phenomenon also covers various fields of communication and media, including the world of journalism.

Three Factors Inhibiting Women’s Journalist Career

Judging from the initial statement that women work as part of being supportive—or complement—and not as the main workers (Melati, 2019),

it is related to the discourse on why women have difficulty increasing their career paths. Using the statistics on the number of male and female journalists in various media outlets, an analysis of the data collected via group discussions (FGD) was conducted with several selected journalist informants. Confirmation was carried out through verbatim *coding* with discussions with 14 (fourteen) female editors-in-chief and revealed at least 3 (three) main factors that were seen as impeding the careers of women journalists in Indonesia.

First, there appears to be a double burden on women journalists as they develop their careers. The double burden in question is in the form of demands that come from external parties (both family and society), as well as internal (self). In its meaning, it is considered that no matter how high the career achievements of women, the household and children remain the primary responsibility contexts. Finally, this resulted in women being placed in a dual role that ‘must or will not’ be fulfilled, both as a worker through their profession, specifically as a journalist, and as a mother and wife in a family who must be prepared to solve problems and manage all the knick-knacks of household activities. This argument can be reviewed through the verbatim meaning conveyed by one of the informants, SR (initial).

“Even though there is support from the family, it still feels guilty to leave the children and home until late at night.” (SR)

“I can continue to work, but in the morning I have to prepare breakfast and accompany my children to study, that’s a requirement from my husband.” (SR)

Several women journalists who are not married and/or do not have children, argue that the field of media and journalism is not an easy industry, considering that working hours in the media tend to be uncertain and require a large commitment to obtain high-value news.

“Journalism is not a family-friendly industry. It’s hard not to be total in this profession.” (YS)

The above understanding cannot be separated from the solid patriarchal system that is still rooted in society. The assumption that being in a public environment, one of which is in the field of media work, is not seen as necessary in accordance with women’s social roles and functions. On the other hand, public space is considered only appropriate for men to have. Men are regarded as the main actors in families whose careers must be supported by their wives and children. Their men domination and subordination to women, as well as the division of labor based on gender (men outside, women at home) in the end, make the women have to work double so challenging to achieve a balance between career and personal life (Adisa, Abdurraheem, & Isiaka, 2019). The meaning of this stereotype indirectly helps to strengthen the position of women in society, especially in the division or dichotomy between the public and private spheres. As a result, the existence of women is stated to be identical with a figure who tends to be in the domestic world (Abdullah, 1997), concerning their role and capacity as a mother and wife in household matters.

In this context, explaining the understanding of the construction and social meaning of the function and role of women in society, ideally, will form a separate perspective on women. Even then, technological developments and globalization have made women more free of expression, one of which is in carrying out their work careers. However, the fact is that this understanding will still be limited by certain social values that limit people’s thinking in treating women in everyday life (Pratiwi, 2015). Moreover, at a position, more extreme restrictions on women tend to be able to cause the system to discriminate on the lives of women, appear to marginalize the participation of women in the economy that have an impact on the lack of women’s strategic position financially (Millie

& Bellamy, 2014). Thus, it is not uncommon for women to tend to depend on their financial lives to men (husbands) because they are the ones who can work optimally and have power in public spaces.

The above assumption may arise due to gender subordination which is also a problem. The assumption is that revealing women's issues in the context of gender tends to lead to resistance. Fakh (2020) identifies this understanding in two forms of analysis: *first*, questioning the status of women, continuously challenging—even shaking up—established systems and structures; and *secondly*, creating misunderstandings when examining women's issues, in which gender issues talk about power relations over private matters as well as involve claims for 'privilege' for men and women.

The patriarchal system places household affairs and childbearing/child care as the responsibility of women. This is why many female journalists choose to step down just as their careers progress. This is a global phenomenon and is not even exclusive to certain countries. Women are considered to have multi-skills that enable them to perform optimally in the office and at home (Boateng & Lauk, 2020). This demand which in turn, makes the journalists, the women themselves, doubt whether women should have worked their way toward the top leadership in the media (Vu, Barnett, Duong, & Lee, 2019).

The *second* factor that also plays a role in the career path of women journalists is mental block from the perspective of women journalists themselves. Several female journalists who were involved in the FGD admitted that they were horrified if they had to take on a higher responsibility than what they currently hold. Several informants also talked about their doubts when they were given the option to promote to the decision-making level and take a higher career path. This can be reviewed through YS (initial) and NQP (initial) statements as follows:

“When I got the offer to be the chief executive officer, I doubted... can I afford it? I then consulted my mentor, and he convinced me to take the opportunity. My mentor said, that’s the difference between women and men. Women, even though they are capable, will doubt themselves first. While men will tend to seize opportunities, regardless of whether he is really capable or not.” (YS)

“If I had a choice, I would choose to remain in my current position (executing editor). I’m happy like this, it’s like I’m the mother of the children in the editor. If you have to go out and deal with mass organizations, you will be called by the Press Council, duh... I can’t afford it.” (NQP)

Through YS’s statement, it can be interpreted that she is having doubts about whether to take the offer for promotion to a higher career path or not. Although it was felt that she had consulted with her mentor for several considerations, in fact, there was still a *denial* in her that made her not completely sure about the offer of a career path. In addition, objections also appeared in NQP’s statement, which seemed unable to take on higher job responsibilities.

The emergence of mental barriers usually occurs in women who receive offers to carry out higher positions. A study of 1,500 women in the United States shows when it comes to assessing themselves (*self-assessment*) for the promotion, the women were systematically provide ratings that are less favorable for the performance and potential of their capabilities in the future, compared to their male counterparts of similar performance (Exley & Kessler, 2019). This shows that there is a denial by women of their abilities. Women will feel less confident about their credibility. Thus, this woman’s distrust can be stated no longer at the individual level but is already structural in nature.

Although women consistently scored higher than men in the managerial ability test (Zenger & Folkman, 2019), women are viewed as not as easy as men when expressing their confidence in the group. This is because women are socially and culturally accustomed to being ‘prosocial’ individuals, whose main task is to maintain a conducive social atmosphere, even though it means avoiding conflict (Guillén, Mayo, & Karelaia, 2018). On the other hand, when a woman does not comply with this social code, her party will be perceived as a dissident, aggressive, and ultimately unwelcome figure.

The *third* factor that hinders the careers of women journalists is the masculine political culture of the office. This is inseparable from the fact that most journalists working in the media are male compared to female journalists. Aspects of office politics masculine can be demonstrated by the reluctance of the media to recruit female journalist from the beginning because it is already constructed the assumption that there will be a natural selection for female journalists, in which they will resign after marriage or have children, so that they do not continue their career path in the media.

The single most influential aspect is when women journalists call never got discrimination in the assignment. This is evident during the course of reporting on a certain subject, such as lifestyle or entertainment. Another problem that women journalists face is bad experiences (harassment) from sources. In this context, the editors did not immediately give a swift response to deal with it. Moreover, not infrequently, journalists who are at the decision-making level accept this and consider it part of the news search process.

According to one study, women who work in a system with a majority of men tend to be less confident, less influential, and more reluctant in their opinions. However, when women apply for or are selected for leadership positions, they tend to feel encouraged (Born, Ranehill, & Sandberg, 2018). The more men dominate the newsroom, other research

also shows that the presence of women in leadership positions influences other women, making other women more confident and comfortable in pursuing their careers to the top (Glass & Cook, 2018).

However, keep in mind that this research is very limited in scope. The ten media that became the focus of the study, in terms of numbers, are relatively small compared to thousands of national media. As a result, the findings of this study are more casuistic and contextual when it comes to the media on which the research is focused. Additionally, 14 female editors in chief probably do not adequately represent (generalize) the objective reality of all female journalists in Indonesia. Thus, it is hoped that quantitative research with a more significant number of media will emerge and qualitative research using the *in-depth interview* method in order to present a broader and *in-depth* perspective on similar topics.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the findings and analysis of data quantitative and qualitative described above, it was found that there was indeed a distance (gap) leadership in industry media. At the reporter level, the number of male journalists is stated to be higher than that of female journalists. This also reinforces the notion that the world of journalism with the context of many work activities taking place in the field and the irregular flow of work hours is considered more suitable for men. Interestingly, at the managerial level, the percentage of men is also much more dominant. This means that more male journalists are considered to have leadership qualities to become editors, managing editors, and editor-in-chief, compared to female journalists.

In general, three causes of this condition were identified: the first is the double responsibility placed on female journalists. Even though they are “freed” to work, they are also expected to remain good housewives and

play a dominant role in caring for children and taking care of the house. This creates demands for women so that they often choose not to carry out more responsibilities in the office. The second is the mental factor. The majority of women who feel unable to occupy higher positions because structurally, women tend to receive “education” that their area is private or domestic (both home, children, and the like), so they feel objected to accepting challenges in a number of work sectors in the workplace public. Third, the political condition of the office environment, which is masculine. Men who sit in structural positions will usually tend to promote fellow men than women. In addition, the position of the dominant male in leadership will create assumptions and “trust” the public that men are more worthy of being a leader than a suitable woman.

Suggestion

There needs to be a cultural change in media companies and newsrooms that regarding the care and management of households and children it is a shared task, both for women (wives) and men (husbands). This cultural change can then be implemented into various policies. Policies such as *work from home* and flexible working hours must be given to female or male journalists, when necessary, equipped with clear and open job descriptions, as well as rules.

Media companies and the newsroom need to provide opportunities for female journalists to be able to lead many significant projects. Trust to take on more responsibilities will give women journalists a sense of self-confidence. This is what is needed as a form of support for self-actualization for these women journalists. Career mentoring sessions for women journalists, for example, can be a place to share experiences, expertise, and encouragement to continue to develop the necessary careers. The hope is that more female journalists can advance in capability and competence so that a number of important positions at the managerial level can be occupied by male and female journalists equally.

Female journalists who are already in managerial positions then promote their female colleagues (*women endorse women*). This is done as an attempt to counter the social stereotype that only men are more worthy of being leaders. Recently, media companies and the editorial office also need to ascertain that the condition of the journal is free of sexual harassment, both verbal, and physical.

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