

The Meaning of Independent Women in Social Media

Pierre Mauritz Sundah ¹, Nathaniel Antonio Parulian ², Rambu Naha ¹

¹ PJJ Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Pelita Harapan

² Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Multimedia Nusantara

Email: pierre.sundah@uph.edu

Kata kunci :

Independen,
Instagram, Media
Sosial, Peran,
Perempuan

Abstrak

Kehidupan kaum perempuan di Indonesia sempat mengalami masa-masa sulit sehingga kaum perempuan memiliki ruang gerak yang terbatas untuk berkarya. Keterbatasan kaum perempuan di Indonesia untuk berkarya disebabkan oleh banyak faktor seperti tuntutan untuk berperan sebagai sosok yang bertanggung jawab terhadap pekerjaan-pekerjaan domestik, sementara laki-laki yang diberikan kebebasan lebih besar untuk berperan serta di tengah lingkungan sosial masyarakat yang lebih luas termasuk untuk menjadi motor penggerak dalam menghasilkan pendapatan. Hal ini disebabkan oleh budaya patriarki di Indonesia yang mengakar. Fenomena sosial ini juga berdampak pada kaum perempuan di Nusa Tenggara Timur yang bermukim di Pulau Solor, Flores Timur. Kaum perempuan kerap mendapatkan penilaian sosial oleh sesama masyarakat dan digeneralisasikan sebagai kaum yang bodoh karena kualitas pendidikan yang buruk dan tidak merata sehingga kaum perempuan dianggap hanya mampu bergantung pada kaum laki-laki. Namun ada hal berbeda yang tampak pada akun media sosial Instagram @duAnyam, dimana kaum perempuan memperoleh kesempatan untuk mendapatkan pemberdayaan dalam memproduksi produk anyaman sehingga kaum perempuan juga memiliki kesempatan yang sama untuk menciptakan kemandirian ekonomi dan finansial. Berdasarkan fenomena sosial inilah sehingga penelitian ini menjadi menarik untuk diangkat dengan tujuan untuk mengetahui tentang bagaimana pemaknaan perempuan independen yang tampak dalam media sosial Instagram @duAnyam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana kaum perempuan memaknai perannya sebagai sosok yang independen yang umumnya dilekatkan kepada kaum laki-laki. Hasil dari penelitian ini menggambarkan pemaknaan kaum perempuan akan pengalaman-pengalamannya secara subjektif akan jiwa independen yang melekat di dalam dirinya.

Keywords :

*Independent,
Instagram, Social
Media, Role, Women*

Abstract

Indonesian women's lives had been challenging at times, leaving little room for them to work. Numerous reasons contribute to these restrictions. One of the influencing elements is that men in Indonesia are given more flexibility to participate in the wider context of society, including being the primary source of producing revenue, but women in Indonesia are forced to play a role as someone who is responsible for household duties. The deeply ingrained patriarchal culture in Indonesia is to blame for this. Women in East Nusa Tenggara are also affected by this social issue, particularly those who reside on Solor Island in East Flores. Due to the poor and inconsistent quality

of education, women who live there frequently receive social evaluations from other Indonesians and are stereotyped as being unintelligent, leading to the belief that women can only rely on men. However, there are other things that can be seen on the Instagram account @duAnyam, where women have the chance to become empowered in the production of woven goods, giving them the same opportunities as men who can establish economic and financial independence. Based on this social phenomenon, it is intriguing to do this research in order to understand what independent women lies @duAnyam on Instagram imply. To describe how women perceive their function as independent, typically tied to males, this study will employ qualitative methods and a phenomenological approach. The findings reflect what women mean in terms of their varying perceptions of the intrinsic independence that they possess..

INTRODUCTION

Women in Indonesia continue to endure prejudices, discrimination, and stigma, with the idea that their worries are limited to the kitchen and household. Women are still stereotyped as weak, constrained, and unfit for leadership. Women are frequently not required to have a high level of education because they will subsequently become housewives and care for children. Women today play a variety of positions and are expected to accept responsibility for their decisions. Women are becoming more egalitarian as adults, rejecting old norms that contradict competence and achievement. Despite chances in numerous fields, women continue to bear the burden of family responsibilities, particularly as housewives (Yovita, Angelica, & Pardede, 2022)

In Indonesia, societal stigmas continue to impede women's rights, abilities, and interests. Many people feel that women are the second class in society, incapable of being stronger, wiser, or wealthier than males. This is inextricably linked to the country's patriarchal culture. Patriarchy is a phrase used to indicate men's dominance over women, which is founded on biological distinctions between men and women. Women who

lack muscle are frequently stereotyped and placed in inferior places, showing that the weak character of women's groups is inherent and not a social construct. This maintains the gender gap, limiting women's participation in political, social, and economic areas (Salfa, 2022).

Indonesia has a long history of discrimination against women, stretching back to the colonial period. Women were regarded as second-class citizens, with men possessing great social power. This created a reputation that women were inferior and needed to be safeguarded by men. This disparity hampered women's participation in political, social, and economic areas. This resulted in the establishment of the patriarchal structure that exists in Indonesia today (Salfa, 2022) Women in some parts of Indonesia are denied the option to pursue a high level of education, resulting in an underestimation of women having careers. Although women's access to higher education and employment prospects is expanding, conservative attitudes may linger, making it difficult to eliminate the negative stigma against women (Yovita, Angelica, & Pardede, 2022)

The arguments about men and women in our society have been shaped in such a way. Society has given the assumption that women are weak people both physically and psychologically and tend not to be able to provide their surfer in politics, art, or education. Based on that argument, which has been established for centuries, women cannot afford to get a higher education. They are only assigned to take care of the domestic work such as taking care of the house and their children. Education that they get is only in the form of education about women, not politics or science (Kusumawardhani & Rahayu, 2020). This can lead to the development of patriarchal attitudes among men, who continue to prevent their spouses from working out of rivalry and a desire to rule the household. This inequality can give the impression that women are born with limited job opportunities and low employment status. Not only that, but the stereotype that highly educated women will have a tough time finding a life partner is still developing. When women complete higher education and have a successful profession, society stigmatizes them as having difficulty finding a companion or preferring to stay single because there will be many men who are inferior to their achievements.

NTT is an archipelagic province in the east of Indonesia consisting of twenty-two rural districts and cities and with a population of around 5.25 million. Three important factors influence women's representation in the region: NTT's status as a marginal region economically and the strength of its culture of patriarchy (Bayo, 2020). The dominance of patriarchal society in people's lives in NTT is nearly obvious in every area. Men have the power to tell women what to do. Men appear to be the people who know best whether a decision is good or bad. Women, on the other hand, solely listen to and follow men's instructions. In this world, women's existence will always be viewed as an object of patriarchal culture. In gender relations between men and women, women are always placed in the kitchen, household, and childcare, which is a stigma for most of the people in NTT. This, of course, makes it difficult for women to grow and develop their capacity (Tiran, Tabun, Benyamin, & Keon, 2023).

Du Anyam, a company that collaborates with NTT women weavers, provides a variety of woven goods with authentic touches. By providing souvenirs, hotel amenities, and home decorations, the company hopes to empower women and enhance

communal welfare. Over 1600 women weavers have been empowered by Du Anyam in 54 villages across NTT, South Kalimantan, and Papua. The company was formed in 2014 to address the severe socioeconomic issues that contribute to hunger in East Flores, NTT. The high cost of daily essentials, along with the necessity for financial planning, made it difficult for rural populations to make informed purchase decisions, resulting in high childhood malnutrition rates (Anyam, 2018).

Du Anyam, a rural Indonesian weaving initiative, aims to empower and improve the welfare of mothers and children by giving an alternative job in weaving. This initiative enables women to supplement their seasonal farming income, which is rarely profitable. The weaving activities have evolved throughout time, with the first generation of mothers telling stories and others participating to maintain their ancestors' local culture. According to research, financially independent women prioritize nutritious diet, health, and education. By focusing on healthy food, health, and education, Du Anyam continues to innovate, create improvements, and contribute to the betterment of women's lives and welfare. The initiative aims to conserve local culture while also promoting

economic development for rural Indonesian women (Anyam, 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a social structure in which men have historically and structurally possessed greater power than women in areas such as politics, economy, culture, and family. This system, derived from the word patriarchate, results in gender inequities and injustices, affecting numerous aspects of human activity. Men dominate society, while women have little to no power or rights in economic, social, political, and psychological dimensions, including marriage. As a result, women are often placed in subordinate or inferior roles.

Women's duties are restricted under a patriarchal culture, which leads to imprisonment and unequal treatment, continuing inequality. Inequality between men and women generates structural barriers that prohibit individuals from having equal access. Women are frequently victims as a result of government policies that are less sensitive to their needs. Women are indirectly marginalized by the absence of legal protection. Through patriarchal power relations, both on a personal and

societal scale, historical and cultural factors have placed women in oppressed situations (Trisnawati, 2023).

Patriarchy is a societal structure in which men historically have more influence and power in numerous aspects of life. Women are generally placed in lesser roles in patriarchal organizations, with limited access to education, work, and political and social decision-making. Patriarchal culture is deeply ingrained in mindsets and traditions that might result in gender inequity. Women are frequently seen as being weak, insignificant, or solely functioning in household tasks. Women, on the other hand, have equally significant capacities, potentials, and contributions to societal growth. Women's effort to break patriarchal limits, seize equal opportunities, and modify conventions that limit their freedom and potential has been aided by social reform and increased awareness of the importance of gender equality. This approach entails a collaborative effort to create an inclusive atmosphere in which women may engage completely in all areas, play a role in decision-making, and have their rights recognized (Trisnawati, 2023).

Instagram as a Social Media

The creation of social media is one of the outcomes of technological advancements in the internet area. People no longer need to open laptops or PCs to access social media in this day and age; instead, they can easily and quickly access the needed social media by utilizing smartphones. Social media is a platform that allows users to socialize with people they know as well as meet new friends. Social media is not only a platform to interact; it also allows users to express themselves through uploads of images, text, videos, and other media.

Instagram is a free photo and video-sharing application. Users can share one-minute photographs or videos with followers or groups by uploading them to the platform. Instagram is one of the social media platforms that is not only useful for user interaction, but it has also become a platform for companies or individuals to market their brand or business, for example, photographers who are just starting out in the world of photography can use their Instagram profile as a portfolio that they will later use in applying for a job as a photographer. Instagram may also be used by a brand to raise brand recognition or as a channel for

disseminating information in order to create a representation of something.

Instagram as a media to represent social reality

Social media is an online platform that lets users engage, collaborate, share, and create virtual social bonds while also allowing them to represent themselves. It is a digital platform where interactions between users take place in social reality. Social media is viewed as a depiction of actual events by some scholars. The term "representation," which is derived from the English word "representation," refers to a picture or depiction of a real-world event that is captured in some form of media. It is a social construct that necessitates research into how meaning is created in various circumstances and in texts (Evita, 2020).

The concept of Representation, as a work that pioneered debates on women's representation, is a significant foundation for defining and describing the concept of representation, as well as analyzing the significance of affirmative action. Representation can be divided into four types: (1) formalistic representation, which derives its authority from an institutional arrangement; (2) descriptive

representation, in which the representatives are a representation of a specific group, either based on gender, religion, race, or ethnicity; (3) symbolic representation, which is based on how individuals perceive the representatives based on emotional ties or intimacy; and (4) substantive representation, which is based on how individuals perceive the representatives based on (Jovani, 2020).

Instagram is a social media platform that promotes a careful curation of everyday life, incorporating filters and photo-editing tools. This expansion of aesthetic experiences extends beyond the traditional artistic domain, incorporating mundane experiences such as home-life, workplace, food consumption, clothing, and entertainment. Instagrammable aesthetics are reframed in terms of lifestyles, experiences, and objects, with certain contexts being particularly desirable for appearance and likes (Caldeira, De Ridder, & Van Bauwel, 2020).

Everyday objects and moments can be presented in an Instagrammable manner, following visual conventions such as "flat lays," framed photographs of users' bodies, or candid, stylized photos of users in mundane settings. The most popular lifestyle Instagrammers,

primarily young women, contribute to the popularization of Instagrammable aesthetics. This aesthetic can also take on gendered articulations, as the focus on every day and personal life echoes subjects often associated with women's genres, such as fashion, beauty, and fitness. Many popular subjects on Instagram parallel concerns stereotypically associated with women and link back to historical associations of women as "to-be-looked-at" and aesthetically admired (Caldeira, De Ridder, & Van Bauwel, 2020).

The Meaning of Independent Women

Meaning is an integral aspect of semantics and is constantly present in everything we say. The sense of meaning varies widely. Meaning is a sense or concept that has or is contained in a linguistic symbol. Meaning is a relationship between language and the outer world that is mutually agreed upon using language so that they can comprehend each other. Meaning as a link between language and the outside world, according to the agreement of its users, so that they can understand one other. Meaning exists on three levels: (1) At the first level, meaning is transformed into the content of a linguistic form. (2) At the second level, the meaning

becomes language content. (3) At the third level, the meaning becomes communication material capable of providing specific information. Meaning is seen at the first and second levels in terms of its relationship with the speaker, however meaning in communication is more stressed at the third level (Lesari, Anrial, & Verolyna, 2021).

Based on biological differences, society imposes laws, regulations, obligations, and rights, which frequently results in discriminatory behavior and inferior status for women in different facets of life. Technical concepts such as autonomy, empowerment, status, and gender equality can be difficult to distinguish, and their meanings could be interpreted incorrectly or misused. Understanding the true meaning of these concepts is critical for the real advancement of women and society. The frequency with which technical phrases are used is inversely proportional to their understanding. For example, the phrase "empowerment" is frequently abused and poorly defined. Some academics say that there is no clear distinction between these phrases, which are frequently used interchangeably. Some people view autonomy and empowerment to be

identical, describing both as women gaining control over their lives in many ways. Understanding the true meaning of these concepts is critical for creating genuine advancement for women and society (Haque, Islam, Tareque, & Mostofa, 2011).

Autonomy and empowerment are sometimes misinterpreted, with autonomy indicating independence and empowerment attaining interdependence. Studies on women's status frequently cover components of empowerment without overtly naming it, instead focusing on the women's overall standing in the community. Acharya and Bennett (1981) adopted the more generic phrase "women's status" to emphasize the relationship between gender-related power differentials in the family and the links between women's economic responsibilities and their control over resources and life alternatives. Dixon (1978) distinguished between status and power, arguing that status relates to women's overall position in society, whereas power refers to women's ability to influence and control at the interpersonal level. The process of removing factors that generate powerlessness is known as empowerment, and it has been used to

describe a wide range of concepts and outcomes.

Empowerment is a development of people's ability to make strategic life choices in situations where such choices were previously prohibited. Women's empowerment is the process by which women organize themselves in order to improve self-reliance, assert their independent right to make decisions, and control resources in order to confront and abolish their own oppression. The ability to control one's destiny is at the heart of women's empowerment, with most definitions referring to an increase in choice and freedom to make decisions and perform activities essential to shape one's life outcomes. Gender equality refers to women and men having equal access to resources, yet it is insufficient for empowerment.

Empowerment emphasizes engaging individuals rather than the content of what is done to them, and it includes the ability to develop strategic choices and control resources and decisions that affect major life outcomes. Women's empowerment is the process by which they obtain more power and influence over their lives and circumstances, whereas women's autonomy is the ability to do whatever they choose without requesting

permission or consent. Gender equality refers to women having equal access to the law, resources, and power.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is using qualitative research approaches. Through in-depth observation, qualitative research tries to grasp a meaning/phenomenon that occurs in the social context. The technique is viewed as a response to quantitative research methodologies that are deemed inadequate for answering more complex questions or phenomena, particularly in the field of social sciences. Qualitative approaches are frequently utilized in social studies. According to Oun and Bach (2014), qualitative approaches can answer exploratory questions such as how and why a person or group is experiencing a specific issue.

Phenomenology is one example of qualitative research. The phenomenological approach is one method of research that seeks to comprehend human experience or consciousness as an object of study on a phenomenon encountered. The phenomenological approach demands researchers to analyze multiple research objects directly to acquire information and build patterns that will eventually

form a meaning of the relationship of the research issue under study. In general, phenomenological techniques are classified into two types: descriptive and interpretive approaches.

Interpretive phenomenology analysis offers researchers with a more specific space to comprehend situations that occur in a specific environment. Rather of attempting to identify patterns from multiple individual experiences to make objective findings, interpretive phenomenological analysis aims to analyze an individual's unique and subjective experience of an event. In this case, the interpretative Phenomenology Analysis approach also allows researchers to participate in their interaction with the research object.

According to the study's objective, which is to explore how the meaning of independent women raised in Instagram du Anyam, interpretative phenomenological analysis is believed to provide flexibility for researchers to observe and collect information needed in performing analysis. Semi-structured interviews are performed to gather data. The approach is used because it lets researchers and research objects to engage actively. In this study, the interviewer plays a significant impact in determining the outcomes. Information

can be retrieved in-depth, specifically, and personally from predetermined sources of information. This is in accordance with one of the objectives of the interpretive phenomenology approach, which is to seek personal experiences of the phenomena raised in research. The interviewees were du Anyam's company owners.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate the significance of NTT women's subjective life experiences of an independent spirit inherent in them. These experiences are related to her social role as a woman in general in a patriarchal culture where women are assigned to complete domestic work, as well as her social role as an NTT woman who has been characterized as an uneducated woman due to poor and uneven educational quality, causing NTT women to depend on men.

The findings of this study show how women in NTT live their responsibilities as weaving craftsmen, meeting financial, socio-intellectual, and emotional requirements. For all informants, the independence they earn provides a sense of fulfillment with financial and social-emotional implications.

Division of Roles as Women Craftsmen

When a woman is in the midst of a patriarchal culture that positions men higher than women, it also affects the position of women in the midst of their

social environment. Women's positions have been mapped to work in the domestic sphere, namely things related to household work, such as washing clothes, watering plants, cooking, etc.

Referring to the study that has been done, the form of women's independence on Solor Island, East Flores is when a woman not only performs and carries out her roles, functions and responsibilities in the domestic sphere, but a woman is given the same freedom as men so that she feels free from the confinements that have limited her to work. As a form of expression of a woman's independence, she will devote herself as a craftsman who is able to produce beautiful woven handicraft works.

Financial Needs Fulfillment

The study highlights the need for additional education and knowledge among women on Solor Island, East Flores, which results in a lack of aid and income for themselves and their families. Many women are barred from working, forcing them to depend on men. However, with the option to collaborate with the owners of the business @DuAnyam, these women might create exquisite woven handicrafts that are then promoted to consumers, providing them with benefits that meet what they need as well as the needs of their families. This study underlines the importance of bridging these women's educational and skill disparities in order to improve their situation.

Socio-Intellectual Needs Fulfillment

A woman, as a social being, needs the presence of other people in addition to her partner, children, or other family

members, but she also needs recognition of her existence in other social spheres, particularly the Solor Island area of Flores, which includes a plural social environment with a diverse demographic distribution map. It was found that informants felt a sense of independence that corresponded to their social needs as individuals, one of which was the freedom to build relationships with others, such as social relationships with @DuAnyam business owners, fellow craftsmen, and local residents who supported her existence as a woman weaving craftsman. One of the pyramids of needs is affiliation and social interactions with others.

The study looks into the lives of women on Solor Island, East Flores, who are frequently characterized as physically dependent on their physical ability for household activities. They have demonstrated intellectual independence, however, by participating as @DuAnyam craftsmen and receiving training and counseling from local company owners and stakeholders. This helps individuals to express themselves through their natural talents and skills, increasing their independence. These women's self-actualization requirements are addressed in local locations, according to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, with self-actualization being the highest hierarchy of needs. This demonstrates the opportunity for women in Eastern Indonesia to reach their full potential.

Emotional Needs Fulfillment

Women frequently encounter difficulties expressing their emotions as a result of binding to cultural norms and traditions. Due to traditional responsibilities, a group of women living on Solor Island in East Flores endures

these difficulties. They have, however, found freedom in expressing themselves through their woven products, which are known and valued by the community. This allows individuals to meet their emotional requirements while also finding fulfillment and pleasure. Recognition for what they do can also help with interpersonal communication concepts since praise from others can boost a woman's self-esteem. This study emphasizes the need to encourage women's emotional expression and comprehension.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significance of NTT women's independent spirit, which is influenced by patriarchal culture and uneducated orientation. Due to poor educational quality, women are frequently assigned to domestic tasks and rely on men. This study illustrates how NTT women meet their financial, socio-intellectual, and emotional demands as weaving craftsmen. The sense of fulfillment they gain from their independence has financial and social-emotional ramifications.

The findings of the study must be viewed in light of numerous limitations. It is possible that the concepts utilized, whether independent, independence, autonomy, gender equity, or empowerment, are not clear. This study is still perceived from a broad perspective, as illustrated by du Anyam's Instagram and the owner's perspective. Due to an insufficient amount of both time and funding, this study cannot be carried out by directly observing and conducting interviews with the women at NTT, particularly those who work with du Anyam. It lets this study be carried out from the perspective of the weaving worker who works with duAnyam. It would be more comprehensive if this

study could demonstrate from both perspectives.

REFERENCES

- Anyam, D. (n.d.). *Cerita Kami*. Retrieved 10 1, 2023, from Du Anyam: <https://duanyam.com/tentang-kami/>
- Bayo, L. N. (2020). Women Who Persist: Pathways to Power in Eastern Indonesia. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 40(1). doi:10.1177/1868103421989712
- Caldeira, S. P., De Ridder, S., & Van Bauwel, S. (2020). Between the Mundane and the Political: Women's Self-Representations on Instagram. *Social Media + Society*, 6(3). doi:10.1177/2056305120940802
- Evita, J. (2020, October). Pemaknaan Campaign #BeAdored Melalui Konten Instagram dan Website By Lizzie Parra (BLP) Beauty Terhadap Standar Kecantikan Wanita Indonesia. *Jurnal Komunikasi, Masyarakat dan Keamanan (KOMASKAM)*, 2(2), 44-67.
- Haque, M. M., Islam, T. M., Tareque, M. I., & Mostofa, M. G. (2011). Women Empowerment or Autonomy: A Comparative View in Bangladesh Context. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, 8(2), 17-30.
- Jovani, A. (2020). Women's Representation in Politics: Case Study of Women Legislative Member in Regional of Representatives Nusa Tenggara Timur Period of 2014-2019. *KnE Social Sciences*, 4(10), 367-376. doi:10.18502/kss.v4i10.7426
- Kusumawardhani, M., & Rahayu, E. Y. (2020). Women Independence In Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* as a Feminism Study. *Dinamika Bahasa dan Budaya*, 15(1), 40-51. doi:10.35315/bb.v15i1.7894
- Lesari, L., Anrial, & Verolyna, D. (2021). *e-theses IAIN Curup*. Retrieved October 10, 2023, from e-theses IAIN Curup: <http://e-theses.iaincurup.ac.id/1481/>
- Salfa, H. N. (2022). Peran Sosial Perempuan dalam Masyarakat dan Implikasinya terhadap Penempatan Perempuan Anggota Legislatif Pada Komisi-Komisi di DPR RI Periode 2019-2024. *Jurnal Polica*, 13(2), 162-181. doi:10.22212/jp.v13i2.3163
- Tiran, R., Tabun, D. S., Benyamin, R., & Keon, Y. F. (2023). Women's Political Representation (Study on the Role of WOMen Legislative Members in the DPRD of East Nusa Tenggara Province Indonesia for the 2019-2024 period. *International Journal of Policy Studies*, 3(1), 21-35. Retrieved from <https://www.ijpstudies.com/index.php/ijps/article/view/40>
- Trisnawati, S. N. (2023). Jeritan Perempuan Yang Terkungkung Sistem Patriarki. In R. P. Anto, T. K. Harahap, Y. E. Sastrini, S. N. Trisnawati, J. D. Ayu, Y. Sariati, . . . A. Y. Mendo, *PEREMPUAN, MASYARAKAT, DAN BUDAYA PATRIARKI* (pp. 71-83).
- Yovita, K., Angelica, A. D., & Pardede, K. G. (2022). Stigma Masyarakat Terhadap Perempuan Sebagai Strata Kedua. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Ilmu Ilmu Sosial (SNIIS) 2022. 1*, pp. 401-411. Surabaya: Universitas Negeri Surabaya.