

Patriarchal Control and the Women's Body Politics in Najwa Shihab's Podcast 'Susahnya Jadi Perempuan'

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Abstract. This study provides a feminist media analysis of patriarchal control over Indonesian womanhood as discussed in Najwa Shihab's podcast *Susahnya Jadi Perempuan*. It examines how patriarchal norms and hegemonic masculinity are maintained in Indonesian society through media representation, particularly digital podcasts. By analyzing the podcast narratives, this study reveals gender hierarchies, standards and societal expectations that regulate women's lives. It highlights how women's economic achievements, beauty standards, virginity and sexual experiences are framed within patriarchal discourses. Despite these challenges, the podcast serves as a platform to raise awareness and show male perspectives on gender equality.

Keywords: *feminist, gender studies, patriarchy, woman, politics of the body*

Abstrak. Studi ini menyajikan analisis media feminis tentang kontrol patriarki atas peran perempuan di Indonesia sebagaimana yang didiskusikan dalam podcast Najwa Shihab, 'Susahnya Jadi Perempuan'. Studi ini meneliti bagaimana norma-norma patriarki dan maskulinitas hegemonik dipertahankan dalam masyarakat Indonesia melalui representasi media, khususnya podcast digital. Dengan menganalisis narasi dalam podcast, studi ini mengungkap hierarki gender, standar, dan ekspektasi masyarakat yang mengatur kehidupan perempuan. Studi ini menyoroti bagaimana pencapaian ekonomi perempuan, standar kecantikan, keperawanan, dan pengalaman seksual dibingkai dalam wacana patriarki. Terlepas dari tantangan-tantangan ini, podcast tersebut berfungsi sebagai platform untuk meningkatkan kesadaran dan menunjukkan perspektif laki-laki tentang kesetaraan gender.

Kata Kunci: *feminis, studi gender, patriarki, perempuan, politik tubuh*

Introduction

Patriarchy, as explained by Rokhmansyah (2016) in *Introduction to Gender and Feminism*, originates from the term *patriarche*, referring to a social structure that positions men as the central holders of authority. Over time, this structure becomes normalized in everyday life, granting men control over various social roles while limiting women's participation in economic, political, social, and educational spheres (as cited in Vioni & Liansah, 2022). Patriarchal culture is deeply embedded within society, widely accepted, and often perceived as legitimate, reinforcing male dominance over women (Agustina, 2023). In contemporary Indonesia, patriarchal systems remain pervasive, producing a deeply rooted gender hierarchy that positions men as superior and women as subordinate (Murwanti, 2025).

This system is not static; rather, it is actively maintained through the glorification of a dominant model of masculinity. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) conceptualize this phenomenon as *hegemonic masculinity*, which functions as an ideal standard against which gender roles and identities are measured. Through this mechanism, men gain default social privileges, while women experience structural inequalities and double standards. As a result, patriarchal values continue to shape social expectations, regulate women's roles, and normalize gender-based power imbalances in Indonesian society.

Media plays a crucial role in sustaining and circulating these patriarchal norms. In Indonesia, media representations frequently reinforce limited and idealized constructions of femininity that align with traditional gender expectations. Even within digital spaces that are often perceived as more open and democratic, women continue to face strong social pressures related to behavior, appearance, and moral standards (Handayani et al., 2025). Thus, media functions not only as a site of entertainment but also as a cultural resource that normalizes gender hierarchies.

Alongside this, the development of digital media has opened new spaces for discussion and negotiation of gender issues. One such medium is the podcast, which has gained popularity due to its conversational format and accessibility. Podcasts allow social issues, including gender inequality and women's lived experiences, to be discussed in a more personal and reflective manner (Putri et al., 2025). In the Indonesian context, independent

podcasts have increasingly functioned as educational platforms that raise public awareness and bring marginalized topics into wider public discourse (Syawaludin, 2025).

Within this evolving digital media landscape, *Susahnya Jadi Perempuan* (The Difficulty of Being a Woman), a podcast hosted by Najwa Shihab, emerges as a significant platform for gender discourse. By featuring male public figures such as Nadiem Makarim, Tompi, Reza Rahardian, and Arie Kriting, the podcast deliberately involves men in conversations about women's experiences and gender inequality, positioning them as contributors rather than central subjects. This approach offers a distinctive perspective by encouraging male reflection on patriarchal norms while maintaining a focus on women's realities.

Although patriarchy and media representation of women in Indonesia have been widely discussed in previous studies, limited attention has been given to podcasts as a medium for examining gender discourse, particularly through male perspectives. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how *Susahnya Jadi Perempuan* constructs and frames narratives related to patriarchy, women's bodies, and gender roles, while also exploring how male participants articulate progressive perspectives on women's issues within the boundaries of Indonesia's patriarchal culture.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design grounded in feminist media analysis to explore how Indonesian womanhood is constructed and regulated in Najwa Shihab's podcast episode *Susahnya Jadi Perempuan*. A qualitative descriptive approach is appropriate because it examines how media shapes and reflects patriarchy and women's agency in Indonesian society, using concepts from feminist media studies such as patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, sexism, and politics of the body.

The data collection technique employed in this study is document analysis of audio-visual media. The primary data source consists of the dialogue from the podcast episode *Susahnya Jadi Perempuan*, published on the YouTube channel *Narasi / Najwa Shihab Official*. The data include verbal interactions between the host and the guests, while supplementary data consist of relevant visual cues and audience comments related to the episode that support contextual interpretation. No human participants were recruited, as all materials analyzed are publicly accessible media content.

Data selection was conducted using purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the research focus. Segments were included if they explicitly discussed gender roles, body and beauty standards, or issues of sexuality and consent, as well as statements reflecting moral judgment, social control, or patriarchal expectations toward women. Data collection involved repeated watching and listening to the podcast to gain a comprehensive understanding of the discourse, followed by identification of women's issues articulated by the host and guests. These issues were then categorized into thematic groups, including gender roles, body and beauty, and sexuality and consent.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis informed by feminist media studies. After transcription, relevant segments were coded inductively to identify recurring patterns related to gender regulation and inequality. These themes were then interpreted deductively through feminist theoretical frameworks, including Sylvia Walby's theory of patriarchy, R.W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, Bell hooks's concept of sexism, and Michel Foucault's concept of the politics of the body. This analytical process allowed for a systematic examination of how the podcast reproduces, negotiates, or challenges patriarchal power structures in Indonesian society.

Patriarchy, as theorized by Sylvia Walby (1990), is defined as a system of social structures in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women. Walby (1990) argues that patriarchy operates through interconnected institutional domains, including paid employment, the state, sexuality, male violence, cultural institutions, and domestic production. Each of these domains reinforces gender hierarchy and reproduces male authority over both public and private spheres. Within the context of the *Susahnya Jadi Perempuan* podcast by Najwa Shihab, discussions surrounding unequal gender expectations, disproportionate domestic responsibilities, normalized victim-blaming, and the limitations placed on women's autonomy reflect the persistent impact of patriarchal systems in contemporary Indonesian society. These recurring concepts imply that gender inequality is not merely the result of individual behavior or personal attitudes but rather rooted in structural and cultural arrangements that shape social norms and power dynamics.

The argument is further supported by R.W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, which provides a deeper understanding of how dominant masculine ideals

operate to maintain structural inequality. Connell (1995) explains hegemonic masculinity as a culturally exalted form of masculinity that legitimizes male domination and justifies the subordination of women as well as marginalized masculinity. This dominant model of masculinity is characterized by authority, heterosexuality, emotional restraint, rationality, and physical power, forming a standard against which all gender identities are measured. The podcast's discussions, such as the persistent framing of women as inherently at fault or the tendency to female victims, illustrate how hegemonic masculinity constructs expectations that reinforce male privilege and normalize gender bias. This theoretical perspective makes it clear that male dominance continues to exist not only by explicit actions but also by cultural norms which protect men from responsibility while placing women to societal scrutiny.

Alongside these primary theories, this study also draws on Bell Hooks' theoretical perspective on sexism. Hooks (2000) argues that sexism should be understood as a systemic and ideological structure that supports male supremacy rather than as an isolated interpersonal bias. Hook emphasizes that sexism is deeply rooted within institutions such as family, education, employment, and legal systems, influencing women's lived experiences through racial, class, and gender intersections. The podcast highlights these dynamics through its discussion of discrimination faced by women in professional spaces, within family expectations, and in social judgment, demonstrating that gender inequality operates through institutional practices and societal beliefs rather than individual prejudice.

In addition, this research applies Michel Foucault's concept of biopower to analyze the politics of the body. Foucault (1977) explains that modern mechanisms of power function by regulating bodies through surveillance, discipline, and normalization, making the body a central site through which power is exercised. The podcast frequently addresses concerns such as control over women's bodies, moral policing of female sexuality, and restrictions on women's public presence, all of which exemplify the disciplinary mechanisms described by Foucault. The framing of women's bodies as subjects of moral and social regulation demonstrates how ideological power is enacted through expectations regarding behavior, modesty, and bodily presentation, revealing that gendered inequality is enacted materially through control of the physical body.

Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing how gendered power relations are represented, sustained, and reproduced within *Susahnya Jadi Perempuan*. The integration of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity as the core analytical foundations, supported by theories of sexism and the politics of the body, enables a thorough examination of women's marginalization and the maintenance of male privilege in everyday life. The framework illustrates that the social issues discussed in the podcast are rooted in continuous structural and cultural systems rather than isolated circumstances, showing how gender inequality continues to operate through institutional structures, dominant masculine norms, systemic discrimination, and the regulation of women's bodies.

Throughout the research process, reflexivity was maintained to acknowledge the researcher's positionality and potential interpretive bias. Analytical memos were used to reflect on assumptions and ensure that interpretations remained focused in the data. Ethical considerations were also observed, as the study relied solely on publicly available media content and did not involve direct interaction with human participants. Nevertheless, care was taken to represent the speakers' statements accurately and to address culturally sensitive gender issues with critical responsibility.

Results

Based on these findings, the discussion examines how patriarchal culture shapes the construction of womanhood in Indonesia. Using concepts such as the politics of the body, hegemonic masculinity, gendered power relations, and patriarchal violence, the analysis demonstrates how women's bodies become sites of surveillance, moral judgment, and structural control. The discussion also highlights how the media—in this context, Najwa Shihab's '*Susahnya Jadi Perempuan*' podcast—disrupts these narratives by opening space for critical dialogue among both women and men. Through this lens, the podcast becomes not only a reflection of patriarchal problems but also a platform that challenges, reframes, and repositions gender norms within contemporary Indonesian society.

In order to make the discussion organized, this section of discussion will be separated into four different aspects which are already connected to the segment in the podcast. This paper will examine four main points of patriarchal theme that already collected from the podcast, there are women's higher wages compared to men, beauty standards, virginity, and sexual abuse.

a. Women's Higher Wages Compared to Men



Figure 5.1 A comment by Rini Dewi in the podcast

This comment shows how society still uses social threats to control women's aspirations. The message "jadi cewek tuh ga usah punya karir ketinggian" serves to maintain a patriarchal structure in which women are ideally not supposed to surpass men in economic achievement and stability. As explained by Alwedini (2017), this kind of pressure is a form of *bargaining with patriarchy* where women are encouraged to obey gender boundaries for the sake of social security. The phrase "jadi perawan tua" is a disciplinary instrument to scare women into fulfilling the expectations of hegemonic masculinity (Yassar, 2020). Here, women's success is treated as a threat that must be prevented from the beginning, so that careers become a space that is monitored by patriarchal norms.



Figure 5.2 A comment by Derry R. in the podcast

This situation proved that masculine identity is not only shaped by personal feelings, but also built by other men through *peer policing* (Bahardur et al., 2022). Mockery functions as a social mechanism that reminds men of the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity, that men should be the primary providers. When women's income exceeds that of men, this hierarchy is shaken and results in a sense of shame made by patriarchal

norms. Derry's reaction shows that social pressure is often so strong that it can disturb one's personal values.



Figure 5.3 A comment by Dwiki Adi Putrai in the podcast

Although Dwiki stated that he “accepted” women earning higher salaries, the existence of the condition of “asalkan hak dan kewajiban sebagai perempuan tetap terlaksana” shows that he still proposed gender relations within the framework of traditional patriarchy. This statement is aligned with Ary's (2020) findings that working women are still burdened with domestic roles as a moral obligation. In other words, Dwiki only accepts women's economic advancement as long as the household structure remains unchanged. This pattern can be associated with the concept of the *patriarchal bargain*, in which men appear progressive but still maintain the domestic hierarchy through unequal division of roles (Alwedini, 2017). In other words, this shows that women's mobility remains limited by roles that are considered its nature.



Figure 5.4 A comment by Zul Fahmi Johar in the podcast

The idea of “saling mengerti posisi dalam keluarga atau hubungan” shows that he still views gender relations as a hierarchical structure. Implicitly, he assumes that even though women's salaries are higher, men still have a certain position that must be maintained, similar to Dwiki's opinion. Yassar (2020) states that hegemonic masculinity

works through the establishment of men's roles as symbolic leaders of the family. Thus, the phrase indicates that the gender hierarchy is still expected to continue and does not automatically correlate with economic capability.

Panellist Excerpts Analysis

Excerpt 1 – Nadiem Makarim

Nana : "Oke, tapi jujur. Kalau misalnya pasangan lebih gede gajinya, pendidikannya lebih tinggi, jabatannya lebih tinggi, terganggu enggak, jujur terganggu enggak?"

Nadiem : "Ya, menurut saya itu akan menciptakan kebanggaan ekstra buat saya. Saya bisa dapetin perempuan yang sangat sukses di dalam pekerjaan dan lain-lain. Saya dan istri saya dua-duanya kerja sekarang yang CEO bukan saya, yang CEO dia."

Nana : "Kayaknya gajinya juga gedean dia ya?"

Nadiem : "JELAS!"

Nadiem : "Saya bisa mengerti, karena laki-laki itu kita digedein alam peran untuk menjadi, pemberi nafkah, protector. Itu adalah image yang kita lihat dari kakek kita, ayah kita, semuanya kita melihatnya seperti itu. Nah, itu mulai berubah nih sekarang. Di zaman kita udah mulai berubah sekarang karena pendapatan perempuan dan karir mereka udah mulai equal."

Nana : "Belum"

Nadiem : "Lebih equal dari sebelumnya"

Nadiem : "Tapi, saya bisa mengerti kalau beberapa laki-laki yang less secure mengenai dirinya, terciptalah insecurity yang keluar dalam bentuk kecemburuan sama istrinya, nanti aneh-aneh keluarnya, seperti lebih ingin mendominasi istrinya. Dan itu yang akan jadi chaos."

Nana : "Jadi itu wujud dari ketidakpercayaan diri, ya?"

Nadiem's statement presents an alternative form of masculinity that is not threatened by women's success. He describes this condition as something to be proud of, not ashamed of. However, he also honestly points out how many men who are raised within a patriarchal environment claim that men must be the breadwinners and protectors of the family. By acknowledging that these traditional roles are changing, he argues that

the insecurity felt by some men rooted from their unpreparedness to face the derivation of hegemonic masculine roles (Yassar, 2020). This insecurity, according to him, often manifests itself in the form of jealousy or a desire to dominate one's partner which is a common pattern of compensation in patriarchal structures (Ashraf & Jepsen, 2024). When Nana interjects that equality has not yet been fully achieved, this dialogue shows that even though economic structures are changing, the process of unlearning patriarchy is far from complete.

Panellist Excerpt 2 – Tompi

Tompi : "Kalau misalnya selisihnya dikit itu enggak berasa. Misal, suami kerja, istri kerja. Pendapatan istri memang kebetulan lebih tinggi tapi si suami masih punya pegangan dan itu enggak kan jadi masalah. But, once suami itu bener-bener jadi bapak rumah tangga, enggak kerja, relatif jaga anak doang misalnya..."

Nana : "Nah, kalo bilang 'doang' itu seolah-olah jaga anak itu itu "doang" lho."

Tompi : "Kita berangkat dari sistem patriarki yang masih berjalan, bahwasanya menjaga anak itu bukan tugas laki-laki. Gua enggak bilang jaga anak itu gampang. Maksudnya, katanya laki-laki itu tugasnya nyari nafkah dan lain-lain. Tapi dia tidak melakukan hal itu, hanya melakukan pekerjaan jaga anak di rumah. Sebenarnya ini kan berbagi peran, istri bekerja di luar, suami melakukan pekerjaan rumah. Kalau dilihat dari segi bobot, dua-duanya enggak gampang. Capek lho jaga anak. Kita nya udah lemes mereka nya masih lari-lari sana sini. Nyuruh makan aja tuh susah.

Tompi : "Makanya, aku kalau ngelihat. Dalam koridor yang tidak kontras banget, mungkin fine. Tapi kalo bener-bener udah yang kontras banget, kaya yang satu kerja di luar, yang satu di rumah ngelakuin pekerjaan yang katanya seharusnya dilakukan oleh istri. Nah, itu 5 tahun pertama masih aman, karena masih love..."

Tompi reveals the dilemma men face when domestic roles become their responsibility. Verbal slips such as "jaga anak doang" show the internalization of patriarchy that undervalues domestic work, even though he later corrects himself by saying that the work is actually hard. He also acknowledges that society still views domestic work as a woman's domain, so men who take on this role are considered to have lost their masculine value. Simulja et al. (2014) show that gender-based division of labor

remains strong, and Tompi's statement is parallel with these findings. Furthermore, he states that wage differences can only be tolerated as long as there are not too many gaps that exist, showing that patriarchy works in tiers where women are allowed to excel a little, but not too much. When the economic gap becomes too large, masculine roles and identities are considered disrupted, making relationships more fragile.

Panellist Excerpt 3 – Reza Rahadian

Reza : "Apalagi dengan kultur patriarki kita (Indonesia) yang kuat ya. Sulit sekali gitu kalau ngelihat dari representasi realita dari yang ada di luar (luar negeri). Mereka udah mulai mengenal istilah "house husband" gitu. Kan di kita kan "Hah! yang bener aja jadi bapak rumah tangga" yang dalam artian bener-bener istrinya yang kerja, laki-lakinya yang di rumah."

Nana : "Bisa enggak? Kalau lu mungkin enggak, Za? You can see yourself jadi enggak memberi nafkah, jadi domestik gitu?"

Reza : "Oh! I don't think so. No, I can't."

Reza : "Mungkin karena aku dibesarkan oleh ibu tunggal. It gives me drive untuk memberi nafkah. Susah, it's quite impossible untuk aku duduk, mengurus semuanya. Karena aku pernah mengalami itu di usia 13 tahun. Ngurusin David, my little brother, dari dia lahir sampai usia 1 tahun. It's quite a challenging moment."

Reza directly stated that patriarchy in Indonesia is very strong, especially in how Indonesians have very vague views on the concept of "house husband." He himself cannot imagine taking on a full domestic role. For Reza, providing for his family is not only a social requirement but also an identity formed from his experience as the child of a single mother. This experience reinforces his drive to be the breadwinner, aligned with the hegemonic masculinity framework that links masculinity with financial capability (Bahardur et al., 2022). Therefore, Reza's story illustrates how masculinity is formed simultaneously by life experiences and his surroundings.

Panellist Excerpt 4 – Arie Kriting

Arie : "Kalau saya, nona (istri) itu karir dia secara aktor lebih cermelang dari saya, penghasilan juga dia di atas. Itu alasan saya nikahin dia."

Arie : "Tapi kalau menurut saya ya. Mungkin salah satu alasan kenapa laki-laki selalu berusaha untuk bekerja di luar karena label "modal dengkul" hanya untuk laki-laki, tidak untuk perempuan. Kalau istri bekerja dan saya di rumah, itu tetangga bisa bilang "Arie Kriting ini modal dengkul dia itu." Jadi hal itu bisa membebani gitu. Melihat laki-laki hanya di rumah dan mengurus kegiatan rumah tangga jadi susah untuk kitanya (laki-laki) karena tekanan dari luar."

Arie presents a different perspective that he is proud to have a more successful wife. However, he also reveals the strong social pressure placed on men who do not work in the public sphere. Labels such as "modal dengkul" become a mechanism of social punishment that pushes men to keep fulfilling the role of provider. This pressure shows that patriarchy not only regulates women but also forces men to follow certain expectations, even when the household is actually egalitarian. His argument supports the findings of Simulja et al. (2014), who found that society still views domestic work as something that lowers a man's status. Arie's narrative reveals that even though he accepts his wife's success, he still has to deal with social voices that maintain the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity.

b. Beauty Standards

Arie Kriting's Stand-Up Comedy Video Clip Excerpt

"Kita mencoba menghilangkan identitas kita yang sebenarnya. Ini yang saya rasa orang Timur itu kadang-kadang punya perasaan ini. Kita takut karena perbedaannya kita. Makanya kita coba hilangkan identitasnya kita. Contohnya apa berapa banyak adik-adik nona di luar sana yang rebonding rambut? Berapa banyak? Berapa banyak Ade Nona disana yang menggunakan pemutih kulit dengan harapan kulit menjadi lebih cerah daripada sebelumnya? Berapa banyak? Sementara standar kecantikan selalu digariskan seperti itu. Yang rambut lurus, kulit putih bibir, merah. Terus kita yang lahir dengan kulit hitam, rambut keriting, mata menyala ini menarik atau tidak sebenarnya? Cantik atau tidak sebenarnya? Kita sangat-sangat cantik dengan kepribadian kita yang apa adanya."

Panellist's Discussion Excerpt

Tompi : "Di Korea mereka tuh bikin riset. Wajah cantik itu diukur tuh jarak antar mata, lebar mata, panjang mata, jarak mata ke hidung, lebar hidung, semua dipetain, dari situ dicari nilai tengahnya sehingga kalau yang melihat Pigeon sekarang di Korea mukanya

sama semua. Karena no matter what wajah kamu seperti apa, akan dipotongnya seperti itu. Potong rahang, potong pipi. Padahal itu kan, harusnya orang Afrika cantik dengan Afrikanya orang Arab cantik dalam ke Arabannya. Begitu juga dengan orang Aceh, orang Papua, dan lain-lain."

Tompi : "Kan ada orang cantik muka bulat."

Nana : "Berarti kalau muka bulet itu enggak cantik?"

Tompi : "Media mengarahkan persepsi ke arah sana. Media dari blogger atau manapun. Kalau muka enggak lonjong kurang oke. Muka bulet ini enggak sesuai standar kecantikan. Which is standar ini berubah-ubah. Begitu ada aktor atau aktris yang dianggap keren, itu jadi standar."

Nana : "*Social media* juga bikin kita enggak percaya diri karena filter itu lho. Bisa dibuat tirus, mancung, dan lain-lain."

Nadiem : "Itu yang mengerikan si buat saya sekarang. Saya punya tiga putri. Masih balita sekarang. Jadi bagi saya ini menakutkan banget, karena dia (anak) akan tumbuh sebagai digital native. Dan di dunia Instagram atau apa pun platformnya akan merajalela pada saat mereka besar. Ini persepsi realitas dan apa yang dia lihat sebagai kecantikan akan besar gap nya. Enggak ada tuh selebritas manapun yang bangun dalam keadaan seperti dirinya yang ada di social media. Tapi masalahnya, untuk anak-anak muda terutama bagi perempuan, mereka itu adalah realita. Itu yang menyebabkan systemic insecurity mengenai body image, mengenai face. Yang di take advantage of oleh industri kecantikan, kosmetik, filter-filter. Buat saya kita harus sadar bahwa harus mengedukasi anak-anak kita bahwa itu bukan sesuatu yang real. Biar mereka mencintai diri mereka seperti apa adanya. Dan itu yang menyedihkan banget sekarang. Suicide traits dari teenage girl di seluruh dunia dan itu terjadi hanya saat Instagram meledak. Baru aja ada riset nih, yang dilakukan oleh beberapa orang di platform facebook mengenai kolerasi dampak depresi dengan instagram. Itu yang menurut saya mengerikan dan menurut saya peran orang tua menurut saya sangat penting."

Reza : "Soalnya kalau melihat dari standar kecantikan dari social media itu kan sesuatu yang tidak terukur. Siapa yang mau mengukur? Siapa yang mau membatasi? Soalnya kalau dari yang aku lihat dari documentary social dilemma ya, kalau kita like satu

page tentang body goals atau yang cantik maka algoritma kita akan disuapi dengan hal-hal serupa secara terus menerus. Dan itu akan membuat stress bagi orang yang merasa kurang cantik atau sebagainya. Karena komparasinya."

Nana : "Masalahnya dikelilingi oleh lingkungan yang kemudian memiliki ekspektasi itu. Cowok juga nyarinya cewek yang seperti itu dengan standar mereka masing-masing. Bukan hanya social media, seperti Instagram. Melainkan the whole system yang seperti itu."

Arie : "Kalau di Indonesia ini mungkin kami orang Melanesia yang paling punya tantangan besar tuk menghadapi tantangan ini. Karena kamilah golongan kulit agak gelapnya di Indonesia. Merurut saya dari sudut pandang orang Melanesia, representasi kehadirannya itu jarang. Jarang dipajang sebagai wujud kecantikan atau menarik. Ketika di film, iklan, atau media manapun, sosok-sosok yang merepresentasikan orang Melanesia itu lebih sering identik dengan sesuatu yang ketertinggalan, kemiskinan. Mereka jarang mendapatkan imaji yang baik. Coba kalau orang Melanesia juga sering dipajang dengan profil yang baik seperti cerdas, menarik. Harus ada proses edukasi."

Reza : "Representasi itu memang kurang si. Bahkan di dunia hiburan, di luar negeri kita bisa lihat perempuan kulit berwarna menjadi pemeran utama, pendukung, yang terlihat cantik atau bahkan jadi pawn girl. Tapi di Indonesia, hampir di sebagian besar film-film di Indonesia, potretnya ya yang "cantik"

Nana : "Dan lagi-lagi standar kecantikannya yang sudah ditentukan oleh industri media."

Tompi : "Tapi ada satu hal yang harus di garis bawah. Jangan terjebak dengan istilah menerima diri apa adanya tanpa merawat diri sebaik-baiknya."

c. Virginitiy



Figure 5.5 News of the abolition of virginity tests in the TNI selection

Panellist's Discussion Excerpt

Nana : "Itu standar ganda gue setuju. Ngga ada tuh tes keperawanan buat cowok. Kalau bisa dicek juga gimana bisa ngecek perjaka, kan? Sebenarnya ada 20 negara yang masih menggunakan tes keperawanan ini untuk sesuatu, karena sebenarnya itu melanggar hak asasi manusia, ya."

Reza : "Menurut aku itu ngga berkaitan ya, apalagi kalau untuk digunakan syarat bekerja, itu ngga ada hubungannya, ya."

Nana : "Menurut kamu itu masih penting atau tidak sih secara keseluruhan di Indonesia?"

Arie : "Kalau saya pribadi, selama tidak ada fungsi yang menjadi hilang ketika keperawanan itu hilang itu tidak masalah, ya. Apakah misalnya, ketika keperawanan hilang dia tidak bisa mengandung lagi? Apakah ketika dia keperawanannya hilang jadi tidak bisa menjadi seorang ibu atau istri?"

Tompi : "Kalau gue dalam hal pekerjaan, gue rasa ngga ada urusannya tu mau lo bos, jenderal, atau siapapun perlu tahu lo masih perawan atau ngga. Karena ya apa urusannya? It doesn't make sense. Tapi kalau dalam hubungan suami-istri, ini pilihan. Lo harus menghargai orang yang menganggap itu penting."

Reza : "Lebih lanjut, untuk prinsip sex before marriage, ya. Itu hak. Itu pilihan. Laki-laki ngga bisa memaksakan apabila bagi seorang perempuan "oh saya nggak mau berhubungan seksual sebelum menikah". Dan itu boleh banget. Itu kembali kepada individu masing-masing, dan laki-laki ngga boleh egois. "Oh saya gabisa ya, saya mau nya sama yg perawan"

Tompi : "Repotnya di situ. Kalau misalnya gini dia nya udah ngga perjaka, tapi nuntut harus perawan. Ngga *fair*, dong."

d. Sexual Abuse

In the podcast, the discussion returns to another sexual topic; sexual violence. Najwa Shihab opens the podcast segment with the title "*Kekerasan Seksual, Salah Siapa?*", which often sparks debate among the public. This chapter begins with a light case study featuring a video from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, which highlights cases of sexual violence in educational settings, one of which is on campus.



Figure 5.7 The Kemendikbudristek's First Scene

The video begins with a portrait of a student speaking in the academic office, facing three other people who are considered representatives of the campus itself. The conversation is triggered by one of the university representatives asking, "*Kenapa kamu jalan-jalan sendirian malam-malam?*" which indirectly directs the issue towards the victim. The victim explains that she was walking with a teaching assistant, who is described as the perpetrator, at 6 p.m., because the teaching assistant wanted to show her a book that he said would be good for his thesis. Unfortunately, when the victim tried to keep her distance by refusing to enter the teaching assistant's residence, the teaching assistant forced her inside, and then the unexpected happened. The teaching assistant hit, forced, and raped the victim inside his residence.

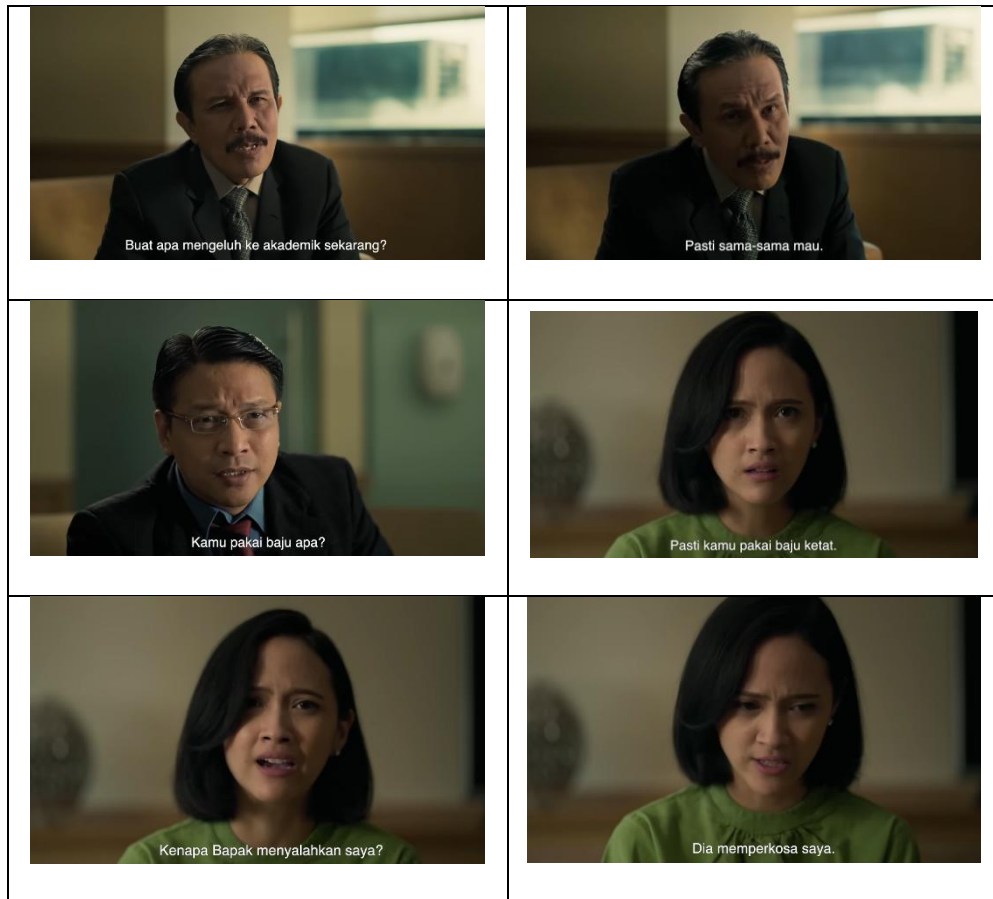


Table 5.1 Several supported scenes from the videos

In the following scenes, university representatives direct assumptions and accusations toward the victim. Statements such as *“Buat apa mengeluh ke akademik sekarang? Pasti sama-sama mau.”*, and *“Kamu pakai baju apa? Pasti pakai baju yang ketat,”* indicate verbal oppression through power relations. These comments represent patriarchal violence enacted through gendered power dynamics. In this context, individuals within the academic institution, such as staff, lecturers, or those with higher status, use their authority to undermine the victim’s credibility and shift blame away from the perpetrator. According to Umaimah & Legino (2021), such cases align with the theory of gendered power relations, where patriarchal structures in romantic or educational contexts enable men to maintain dominance through intimidation, coercion, and control. This dynamic is evident in the video, where the university’s trust in the perpetrator, a teaching assistant, leads to one-sided accusations.

The comments such as *“pasti sama-sama mau”* and *“pasti pakai baju ketat”* illustrate a clear pattern of victim-blaming, a mechanism through which patriarchy shifts

responsibility from perpetrators to victims. Within gender studies, victim-blaming serves as an ideological tool that rationalizes violence by framing women's bodies, choices, and appearance as the source of danger rather than addressing the perpetrator's acts (Wijayanti & Sukmayanti, 2023). The remark about "tight clothing" reflects how women's bodies become moral and political battlegrounds in public discourse, where female respectability is measured through appearance and compliance with gendered expectations. This aligns with Foucault's (1977) notion of the politics of the body, in which bodies—particularly women's bodies—are sites of regulation and disciplinary control. Through these comments, authority figures in the video reinforce the idea that women must constantly monitor their bodies to avoid punishment, thereby reproducing patriarchal norms that justify violence as a consequence of women's perceived moral failure.

From a Foucauldian perspective, these victim-blaming statements operate as disciplinary power that polices and normalizes women's behavior through subtle and overt social sanctions (Swastini et al., 2025). Foucault explains that bodies become objects of biocontrol when those in positions of authority—institutions, educators, state actors, or even social norms—dictate what is acceptable, respectable, or "safe" for individuals to do. In the video, women's clothing is weaponized as a disciplinary marker: it becomes a justification for discrediting the victim, assigning guilt, and absolving the perpetrator, particularly when the perpetrator holds higher status such as a teaching assistant. This reflects how patriarchal institutions regulate women's bodies not only through explicit rules but through cultural narratives that portray women as responsible for preventing male violence. Yet, as emphasized in gender-based violence literature, a woman's clothing can never legitimately justify rape or assault; blaming victims based on appearance simply reinforces the unequal power relations that allow violence to persist.

To strengthen this section, contemporary research shows that victim-blaming in Indonesian campuses is often institutionalized: administrators tend to prioritize institutional reputation over student safety, leading to silencing, gaslighting, and delegitimization of victims' testimonies (Novianti, 2024). This aligns with the previous

existing theories of institutional betrayal, where trusted institutions perpetrate secondary harm by failing to protect victims.

Panellist's Discussion Excerpt

Nana : Itu kayanya respon2 awal selalu orang kalau ada kekerasan seksual atau pelecehan, yang dipikirkan cewek ini pakai baju apa

Reza : menurut aku ngga ada urusannya mau cewe pakai baju se-seksi apapun, kekerasan seksual ngga bisa dibenarkan

Nadiem : Ini ada riset dari UNESA, menunjukkan kira2 dia mensurvei 300 mahasiswi di seluruh Indonesia dengan 40% dari mereka pernah mengalami pelecehan seksual/kekerasan seksual. Yang paling banyak di perguruan tinggi. Ini namanya victim blaming. Cerita itu bukan sebuah cerita yg didramatisir yah... belum lagi masuk ke public shaming, ketika korban dipermalukan, dan gabisa speak up.

Nana : Menarik lagi nih, survey menunjukkan bahwa banyak kekerasan dilakukan di ruang terbuka. Di siang hari, dan yang jadi target itu kebanyakan justru yang memakai pakaian tertutup.. Jadi sama sekali ngga ada urusannya sama baju atau perilaku perempuan. Tapi lagi-lagi, kita hidup di dunia patriarki yang apapun dosa siapapun, selalu korbannya adalah perempuan.

Tompi : Kalau secara biologis, sebenarnya kecenderungan seorang laki-laki itu ketika melihat perempuan seksi pasti akan *turn on*, tergoda. Tapi, keputusannya untuk tidak melakukan perbuatan asusila di situ, itu moralnya yang berbicara. Ini kita ngomong rangsang seksual ya. Ketika itu terjadi, mau terbuka atau tertutup, mereka akan terangsang.

Nadiem : Bayangkan aja menjadi perempuan, yang 3-4 kali interaksi di luar itu selalu ada orang yang menginginkan dia atau menggoda atau merayu. Bayangkan tekanan psikologis yang dihadapi dan alasan kenapa ini tersebar. Bukan masalah apa ya, tapi masalah ditolerir sama masyarakat, sama *patriarchal society* kita. Jadi ini masalah budaya, dan harus didorong sama org2 yg pikirannya progresif, yang tau bahwa consent itu harga mati.

Discussion

The topic “women’s higher wages compared to men” shows that economic issues always intersect with patriarchal structures that regulate gender identity. These findings align with Simulja et al. (2014), who argue that women’s increasing economic power does not automatically change gendered expectations in society. Analysis of audience comments shows that society still uses stigma, mockery, and threats to control women's capabilities and maintain men's position as the primary breadwinners. Women's success is seen as disrupting the long-established hierarchical balance, prompting various social mechanisms to lecture, regulate, or “return” women to their perceived proper place.

Meanwhile, as the conversations flow, it reveals that awareness of this inequality is beginning to grow. Nadiem and Arie, for example, present a more flexible model of masculinity that is not threatened by economic hierarchy. Their responses illustrate the plurality of masculinities discussed by Connell (2022), in which not all men rely on hegemonic dominance to secure their identity. However, they themselves admit that the social environment is not yet ready to accept these changes. Even when the men are “secure”, social pressure makes it still difficult to shift traditional gender roles. These findings differ from previous studies that primarily emphasize women’s disadvantage in wage gaps (Ary, 2020), because this study also demonstrates “how men are being regulated” by patriarchal norms to maintain economic superiority, which is the main focus of previous research.

At this point, it is clear that patriarchy operates on two levels: first, it disciplines women not to be “excessive” in their careers; second, it disciplines men not to be “less masculine” in their economic positions. This supports Ashraf and Jepsen’s (2024) idea of masculinity compensation, but the data from this podcast case reveal more dynamic negotiation that takes place publicly, rather than privately. Hegemonic masculinity becomes a mandatory standard for both parties, making gender relations a tense space of negotiation between traditional values and contemporary realities. Consequently, the issue of wages is not just a matter of numbers, but of social meaning: who is allowed to be in power, who must provide support, and how society determines the value of men and women.

From the excerpts, we can see that beauty standards function as a mechanism for regulating women's bodies, which is reproduced by the media and society. It supports

Ponterotto's (2016) analysis, which states that Western visual culture normalizes women's bodies as objects of *male gaze*, the conversation between Nana, Tompi, and other panelists reveals how the Indonesian media industry has internalized the male gaze in determining the ideal face, thin, oval, and with large eyes which is considered universal and objective. In this context, women's bodies are not only seen, but also judged and measured based on standards formed through patriarchal power relations.

Arie's criticism of rebonding and skin whitening practices is the act mostly Melanesian women take to customize themselves to the existing standard, shows how beauty operates as a form of body discipline that makes women erase their own ethnic identities. This phenomenon is in line with Naomi Wolf's reading of the *beauty myth*, which is an ideological construct that pressures women to follow ideals created by the dominant industry and culture. A critical reading of Wolf, as reviewed by Al Farisiy (2024), shows that beauty often becomes an instrument of social control that restricts women's autonomy, especially those from racial or ethnic minority groups. In the Indonesian context, Melanesian women experience double marginalization due to their darker skin color and minimal representation in mainstream media, a situation that echoes intersectional analysis of the relationship between gender, race, and aesthetics.

Tompi's discussion of plastic surgery trends in Korea shows how the globalization of beauty culture contributes to facial homogenization. Holliday and Elfving-Hwang (2012) explain that the Korean cosmetic surgery industry shapes an ideal face that can be replicated through medical techniques, producing a uniform aesthetic in response to global market demands. When Tompi mentions that faces "mukanya sama semua," reflects the logic of global capitalism that creates beauty as a standardized commodity. The impact on Indonesian women is visible in the persistent visual pressures they face, reinforced by media and algorithm-driven digital platforms.

In this digital era, social media reinforces this pressure through filters that make faces look slimmer and skin brighter. Panelists such as Nana and Reza highlight how algorithms worsen body insecurity among young women. This phenomenon can be interpreted through the lens of contemporary feminist theory as explained by Banet-Weiser, Gill, and Rottenberg (2020), who state that digital culture shapes forms of *popular feminism* and *neoliberal feminism*. On the one hand, women are encouraged to "love

themselves”; on the other hand, they are still bombarded by representations of beauty that force them to regulate their bodies and faces according to commercial standards. This contradiction creates a more subtle but far more powerful form of control because it is wrapped in the rhetoric of empowerment.

In addition, the panel discussion also pointed out how men play a significant role in sustaining beauty standards through social norms that are often treated as “its nature.” This view can be analyzed through Connell's (2022) theory of masculinity, which explains that the construction of hegemonic masculinity creates and maintains gender hierarchies through the regulation of women's bodies and behavior. Men's expectations of certain beauty models are not merely individual preferences, but a form of structural pressure that influences how women view their bodies. Therefore, beauty cannot be separated from power relations, whether in the family, social environment, or media industry.

In the dialogue presented in the podcast, it becomes clear that society still frequently discriminates against women on the issue of virginity. Gea et al. (2023) explain that female virginity is often treated as a marker of morality, leading to judgments based solely on a woman's physical condition. Medically, however, virginity cannot serve as an indicator of morality or integrity, and the hymen may change or tear for various non-sexual reasons. In Indonesia, several institutions, including the police and military, have historically required women to undergo virginity testing as part of their recruitment process. In response to this, Najwa Shihab highlighted in the podcast the urgency of abolishing virginity tests in police and military institutions—policies long criticized and rejected by the National Human Rights Commission (Mazrieva, 2021).

To strengthen this argument, recent studies also highlight that virginity testing is a form of gendered biopolitical control that disproportionately targets women while lacking scientific validity (Faizal, 2022). This aligns with global human rights frameworks that classify virginity testing as degrading, inaccurate, and harmful. Thus, societal assumptions about virginity reproduce patriarchal norms that attempt to regulate women's bodies and moral “purity.”



Figure 5.6 A comment by Mikaela Wijaya in the podcast

The picture above highlights a comment from an account named Mikaela Wijaya, stating, “... *Enggak masuk akal banget make keperawanan jadi syarat untuk bisa jadi sesuatu atau melakukan sesuatu,*” which reinforces the argument that virginity is often associated with negative stigma and disproportionately targets women. Based on the concept of the politics of the body, women have full autonomy over their bodies, and private matters, such as their sexual history, should not determine their worth or professional competence (Andani, 2023). This phenomenon aligns with patriarchal culture, which constructs the notion that women’s bodies must be monitored and morally evaluated. MaPPI FHUI (2020) has also emphasized that practices such as virginity testing are not only double standards but constitute violations of human rights because they blur boundaries between the private and public spheres.

At this point, it is important to address why no equivalent test exists for men. Even though a “virginity test” is medically impossible to conduct on men, the absence of such tests demonstrates that male virginity is a purely social construct, not a verifiable medical condition. In contrast, virginity tests are often justified for women because the hymen is mistakenly considered physical evidence, despite scientific consensus and international human rights bodies, such as the United Nations, condemning the practice as inaccurate, degrading, and potentially traumatic (Faizal, 2022). According to Sylvia Walby (1990), this align with the patriarchal conception, which has shift and become a disparity that highlights the selective policing of sexual morality, placing the burden on women while exempting men.

The podcast further emphasizes that virginity testing exposes a clear double standard, as mentioned by Najwa Shihab before, “*Itu standar ganda gue setuju.*” The

patriarchal assumption that a woman's moral value can be measured through her body positions women as objects of scrutiny, while men remain free from similar judgments (Gea et al., 2023). This aligns with the concept of sexism, which places women in vulnerable positions in both workplace and societal contexts (Kilali, 2024), as well as Connell's (2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity, where men possess the authority to define moral standards without adhering to them. Ultimately, this form of masculinity manifests through male dominance that harms women—intentionally or not—by restricting their rights.

This point is further reinforced when Nana asks whether virginity still matters in Indonesia today. Arie responds by questioning its functional relevance, emphasizing that the loss of virginity does not diminish a woman's biological ability to conceive or perform roles as a mother or wife. His perspective strengthens the politics of the body framework, showing that virginity has no medical or functional basis yet continues to be treated as a moral standard imposed disproportionately on women (Andani, 2023). Tompi adds that virginity has no relevance in professional settings, *"Kalau gue dalam hal pekerjaan, gue rasa ngga ada urusannya tu mau lo bos, jenderal, atau siapapun perlu tahu lo masih perawan atau ngga. Karena ya apa urusannya? It doesn't make sense."* This underscores how institutions should not police women's bodies or sexual histories. According to Nurnaningsih (2023), women's virginity is not a part that needs to be justified, and on the contrary, it is a private domain that should not cover their skills. This also elaborates a real situation in Indonesia, which reveals how patriarchal expectations in private contexts can reproduce the same sexual double standards critiqued earlier in the discussion.

Furthermore, the discussion shifts to the issue of premarital sexual principles—often referred to as "sex before marriage"—which have become increasingly visible in the digital era. This principle refers to an ideology adopted by individuals who choose to remain virgins until marriage (Shanti et al., 2025). Although theoretically applicable to all genders, in practice, it often reinforces double standards, especially for women. In the podcast, Reza emphasizes that avoiding premarital sex is an individual right. This perspective challenges patriarchal expectations that women's sexual decisions must align with societal norms. The debate intensifies when Dr. Tompi highlights the double standard in which many men who are not virgins expect their female partners to remain

“virgin” or “pure.” He describes this as fundamentally unfair, exposing a longstanding pattern of sexism criticized within feminist studies.

The phenomenon of “sex before marriage” in Indonesia reflects Foucault’s (1977) conception of the *politics of the body*, where the body becomes a site upon which power operates through discipline, surveillance, and normative regulation. Within this framework, female sexuality is subjected to moral scrutiny through social expectations that define what a “proper” woman should be. Women who are perceived as sexually active are framed as morally deviant—not because of any biological reality, but because disciplinary power constructs sexual purity as a requirement for social legitimacy. Through these subtle mechanisms of power, society internalizes the notion that women must continuously monitor and regulate their bodies to align with dominant moral expectations, revealing that sexual morality functions as a political instrument rather than a private ethical concern (Mardiana, 2025).

These disciplinary mechanisms create unequal moral standards that privilege men with sexual autonomy while positioning women as custodians of morality. This dynamic resonates with Najwa Shihab’s insight in the podcast, where she highlights that women remain the group most burdened by stigma in both public policy and public opinion. Kilali (2024) similarly underscores how sexual double standards are embedded within patriarchal structures that grant men symbolic and social freedom while tightly regulating women’s sexual behavior. Thus, the broader sociocultural response to premarital sex in Indonesia is not merely a matter of individual attitudes, but a manifestation of gendered power relations that use the female body as a focal point for maintaining patriarchal order.

To add analytical depth, these discussions reflect a lot of patriarchal conception that is stated by Sylvia Walby (1990) and how moral regulation operates through cultural narratives that define “good womanhood,” shaping acceptable behaviors for women while absolving men from similar accountability. In Indonesian society, religious, cultural, and nationalist discourses often reinforce that women’s bodies symbolize collective honor, thereby intensifying pressure on women to maintain “purity.” This

highlights the intersection between hegemonic masculinity and the politics of respectability, both of which are visible in the podcast dialogue (Mardiana, 2025).

In the podcast, the speakers reiterate the prevalence of sexual violence today. Nadiem cites research from the University of Surabaya (UNESA), which reports that 40% of Indonesian students, particularly in universities, experience sexual violence and victim-blaming. This reflects patriarchal culture in which women are positioned as moral subjects expected to regulate their bodies and behavior to remain safe from accusations. Within patriarchal structures, gendered power relations allow men and institutions to silence, accuse, and delegitimize victims. According to Nuraningsih (2023), men in such social structures possess authority that suppresses women's voices and perpetuates narratives that blame victims for provoking or inviting violence, an extension of symbolic violence rooted in patriarchy.

Tompi further states, "*Biologisnya, ketika laki-laki melihat perempuan seksi pasti akan terangsang, tapi moral menentukan apakah dia ingin melakukan tindakan asusila*", reflecting a longstanding argument that male sexual impulses are natural while moral restraint becomes a personal responsibility (Sutikno & Silva, 2025). In patriarchal societies, expectations for men to control their desire are framed as moral decisions rather than structural issues that prevent violence. In the theory of patriarchal violence, this suggests that male dominance operates not only through aggression but also through the social legitimization of male "temptation" and the moral policing of women (Nuraningsih, 2023).



Figure 5.9 A comment by Fina J.

Moreover, there is a comment that comes from an account named Fina J in the podcast, which reads as "*Kucing ga akan nyamber kalau ga ada ikan, ini nih, contoh logika yang*

bikin emosi.". Discursively, this comment is relevant to issues that are happening in Indonesia. A lot of people seeking validation for sexual harassment by indirectly saying that they're lured by the victims. The term "*ngga akan nyamber kalau ga ada ikan*" shows a self-defense to normalize the masculine side of men, which tends to be dominant, and to bring down women who are often the victims (Lestari et al., 2025). This kind of defense is linear with toxic views on male inclusivity, one of which is hegemonic masculinity, where the challenge of being dominant is used as a tool to victim-blame the non-dominant party, in this case, women or victims of sexual violence (Latra & Suarya, 2023). However, the comment expresses emotions regarding the reality that occurs where humans, both men and women, should not need to defend themselves against actions that are considered immoral.

Nana's statements in the podcast strengthen the position that being a woman in Indonesia is hard, according to a survey that said most sexual violence is carried out in open spaces, during the day, and regardless of who the victim is. She said "*yang jadi target itu kebanyakan justru yang memakai pakaian tertutup. Jadi sama sekali ngga ada urusannya sama baju atau perilaku perempuan."*, reveals that hard to find security in the public for a woman. It later responded by Nadiem who says "*Bayangkan aja menjadi perempuan, yang 3-4 kali interaksi di luar itu selalu ada orang yang menginginkan dia atau menggoda atau merayu. Bayangkan tekanan psikologis yang dihadapi dan alasan kenapa ini tersebar. Bukan masalah apa ya, tapi masalah ditolerir sama masyarakat, sama patriarchal society kita.*" His remark that these experiences are "tolerated by society, by our patriarchal culture" points to the structural dimension of rape culture—where harassment is normalized, minimized, and framed as an unavoidable part of womanhood (Walby, 1990). Together, their exchange demonstrates how Indonesian public discourse is slowly exposing the contradictions within rape culture narratives; women remain unsafe not because of their behavior, but because societal norms continue to justify or excuse male entitlement in public spaces.



Figure 5.10 A comment by Herlina H.

In the next segment, the speakers jumped into the concept of consent, which Nadiem refers to as “non-negotiable.” Consent refers to mutual agreement between both parties when engaging in sexual activity. In patriarchal societies, male sexual temptation is often used to justify dismissing the concept of non-consensual violence (Swastini et al., 2025). A comment submitted to the podcast by an account named Herlina states, “*Konsep consent ini tuh sebenarnya simpel, dan ini juga bisa diterapkan di berbagai macam hal, ga cuma di pelecehan seksual,*” demonstrating public recognition that unilateral acts cannot be justified for any reason, and that only clear and explicit consent makes sexual activity acceptable. Recent studies on sexual consent among Indonesian university students show persistent misconceptions about consent, particularly the idea that silence or compliance under pressure counts as agreement, which is strongly shaped by patriarchal social norms (Shanti et al., 2025). As highlighted in the podcast, such misunderstandings often lead to public shaming and one-sided judgments against victims.



Figure 5.11 A comment by Andre E.

Another comment reads, “*Wanita bukan objek seksual yang bisa dipaksa. Jadi pria-wanita bukan majikan-budak, tapi pasangan yang saling menghormati.*” This statement,

delivered by an account named Andre, underscores that women are autonomous beings who must not be constrained by their sexuality. The statement contrasts healthy relationships with patriarchal power relations that position women as subordinate or available for male desires. Within the framework of sexual autonomy and body politics by Millet (1968), women's bodies represent spaces of agency that must not be controlled by male desire, moral pressure, or biological justification. This reinforces the principle that ideal sexual relationships must be based on equality, open communication, and mutual respect—not domination (Lestari et al., 2025).

To further strengthen this section, research on digital discourse in Indonesia shows that online platforms increasingly serve as counter-hegemonic spaces where women (and male allies) challenge patriarchal scripts on sexual violence (Ardani, 2024). The podcast successfully demonstrates how mediated discussions can dismantle harmful myths—including myths of seductive clothing, mutual desire such as “*sama-sama mau*”, or biological justification of men's actions.

Conclusion

This study shows that patriarchy still continues to dominate the regulation of Indonesian womanhood. Through the discussion, the podcast *Susahnya Jadi Perempuan* reveals how women remain subject to double standard, bodily control, and victim-blaming, which reveals that it is indeed difficult to be a woman in a culture where masculine standards remain dominant.

Using the concepts of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity, the analysis shows how dominant male-centered norms determined what is “proper” for women. The discussions in the podcast highlight how women are commonly blamed or judged, even in situations where they are victims of inequality or violence. Meanwhile, the politics of the body demonstrates how women's appearance, movement, and sexuality become targets of public judgment. These findings confirm that the difficulties women face are not individual burdens but systemic outcomes of entrenched gender inequality.

This podcast episode also highlights a critical cultural gap: very few men are aware of gender equality issues. According to Narasi's own audience data, only 3% of respondents say that no men around them are aware of women's issues, 88% say only a few men are, and

just 10% say most men are aware. This data shows how rare it is for men to acknowledge gender inequality, and how much harder it becomes for women to advocate for themselves when male awareness is limited.

Najwa Shihab's approach by inviting male guests into discussion about women's issues demonstrates that gender inequality is not merely just "women's issue" but a collective problem which is deeply tied to societal expectations shaped by masculine dominance. Their willingness to speak up, openly recognizing double standards, blaming culture, and unequal burdens, demonstrates that progressive male voices play a crucial role in breaking the silence surrounding patriarchal norms and encouraging accountability among their peers.

Overall, while the podcast underscores the dominance of patriarchal ideology in Indonesia, it also illustrates the transformative power of media to challenge these structures, raise awareness, and encourage generational shifts in attitudes toward gender, sexuality, and bodily autonomy. As conversations like these become more common, they hold the potential to shift societal attitudes, inspire generational change, and support broader efforts toward gender equality in Indonesia.

Implication

This study suggests that future media research should further explore other digital conversational platforms as spaces where gender norms are negotiated and challenged. Comparative studies of media formats or cultural contexts may provide deeper understanding of how patriarchal discourse adapts within different media environments. From a practical perspective, the study highlights the potential of media producers to create programs that critically address gender inequality by encouraging inclusive dialogue and responsible representation. At the policy level, the findings support the importance of media literacy initiatives that promote critical engagement with gender representations, allowing audiences to recognize and question normalized patriarchal narratives in everyday media consumption.

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Authors' contributions

ANA and NNM were responsible for data collection and data analysis. BCK developed and mapped the theoretical framework of the study. CWD and TAY contributed to drafting the introduction and

elaborating the literature review. SA formulated the conclusion and discussed the implications of the findings. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript, all authors also read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Competing Interest

The author declares no competing interests.

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