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Construction of Single Mother Blogger towards Attached Negative Label

Anggun Nadia Fatimah, Andi Nirmalasari, Deby Puspitaningrum,
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Abstrak/Abstract

Artikel ini ditujukan untuk memahami bagaimana ibu tunggal penulis blog mengkonstruksi penerimaan label negatif yang diberikan masyarakat. Label negatif terlanjur melekat pada diri perempuan yang menyandang status ibu tunggal penulis blog. Studi ini disusun berdasarkan hasil wawancara mendalam yang dilakukan peneliti terhadap ibu tunggal penulis blog blogger dan didukung penelaahan dari isi blog yang ditulis mereka. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam studi ini adalah holistic single case study dengan paradigma konstruktivisme. Adanya interaksi sosial antara ibu tunggal dengan lingkungan sekitar menjadi penekanan dalam studi ini. Adanya faktor internal berupa komunikasi intrapersonal pada diri ibu tunggal serta faktor eksternal berupa komunikasi interpersonal ibu tunggal dengan lingkungan, seperti keluarga, komunitas, teman dekat, bahkan termasuk komentar-komentar positif dari orang-orang di dunia digital, ibu tunggal memiliki mekanisme penyembuhan diri. Hal ini digunakan oleh ibu tunggal penulis blog dalam membentuk realitas baru atas label ibu tunggal.

This article is intended to understand how single mother blogger constructs the acceptance of negative labels given by society. The negative label was inherent in women who held the status of single mother. This study was compiled based on the results of in-depth interviews conducted by researchers on the single mother bloggers and supported by a review of the blog contents written by the single mother bloggers. The research method used in this journal is holistic single case study design with constructivism paradigm. The social interactions between the single mothers and their surrounding environment or a supporting system is emphasized in this study. An internal factor of the single mothers' intrapersonal communication and external factor of interpersonal communication between the single mothers and supporting system, such as family, community, close friends or even people in the digital world who give positive comments, has a self-healing mechanism. The single mother bloggers used this to shape a new reality on the single mother label.

Kata kunci/Keywords:

Interaksi, konstruksi realitas, label negatif, Ibu tunggal penulis blog, mekanisme penyembuhan

Interaction, construction of reality, negative label, single mother blogger, healing mechanism

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Introduction

Until now the patriarchal culture that placed men in a higher position than women (Mies, 1986) is still attached to Indonesian society. As a result, various psychological and social problems arise and restrain women. Mies (1986) saw patriarchal culture as a value system that placed men higher than women. This situation permeates various aspects of society, thereby creating a cultural system that perpetuates male dominance over women. Women are considered weak and need to play a role according to patriarchal value structures, such as managing the household, supporting the husband's career, and being a submissive wife. Conversely, men are considered strong individuals, with the ideal role of 'protecting' women, making a living, and being the head of the family (Raharjo, 1995).

In this digital age, patriarchal mindset is no longer manifested only in the real world, but also in the virtual world, with negative label towards women as one of its manifestations. Both technology and the concept of gender will eventually evolve and influence one another, where this linkage will be socially constructed in certain dimensions of space and time (Wacjman, 2008). Technology also takes a role in perpetuating and transforming the values of patriarchal cultural dominance (Wacjman, 2004). This transformation then further discredits the position of women, especially those who are single mother. In the case of single mother, women find multiple negative labels. First, their single mother status is perceived to violate the ideal expectations of patriarchal culture, where women should ideally be married, have children, and fit into domestic roles well and fully. Second, the negative label comes as a consequence of taking over the position of the head of the family, which is ideally held by men.

Negative labelling is done for several reasons, such as morality, violation of gender roles, and victimization. The reason of morality puts single mother as a violator of marriage commitments. The violation of gender roles in question is associated with a single parenting practice that is not in line with community expectations. Whereas, victimization is putting negative judgement towards single mother, resulting in the increased pressure for a single mother (Worell, 1986).

A single mother has a vital position in the family. Apart from taking care of domestic matters, single mother must also improve the economic quality of her family life. There are three important roles that every single mother entails: the role as an individual or being the oneself, as the backbone of the family, and as a housewife as well (Bianca, 2014).

Negative labels place those labelled as the perpetrators of irregularities (Bercker, 1963; Lemert, 1967). Dariyo (2004) explained that the labelling of single mother status to women, whether consciously or not, will bring negative impact on the relevant women. Such negative impacts may be traumatic experiences of spouses and children, as well as the instability of work life. Single mother's happiness, according to Sirait and Irna (2015), tends to decrease due to increasing interruption variables in parent-child relationships. Examples of these variables are fighting for custody, losing partner's support, feeling failed in meeting family and social expectations, being vulnerable to problems from both families (Sirait & Irna, 2015), feeling guilt, self-regret, loneliness, helplessness, inferiority, anxiety, and the emergence of shame (Hasana and Thistle, 2014). These indications, according to Sirait and Irna (2015), can cause symptoms of depression for those who experience them.

However, single mother status does not solely bring negative impact. Single mother with a

high fighting spirit (Cahyaningsih, 2018) tends to show different symptoms. Instead of dwelling on problems, single mother with this kind of spirit is motivated to get up and improve the situation. Emerging indication can take various forms, such as personal desire for actualization, increased religiosity, independence, positive thinking attitude, and efforts to accomplish happiness in life (Hasana & Widuri, 2014).

This type of single mother thinks and takes a different attitude in dealing with negative labels due to her separation. Her fighting spirit is a form of adversity quotient (Suryanti, 2016). This research was inspired by a similar phenomenon: two single mothers who decided to rise from adversity. Their effort can be seen through their personal blog posts. Blogs in this case, become a means for individuals to convey their thoughts, feelings, and resistances toward negative labels attached to single mother. Blogs become dialectical spaces which show that social construction is not a static state.

In communication studies, different scholars discuss social construction in different ways (Robles, 2012). The first viewpoint sees social reality as a result of construction (Bloor, 1976; Collins, 1985; Latour, 1987; Fayerabend, 1975; and Gross & Keith, 1997). In his work with Croteau, Hoynes, and Sasson, Gamson (2012) showed how media as a part of social relations construct social reality. Audiences in Gamson's claim perceive media realism as reality. The second point of view sees construction of social reality not as a one way process, but a dialectical one. Social reality at individual level is not only passively a result of social construction, but also a consequence of social interaction. Individuals in this sense are positioned as active and dynamic subjects.

The application from the second perspective can be seen in Zajacoval (2002) who observed the construction of social reality at the individual level, with 4 immigrants as the subjects of research. Zajacoval emphasized that knowledge was not passively absorbed by individuals, but rather partly constructed by the individual upon verbal information obtained through the process of interaction. This proposition is in line with Berger and Luckmann (1966), who coined the term construction of social reality for the first time. As social beings, individuals cannot be separated from other individuals in their social structure. Interactions between individuals and the social environment are mutually influential. On one hand, individuals construct society, and on the other hand, individuals are also constructed by society (Berger & Luckman, 1966). The universe of meaning is thus created through a process of interaction involving intersubjectivity, which is created not only through face-to-face interaction but also in all dimensions of social life (Garcia, 2015).

In line with the second point of view, this research seeks to understand reality construction

as a dialectical consequence of social interaction. This study describes how single mother bloggers construct their acceptance of negative labels given towards them. It is formed in a research question: "how is the construction of single mother bloggers towards attached negative label?"

Research around women, single mothers, bloggers, labelling, and reality construction is not new. These themes have been widely studied, both in Indonesia and abroad, at the level of individuals and groups. The theme of female bloggers and the construction of reality were raised among others in Triastuti (2014), about women and the selection of blog features; Sartana & Purna (2014), about women, the internet and gender; Intyaswati & M.B.P (2017), about women, bloggers, and virtual communities; Istiani (2015), about the construction of social reality in Moslem Fashion Bloggers; Eckert (2018), about online abuse of female bloggers; Karman (2015), about the construction of social reality as a movement of thought; Muashomah (2010), about labels against women in teen magazines; and Anwari (2017), about social labels accepted by women victims of rape.

These studies have enriched the literature related to women, female bloggers, labelling of women, and the construction of social reality, but the combination of labelling phenomena in single mother bloggers and the perspective of social reality construction as used in this study have not been widely publicized, both in Indonesia and abroad. Therefore academically, the significance of this research lies in the links between single mother bloggers phenomenon and the concept of labelling in which the construction of their reality changes the view of single mother labels.

Socially, this research is significant because of the social issues discussed in the study, i.e. the negative labelling of women as a consequence of patriarchal culture. This phenomenon is not fully realized by the community, so individuals as part of the community worsen the atmosphere by emphasizing the existing labelling practice. On the other hand, women and single mother, who are labelled, stuck in depression and vulnerable situations. This research seeks to present the perspectives of single mother bloggers with higher fighting spirit who actively articulate their views through their blog posts.

Literature Review

Social Construction of Reality

The social construction of reality is chosen to understand the use and benefits of blogs for single mothers, which in turn enriches studies related to single mothers, negative labels, and blogs. As explained earlier, previous studies on single mother negative labels and the use of blogs have not been able to explain the role of blogs for single mothers in dealing with negative labels. Moreover, the social construction of reality has never been used in research related to the acceptance of negative labels on single mother bloggers.

Before talking about the social construction of reality, it is important to first understand what reality is. Reality, according to Mugambi (1996) is what empirically happens in the world. Through the sensory system, this reality is perceived by humans. The reality of the results of human perception is known as perceived reality (Mugambi, 1996).

Humans label and categorize perceived reality through language. By labelling, humans construct what they perceive as truth, which is a proposition about an empirical reality. This proposition always has two possibilities. First, it is true if its version of truth is in line with its empirical reality. Second, it is false if the version of truth differs from its empirical reality (Mugambi, 1996). Mugambi said that there could not be more than one version of truth. However, it is very likely to see reality from so many points of view. Different perspective roots in different perceived realities, which cause the variations in the construction of understanding of truth.

The social construction of reality illustrates how humans shape their understanding of the world (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). The term social construction was first introduced by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966). Built from the perspective of social constructionism, Berger and Luckmann focused their thoughts on human as subject. Both saw humans as individuals who permanently connected and interacted with other individuals. Through this interaction, the subject constructs society and is also constructed by it (García, 2015). The social world is built in interactions which involve patterns of activity.

Cromby Nightingale (1999) described four general characteristics of social construction, as quoted in Garcia (2015). First is prioritizing social processes, which views the subject's experience as a social process where interaction is understood as a determinant of the knowledge absorbed by the subject. Second is looking at historical and cultural specificities as specific social and cultural products. Third is to realize the interdependence between knowledge and action. Thus, each way of knowledge leads individuals to different forms of actions that lead to different consequences. Fourth, social construction is related to the assumption that all knowledge is historical and socially specific and its critical contribution is to oppose essentialism, individualism and mentalism, the central idea of hegemonic psychology, from a more experimental approach.

According to Littlejohn and Foss (2009), among the ideas of Berger and Luckmann, there were two main issues which were relevant to the study of communication. First, humans define experience by building their perception of the world and how the world works. Second, language plays a role in constructing reality. There are three important aspects in Berger and Luckmann's social construction, namely reality, social interaction, and language and science (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). In communication studies, Littlejohn and

Foss (2009) adapted these three aspects and re-constructed them in three terms: social, construction, and reality.

Social aspect refers to how social interaction contributes to the formation of perceived reality. Luckmann (2008) said that the social world was a historical communicative system in which historical knowledge was stocked and historical institutional structures were built, nurtured, transmitted, transformed, and sometimes destroyed in social interactions. Social interactions include intentional individual actions, where the actions are of particular significance to individuals, e.g. related to expectations of results. Likewise in marriage, according to Luckmann (2008), actions were intrinsically meaningful, no matter whether the bridging relation like marriage still survived from collapse, persisted or failed. The meaning of individual actions is subjective, but most of it comes from the stock of social knowledge. Social knowledge does not arise from nothing; rather it is built in a long chain of communicative social interactions consisting of coordinated and synchronized individual actions (Luckman, 2008). This stock of social knowledge then guides the individual in various actions including in solving his own problems.

Reality refers to physical reality. In Mugambi's view, this was known as empirical reality. Empirical reality is different from perceived reality (Mugambi, 1999). Reality is defined as the quality of phenomena known independently of the individual's will, whereas knowledge is understood as a certainty that the phenomenon is real and has special characteristics (García, 2015). Garcia further explained that, the reality of daily life was also related to face-to-face interactions and mediated interactions with the social world. Borrowing Carey's (1989) point of view, Littlejohn and Foss (2009) described construction as a process which involved four stages: development, maintenance, reparation, and change. If construction involves the process of forming human perception of reality, the four stages represent the formulation path of this perception.

According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), reality construction was built through three stages: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Externalization occurs when humans create cultural product, both material (such as writings and artifacts) and non-material (such as beliefs, values, and norms). Objectivation occurs when cultural products are released into the social world and become separated from the makers. At this point, other people are free to interpret cultural products independently. The third stage is internalization. Internalization relates to perceived reality that is integrated to the interactions and social contexts that influence a person. Kashima (2014) said that context-specific shared grounding was not lost when shared activities ceased, but rather were remembered and carried into the future. This is a generalization process that needs to be mediated by intraper-

sonal cognition. When each individual leaves certain shared activities, that person will involve in other shared activities, then others, and so on. When people join and leave the shared activities, they carry on their memories of specific shared contexts (Kashima, 2014).

In this construction process, language plays an important role (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). Using language, humans label realities. The reality captured by human senses and transformed into perceived reality is integrated into the structure of human understanding, and becomes the basis for their judgment of truth (Mugambi, 2009). Littlejohn and Foss combined this perspective of social construction of reality with the communication perspective. Both assessed that communication became a means of creating human construction of reality and human understanding of that reality. Through communication, words, actions, and media products, the construction of social reality is possibly developed (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). Thus, understanding and meaning are not created solely in individuals, but through their interactions with humans and their social environment (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Labelling

The concept of labelling is developed from sociological approach which focuses on the role of social labelling in the development of crime and deviation. This concept assumes although deviant behavior can initially originate from various causes and conditions, once individuals are labelled or defined as deviations, they often face new problems stemming from self and others' reactions to negative stereotypes inherent in deviant labels (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1967).

Social labels in general are part of the cultural framework that people use to define and categorize the social world. The label of deviation becomes special due to its role which allows stigma to occur. This is a basic assumption for labelling theory. Deviant labels, associated with stigma, mean that mainstream culture has attached specific images or stereotypes to those labels (Link & Phelan, 2001). Negative stereotypes, such as perpetrators of crime, are manifested in mainstream culture in various ways, for example in films, books, mass media, and even everyday language (Becker, 1963; Goffman, 1963; Scheff, 1966).

In relation to gender discussions, social labels that are rooted in these stereotypes tend to harm women and hinder their steps (Muashomah, 2010). In Anwari (2017), the label of crime and/or deviations depends on the view of the person observing. Different individuals and/or groups may have different concepts about what is considered good and appropriate in certain situations.

Patriarchal Culture

The concept of patriarchal culture was explained by Pierre Bourdieu in his book, *Masculine Domination*, the basis of that worldview

which being organized according to the division into relational genders, male and female. It is also constituted as the symbol of virility, of the specifically male point of honour, and the difference between biological bodies as objective foundations of the difference between the sexes, in the sense of genders constructed as two hierarchized social essences and it legitimates a relationship of domination by embedding it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction (Fowler, 2010). Mies (1986) stated that patriarchal culture is a value which placed men in a higher position than women. The situation is pervasive in various aspects of society, thus creating a cultural system that gives dominance to men. Therefore, women become the subject of subjugation. Applicable standards are men's standards in various fields, such as employment, sports, and so on (Haryatmoko, 2010).

Women and Blogs

Literatures on women and technology are actually high in numbers. Terry and Gomez (2011), for example, outlined some of the obstacles which made it difficult for many women in developing countries to gain access to and utilize ICTs. In addition to infrastructure and connectivity issues, an obstacle often faced by women is the issue of time and cost availability. This is related to the role of women in developing countries, the majority of which still prioritize the housewife roles. Thus all of their time is mostly used to take care of children and families (Hakiki & Supriyanto, 2018). More specifically about the use of blogs by women, Manosevitch and Tzuk (2017) explained that blogging was used as a driving mechanism for community development and empowerment for the economic and personal development of women, especially in the Israeli female craftsmen community. Blogs are also used as cyberspace and virtual space that gather people with similar interests and build emotional bonds virtually (Frizzo et. al, 2017). Blogs also shape the identity of women (Antunovic & Hardin, 2013).

Theoretical Assumptions

In the context of this study, Berger and Luckmann's (1966) point of view is used to provide an overview of how interactions affect the construction of reality in the minds of research subjects. The externalization of negative labels on single mother bloggers emerges due to patriarchal culture dominance. The label is then objectified both in oral speech as well and written text in social media in the form of uploaded posts, personal messages, and comments. This label is then perceived by the individual and its values are internalized into the construction of the knowledge that person has.

Even though it is internalized, the construction of reality in the mind of the respective individual is not static. The researcher assumes that the construction of reality can change along with dynamics in that person's social interactions. This

study concentrates at individual level and seeks to understand the relationship between social interaction and the shift in the construction of reality in the research subject's mind (single mother blogger), especially in viewing and responding to negative labels directed towards her.

Research Methodology

This research intends to gain an understanding of the experience of single mother bloggers related on their mechanism in overcoming problems related to negative label towards their single mother status and how the interactions occur so that new construction emerges from the single mother and forms new realities for them, who in this case are bloggers. The purpose of the research is in line with the research question, which is "how is the construction of single mother bloggers towards attached negative label?" Proposition of the study states that there is a difference in the reaction of the single mother towards negative label, which is related to individual's differences in constructing reality. A single mother who is psychologically down at first, can construct different thoughts which changed their reaction mechanism towards negative label attached to their status. Reality construction, therefore, is not a static state.

This study describes the life experience of two single mother blogger informants. Both experienced many adversities and at first, shut themselves off from the world, including digital sphere due to the negative labels they received. Informants later chose to speak up their mind in their personal blog. Their posts gained many positive responses and even inspired some other women who shared the same story. Informant's decision to keep writing about their story in blog illustrates at least two things: (1) a shifting perspective that triggers their attitude to change towards negative label they received; (2) different reactions between these two informants in dealing with negative label.

This study is built upon constructivist paradigm with qualitative research approach. By utilizing constructivism, this study tries to uncover negative labelled experienced by single mother bloggers from their own point of view, how they react towards it, and how their individual construction of reality shapes their understanding and directs their behavior to overcome it. The shift in the construction of reality is assumed to be influenced by the change in their social interactions with community and extended family. The purpose of this study is to determine the process carried out by single mother bloggers in constructing their reality upon receiving negative labels as single mothers. This also includes the process of the reality construction, and how blogging helps these mothers in curing their emotional pain than later inspire others.

This research uses case study as the research strategy. This strategy does not apply any control over certain behaviors and focuses on contempo-

rary phenomena in the context of real life (Yin; 2014). Therefore, it is suitable to describe the addressed phenomenon: the single mother bloggers' construction of negative label they received. The chosen type of case study is holistic single-case design with focuses on single mother blogger individual as unit of analysis. Data collection method includes semi-structured interviews to gain primary data, complemented by analysis of written posts uploaded in informants' personal blog. The written blog posts served as supporting or complementary data.

Additional data were selected by choosing one article from each of the informant's blog which best represented the experience of negative label and the decision-making process reflecting their reaction to it. This research was conducted from February to June 2019. Data analysis technique applicable to this research is pattern matching logic (Yin, 2014). By utilizing purposive sampling, this study found two single mother bloggers who have experienced a divorce and received negative labels from society due to their single mother status. Both informants used organic blogs to convey their personal thoughts. Organic blogs are blogs that have no profit or income gaining intentions from the uploaded posts. To reach these informants, researchers first contacted some bloggers community, like Komunitas Emak-Emak Blogger (KEB), Single Mother Indonesia (SMI), and Single Parents Indonesia in Motion (SPIN Motion) as first step to find relevant informants. Interview results were transcribed into verbatim following some coding steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The Coding Book was made before the coding steps were taken.

Results

Results of this study were obtained from in-depth interviews and blog posts written by both informants. In-depth interviews served as primary data to find out how the interaction of these single mother blogger informants influenced their reality construction and how they responded to negative labels attached to them. Blog posts were used as supporting data to explore important facts from informants and reveal things which have not been conveyed in the in-depth interviews. Through these posts, the informants' expressions and feelings could be further explained.

Informants in this study are MS and FSH. At the time of research, MS was 38 years old and FSH was 27 years old. Both came from high educational backgrounds. Both MS and FSH completed their college degree. FSH was currently enrolled in a magister program at a private university in Jakarta. MS and FSH have both worked as officers. MS used to work in a government agency, while FSH had worked in several e-commerce companies and a private school in Jakarta. MS got married after graduating from college, while FSH got married at 21 years old and was still a college student. From that mar-

riage, MS was blessed with 2 children (boy and girl) who were in elementary school, while FSH was blessed with a 4-years-old daughter, who was in preschool.

Informants' background showed that both were adult women, who were educated, independent, had their own income, and able to make decisions. However, MS said that she felt that her performance was better when she worked around people. When this research was conducted, she has been working as a blogger and certified yoga instructor. Meanwhile, FSH felt more like working in e-commerce than being a teacher, despite pursuing her further education in educational studies.

During her marriage, MS lived in good financial conditions. She and her husband married at a mature age and already had an established job. MS's husband supported her decision to work at the Presidential Staff Office, even though she had to be separated from her first child who lived in Bandung. "*My kid was in Bandung...every week I went to Bandung to see him, and headed for Jakarta on Monday,*" she said. MS should go back and forth between Jakarta and Bandung every week to be able to work and meet her baby.

This situation made her working uncomfortably. In addition to being separated from her kid, MS felt that her job was not suitable for her. She actually preferred to work with people rather than behind the laptop. Therefore, she intended to quit but her husband did not give his permission. Her husband encouraged her to continue working and facing all difficulties. When she was finally pregnant with her second child, she recognized this to be her only chance to resign. "Thanks God I was pregnant, that's the only way I could get out of my work, because my husband continued encouraging me to work," MS explained.

Her statement represents the externalization of feeling relief after being released from the pressure of her husband who still required her to keep working. Bourdieu (in Haryatmoko, 2010: 13) identified the phenomenon based on a scheme of perception and appreciation of the historical structure which referred to the metaphysical hierarchy. Symbolically, MS was hampered when deciding to stop working because the decision was not supported by her husband. Although she was not comfortable having a routine that was not her interest and also being far from the child, MS had to continue to live that way because her husband had not allowed her to stop working. What MS's having been through then increasingly legitimated the dominance of the husband, which in this context was based on patriarchal cultural domination. Her husband's dominance in this context was rooted in patriarchal dominance.

The dominance of patriarchal culture was also experienced by FSH. FSH had experienced inner turmoil while working. In contrast to MS, FSH started her marriage with bad financial conditions. A few months after marriage, she was pregnant. But according to her, her husband was not

happy about this. She thought that her husband was not ready to have kids and that caused his depression. *"In my own point of view, I think he just wanted to get married and have fun. He was shocked when I was pregnant... He stressed about the money he needed to earn for the baby."* That pressure caused her to be forced by her husband to work even while pregnant. She felt pressured because at that time she had not yet graduated from college and did not have a diploma. For this reason, FSH began trying to work as a freelancer who did not need any diploma.

This pressure became increasingly unusual, when the husband thrown away the responsibility for earning a living to her. She felt burdened having to work in a pregnant condition. In her opinion, her husband's salary was fairly high. But it was never enough because the husband did not give it completely to her. FSH was aware of this injustice but chose to be silent and not convey this feeling to her husband.

"He said this, 'if you don't work, what should we eat?' I thought it's his responsibility as the head of the family, but I hardly dare to open my mouth. I obeyed him, 'yes, tomorrow I will work.' I was afraid of being hurt. If I didn't obey him, I was afraid to be killed...left nothing but a name. That's what I was afraid of," she added.

Her husband's violence was not only in forcing her to work, but also transformed into domestic violence. FSH herself was confused by her husband's changing attitude. His marriage attitude was the opposite of the times when they were still dating. *"In dating, he looked so sweet. During marriage, he was typical after I was scolded and beaten, the next day he gave me flowers, gave me a trip. Feeling guilty but in that way."*

Situation got worse when their financial needs could not be fulfilled, even after both of them worked. FSH began to suspect her husband who often went home so late at night, or even came in the morning. *"I asked him why he got home so late. He replied, 'I work, you think I do not. This is for you!'" He strangled my neck, and I said it hurt. The next day, he gave me flowers."*

Her obedience to her husband was like a logical consequence that FSH had to undergo and became her only life choice. She was unable to express her opinion because she was cautious of the threat of violence. The wife's role in not denying the husband's decision has been confirmed by patriarchal cultural traditions. Haryatmoko (2010:135) explained that mastery over discourse made male dominance something natural and acceptable to women. Even the most torturous and intolerable situations can seem natural.

The torturing situation experienced by MS and FSH seemed normal for their husbands because the dominance of patriarchal culture legitimized their decision to do so. It once received without resistance from both informants. Until the pregnancy enabled them to evade their husband's decision.

The phenomenon experienced by MS and FSH

is a form of symbolic violence. Bourdieu (1980: 216, in Haryatmoko, 2010: 13) defined symbolic violence as a very subtle violence wherein the victim was unaware of the violence. Symbolic violence is mostly channeling cognitively through symbolic communication, namely language, representation, and symbols. Thus, it makes the victim implicitly agree to experience violence. After going through various forms of symbolic violence, both MS and FSH finally decided to divorce. Symbolic violence was not the only reason for divorce. There were also other equally crucial reasons which brought them around to divorce. At the time of divorce, MS had been married for 13 years, while FSH was 2 years. MS's marriage was initially fine, though she and her husband had undergone a long distance marriage (LDM) in the last 3 years. Her husband was transferred to Papua in the Papua and West Papua Development Unit (UP4B), while MS continued to live in Jakarta with her two children. Despite the long distance, they continued to communicate intensely. *"When we decide to do LDM, we had taken to considerations any risks involved,"* said her.

In the third year of her husband's working in Papua, precisely on Sunday, February 8, 2015, MS's husband suddenly disappeared and could not be reached. She tried various ways to find her husband, from asking her husband's coworkers in the office to reporting missing people to the authorities. At the time, MS was devastated by the incident as she wrote her distress on her blog. Whenever someone asked her about her husband, she felt hurt as she could not imagine her husband's condition and whereabouts. In March 2015, exactly 25 days after disappearing, MS's husband was found in Bandung. However, MS did not elaborate further until they divorced. According to MS, the relationship was no longer tenable despite all the counselling taken:

"After all, in 2015 I'm officially a single parent. One year after that I withdrew from all activities ... from the existence that had been built in the KEB," said MS.

Meanwhile FSH, different from MSH, had dealt with a difficult marriage from the beginning. According to FSH, she and her husband were dating for only 6 months when she was in college in Yogyakarta. After a short dating period, he proposed. FSH explained that her husband's broken family background made him have to live alone in Yogyakarta and this too pushed him too to ask FSH's hand for marriage. However, after marriage, and after FSH got pregnant early on their marriage, her husband was caught in an affair with another woman. *"My friends told me everything. I also found his BBM message to a woman,"* expressed her.

FSH tried to think positively every time her husband came home late, but eventually FSH gave in and confronted her husband. FSH also experienced domestic violence, even during her pregnancy. However, every time he hurt her, FSH's husband always behaved sweetly. Due to

this unhealthy relationship, FSH decided to move out and that was the time when she found her husband was unlawfully married and pregnant with another woman. FSH decided to divorce as she justified that she didn't know where her husband was. After a year, she was officially a single mother.

MS and FSH both experienced a severe period after their divorce. MS felt guilty for not being able to maintain her family and disappointing her children. FSH blamed God for her husband's condition which was full of problems, like cheating, irresponsible, and doing domestic violence to her. The most difficult situation for MS after divorce was when she had to raise her kids properly, while she was currently blaming herself and looking for objects to blame. Whereas, the most difficult time for FSH after divorce was that she had to take care of her child alone, without being supported and received no attention at all from her ex-husband.

After becoming a single mother, MS and FSH were psychologically down, especially due to negative labelling. Social labels are generally part of cultural construction, which in this context is patriarchal culture. This patriarchal cultural construction was used by people around MS and FSH to define and categorize the social world. Label is one of the definitions and categorization of the social world. A distorted label is something special because it becomes a stigma (Link & Phelan, 2001).

Labelling enters gender construction in and across communities in a complex way. The specificity of linguistic resources and practices available to speakers, is very important to show how labelling is related to gender. At the same time, the function of a particular label depends on how the label is used in social practice in general and its relation to gender practices in particular (McConnell-Ginet, 2008). Labels in the case of MS and FSH are used in patriarchal cultural practices, i.e. labels which contain negative sentiment on women.

MS was labelled as an extremely busy career woman who forgot about her family and was divorced. MS claimed she often received negative comments repeatedly in several posts on social media, like "No wonder her husband ran away, she's trying too much to impose her existence!", "Be careful. When a woman has a career, she can forget about her place themselves,", "Be careful, a woman should get back to the kitchen."

Because of the labels, MS was traumatized by social media. She stopped working as a top multilevel marketing (MLM) agent as well as from the women blogger community that she had long pioneered. MS chose to withdraw from people and remain silent. FSH, on the other hand, with her widow status, she felt prevented from entering the community. Moreover, she was still very young when she had to embrace her new status as a single mother. After the divorce, FSH

claimed to often hear negative comments directed towards her. FSH said that her close friends often told her that there were negative comments posted to her from other friends.

"Divorce? Who can provide for her child?"
(FSH's friend)

"This girl must depend so much on her husband. She is too cheerful and cannot make money herself." (FSH's friend)

"I will not marry a widow. I mean, widow, what do I get from her. Like there's no other woman" (FSH's friend)

Not only from friends and acquaintances, FSH heard her extended family talked negatively about her. FSH said that her mother often received comments from her aunties. Such comments questioned her parents' decision to allow FSH to get married in such a young age.

"No wonder, she's too young to get married."
(FSH's aunty)

"Don't follow her. Quick to wed, quick to fail." (FSH's aunty)

Similar to MS, FSH chose to draw back from social media as she was not prepared to be questioned by her surroundings. She also decided to refrain from family events. All these fears and adversity that MS and FSH were facing were part of their internalisation and part of their social construction of reality formed by the society through negative or diverge labelling. Distorted labels, associated with stigma, mean that mainstream culture has attached specific images or stereotypes to distorted labels (Link & Phelan, 2001). These negative stereotypes, such as negative image of crime perpetrators, are manifested in mainstream culture through various ways, such as films, books, mass media, as well as everyday language. (Becker, 1963; Goffman, 1963; Scheff, 1966).

For a year, MS and FSH suffered a post-divorce slump, until finally they were able to rise. The presence of children, closeness with mother, family, and close friends made them able to return to normal conditions. They were all supporting systems for MS and FSH. Moreover, they both joined a community whose members had the same status as them, which further strengthened their mentality to rise.

MS joined Single Mother Indonesia (SMI) after receiving an advice from a close friend who was the founder of SMI. Meanwhile, FSH joined Single Parents Indonesia in Motion (SPIN Motion) after receiving advice from friends whose uncle is the founder of the community. After joining SMI and SPIN Motion communities, MS and FSH dared to speak up on their status as a single

mother. One of the means they used to convey their thoughts was through writing blog articles. This also served as a healing mechanism for them.

“Alright, let’s be empowered together. My best friend, the founder of SMI, has friends who need help. I also have a community of women whose contents should synergize, let’s not talking bad to others. There are women oppressed and have their own stories. Here, we have the power to talk, to speak up,” (MS).

“I really want to befriend people like those in SPIN Motion. We don’t make widows or widowers a bad stigma: “we can’t live if we don’t have a partner,” “we can’t live, we can’t feed the children”, don’t be like that. That’s why, our chairman mas Yasin likes to write about widows”. (FSH informant)

Although MS and FSH got married and divorced in different ages, both studied the same major, i.e. Indonesian Literature. This made them familiar to writing or expressing thoughts and feelings through words. Their supporting systems encouraged them to speak up about their status as a single mother, while blogs became their means to heal. Moreover, they have previously had writing experiences on blogs. MS has written on blogs for her MLM business needs. FSH has written on Tumblr. Both informants were also familiar to write

MS wrote a blog which inspired women to rise, while FSH’s blog posts helped others to learn from her bitter experiences. MS blog posts flowed according to the expression of her heart and thoughts. The content were not emotional and seemed reflective. This could be attributed to MS’s passion for yoga. Writing and yoga were a fitting combination for her to heal. In addition, it was supported by the habit of MS to gather with friends while drinking coffee. On the other hand, FSH’s blog posts were more emotionally and fiery due to the release of her scarred feelings towards her ex-husband and cheating. Chronology of the affair and what kind of her ex-husband’s irresponsible behaviour and often his doing domestic violence was also written. In interview session, FSH said that she preferred to disclose identities of ex-husband and his affair.

After expressing their thoughts and feelings as single mother, MS and FSH felt relieved. Initially, they had doubts and afraid of people’s reactions to their writing. *“I often feel afraid, whether my writing scarred someone or not...”* (FSH). They both then, decided to do intrapersonal communication. This they did before finally decided to publish articles. However, in the end, both of them decided to post their writings after encour-

aging themselves to doing intrapersonal communication.

Intrapersonal communication is communication within a person or between a person and himself, a form or class of thought, and nonverbal communication as a form or class of nonverbal behavior. Intrapersonal communication is not exactly thinking or it is nothing more than thinking. Intrapersonal communication can be understood as a conversation or sharing of meaning between two positions or modes of thought in a person, involving shared meaning between dialogical entities. Unlike generic nonverbal behavior, thinking involves the use of symbolic forms. Thus, intrapersonal communication inherently involves the transfer of symbolic meaning among two dialogical positions in a person (LittleJohn, 2009).

The most memorable blog post for MS was titled Hello, Merdeka! (translated: Hello, Freedom!), while for FSH, it was titled Lovy Bukan Prioritasnya (translated: Lovy Was Not His Priority). Hell, Merdeka! blog post for MS was her turning point as she could feel freedom and independence after a long helpless and trapped feeling. On the other hand, Lovy Bukan Prioritasnya blog post was FSH’s first article expressing her feelings which needed a lot of courage. Both MS and FSH shared that they received a lot of comments on their memorable posts. They did not expect their writing could inspire or even empower other people. MS told how people were inspired by her experience as a single mother on her blog. This then motivated MS to write more articles related to single mother. MS stated that her writings did not just become a form of expression, but also to motivate and empower those who read her blog.

Eventually, I decided to write, still with this one specific keyword which is single mother, but on different topics such as how to be a strong single parent, the tips and so forth. Turns out we can benefit other people through our writing. That’s when I came to think that this is my way, writing. (Informant MS)

Similar with MS, FSH told how her blog triggered her closest friends. Most of her friends learned through stories on her blog. They admitted that how their view on single mother changed as FSH was able to describe her struggle to revive from the downturn in her writing.

“Some good friends told me like this, ‘You are one of the people who make us realize that a single mother is not always that gloomy. You prove that you can still manage to send your child to school, you can still be happy, you can still share promos, and share about whatever activities,’ said FSH.

The ability of MS and FSH to get through difficult times, reflects a form of interaction between them and their support system circle. Social interaction, in this context, can accelerate the process of healing the wounds from negative labels. In addition, intrapersonal communication also

helps informants to identify opportunities that can be maximized by both. External and internal support then further strengthened the two informants to write down their life stories in blogs. After releasing blog posts, the two informants felt relieved. Publishing articles through blogs became a turning point to re-open themselves as a new person who held the status of single mother without pressure.

Discussion

The social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) involves not only face-to-face interactions, but also computer-mediated interactions. In the context of MS and FSH as single mother bloggers, the interaction as mentioned takes place in the virtual realm, that is, when both externalize their thoughts and feelings and make them objectified through their blog posts. Public read and internalized it with various responses, which some are reflected in the comments they left on those posts. Patriarchal culture domination influenced articulation of these comments. The hierarchical pattern of relations created by patriarchal culture in social interactions forms a perspective that prioritizes men's interests over women's. This perspective then constructs the general social reality of a phenomenon and potentially restraints the lives of women, especially women with single mother status.

Single mother status is defined negatively by society. Therefore, the definition frequently ends in embedding a negative label on a single mother. Negative labels that are pinned over and over again, make the downturn become inevitable for single mothers. Yet, behind their deterioration experience, there will be people who become the strength of the single mother to rise, such as themselves, children, family, and also friends.

Social interaction that strengthen these two single mothers does not only come from the closest people but also from the community. These communities influence individual decision making from intrapersonal communication in facing negative labelling. Although negative labels will never disappear, but single mother manage to deal with these negative labels and reshape their lives.

In today's digital era, any single mothers can use blogs as a means to articulate their point of view. Blogs become dialectical space for the single mothers to define new realities about their status. In addition, blogs can be a public space for single mothers to actualize themselves. The single mothers can devote all the power they possessed by writing on a blog. The article can open a dialectical space between single mothers and the public which then potentially present a new reality construction and represent their form of resistance towards patriarchal domination. Or in other words, single mothers "go against" the patriarchal culture that has been formed so far by carrying out new reality construction through writing on the blog.

Blogs as a medium of communication become a means to provide information to people about what has happened and how the self-healing process experienced by single mother bloggers. Even though negative comments containing negative labels are conveyed, the healing process still occurs. In the end, intentionally or not, single mother bloggers succeed in empowering themselves and inspiring others, especially their blog readers, so other people do not experience the same thing, or if they ever do so, they can copy the healing mechanism that has been told through the blog. This finding discussion can be simplified in this scheme.

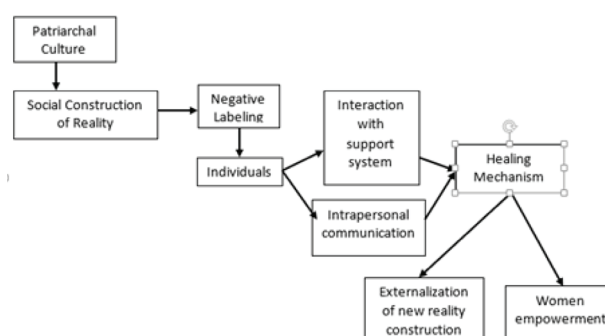


Figure 1. Research Finding Scheme

This scheme illustrates how patriarchal culture takes role in shaping the single mother's self-construction in the social world. This construction is then manifested in the form of a negative label pinned to a single mother. When receiving the negative label, the individual experiences a slump. Nevertheless, interaction with the support system and intrapersonal communication enables single mothers to create a self-healing mechanism. This chart supports the findings of Eckart's research (2018) which stated that women used blogs to carry out resistance to social constructs which labelled them negatively. Eckart (2018) asserted that female bloggers were able to set new ground rules for online and offline communication, with the power of solidarity, creativity and sophistication, without ignoring the social, technological, cultural, and legal constraints they faced. The findings in this study further reinforce that the collective of single mother bloggers has become a support system for them to undergo difficult times when facing negative labels. This support is then internalized through interpersonal communication to create a healing mechanism.

This mechanism also affects their decision to overcome adversity. When deciding to rise up, single mother then externalizes her healing through writing on a blog that illustrates the new reality of the meaning of single mother. Through these writings, single mother is able to confirm that her identity as a single mother does not always have a negative meaning. Moreover, the healing mechanism is also able to make single mothers have the desire to empower other women who are

facing similar problems. This is carried out, so other women could rise from adversity.

Thus, this research further confirms that the healing mechanism created from women's dialectical space with online communities, provides opportunities for women to form new realities. Therefore, they can communicate through public spaces, such as blogs. In contrast to the research of Parker, Riyani & Nolan (2016) which illustrated the few women's choices to form new realities to be accepted by the social world, the findings of this study actually show that with the help of technology, women's opportunities to actualize themselves open wider. In the same time, technology also facilitates the creation of support system formation for other women who experience similar problems.

Conclusion

This study shows that construction of single mother bloggers over negative labels is changing. Initially, the reality construction in the minds of two informants was strongly influenced by the negative label of the community towards the status of single mother which made the informants felt down. The negative post-divorce label is apparently not the sole source that constructs the informants' perspective on the world. The tendency of informants to blame themselves and feeling weak is also built on the long history of patriarchal domination. The research findings show that symbolic violence occurs repeatedly on both informants, both in face-to-face interaction and in virtual interactions. These violent acts were carried out by people closest to and distant acquaintances, since before and after divorce.

However, this construction of reality is changing slowly. In both informants, this change oc-

curred along with the psychological healing mechanisms that each experienced. From the research findings, there were two factors which supported the healing mechanism of the informants, i.e. external and internal factors. Internal factor was the presence of support system which provided all the informants needed in difficult times. This support system might consist of closest people, such as children, family, friends, and also the special community for single mother, like SMI and SPIN Motion. Meanwhile, the internal factor could be a form of communication carried out by single mother as a form of self-healing.

The involvement of informants in the community also indicated the change in the formation of social environment. SMI and SPIN Motion which is dedicated to provide moral support for single mother presents a new perspective on the reality of single mother. The interaction between informants and this community also with closest people influenced the construction of reality in informants' minds. As the healing mechanism flows, each individual finds a turning-point to revive from their downturn.

That awakening signified the change in the construction of reality in the mind of each informant. Their thoughts, opinions, and feelings were externalized in various forms. One of these was through writing in their blog. This new construction of reality triggered awareness among informants, i.e. being a single mother was not purely a woman's fault. Single mothers can also be independent and brings a positive impact on her surroundings. This awareness then led to the desire of the single mothers to empower other women, so they would have capabilities to rise from the same dilemma.

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