

“If You’re Male, You Get It More”: Experiences of Indonesian Female Academics Under New Managerialism

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Abstract

This study explores the career ladder experiences of female professors in Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia. The experiences of Indonesian female academics are distinct compared to their counterparts worldwide, as they face unique challenges in attaining higher academic positions such as associate professor or professor. Female academics in Indonesia are often perceived as less productive in research and publication, hold fewer leadership roles, achieve lower academic ranks, and earn significantly less than their male peers. Employing a feminist research methodology, this study aims to amplify women’s voices and advocate for their advancement to higher positions. Through qualitative interviews and analysis using Miles and Huberman’s model, the study examines the lived experiences of female academics operating within the constraints of a new managerialism framework. The findings highlight a feminist perspective that is rarely acknowledged in the discourse on higher education in Indonesia. Drawing on Mohanty’s postcolonial feminist framework, the study celebrates the resilience and contributions of non-Western women while shedding light on the systemic barriers they face. Indonesian Muslim female academics report enduring gender bias, limited opportunities for leadership, and cultural norms that prioritize familial responsibilities over professional growth. These challenges restrict their potential and diminish their contributions to academia and research. This study serves as a critical call to address the structural inequities and cultural dynamics that hinder the progress of women in academia.

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Introduction

New Public Management (NPM) has become a global phenomenon under neoliberalism, transcending national boundaries and manifesting in both English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries (Gaus, Sultan, and Basri 2017). The interpretation and implementation of this administrative framework are not confined to a single linguistic or cultural context; instead, they are adapted to suit specific national environments. These adaptations take into account factors such as national institutions, socio-cultural norms, educational systems, and ideological orientations. Using Indonesia's administrative reform as a case study, Gaus, Sultan, and Basri (2017) illustrate how NPM is reinterpreted to align with local contexts. Their analysis highlights how Indonesia's public governance reforms integrate global NPM principles with the country's existing values and traditions. This approach not only enhances the relevance and effectiveness of these reforms but also contributes to the broader international discourse on the dissemination and recontextualization of NPM principles.

The concept of "new managerialism" refers to the adoption of management norms and practices from the profit-driven private sector into government operations (Deem, Hillyard, and Reed 2007). Universities today face multiple challenges, including massification, commercialization, internationalization, and budget cuts. Compounding these issues is an aging academic workforce, which reduces the pool of candidates available for administrative and research leadership roles (Blackmore 2014).

A new management structure has been implemented in public services, driven by the belief that New Public Management (NPM) is an innovative, ideologically motivated approach to modernizing these services. In New Mexico, for instance, universities have

been reclassified as “Research Universities,” leading to significant transitions for academics. One notable example is the increased focus on reducing educational costs (Ball 2015).

In Australia, the academic landscape has become increasingly shaped by management- and market-oriented practices. This shift significantly influences how academics perceive the role and value of formal degrees in university teaching and learning (Hardy 2007). Similarly, in Indonesia’s state Islamic institutions, NPM has emerged as a dominant trend, further demonstrating its global influence. In terms of the gender divide, New Mexico provides women with greater opportunities to thrive under a meritocratic system (Harris, Ravenswood, and Myers 2013). However, new managerialism is often criticized for its inherent gender bias (Teelken and Deem 2013). Women are disproportionately affected by the intersection of gender and managerial practices, as these systems frequently perpetuate inequality.

Deem (2020) characterizes “new managerialism” as embodying masculine behaviours and values. This management style is inherently inequitable, often favouring male managers over their female counterparts. Early career academics—particularly women and those in traditionally feminine disciplines—are among the most vulnerable to the gendered impacts of modern managerialism. The system’s inherent bias toward men exacerbates these challenges (Steinþórsdóttir, Brorsen Smidt, Pétursdóttir, Einarsdóttir, and Le Feuvre 2019).

Research on female academics worldwide has highlighted significant gender disparities in academia (Aiston and Jung 2016; Chacha 2021; Khan and Siriwardhane 2021). A study of female academics in Hong Kong has contributed to a deeper understanding of gender disparities in academia, particularly the relationship between gender and research productivity from a global perspective (Aiston and Jung 2016). In Kenyan higher education institutions, women continue to face numerous challenges in their pursuit of professorships (Chacha 2021). The historical narrative that women

entered academia later than men remains central to discussions about their advancement in Kenyan universities. Additionally, the dual burden of professional responsibilities and traditional domestic roles is often cited as a significant barrier to women's leadership in academia.

In Australia, variables influencing academic advancement to the professoriate level have been explored in depth. Khan and Siriwardhane (2021), for example, provides a comprehensive understanding of the key factors that adversely affect career progression, with a focus on gender disparities. Female academics in STEMM and business fields reported stronger perceptions of barriers to career advancement. Interestingly, the findings challenge the conventional notion that family obligations are the primary hindrance. Instead, institutional factors, particularly organizational variables, emerge as significant obstacles. Heavy workloads and insufficient research funding are identified as major barriers, significantly impacting the progression of female academics to senior ranks, such as Levels D and E.

Similarly, women in New Zealand face multidimensional marginalization that obstructs their professional growth. Toyibah and Riyani (2022)'s findings suggest that meritocracy—perceived as an impartial system rewarding individual achievement—fails to apply equitably to female academics from minority backgrounds. Systemic discrimination linked to identity prevents women of color and Māori academics from advancing within academia (Toyibah and Riyani 2022). Their study concludes that unless these intersectional challenges are addressed, inherent biases will continue to disadvantage underrepresented groups, limiting their opportunities for academic progression.

However, research on the everyday life experiences of female academics in Indonesia, particularly within the context of Indonesian State Islamic Higher Education (ISIHE), remains scarce, especially when approached through the lens of postcolonial feminism. This study seeks to address this gap by employing feminist research

methods to explore the lived experiences of female academics in ISIHE under the influence of new managerialism (NM).

In the 2000s, Indonesia's Islamic higher education institutions underwent significant transformations due to the adoption of rigid NM principles (Said and Elangkovan 2014). NM has had profound impacts on academic positions and institutional structures (Burford and Wijaya Mulya 2019; Gaus, Sultan, and Basri 2017; Rosser 2023). The low quality of Indonesian higher education has been linked to administrative inefficiencies, including the dominance of bureaucratic and corporate interests. These shifts have marginalized efforts to improve community service, education, and research. While NM offers hope for administrative reform, competing reformist agendas often conflict with equitable interpretations of academic quality (Rosser 2023).

As Burford and Wijaya Mulya (2019) note, the persistent neoliberal transformation of higher education poses significant challenges for researchers in the field. Scholars have extensively studied the impacts of corporatization, audit culture, and managerialism, focusing particularly on how these developments affect both academic and professional life. However, there remains a pressing need for narratives exploring the spread and resistance to neoliberal concepts in higher education institutions within the Global South.

In Indonesia, the principles of new managerialism (NM) are closely linked to the evaluation of academic performance. This involves work-based targets and a greater emphasis on measurable outcomes (Ball 2015). Practices such as using fingerprint scanning equipment to monitor attendance exemplify this approach. Indonesian female academics working within these frameworks face unique challenges (Gaus and Hall 2016). They are often burdened with additional administrative tasks, required to teach more classes, and subjected to rigorous evaluations, planning, and reporting—mostly conducted online. A similar trend is evident in the UK (Bagilhole

2002). As Gaus and Hall (2016) report, women academics in the UK also face an overload of responsibilities, such as supervising theses, which leaves them with limited time to develop research proposals or apply for grants. They are rarely given opportunities to present at international conferences, a key avenue for publishing papers. Instead, their time is consumed by tasks assisting students. This contributes to lower academic rankings and limited leadership opportunities for women within universities.

In Indonesia's state Islamic institutions of higher education (ISIHE), NM gained traction in the early 2000s as these institutions transitioned into more comprehensive universities (Lukens-Bull 2013). Names changed from STAIN (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam) to IAIN (Institut Agama Islam Negeri) and later to UIN (Universitas Islam Negeri), reflecting broader transformations aimed at accelerating development. The implementation of NM has directly influenced the roles and experiences of women academics. Under neoliberalism and managerialism (Ball 2015), these institutions have expanded faculties and programs, increased student enrollment, and assigned academics more complex responsibilities, such as serving as course designers, marketers, technology experts, and administrators (Ferman 2002). However, these additional roles often limit opportunities for professional growth.

Institutional structures in higher education perpetuate the marginalization of women, presenting their roles as inherently gendered. Bureaucratic and hierarchical systems continue to exclude women, despite shifts in industry norms (Eddy and Ward 2015). Sociologists such as Acker (1990) identifies key characteristics of gendered organizations, evident in universities: distinct roles for male and female academics, gender-based segregation in work divisions, and symbolic representations that reinforce these divides. Men often perform task-driven roles, while women are relegated to providing emotional support. Such dynamics not only affect faculty but also extend to students and administrative assessments.

Women are frequently perceived as less efficient workers or as not fitting the ideal organizational member profile (Sauers, Kennedy, and O’Sullivan 2002). Cultural expectations for women to prioritize family responsibilities often conflict with rigid organizational policies. Structural barriers marginalize women, hampering their career progression. Meritocracy, combined with traditional workplace norms, frequently undervalues women’s contributions and reinforces gendered hierarchies (Harris, Ravenswood, and Myers 2013).

Women also face additional hurdles in advancing to senior positions, negatively impacting their careers and undervaluing their capabilities (Valian 2005). The “glass ceiling” remains a persistent barrier in higher education, manifesting in the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, pay disparities, and limited access to support initiatives (Jackson and O’Callaghan 2009).

Studies reveal that the masculinity inherent in NM significantly influences daily operations within organizations. Implementing NM often results in additional responsibilities for university staff and can create challenges when professionals are evaluated through managerial frameworks. Connell (2000) notes that global masculinity under neoliberal academic systems privileges those willing to adopt its principles. Meanwhile, Lynch (2010) highlights the “care ceiling,” which explains why women, often balancing caregiving responsibilities, hold fewer senior administrative roles. In Indonesian higher education, women academics remain underrepresented, and the “ideal worker” is typically envisioned as someone unencumbered by external responsibilities (Grummell, Devine, and Lynch 2009).

Despite their contribution to the understanding of the influence of NM on academic women, these studies are lacking a study of everyday life experiences of female academics under NM. Therefore, this study examines the career trajectories of female academics navigating neoliberal managerial systems in one state and one Islamic institution in Indonesia. By integrating management, feminism, and gender theories, it explores the intersections of these

frameworks with the career growth of Indonesian female academics. Employing a feminist research methodology, this study prioritizes the experiences of female academics, presenting their perspectives as central to understanding these challenges.

Postcolonial Feminism As a Theoretical Framework

Postcolonial feminism is particularly suited for this research as it emphasizes the unique experiences of women from non-Western countries (Harding 2008). This framework recognizes and values the diversity among women, encompassing differences in experiences, culture, religion, race, class, age, and language. The experiences of Indonesian academic women hold significant importance and should be integrated into the broader discourse of feminism. Acknowledging their lived realities contributes to the expansion of feminist scholarship and aligns with the objectives of feminist research, which seek to validate diverse forms of knowledge.

Certain subsets of Western feminist discourse often operate under the assumption that all women share the same aspirations—specifically, the idealized Western conception of a “first-world woman” (Mohanty 2003). This archetype represents an educated, independent woman who exercises full control over her body and life decisions, free from the constraints of family, religion, or tradition. In contrast, the “third-world woman” is often stereotyped as illiterate, domesticated, victimized by her family or culture, and lacking agency over her own body.

Such characterizations are deeply problematic as they perpetuate systemic domination and suppress the heterogeneity of third-world women. By homogenizing the experiences of third-world women, Western feminist discourse risks reinforcing colonial attitudes. This oversimplification not only diminishes the complexities of their lives but also marginalizes their voices within feminist dialogue, thereby contributing to their continued subjugation.

Feminist Research Methodology

This paper employs a feminist research methodology, which actively seeks to eliminate power imbalances between researchers and participants (Hesse-Biber 2013; McHugh 2014). The methodology aims to improve women's positions and address social inequalities. Feminist research begins with women's standpoints and experiences, valuing their perspectives as foundational to the inquiry. Additionally, feminist research aspires to create transformative change and dismantle gender asymmetry in society (Harding 2008). It prioritizes women's experiences, needs, and perceptions of the social world as essential components of the research process.

Five basic guidelines for feminist methodology, as proposed by Cook and Fonow (1986), serve as a framework for this study. First, it places women and gender at the center of the investigation, aiming to raise awareness. Second, it rejects the binary distinction between subject and object, instead respecting, appreciating, and recognizing participants as sources of knowledge. By challenging the notion of "objective" research, feminist methodology acknowledges the influence of social and historical perspectives on all research. Third, research ethics are integral, ensuring ethical practices throughout the study process and in the findings. Ultimately, feminist research seeks to empower women and liberate them from oppression.

This study focuses on advocating for female academics within university societies and analyzing the gender-based discrimination they encounter. It transforms participants' lived experiences into valuable knowledge while emphasizing social justice and striving to create societal change for women academics. The research highlights the intersectionality of gender with other forms of oppression, such as race, ethnicity, class, nationality, and religion. Reflexivity, collaboration, power analysis, and advocacy are central to this feminist qualitative research approach (McHugh 2014). Unlike traditional research, feminist research aims to generate new knowledge and drive meaningful social transformation. It

has its roots in movements against the various ways women have historically been oppressed.

For this study, I interviewed three senior female academics with over 10 and 20 years of service in academia. These women, all in their 50s, have held leadership positions in their faculties. They are married and have children. Two hold Ph.Ds, and one holds a Master's degree. The interviews took place on our campus, with the participants choosing the rooms they preferred. Before proceeding, I provided a consent form, ensuring their collaboration aligned with feminist values. Using feminist ethics, I built a close relationship with the participants, obtained their informed consent, and assured them of confidentiality by using pseudonyms (Jaggar 1995).

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, which involves data reduction, data display, and drawing verification and conclusions (Miles and Huberman 1994). This approach ensured rigorous and ethical handling of the data, consistent with the principles of feminist research.

Experiences of Indonesian Female Academics Under New Managerialism

From interviews with the three academic women, I found that their challenges in a male-dominated university environment primarily stem from teaching, supervisory, and administrative overload. These issues are byproducts of departmental and campus expansion efforts aimed at upgrading institute status to university level.

Their experiences are closely tied to the implementation of neoliberal management in Indonesian state universities, which has had adverse effects on their daily lives. For instance, disputes arose when academics were required to log their attendance using fingerprint scanners, a practice they felt was at odds with their core academic responsibilities. The heavy monitoring imposed on academics further misaligned with their professional roles and priorities.

Women academics reported increasing external pressures and performance measurements that largely disregarded their essential work and professional contributions. Their academic lives are increasingly dictated by the principles of neoliberal management. One notable consequence is the escalation of teaching responsibilities, which leads to an increased load of thesis supervision. Finally, an unavoidable burden is the extensive administrative work, including completing numerous forms and applications, which adds further strain to their roles.

Female Academics Experienced Teaching Overload

This is one of the consequences of departmental growth following the conversion of the institute to university rank.

Liyana

Liyana was the first female academic I ever met. She acknowledged that academics' lives are increasingly oriented toward commercialization, which she finds troubling, as it undermines the professional identity of academics. As she spoke, I couldn't help but notice how striking her framed spectacles were and how the November breeze gently rustled her black headscarf.

I asked Liyana to share her experience with the market-oriented shift in academia. She explained that she had a full teaching schedule and is supervising theses to meet these market demands. She felt overwhelmed by both responsibilities. Last semester, she taught eight credits, but this semester, she is teaching sixteen credits, doubling her workload as an undergraduate instructor. Additionally, she taught postgraduate students. Fortunately, she taught teamwork in the postgraduate program, which she found somewhat manageable. The most prominent features of university administration, dominated by masculine tendencies, are the heavy teaching load and thesis supervision. Women are often expected to take on more teaching

duties, as they are seen as more suitable for teaching than for conducting research.

Liyana added that the most challenging part of teaching was the first meeting. She had to provide a detailed explanation of everything, and the first classes were the most demanding. The subsequent classes were easier because the planning had already been done. She believed that good planning was key to ensuring the rest of the semester run smoothly. I agreed with her—setting clear expectations and planning the study contract at the start of the semester shapes the entire teaching experience.

Liyana shared: “In the first classes, because of too many classes I teach, I got sick, my voice was gone, as it felt like I screamed in the classes.”

She continued to describe how busy she is with teaching. Liyana lectured in her undergraduate department on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and in the postgraduate program on Mondays. She even supervised teaching apprentices on Saturdays. Her week was completely booked. It was no wonder she felt irritable from the overwhelming schedule. I asked how she managed all this work while having a family with young children. She responded that she kept a journal and practices strict time management. If students were late for an appointment, she simply moved on to the next task. Her academic schedule was demanding and time-sensitive, requiring careful balance.

Liyana’s actions reflect an awareness of her “situatedness” within a postcolonial context. I interpreted her experiences as revealing how political positions and identities are negotiated within this context (Lewis and Mills 2003). Liyana shared her experiences and the conditions of her workplace as a postcolonial subject. This highlights the inequalities of privilege and position, which are shaped by factors like class, gender, and other relationships that influence research and the dynamics between academic women and researchers.

Anita

Anita was the second female academic to share her experience of voluntarily supervising students, which often felt more like an obligation. She talked about her role in pastoral care, expressing that she could not refuse to help and support her students. She worried that if she didn't provide assistance, her students might end up jobless in the future. She was concerned that if she ignored their needs, they would fail, and thus felt responsible for their well-being. For Anita, offering pastoral care was an essential part of her duties as an academic.

Anita attested that she dedicated considerable time to providing students with free services. This reminded me of a male colleague who had once shared his experience when Anita expressed her obligation to offer this kind of help. He politely declined requests from students who demanded his attention, believing that academic progress was determined more by commitment to the core duties of teaching, research, and community service than by how much time was spent assisting students. He consistently emphasized the importance of setting boundaries and how learning to "say no" had been key to his academic success.

One of the community service requirements at ISIHE involved assisting students with non-academic matters. However, he preferred to engage with the community through teaching, giving speeches, or participating in religious events instead of spending time helping students with personal issues. According to the university's guidelines, about 10% of the points for advancement were awarded for community service, while 40% were based on research (DGHE 2013).

I recognized that it was generally easier for male academics to avoid serving students compared to their female counterparts. Most female academics, including those in senior positions, were more likely to sacrifice their personal time to assist students with their assignments. This aligned with findings that women in academia

often struggled to articulate their desire to provide fewer services or less instruction (Griffin, Bennett, and Harris 2013). Anita likely spent more time with her students in a more personal and hands-on way than her male colleagues did. In conclusion, I recalled agreeing with Acker's (1990) concept of the "macho university." The work that female academics like Anita did highlight how gender disparities in academia—particularly in the types of work assigned, such as research, which was predominantly carried out by men, and teaching and administration, which were primarily handled by women—were influenced by the institutional workload and expectations.

Some Academic Women Experienced Heavy Thesis Supervision

While the number of academics remained constant, the student population had grown as a result of departmental expansion, leading to administrative chaos. As a result, certain female professors in the department had found their responsibilities increasing. For example, they were required to take on the duties of other professors who had failed to adequately oversee their students.

Liyana

One of the challenges Liyana had faced was supervising the theses of 30 students. This overwhelming responsibility had arisen just as she was nearing the completion of her doctoral degree. Due to the sheer number of students under her supervision, one day, a student had come to her for consultation. However, she soon realized that the student was not actually under her guidance, yet the student insisted on her support.

Liyana believed that students preferred her supervision because they felt comfortable with her or perhaps because she was easily accessible. She knew that some students chose specific professors like Ms. X because they believed Ms. X was always available. Reflecting on her experience, Liyana recalled supervising students every day as Eid approached, sometimes handling up to 30 students or even

more. Liyana felt that the administrative system was disorganized. Although she had not closely followed the changes occurring in the department, she acknowledged that supervising 30 students in one semester had been an excessive burden. Despite this, she managed to handle all of the supervisions, albeit not without flaws.

Liyana identified herself as a “native,” and it was important to examine how she “spoke for herself” to challenge how Indonesian Muslim women academics were portrayed in Western theories and texts (Ozkazanc-Pan 2012). Liyana aligned with Spivak’s concept of the subaltern (Spivak 1988), viewing these individuals as marginalized by global capitalism and lacking the means to advocate for themselves. However, despite the challenges, Liyana succeeded.

The subaltern, in this context, was not a group of people or an individual but a subject position. I agreed with and accepted this interpretation. To understand the notion of an agent of collective subjectivity, we needed to recognize the conceptual difference and how various individuals could adopt a similar subaltern perspective (Loomba 1998).

Liyana’s experience with postcolonial theory offered new perspectives and methods for understanding the identity of Indonesian female academics. However, Western ideologies may have obscured or devalued these concepts and actions. Theories often assumed that class relations, gender, ethnicity, and religion in Eastern countries were the same as in the West, which failed to account for the unique contexts and challenges these women faced.

Anita

Anita had experienced a heavy administrative load in the department she led. As a mother of four children, she was already busy. Moreover, she was an academic and the head of a department.

Anita had claimed that she struggled to understand how to secure competitive grants. She knew that she needed to read extensively to expand her knowledge and increase her chances. However, she

was so overwhelmed with her leadership role that she did not have the time to study and prepare a proposal. She had to fulfill all of her department's administrative duties. To avoid spending too much time with students, Anita had overseen thesis supervision via email. As a senior academic woman, she should have had more publications and achieved a higher academic level, but she was not given the opportunity. This reflected the masculine nature of academic work. Anita's workloads in research were a clear example of how female academics often never had the chance to advance (Deem 2003). Anita had illustrated this issue of administrative burden well and connected it to why she had always failed to apply for research grants.

Given her experiences at Indonesian public universities, I had found it surprising that there was no gender division in academic work. Both male and female academics had performed the same duties in terms of administration, research, and teaching. Though most research was probably done by males, Anita's lack of time to prepare proposals was consistent with the experiences of many others. Modern managerialism had surveilled its staff and was not gender-neutral (Deem 2003). For female academics, this surveillance was part of a specific form of macho-masculinity. Additionally, academic women had been subject to the culture of "long hours." To increase productivity, women had been expected to stay in college longer than men, doing more teaching and administrative work than their male counterparts (Deem and Hillyard 2002).

Female Academics at My University Increased Administrative Responsibilities and Teaching Loads Due to the Recent Introduction of Graduate Studies

Weekends were included in addition to weekdays. To accommodate adult learners who worked during the week and pursued master's and doctoral degrees on the weekends, a weekend service had been offered.

Desiyana

In the department she oversaw, Desiyana had admitted that she was exhausted. She had a ton of work ahead of her. She and other women were unable to apply for advancement to a higher academic rank due to their workload in the department.

She explained that every student who visited her office requested assistance and wanted to finish their tasks as soon as possible. For example, when she sat in her office, hoping to write her delayed research proposal, there were numerous tasks to do, such as signing documents. Sadly, students would rush to her and not choose other staff members around. When she was at home, students still called her for assistance. She had thought that these were obstacles to applying for a promotion. She emphasized that she truly felt she could not be promoted if she was constantly overwhelmed with tasks.

The intensification of management at her university aligned with Desiyana's experiences. The requirements stated that the personnel had to be accessible around the clock, every day of the week, and ready for on-call duty even when at home (Lynch 2006). Desiyana spent most of her non-working hours—when she truly wanted to unwind—answering calls from students or her direct boss.

Publication had been hindered not just by her work in the department but also by funding cuts. Desiyana remembered that all department budgets had been slashed by the university. The department's money for research had been reduced for women. There had also been a shortage of research grants; whereas there were often close to forty research grants a year, there were now just a few approved research proposals. Even though the funding had been minimal, she claimed that the research grants had been highly beneficial in encouraging women to conduct studies and publish.

Desiyana had also struggled with the regulation of attending using fingerprint machines, as it aligned with the NM principles of close supervision. She had disliked this regulation and felt unmotivated. She did not want to press the machine.

Collins (1990) reminded me that oppression is one of the things that destroys the legacy of colonialism. Institutions of higher learning, as well as cultural ones, continued to oppress. Collins had later proposed the concept of intersectionality to define oppression in the contemporary world. I saw a similar form of oppression in how professors at universities operated—we had once been free, but now we were under machine monitoring. Although we no longer lived in the colonial era, we were still under constant surveillance, much like captives, with numerous non-academic responsibilities to complete. In contrast, I observed that my male colleagues enjoyed greater freedom than the women and I did. Collins had argued that Desiyana was oppressed because of their perceived gender and sexual identity.

Anita

I heard Anita's explanation of why she did not get the research grant. "I don't have time to read articles and write a proposal," she explained. I had once experienced being an academic without additional leadership responsibilities. Now, however, I was the head of a department and the chair of several programs. Meetings and thesis proposals from students kept me busy.

There had been nothing to publish when she lacked research. Her situation motivated her to attain a better academic standing. She had affirmed that she hadn't submitted an application for a promotion in a very long time. Despite having worked for the government for more than 20 years, she was still only a Senior Lecturer.

She had been aware that the editing process was giving her trouble. She had claimed that two days was sufficient for editing an article, but she had to stay at home and not think about her coursework during that time. Ultimately, she needed and wanted more time.

The university's negligence had been the reason for Anita's low academic standing. While it was true that some older women academics had attained prominent positions in specific fields, the majority had stayed in the shadows, victimized by subtle forms of age discrimination.

Bronstein (2001) informs that the advancement of female academics is influenced by sexism combined with ageism. It seemed that no one had paid attention to Anita's life condition. Although students saw her as a good lecturer and a dedicated department head, for herself, she could not provide the time needed to read, write, and publish. But if she did not publish internationally, she would not move to the position of Associate Professor.

The subjugated Indonesian women were impacted by the continuous globalization process. (Mohanty 2003: 506), making a connection to the "Western/Third World," said that in order to understand marginality, one must seek to expose and contest the political, social, and economic processes of power that establish the social, economic, and epistemological framework for "marginality." Since postcolonial feminism examines how Western patriarchal management practices and knowledge affect academic women in the third world, including publication (Özkazanç-Pan 2008), non-Western women could not participate if they did not publish in international publications.

The purpose of this study is to highlight the voices of the disadvantaged and silenced (Hooks 2000). In this regard, Anita's voice on international publishing had been used to oppress specific groups of Muslim women in Indonesia who were academics. Academic women of Anita's age were extremely close to the Professor position since she was a senior and an older scholar, and because of her overall accomplishments. Ageism had become a feminist issue as a result (Bronstein 2001).

Female Academics' Every Day Life Experiences and Gender Inequality in Academia: A Feminist Approach

In Indonesia, female academics frequently faced a patriarchal academic environment that devalued their contributions. The simultaneous demands of traditional home responsibilities and professional obligations that many women bore resulted in fewer

women reaching top academic posts. Career advancement was often hindered by incidents of gender discrimination in recruitment and promotions. Academic women were subjected to multifaceted discrimination that impeded their ability to progress in their careers. Furthermore, systemic prejudice associated with their identities meant that meritocracy, an ostensibly objective system of reward based on individual achievement, did not appropriately apply to female academics in Indonesia. Inherent biases continued to hinder women academics in their pursuit of academic careers until these intersecting issues were addressed. These obstacles not only affected the diversity of viewpoints in research and instruction but also limited the influence of women in academia. Liyana, Anita, and Desiyana were postcolonial subjects, and their shared experiences in the workplace highlighted the inequalities they faced. As a postcolonial scholar, I was aware of the privilege and positional disparities that shaped the intersection of gender, class, and other variables in the research and interactions between female academics and researchers.

These barriers not only impeded these women's advancement and visibility in higher education, but they also caused attitudes in research and instruction to become more uniform. When varied viewpoints were marginalized, the richness of academic debate diminished, leading to a limited comprehension of complicated subjects. This lack of diversity of opinion could impede creativity and critical thinking, ultimately affecting the standard of instruction and research findings. I interpreted Liyana's actions as a reflection of how political positions and identities were negotiated in a postcolonial context. Anita's experiences as a postcolonial subject and the conditions of her workplace profoundly impacted me. As a postcolonial scholar, I recognized the inequalities in privilege and position that she had experienced. Echoing Collins (1990), Desiyana had also experienced oppression. Collins suggested that oppression was one of the things that destroyed the legacy of colonialism. Both higher education and cultural institutions continued to oppress. From a postcolonial perspective, in terms of knowledge creation, Collins

(1990) believed that non-White women, living at the intersection of race, gender, and class, could produce a distinctive standpoint for black women. Similarly, Indonesian women had unique experiences resulting from their political and economic status, which made this distinctive perspective conceivable as well. They were in the middle—neither White nor masculine, nor economically affluent.

As Hooks (2000) claimed, systemic prejudices and deeply ingrained societal norms that supported traditional gender roles and gave preference to male opinions were the primary cause of this dilemma. Cultural norms often pressured women to juggle work and home responsibilities, limiting their visibility and participation. Additionally, discriminatory employment and promotion policies further contributed to gender inequality, creating a culture that devalued diversity, hindered creativity, and narrowed our understanding of important issues in education and research.

This research stands out by employing feminist methodologies that prioritize women's experiences and perspectives, contrasting with previous studies that often adopted traditional, male-centered frameworks. While earlier research may have highlighted gender disparities in a broad sense, it frequently overlooked the nuanced ways in which cultural, social, and institutional factors uniquely affected women in academia. By focusing specifically on feminist approaches, this study not only illuminated the challenges faced by women but also amplified their voices, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of diversity in higher education. This shift enriched academic discourse and proposed actionable insights for fostering inclusivity in research and instruction.

Moreover, this research employed several feminist theories, including standpoint theory, which emphasized the importance of women's lived experiences as a source of knowledge. By centering these perspectives, the study revealed how systemic biases shaped women's roles in academia. Intersectionality was also applied to explore how overlapping identities—such as ethnicity, class, and religion—further complicated women's experiences. Additionally,

postcolonial feminism was used to analyze how academic discourses reinforced gender norms. Together, these theories provided a robust framework for understanding the multifaceted barriers women faced, enhancing both the analysis and potential solutions.

Scholars adopting a feminist approach face challenges with authority as interpreters. The question of power and positioning is crucial in this context. In qualitative interviewing, using a feminist methodological framework entangles the power dynamics between the researcher and the researched. To avoid perpetuating the mistreatment of women as research subjects, Oakley (2016) emphasized the necessity of severing the traditional hierarchical link between researchers and the researched to avoid “generalizing your sister.” Though collaborators may run the risk of manipulation, Oakley’s non-hierarchical approach examines the challenges faced by feminist academics engaging in more intimate practices. They could feel compelled to share unsettling facts, which may be misinterpreted.

In my research, the shifting paradigm of power dynamics between female academics and me as a researcher became a fascinating subject, motivating me to examine the dynamics of my interview partnerships. It was critical to understand the nuanced stance of feminist researchers and their interactions with collaborators, particularly when diverging from narrative interpretations of women. Thus, everything that transpired in our interactions as female academics would undoubtedly influence the direction of my future work and highlight different perspectives on the events our collaborators had lived.

To effectively address the challenges faced by women in academia, a multifaceted approach is necessary. Implementing policy changes that promote gender equity in hiring and promotion processes is crucial (Acker 2006). Additionally, establishing mentorship and sponsorship programs can provide essential support and networking opportunities for women navigating their academic careers. Offering flexible work arrangements can help

balance professional and personal responsibilities, encouraging women to pursue leadership roles. Awareness training on gender bias for faculty and staff can cultivate a more inclusive academic environment. Increasing funding for research projects led by women or focused on gender issues can enhance visibility and promote diverse scholarship. Finally, adopting an intersectional approach that addresses the unique challenges faced by women from diverse backgrounds can lead to more comprehensive and inclusive practices (Crenshaw 1989). Together, these strategies can contribute to a more equitable academic landscape that values and supports women's contributions.

Conclusion

Female academics in Indonesian State-Islamic Higher Education (ISIHE) have celebrated their progress in achieving higher academic positions and management roles, seemingly on par with their male counterparts. However, the implementation of New Managerialism (NM) has had a negative impact on their professional advancement. While women may appear equal to men in universities, the demands of NM—such as the enlargement and intensification of university work—have hindered their ability to achieve academic success. Many female academics struggle to secure national research grants, and they face challenges in publishing in internationally reputable journals due to a lack of time for reading, writing, and research. Their workload is compounded by “compulsory” free services to students—tasks that are presented as voluntary but are, in reality, mandatory. These added responsibilities prevent women from completing their core academic tasks, leading to physical and mental exhaustion.

The experiences of Liyana, Desiyana, and Anita reveal the specific obstacles faced by women academics in ISIHE, highlighting how managerial practices in universities restrict their autonomy and hinder career progression. The overemphasis on managerial roles

and the masculinized nature of the academic workplace under NM has limited women's ability to thrive in academia. Their careers are stifled not just by increased workload, but also by a broader institutional culture that does not support their advancement. The masculine-driven nature of modern managerialism is a form of contemporary colonization that undermines the contributions and potential of women academics.

Future research should explore the long-term impact of New Managerialism on the academic careers of female faculty in different contexts within Indonesian higher education. Further studies could examine how institutional policies and practices in ISIHE specifically contribute to the gendered division of labor and the marginalization of women in leadership roles. Additionally, research could focus on the psychological and physical toll that the intensified managerial workload places on female academics, as well as the potential for institutional reforms that can better support gender equality in academic careers.

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