

Gender Stereotypes toward Women: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Mata Najwa Talk Show “*Susahnya Jadi Perempuan – Part 2*”

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ABSTRACT

Gender stereotypes are views and beliefs about how men and women typically act in society. For example, women are supposed to be nurturing and feminine, while men are supposed to be strong and masculine. Gender stereotypes become problematic when they create certain expectations or limit opportunities for one social group. This study aims to examine gender stereotypes toward women in Mata Najwa Talk Show entitled “*Susahnya Jadi Perempuan – Part 2*”. This is a qualitative study that applies the theory of critical discourse analysis by Sara Mills. The theory focuses on the positioning of actors in the text, commonly known as the subject-object position and the writer-reader position. However, the subject-object position is the primary focus of this study. The results showed that the subjects are one woman and four men with various perspectives about gender stereotypes. According to the female subject, there are several negative stereotypes about women that are deeply ingrained in society. These stereotypes are caused by patriarchal values that prioritize men over women in terms of privilege, dominance, and power. The four male subjects have different views regarding the stereotypes about women. These various perspectives are due to different backgrounds, such as experience, education, family values, and social circle. Men who are raised in patriarchal families and are surrounded by people who have patriarchal values tend to adopt and internalize these values. Meanwhile, men who are aware of issues and obstacles faced by women are generally more understanding and considerate.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Gender Stereotypes, Patriarchy*

INTRODUCTION

Gender stereotypes refer to beliefs about typical behavior patterns exhibited by males and females, as well as expectations about how males and females ought to behave (Koenig, 2018). Traditional gender stereotypes expect women to exhibit nurturing behavior and avoid displaying dominance, while men are expected to exhibit power and refrain from showing signs of vulnerability (Zuhro, 2018).

Gender stereotypes are reinforced and maintained by various institutions, including educational institutions, religious organizations, and governmental policies (Naufina, 2021). Consequently, these stereotypes have been largely accepted and deeply rooted in Indonesian society for numerous generations, leading to the marginalization and inequality of genders that persist up to the present time (Fauzia & Rahayu, 2019).

The mass media holds a significant influence in shaping gender stereotypes (Matthes et al., 2016). Media content is suitable for learning about social mechanisms due to its presentation of simple and frequently one-dimensional examples of norms and behaviors that are constantly displayed (Ward & Grower, 2020). Therefore, the media can be used as a tool to spread ideas about gender equality to society.

The media has played a significant role in shaping public perceptions by disseminating information to the masses. Pujiastuti & Anshori (2022) conducted a study on how the online media platform Magdalene.co highlights cases experienced by mothers related to their mental health. The findings of the study revealed that the author possessed agency in their writing, as demonstrated by the text's inclination towards women who have been marginalized by social stigma. This alignment drives the writer to attract support and educate society about the mental health of mothers. Mother figures need support from those closest to them to fulfill their role.

Another study regarding gender stereotypes has been conducted by Trisnawati et al. (2021). The study aims to examine the awareness and understanding of gender stereotypes among the audience of a movie. The results of the study indicate that the audience is aware of gender stereotypes and their development throughout the movie. This awareness is influenced by various factors, including the narrative structure of the film and the pre-existing knowledge of gender stereotypes.

Grau & Zotos (2016) conducted a study regarding the history of gender stereotypes as portrayed in advertising. According to the study, changes in role structure within families and the labor force have created shifts in traditional gender roles, and these changes are eventually displayed in advertising. For a long time, advertising portrayed genders in conventional roles. Historically, women were portrayed as vulnerable and reliant on others, with their worth being assessed primarily on their physical attributes rather than their abilities. However, the data suggested

a trend toward more positive depictions of their roles. Men are also depicted in roles that promote gender equality.

The three previous studies have shown positive progress in promoting gender equality through mass media. However, none of the previously cited studies have undertaken research on the male perspective regarding gender stereotypes. Therefore, the present study aims to fill this gap by examining gender stereotypes toward women as discussed by the female host, Najwa Shihab, and four male public figures in the video titled “*Susahnya Jadi Perempuan – Part 2*” (The Difficulty of Being a Woman) by Mata Najwa.

Efforts to fix misconceptions about gender stereotypes in Indonesia have been conducted through progressive media outlets, such as Mata Najwa. On 8 November 2021, Najwa Shihab’s YouTube channel posted a video with the title “*Susahnya Jadi Perempuan*” (The Difficulty of Being A Woman). In the video, Najwa Shihab, the host of the show, invited four male public figures to discuss women’s issues. The invited guests were Nadiem Makarim (Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia), Reza Rahadian (actor), Arie Kriting (comedian), and Dr. Tompi (doctor and entertainer). The video received positive feedback from the viewers and has been viewed more than two million times per May 2023.

Following the initial video, Najwa Shihab’s YouTube channel then released the second part of the discussion “*Susahnya Jadi Perempuan*” (The Difficulty of Being A Woman). The video contains a discussion about gender stereotypes toward women. According to Najwa Shihab, women’s issues are not exclusive issues that only women should understand. It requires understanding from all individuals, regardless of their gender. Gender-related issues about women are prevalent and require discussions involving males regarding the challenges associated with the female experience.

Based on the background, the researchers are interested in conducting a study regarding gender stereotypes discussed in the video “*Susahnya Jadi Perempuan - Part 2*”. The objective of this study is to analyze the gender stereotypes directed toward women as presented in the talk show. The theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis by Sara Mills (2005) is used for the analysis. The theory highlights the positioning of individuals involved in the discourse, specifically referred to as the subject-object position and the writer-reader position. However, the primary focus of this study is the subject-object position.

The critical discourse analysis approach with a feminist point of view put forward by Sara Mills is expected to be able to explain the problem of gender stereotypes toward women. By explaining the positions and opinions of the participants involved in the talk show, male and female perspectives on gender stereotypes and their relation to issues of gender equality can be found. Thus, stereotypes rooted in patriarchal thinking can be straightened out in order to increase public awareness of the problems

faced by women and educate the public about the importance of gender equality.

METHOD

This qualitative study applied the theory of critical discourse analysis proposed by Sara Mills (2005) to analyze the data. The data source selected for this study is the video entitled “*Susahnya Jadi Perempuan – Part 2*” (The Difficulty of Being a Woman) by Mata Najwa. This video was chosen as it contained a discussion on gender stereotypes, which presented both male and female perspectives on the matter. In the video, Najwa Shihab acts as the host and delivers the topic of gender stereotypes toward women in Indonesia. There were four male guests, namely Anang Hermansyah (musician and politician), Rocky Gerung (lecturer of philosophy and feminist studies), Denny Sumargo (actor, basketball player, and content creator), and Onadio Leonardo (musician, actor, and presenter). The video was uploaded by Najwa Shihab’s YouTube channel on 1 March 2023 and has garnered over 1.5 million views within a two-month timeframe. The data collection was conducted by watching the video and transcribing the dialogue. After that, the data related to gender stereotypes were analyzed by utilizing the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis proposed by Sara Mills (2005).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Mata Najwa’s talk show entitled “*Susahnya Jadi Perempuan – Part 2*” (The Difficulty of Being a Woman) began with an introduction from Najwa Shihab as the program host regarding the previous discussion, which carried the same title. The reasons why women’s issues are discussed by men were also explained clearly. As stated by Najwa Shihab, issues related to women are not limited to the understanding of women only. Achieving this goal requires comprehension and cooperation from all individuals, irrespective of their gender.

After the introduction, the discussion began with the question of whether the title was appropriate or not. Anang Hermansyah, one of the guest stars at the discussion with a background as a former member of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia who has been in the Indonesian entertainment industry for a long time as a musician, positioned himself as a subject that contradicts that title. This could be seen from the statement he made as follows:

“Ini adalah era emansipasi. Kita ngikutin bahasa itu. Nggak ada pembabasan ini harusnya. Aku nggak ada problem dengan itu”.

(“This is an era of emancipation. We follow the concept. There should be no discussion of this. I have no problem with that.”)

From the statement above, Anang emphasized his position as a person who supports gender equality where there should be no exaggeration regarding the biases faced by certain genders because the world has treated them with no difference.

When asked for his opinion, Denny Sumargo, another guest star on the show, then spoke from the point of view of the child being raised by a single mother. He shared his experience of witnessing how difficult it was for his mother to carry out the two roles of both mother and father to care for and earn a living for the family. Therefore, he stated that the title raised in this talk correctly describes the existing reality.

Rocky Gerung, another guest star, also commented on the issue of the title "The Difficulty of Being A Woman". With a background in teaching philosophy and feminist studies, he strove to convince other participants to support the proposition that it is hard to be a woman. This effort was reflected in the arguments he presented as follows:

"Kalau ini, saya pakai baju ini saya bisa ada di tiga sesi satu hari ini. Baju yang sama... Jadi dari pagi Mbak Nana udah djajah oleh narasi publik itu, bagaimana bahasa tubuhnya. Kalau kita (laki-laki) lebih santai."

("If I wear this shirt, I can be in three different sessions in one day. Same clothes... So since morning, Ms. Nana (Najwa Shihab's nickname) has been colonized by the public narrative; her body language (also being scrutinized). We (men) are more relaxed.")

From this argument, Rocky explained how the physical appearance, style of dress, and speech of women became objects of public criticism which gave a separate burden to women to always try to comply with society's demands while men did not have to bother doing that. In the end of his argument, he stated that the appropriateness of the title of this talk show could be proven when all the stereotypes about women are thoroughly discussed.

The first stereotype that came into the discussion was about women who are mature and unmarried. The negative stigma of "late marriage" is more attached to women than men (Himawan et al., 2018). If a woman is not married by the age of 30, they are labeled as old, unsolicited, or too picky (Nanik et al., 2018). Whereas for men, the negative connotations are replaced, from old to mature, unsolicited to preparing for stability, and too picky to be wise in choosing (Himawan et al., 2019).

Onadio Leonardo, the fourth guest star with a background as an actor and musician, justified this stereotype. Apart from being a subject who gave opinions on the issues being discussed, he also positioned himself as the one who experienced being involved in the social construction of this stereotype. It was reflected in the following statement:

“Gua setuju. Kenapa laki-laki makin tua kayak George (Clooney), makin tua makin hot ya. Tapi kalau di Indo, gua setuju sih umur 35 ah enggak laku ah, ah emang enggak laku. Tertekan gitu.”

(“I agree. How come older men like George (Clooney), the older the hotter, huh? But in Indonesia, I agree that by the age of 35 (unmarried women are considered) unsolicited (by the society), (the society will say) “oh, they really are unsolicited”. It’s so stressful.”)

He shared his opinion about men - the older they are, the more attractive they look, far from the impression that they are unsolicited like old women. As a man gets older, his quality is considered to increase as well. Society evaluates men according to their capacity to provide, which accounts for this phenomenon. Typically, as a man ages, his professional trajectory tends to improve, and his capacity to provide for himself and others increases. Thus, the ability of a man to provide sufficiently is a significant factor in determining his level of attractiveness. In contrast, patriarchal norms determine that as a woman ages, her physical attractiveness and capacity for reproduction decrease. Consequently, societal norms dictate that women are expected to get married at a young and aesthetically pleasing age, typically before reaching the age of 30.

Contrary to Onad’s statement, Anang once again highlighted his position as a subject who claimed the absence of negative stereotypes against women in Indonesia. He stated this assertion in the following statement:

“Sama, kayak tadi terus dibilang kalau dia lagi asik dengan dirinya, dia punya sesuatu untuk dilakukan, dia enggak punya waktu untuk memikirkan mungkin isi hatinya, laki-laki juga melakukan yang hal yang sama. Terus kenapa kalau perempuan masih sendiri, banyak yang keren loh aku lihat hari ini, “Th keren banget pasti udah punya pacar”, “Nggak Mas, aku sendiri.” “Lah, iya? Umur segini?”

(“Same, like I said before, (the reasons why a woman is single could be because) she is preoccupied with herself, she has something to do, she doesn’t have time to think about what’s in her heart. Men also do the same thing. So what if women are still single, there are lots of cool ones. I saw it today (and said), “Oh, you are really cool, I’m sure you already have a boyfriend,” (then she replied) “No, bro, I’m single.” (then I said) “Huh? Really? At this age?”)

From the statement above, it was depicted that Anang views women and men as the same. If they are not married at a certain age, then they have reasons for making that decision, which is acceptable. Denny also revealed several reasons why women choose not to marry: they haven’t found the right person, have trauma from past relationships, or are too busy with work. This statement is in line with the results of the study conducted by Himawan et al. (2022).

Najwa, on the other hand, actually caught that Anang also had negative stereotypes toward women of a certain age who are not married.

This is based on the end of Anang's statement above, which expressed that he was taken aback when an attractive woman doesn't have a partner at a certain age. Najwa then argued against Anang with the following statement:

"Umur segini masih sendiri? Nggak punya pacar? Pasti ada yang salah ama elo." Mas Anang nggak sadar sebenarnya mikir seperti itu."

("At this age still alone? Don't have a boyfriend? There must be something wrong with you." Mas Anang, (you are) not aware that (you) actually think like that.")

Najwa emphasized her position not only as a woman, but also as an activist and feminist by proving that there are negative stereotypes towards women in Indonesia. These stereotypes are not only uttered clearly by society, but also are sometimes implied and may be subconscious, as was done by Anang.

Based on his scientific analysis, Rocky concluded that the negative stereotype toward unmarried women was born from a patriarchal perspective. This shows the men's fear of the discontinuation of a generation. The analysis was conveyed by Rocky as follows:

"Iya itu sudut pandang patriarki karena dianggap kalau perempuan enggak menikah itu artinya generasi akan putus. Sebetulnya yang cemburu adalah laki-laki karena laki-laki enggak bisa melahirkan generasi. Kalau perempuan memilih rahimnya tidak ingin melahirkan generasi, suaminya yang panik."

("Yes, that is a patriarchal point of view because it is considered that if women don't get married, the generation will be discontinued. Actually, it's the men who are jealous (of women) because men can't give birth to generations. If a woman chooses her uterus to be free from giving birth, her husband panics.")

It can be concluded that society's demands for women to get married and have children are put forward for their own interests. Rocky added that inner beauty, such as intelligence and personality, is more important than age when men seek a life partner. The other guest stars on the show agreed with the statement.

The second stereotype that came to discussion was that women are more emotional than men. Compared to men, women are believed to be more expressive in showing their emotions (Brescoll, 2016). Denny stated that women are instinctively controlled by feelings, unlike men, whose mindset is more logical. This could be seen from the following argument:

"... dan perempuan itu cara berpikirnya kan cukup kompleks dengan emosinya dia beda sama laki-laki yang cukup terstruktur dengan logikanya, jadi pasti naturenya akan membawa dia ke sana."

("... and women's way of thinking is quite complex with their emotions, they are different from men who are quite structured with their logic, so surely their nature will bring them there.")

Najwa then used Denny's argument as proof that he adhered to this stereotype. When someone has compartmentalized mindsets based on gender, this includes stereotypes that overgeneralize phenomena occurring in society. Rocky also used Denny's argument to reveal different facts by conveying the following information:

"Keterangan ilmiah memperlihatkan kecerdasan itu Anda peroleh dari ibumu. Jadi kalau Anda berpikir logis, karena ibumu berpikir logis itu. Tapi laki-laki enggak mau terima itu. Jadi kalau misalnya ayahmu pintar itu bukan karena kakekmu tapi karena nenekmu. Kenapa begitu itu? Karena evolusi menuntut supaya peradaban tidak punah. Supaya dia tidak punah, mesti ada bayi yang dilahirkan dari seorang yang cerdas. Itu perempuan tuh. Jadi di mana-mana kalau Anda cerdas, pasti karena ibumu cerdas. Kalau ibumu cerdas, pasti karena neneknya cerdas. Laki-laki enggak ada fungsi dalam kecerdasan. Dia enggak menyumbang gen kecerdasan."

("Scientific evidence shows that you got intelligence from your mother. So if you think logically, (that is) because your mother thinks logically. But men don't want to accept that. So if, for example, your father is smart, it's not because of your grandfather but because of your grandmother. Why is that? Because evolution demands that civilizations don't go extinct. In order for them not to become extinct, there must be a baby born to an intelligent person. That's from a woman. So it is natural if you are smart, it must be because your mother is smart as well. If your mother is smart, it must be because her grandmother is smart. (Gene from) Men have no function in intelligence. They don't contribute to intelligence genes.")

The above statement confirms that the ability to think logically in humans is inherited from their mother's genes. The stereotype of women being more emotional than men can be refuted because there are many factors that affect a person's emotional stability regardless of gender.

The third stereotype that came into the discussion was that women are more consumptive than men. Denny agreed with this stereotype by presenting the following argument:

"Perempuan kalau dikasih uang banyak, secara data akan lebih banyak beli barang."

("Women, if they are given a lot of money, based on collected data, they will buy more goods.")

When asked where the data he claimed came from, Denny replied that not all women prefer investing rather than shopping. To refute this claim, Najwa conveyed the results of research conducted by Pangaribowo et al. (2019), which showed that women would allocate their resources or assets to education and family health. This is also in line with the findings of research conducted by Iskandar & Maizar (2020), which revealed that household savings involving a wife are 24% higher than households that do not involve a wife. The results of the research presented by Najwa were supported by the facts presented by Rocky as follows:

“Pemenang nobel namanya Muhammad Yunus, dia mendirikan Garmin Bank di Bangladesh. Waktu dia mulai kasih kredit pada semua orang, yang balik itu justru dari perempuan 98%. Kredit yang diambil laki-laki itu jadi konsumsi. Jadi fakta itu menunjukkan bahwa perempuan lebih mampu secara rasional mengatur ekonomi ketimbang laki-laki. Dengan kata lain, lebih boros laki-laki daripada perempuan. Lebih konsumtif laki-laki daripada perempuan.”

(“A Nobel laureate’s, Muhammad Yunus, founded Garmin Bank in Bangladesh. When he started giving credit to everyone, 98% of the people who gave it back were women. Credit taken by men was for their own consumption. So this fact shows that women are more capable of rationally managing the economy than men. In other words, men are more wasteful than women. Men are more consumptive than women.”)

This fact was used as a basis for refuting negative stereotypes which state that women are more consumptive than men because it is proven that women’s household expenses are allocated more for family welfare and meeting men’s expectations. In addition, based on what was happening at Garmin Bank, it could be concluded that women gain the trust of the public higher than men in the context of financial management.

This fact was later approved by Onad and Anang by sharing their personal experiences in managing household finances with their respective wives. After listening to these facts, Denny finally positioned himself as a subject who rebutted the stereotype that women are more consumptive than men by expressing his opinion as follows:

“Kalau data seperti itu bukan berarti perempuannya enggak belanja, cuman perempuannya belanja akan sesuatu yang lebih dibutuhkan daripada laki-laki. Mungkin itu maksudnya kesana.”

(“So according to that data, (it is safe to say that) women do spend, it’s just that women spend on something needed (for the family) more than men. Maybe that’s the point there.”)

The fourth topic discussed was the stereotype which stated that women are not ideal leaders. According to Najwa Shihab, female leaders are frequently subject to negative perceptions in comparison to their male counterparts. A female leader who displays assertive behavior is often labeled as “bossy”. Female leaders who aspire to attain specific goals or occupy certain positions are often labeled as overly ambitious. Men with the same qualities or doing the same thing are considered the ideal leader. This statement is in line with the research conducted by Bauer (2015) and Cundiff & Vescio (2016).

Najwa then continued her argument by stating that several studies have indicated that organizations with a higher proportion of female leaders tend to exhibit better organizational performance (Hoobler et al., 2018; Strøm et al., 2014). However, regardless of the research findings, the opportunities for women to lead are still limited due to the stereotype that

says women are not worthy of being leaders (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021). Denny Sumargo and Rocky Gerung then responded to Najwa Shihab's statement:

Denny Sumargo: "*Ada ketakutan juga mungkin. Ada ketakutan juga dari laki-laki bahwa ketika kepemimpinan itu diambil alih oleh perempuan kelaki-lakian itu hilang.*"
("There is fear as well. There is also fear from men that when women take over leadership then masculinity will disappear.")

Rocky Gerung: "*Ada soal culture, ada soal agama di situ yang berperan.*"
("There is a matter of culture, there is a matter of religion that plays a role.")

Based on the statements by Denny and Rocky, it can be concluded that men do not want to be overpowered by women due to their egos and insecurities. Men, in general, tend to perceive women in positions of power and leadership as intimidating. This is related to the patriarchal belief that men are expected to be superior to women; therefore, they may feel challenged to protect their egos. Furthermore, Rocky asserted that the influence of culture and religion is significant in maintaining these patriarchal beliefs.

CONCLUSION

Several gender stereotypes were discussed in the video "*Susahnya Jadi Perempuan – Part 2*" (The Difficulty of Being a Woman). The stereotypes discussed were about women who are mature yet unmarried, women are more emotional than men, women are more consumptive than men, and women are not ideal leaders. The findings indicate that the subjects consisted of a female and four males who held diverse viewpoints regarding gender stereotypes. The female subject claims that a number of negative stereotypes about women are deeply rooted in society. These stereotypes are a result of patriarchal beliefs that give men priority in matters of privilege, domination, and power over women. The four male subjects each have a unique perspective on gender stereotypes. Different backgrounds, including experience, education, family values, and social circle, are the cause of these different opinions. Men who grow up in patriarchal families and are exposed to other patriarchal individuals are more likely to embrace and absorb these attitudes. In contrast, men who are aware of the problems and challenges encountered by women tend to be more considerate and understanding. The result of this study can be used as a reference for future research related to gender stereotypes, especially in Indonesia. Since this study only analyzed four stereotypes, future research can explore other topics about gender stereotypes toward women.

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