

A Call for More Research Publications on Gender in Indonesia's Public Relations

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to analyze the current state of research on gender in Indonesia's PR industry and identify areas that need more attention. Based on the analysis of 14 articles published in academic journals, conference proceedings and scholarly theses from 2012 until June 2023, the following key themes were identified: 1) Leadership in PR; 2) Lookism; 3) Gendered PR roles; 4) Gender and career competence; 5) Gendered stereotypes; 6) Gender gaps in the PR industry; and, 7) Feminist PR scholarship. There have been few publications related to gender in the Indonesia's public relations industry, and even fewer research conducted at a macro level. Moreover, the publications identified in this study lack diversity in research methodology. Using the feminist critical perspective, this article calls for more research on gender in Indonesia's PR industry at a macro level, using diverse research methods, that interrogate the conditions described in literature described over the past decade. There is a need for more inclusive practices in academic processes that shape disciplinary knowledge. This will help close the research gap that exists due to the lack of publications outside of the standard white, heterosexual, American-centric PR.

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Introduction

Historically, women have quantitatively dominated the public relations (PR) industry. Nevertheless, women have also been historically excluded from managerial positions due to the glass ceiling (Simorangkir, 2012). This condition has attracted the attention of many researchers to conduct studies on various issues related to gender in public relations. Some of these studies may focus on specific countries or regions. However, most research published on PR in general, and gender specifically, focus on American PR (Vardeman-Winter & Place, 2017).

In Indonesia, women have also traditionally dominated the PR industry in numbers as well, but not in leadership. This is one of the reasons many women have left their corporate job to work at a PR agency, where women's career appears to flourish (Kriyantono et

al., 2022; Simorangkir, 2011). In fact, many PR agencies in Indonesia were established by female practitioners, e.g., Inke Maris, Indira Abidin, Trishi Setiayu, and more. This may mask the gender inequity problem at hand because of the many women who hold top leadership positions in agencies. It must be noted that, however, very few people actually have the ability – and the capital – to build their own PR agency, so while some women may be able to 'beat the system' by exiting the corporate world, most female PR professionals will have to either accept the reality of being excluded from promotions to managerial positions, while others will simply leave the profession altogether. Nevertheless, many women have proven stellar contributions as PR leaders (Kriyantono, 2019). Yet, there is a general

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perception of what is suitable or not for women leaders.

In 2009, a doctoral dissertation titled “Has the Glass Ceiling really been Broken? The Impacts of the Feminization of the Public Relations Industry in Indonesia” (Simorangkir, 2009) was completed and published. Through interviews with 53 PR practitioners and educators in Jakarta, as well as an analysis of an online discussion by a PR professional association’s mailing list, this dissertation investigated how the PR field, especially when it comes to its female practitioners, has been impacted by its feminization. Results showed several negative impacts, including the degradation of the PR profession; discrimination based on looks; the presumption of male PR practitioners as gay; encroachment in the PR function; low budget allocation and low remuneration; and the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace (Simorangkir, 2009).

More than a decade has passed since this dissertation and the articles published based on it (Simorangkir, 2011, 2012, 2013), yet there have not been many studies conducted on gender in Indonesia’s PR industry. This article stems from the difficulty faced by the author and many of her thesis students in finding recent comprehensive research articles on the topic of gender in PR. Vardeman-Winter and Place (2017) write: “different women’s stories- as well as men’s stories who are not part of the standard White, heterosexual, American experience - are severely underrepresented in public relations practice and research” (p.1). This leads to the lack of literature for new research studies. Those conducting research on gender in Indonesia’s PR would have to rely on outdated studies and studies conducted in other nations – mostly Western nations. Moreover, this lack of recent literatures also leads to under representation of Indonesia in the scholarly realm and challenge the paradigm that dominates PR scholarship, which is primarily American (L’Etang, 2009).

Simorangkir’s comprehensive research on the feminization of Indonesia’s PR industry thoroughly described the PR industry and analyzed it using feminist perspectives. However, even though it involved more than 50 in-depth interviews, it still only focused on the capital area of Jakarta. It is high time for a follow up on whether the conditions described in this research remain the same. Most importantly, it is important that such comprehensive research be expanded beyond the Jakarta area.

Feminist critical theory criticizes how literature (or cultural productions) strengthens or underestimates the political, economic, social, and psychological oppression of women. Feminist

critics believe that wherever there is power inequity, the most dominant power always becomes the default experience (Rhode, 2013).

Bachmann and Proust (2020) identify the overall lack of visibility for feminist scholarship from the Global South and from non-Western contexts within communication disciplines. This lack of ‘other’ scholarship is particularly problematic for feminist scholars, as there is a risk that allegedly universal approaches to the lived experience of women do not take into account the diversity of those experiences or the intersectional factors that contribute to oppression and inequality.

The richness and diversity of feminist perspectives, particularly from regions that are underrepresented in communication scholarship, might deliver insights useful for challenging disciplinary boundaries and gendered power relations. Therefore, this article seeks to analyze the current state of research on gender in Indonesia’s PR industry, and by doing so, identify areas that need more attention.

Gender in Indonesia

As the world’s fourth largest population as well as the largest archipelago, the Republic of Indonesia is home to over 275 million people (Worldometer, 2021), with approximately 87% of them being Muslim. This makes Indonesia also home to the world’s largest Muslim population (Statista, 2021). Other official religions include Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and most recently acknowledged by the state, Confucianism. Indonesia’s diverse population encompasses over 300 ethnic groups with 14 different languages and approximately 400 local dialects. Consequently, all of Indonesia’s leaders throughout history have encountered challenges upholding unity in this large and diverse nation (Ananto, 2003; Simorangkir, 2011, 2013).

The movement toward women empowerment in Indonesia dates back in history, with every era, colonial, post-independence, New Order, and Reformasi—carrying its own initiative, whether against polygamy or for women’s right to education. While Soeharto’s New Order regime (1966-1998) aimed to solidify the domestic role of women by emphasizing the function of ‘wives’ organizations’ such as the Family Guidance Welfare Movement (known as PKK) and Dharma Wanita (Blackburn, 2001; Simorangkir, 2011), the key mission of the women’s movement in the Reformasi era (starting 1999), has shifted to the fight for gender equality and equity (Parawansa, 2002; Simorangkir, 2011). NGOs have been essential to women’s empowerment. Many were established as a response to the heinous crimes committed against women (especially ethnic

Chinese women) during the riots leading to Soeharto's downfall (Hermawati, 2001; Simorangkir, 2011).

Even though throughout history Indonesia has had queens - including Tri Buana Tungga Dewi – and nationally-recognized female heroes who fought against colonialism – Nyi Ageng Serang, Cut Mutiah, Cut Nyak Dien – and have made way for women to take space in the public domain (Parawansa, 2002), today women still are considered to be primarily responsible for the family and household. In 2001, Indonesia appointed its first and, so far, only female president, Megawati Soekarnoputri. After Soeharto's 33-year dictatorship in which gender relations and roles were essentially state-controlled (Suryakusuma, 1996), issues revolving around her gender and competence became national debate regarding women's roles in the public domain.

According to the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index report, Indonesia ranks 85th – with a score of 0.70 – out of 153 countries, placing Indonesia far below other South East Asian nations. Nevertheless, when it comes to gender inequality index, Indonesia still scores above South Korea at 108 and Japan at 121, which lag behind when it comes to women's political representation (Statista, 2021). On the other hand, in 2020 Indonesia was also the sixth nation in the world to have the majority of its economic sector leadership being held by women, yet when it comes to the labor market and income distribution, women's participation remains low at 54 percent. In the education and health sector, Indonesia fared quite well with a score of 97.0. Still, the ratio of female participation in primary education, as well as the literacy rate also remains low (The Indonesian Institute, 2019).

Qibtiyah (2009) argues that, with Indonesia being home to the world's largest Muslim population, a progressive Muslim movement is crucial to Indonesia's gender equality movement, "the modernist santri or neo modernist/pembaharuan (renewal) movement" (p. 23), which encourages Muslims to modernize the Muslim community by learning from how the West has advanced its education, science, and politics.

Nevertheless, there have been a few women who have succeeded in reaching leadership positions. According to Associate Vice President of Corporate Communication of a government financial enterprise, Dyah Rahayu, "women tend to have a higher sensibility compared to men. Women are also able to tell a story, whereas men tend to be more straightforward. This feminine characteristic is identical to the characteristic of PR. There is an art to it" (PR Indonesia, 2017). Agustini Rahayu, Head of

Communications Department of Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, says that public relations must be flexible and adaptive (PR Indonesia, 2021).

Gender discrepancy is also present in the leadership of Indonesia's main public relations association, PERHUMAS, which after 39 years since its establishment, finally elected its first female chairperson, Prita Kemal Gani, for the period of 2011-2014. To this day, she still remains the only female chairperson PERHUMAS ever had. According to her, crucial characteristics of a PR professional include likeability, physical attractiveness, and social skills (Fadli, 2019).

Based on the socially-accepted dichotomy of gender roles and traits that are considered suitable for certain industries but not others, one may predict that the condition in Indonesia when it comes to public relations and leadership will not change in a long time. There will always be a few women who make it to the top in so-called masculine fields, but the majority of public relations leaders will remain to be men. Simorangkir (2011) argues that this reinforces the effects of the gendering of professions, in which professions that are considered feminine face disadvantages such as low remuneration and status, and therefore limited power and influence. The scarcity of female leaders, according to Indonesia's Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, Bintang Puspayoga, indirectly influences the potential for policy-making that favors women, thus causing a low gender equality index (Faqih, 2021).

Feminism is not merely concerned with the rights of women. Rather, as McLeod and O'Reilly (2019, p. 127) posit, it is "a political orientation and ideological movement geared towards the transformation of gendered power relations" (McLeod & O'Reilly, 2019, p. 127). It is based on this feminist critical perspective that this paper calls for more research on gender in Indonesia's public relations in order to highlight different approaches and concerns in relation to feminism and feminist research.

Method of Analysis

The author conducted a systematic review on articles – written in English or in Indonesian – that were published in journal articles, conference proceedings and scholarly theses from 2012 to mid-2023 (when this article was written). The researcher searched Scopus, DOAJ, Google Scholar, and Sinta databases for academic publications, using combinations of keywords, including: Perempuan; Women; Female; Hubungan Masyarakat; Public relations; Gender; Jender.

Under these parameters, the researcher found less than 20 articles. Still, some articles that did not focus on gender in PR were then excluded. Moreover, some articles were published in different media simultaneously, or in different languages (one in English and the other in Indonesian). Eventually, 14 articles were selected for analysis. They were analyzed and summarized to find key themes and make a general conclusion on the current state of the art of gender in Indonesia's PR field according to academic literature in the last decade, and identify what areas within gender in PR need special attention. As part of the systematic review, the researcher also noted the research method, population / sample, keywords, theory / concept, and limitations.

Findings: Public Relations in Indonesia as Described in the last Decade of Research

Based on the analysis of 14 articles published in academic journals, conference proceedings and scholarly theses from 2012 until June 2023, the following key themes were identified:

1. Leadership in PR (Simorangkir, 2012; Fitch et al., 2022);
2. Lookism (Kriyantono & Rakhmawati, 2020; Saputro & Candrasari, 2017; Simorangkir, 2013);
3. Gendered PR roles (Kurdaningsih & Handayani, 2022; Santoso, 2021; Saputro, 2017);
4. Gender and career competence (Kriyantono et al., 2022; Simorangkir, 2017; Yulianita & Wiwitan, 2016);
5. Gendered stereotypes (Damayanti & Saputro, 2017; Saputro et al., 2012);
6. Gender gaps in the PR industry (Munzila, 2019);
7. Feminist PR scholarship (Fitch et al., 2022).

There seems to be a consensus within scholarly literature from 2012 to 2023 that PR is often not taken seriously by management and even by the Indonesian society. Also, these research articles generally discuss gender discrimination in PR within Indonesia's private sector. The salaries earned by male practitioners are said to be greater than the ones earned by female practitioners, and women experience difficulties in negotiating salaries (Simorangkir, 2011, 2012, 2017). Nevertheless, this is only a common perception among the PR practitioners as there is currently no published information on the list of salaries. Other forms of discrimination include those based on race, ethnicity, and religion (Damayanti & Saputro, 2017). Still, the

researcher could not find any other empirical studies on these topics within the timeframe.

There is a call for organizations to embrace feminine traits and acknowledge how they can be valuable and contribute to the organization, rather than preventing women from entering traditionally masculine fields. There is a general notion of traditional characteristics attributed to male leaders, including "realistic, rational...better strategic thinkers, straightforward, objective", whereas female leaders are considered "detail-oriented, understanding, emotional...intuitive, empathetic...motherly, and have a higher level of tolerance" (Simorangkir, 2012, p. 39). This dichotomy is in line with Eagly and Karau's (2002) Role Congruity theory, which posits that the majority of gender beliefs are based on "communal" and "agentic" traits; that for men and women to gain compliance, they are expected to act according to their socially-attributed gender roles; and, that women who hold leadership positions experience a conflict between their managerial responsibilities and gender norms. The literature analyzed argue that organizations must acknowledge that, though different from masculine leadership, female leadership – and its emphasis on shared decision-making, nurturing relationships, empowerment, and teamwork – could also be more effective in transforming the corporate environment.

Aside from the private sector, Damayanti and Saputro (2017) argue that there is also a dichotomy in the public sector. In industries such as coal, oil, plantations, and gas, PR is considered a masculine profession. On the other hand, the profession can become feminine in the hospitality, fashion, cosmetics, and food and beverages industries. Therefore, the type of industry dictates the gender orientation of public relations in the private sector. More often than not, this gendering ultimately also determines the gender of the public relations leadership.

A research study on PR in Indonesia's banking industry (Mustafa, 2019) also concurs with the existence of lookism in the PR field and that "brain, beauty, and behavior (3B)" are the standard requirements for PR officers in banks because they are regarded as front liners. This perspective undermines women's ability as leaders and reduces women to mere pretty faces and regards them as incapable of being assertive and making tough decisions when facing challenges.

Government PR leadership is also dominated by men because the public sector is considered masculine. Though the recruitment into the government field supposedly gives equal opportunities to men and women, men are most likely to be in the leadership position, while

women are in technician positions (Kriyantono, 2019).

Simorangkir (2013) discusses the apparent ideological dilemma that Indonesian PR professionals have, as they adamantly reject the suggestion that lookism exists in public relations, but admit that physical attractiveness is crucial in PR. This discrimination on the basis of looks also focuses on women, whereas men are assessed based on their charisma, strategic thinking, logical thinking, and decision-making abilities (Kurdaningsih & Handayani, 2022). Saputro and Candrasari (2017) and Simorangkir (2013) criticize the existence of lookism in Indonesia's PR industry, saying that physical attractiveness being a job requirement could indicate that the work involved deals with tasks that require attractiveness and most likely do not involve decision making. If attractiveness becomes a more important criteria than educational background and experience, it would not be surprising if management, those of other professions, and even society in general underestimate the work of PR.

Saputro et al. (2012) blames the misperception about the PR profession on the lack of literacy about Public Relations because PR is misunderstood as cheap advertisement using attractive women for the sake of attention-grabbing and entertaining the public instead of a management function requiring specific skills to tackle a variety of issues that deal with publicity, crisis, and more. It is due to this stereotype that male PR practitioners are preferred in the mining and gas industry, whereas female practitioners are preferred in the hospitality and finance industries (Kurdaningsih & Handayani, 2022; Saputro et al., 2016). Even though some literature disagree that PR is considered a feminine profession (e.g., Kurdaningsih & Handayani, 2022; Saputro et al., 2012, 2016), they all agree with the existence of a dichotomy within the PR industry.

In regard to public relations in higher institutions, Yulianita and Wiwitan (2016) argue that PR practitioners must have bachelors and master's degrees in PR, should have knowledge of the scope of PR and stakeholder mapping, and must understand the vision, mission, and objective of the university as well as have a good product knowledge. They should possess good skills in oral and written communication, event management, and the Internet (Yulianita & Wiwitan, 2016).

Most literature analyzed in this research agree that a common problem found throughout gender research studies on PR is how few women with leadership roles there are. Nevertheless, this problem is not exclusive to the PR industry (Simorangkir, 2017). Simorangkir (2017) recommends collaborations between higher education institutions, professional associations, and industries. These partnerships may include career counselling and mentorship programs that pair beginners with managers. Moreover, companies are recommended to introduce policies that would support women in pursuing their career. Such policies may include flexible working time – or flexi time –, and providing such facilities as daycares in the workplace.

Finally, there is a consensus in the call for more research that challenges the status quo and gender hegemony in Indonesia's PR industry, especially regarding leadership and discriminations. Fitch et al. (2022) goes as far as challenging the methods of academic practices that mold the discipline, including research publications and conferences, which lack diversity of women's voices from other contexts, such as global south, indigenous and settler colonial.

Table 1 lists and summarizes the research articles that discussed the topic of gender in Indonesia's PR industry published between 2012 and 2023.

Table 1: List of Articles on Gender in Indonesia's PR Industry Published between 2012 and 2023

No.	Year	Author	Title	Journal	Summary
1	2012	Simorangkir, D. N.	Congruity Analysis on Gender and Leadership Roles among Managers in Jakarta	Journal Communication Spectrum: Capturing New Perspectives in Communication, Vol 2, No 1.	Objective: To investigate the differences in employees' level of compliance toward male and female leaders in PR. Findings: With male managers considered being associated with agentic traits, and female managers with communal traits, most respondents claim no preference between female and male managers, often contradict their own answers.
2	2013	Simorangkir, D. N.	Lookism in Indonesia's Public Relations Industry	Women's Studies International Forum, Vol. 40, September–October, pages 111-120.	Objective: To analyze the perceptions of Indonesian PR professionals and students toward the existence of lookism in PR. Findings: Lookism is present in Indonesia's PR industry. Students as well as practitioners are aware and disagree with this discrimination but concur the importance of attractiveness in PR.
3	2016	Damayanti, N., Yuwanti, H., & Saputro, D. H.	Gender Analysis of the Indonesian Public Relations	Proceeding of the International Conference on Communication Industry and Community 2016, Bali.	Objective: To analyze whether PR is predominantly masculine or feminine. Findings: PR is predominantly masculine. The feminine aspects include physical appearance and traits that include: "feeler", "not thinking long term", "calm", "sociable", and "heedful".
4	2016	Yulianita, N., & Wiwitan, T.	Knowledge and Skills of Public Relations Profession in the Context of Gender	e-Proceeding: 2nd International Conference on ASEAN Women – Gender Mainstreaming and Public Policy	Objective: To provide inputs for leaders of the Islamic University of Bandung in recruiting PR officers. Findings: PR officers must have bachelors and master's degrees in PR; should have knowledge of the scope of PR and stakeholder mapping; must understand the vision, mission, and objective of the university as well as have a good product knowledge. They should possess good skills in oral and written communication, event management, and the Internet.

Table 1 (continued)

No.	Year	Author	Title	Journal	Summary
5	2017	Saputro, D.	The Preference of Gender in PR Industry in Jakarta	Proceedings: First ASEAN Public Relations Regional Conference, September 20, 2017, Bali.	<u>Objective:</u> To analyze the gendered roles of Indonesia's PR practitioners and how they affect gender preference within the profession. <u>Findings:</u> Women and men PR practitioners have different roles in corporate PR. Female practitioners are exploited for business needs and face more difficulties compared to men in bargaining their salaries.
6	2017	Saputro, D. H., Candrasari, S., & Belida, O. O.	Stereotype of Public Relations Profession in Jakarta	Communicology: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, Vol. 5, No. 2, pages 62-82.	<u>Objective:</u> To analyze the stereotype of PR as a woman's profession, concerned with physical and feminine aspects. <u>Findings:</u> The lingering perception that the face of PR is a woman indicates a misperception of PR as a management function. This causes the PR profession in Jakarta to not receive the appreciation it deserves.
7	2017	Damayanti, N., & Saputro, D. H.	<i>Profesi Public Relations di Indonesia dalam Kajian Gender</i> [Gender Analysis on Public Relations Profession in Indonesia]	WACANA: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi, Vol. 16, No. 1, pages 27-42.	<u>Objective:</u> To examine the PR profession in the private sector, which is more dominantly masculine or feminine and to dig deeper into indications of femininity and masculinity in the private sector PR profession. <u>Findings:</u> PR in the private sector tends to be masculine, except for the hotel industry, in which PR is more feminine, in line with hospitality values.
8	2017	Simorangkir, D. N.	<i>Perekrutan Praktisi Hubungan Masyarakat dalam Kajian Teori Feminis dan Velvet Ghetto</i> [Recruitment of Public Relations Practitioners from the Feminist and the Velvet Ghetto Theoretical Perspectives]	Jurnal Komunikasi Vol. 9, No. 2.	<u>Objective:</u> To explore the problems within the recruitment process of PR practitioners from the perspectives of senior practitioners. <u>Findings:</u> The need to increase the status of the PR profession and secure gender equity in PR leadership through collaborations with higher education institutions, professional associations and industries, as well as policy changes.

Table 1 (continued)

No.	Year	Author	Title	Journal	Summary
9	2018	Saputro, D. H., & Candrasari, S.	Isu Gender Dalam Profesi Public Relations Di Indonesia [Gender issues in Indonesia's Public Relations Profession]	Communicology: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, Vol. 6, No. 1, pages 77-102.	<u>Objective:</u> To conduct a literature analysis on gender in Indonesia's PR industry. <u>Findings:</u> Gender issues in PR profession must be monitored because there are signs of gender discrimination in the PR profession.
10	2019	Munzila, O. M.	Perempuan dalam Profesi Public Relations (Studi tentang Gender dan Perolehan Peran Kerja Praktisi PR Perempuan di Kota Malang) [Women in the Public Relations Profession (Study on Gender and Work Role of Female PR Practitioners in Malang City)]	Bachelor's thesis, Brawijaya University.	<u>Objective:</u> To analyze women's perception of gender and employment opportunities in the PR field. <u>Findings:</u> Gender gaps that disadvantage women include unequal distribution and demands of leadership positions. However, women perceive this discrepancy as normal and not a form of discrimination.
11	2021	Santoso, N. R.	Gender and Digital Public Relations: Who Gets Benefits?	Ultimacomm: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, Vol. 13, No. 1, pages 108-122.	<u>Objective:</u> To analyze gender roles in digital PR and interrogate the tradition of male PR practitioners dominating the top positions while female practitioners are in the technical roles. <u>Findings:</u> To compete with men in digital PR, women should enhance their digital skills, be able to manage their time wisely, take on new challenges, and actively voice their ideas in various organizational activities. Men should be more versatile and combine masculine and feminine values.

Table 1 (continued)

No.	Year	Author	Title	Journal	Summary
12	2022	Kurdaningsih, D. M., & Handayani, D.	Gender Analysis of Public Relations and Advertising in Indonesia	American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research, Vol. 6, No. 3, pages 1-11.	<u>Objective:</u> To analyze whether PR is predominantly feminine or masculine, and to analyze the indications. <u>Findings:</u> PR is described as predominantly masculine, with women viewed as “not thinking long term”. The dominance of the female gender in advertising is considered a myth. Women today have masculine traits and are symbols of intelligence, independence and decision makers.
13	2022	Kriyantono, R., Ida, R., Tawakkal, G. T. I., & Safitri, R.	Not Just About Representative: When Democracy Needs Females and Their Competency to Run Indonesian Government Public Relations to Management Level	Heliyon, Vol. 8, No. 1.	<u>Objective:</u> To compare the outcomes of employing male and female practitioners by analyzing their competency in managing government PR. <u>Findings:</u> Female managers have higher level of competence compared to male managers. The Indonesian governments should provide more opportunities for female practitioners to achieve top management level in PR divisions.
14	2022	Fitch, K., Clark, K., Kaur, K., Simorangkir, D., & Souket, R.	Opening Spaces for Researching Feminism and Public Relations: Perspectives from Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia	Public Relations Inquiry, Vol. 12, No. 1.	<u>Objective:</u> To draw attention to the need for more inclusive practices in academic processes by challenging liberal feminist and postfeminist perspectives and offering other perspectives namely from Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia. <u>Findings:</u> Feminist PR scholarship must open up space for perspectives and research studies from outside the US and Europe in order to improve disciplinary processes.

To further the analysis, after listing and summarizing the articles, the researcher noted the research method, population / sample,

keywords, theory / concept, and limitations as described by the respective articles (see Table 2).

Table 2: Comparison of Methodology, Population, Keywords, Theoretical Concepts and Limitations

Article	Research method	Population / sample	Keywords	Theory / concept	Limitations
1	In-depth interviews	40 communication managers in Jakarta	role congruity, leadership, compliance gaining, agentic, communal.	Role Congruity Theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002)	“It remains to be further analyzed whether either gender is actually predertied to a specific role or whether in fact, men and women just select the roles that best suit their so-called ‘natural’ gender skills and competencies” (p. 40)
2	In-depth interviews	50 public relations professionals and 125 public relations students in the Jakarta area	N/A	Feminist theory; Lookism and the cultural discourse on attractiveness	N/A
3	Phenomenology (participant observation, in-depth interview, and literature review)		N/A	Social Rule theory; Gender issues in PR	N/A
4	Phenomenology (in-depth interviews)	6 people experienced in managing the PR program at the Islamic University of Bandung (3 men; 3 women)	Knowledge, skill, profession, public relations, gender	Knowledge; Skills; Public relations; Gender	N/A
5	Interviews	7 PR practitioners from various industries in Jakarta	Public Relations, Gender, Indonesian, Industry, Perspective	Social Reality Construction; Social Rule theory	Limited number of respondents

Table 2 (continued)

Article	Research method	Population / sample	Keywords	Theory / concept	Limitations
6	In-depth interviews	10 PR practitioners from various industries in Jakarta	Jakarta, Public Relations, Profession, Stereotype	Genderlect Styles theory; PR as a profession in Indonesia; Stereotypes of PR	Small number of respondents
7	Phenomenology	2 male and 2 female PR practitioners	Gender, public relations, masculine, feminine	social Reality Construction; Social Rule theory; Genderlect Styles theory	The results of this study only apply to the respondents of this study using this specific research method.
8	FGD	20 members of a PR association, with an average of 20 years of experience in PR	Public Relations, feminist theory, velvet ghetto	Feminist theory; Velvet ghetto	N/A
9	Literature review; interviews; observation	3 PR practitioners	Gender, Profession, Public Relations, Jakarta, Issues	Social Roles theory; Glass Ceiling theory; Feminist theory	N/A
10	In-depth interviews	4 female PR practitioners in Malang	Female, public relations, gender, job role, feminist standpoint theory	Feminist Standpoint theory	The research is only limited to female PR practitioners who work in Malang city, which consist of one hotel, one government agency, and one state university. The research only discusses the views of women PR practitioners regarding the concept of gender which then influences the work roles they obtain.

Table 2 (continued)

Article	Research method	Population / sample	Keywords	Theory / concept	Limitations
11	Literature review	40 journal articles on public relations, gender, and digital technologies published from 1990 to 2020 by various publishers.	Digital public relations, gender discrepancy, feminine values, patriarchal system, professionalism	Gender issues in PR; PR roles; Digital PR	No empirical data offered.
12	Phenomenology (in-depth interviews and document analyses)	PR: several (did not specify number) senior PR practitioners Advertisements: TV ads, cigarette products, automotive products and strong drug products.	gender, Indonesian public relation, feminine, masculine, advertising.	Researchers uses social rules theory and issues of gender in public relations and advertising	N/A
13	Online survey (quantitative univariate analysis)	102 public relations practitioners from various government institutions	Democracy, Gender competency, Government public relations, Management level, Two-way communication	Government public relations and democracy in Indonesia; Gender issues in PR	The research involves only 102 respondents so that the results cannot be extrapolated to the national context; Respondents were chosen on the basis of accessibility consideration; The findings presented do not go in-depth to investigate these findings' economic, political, and socio-cultural influences.
14	Conceptual paper	N/A	Gender, public relations, Indigenous, feminism, discipline, transnational feminism, intersectionality, Indonesia, Australia, Malaysia	Feminist and post-feminist perspectives	N/A

As seen on Table 2, all except for one article involved a qualitative approach, using similar techniques, mainly in-depth interviews, and one of them with as little as 2 research participants. Also, most of the studies either focused on a specific organization or Jakarta.

Discussion

While in previous years scholarly literature on gender in Indonesia's PR discussed PR as a feminized profession, in the period of 2012-2023 there were several studies (e.g., Damayanti & Saputro, 2017; Damayanti, Yuwanti, & Saputro, 2016; Kurdaningsih & Handayani, 2022; Saputro et al., 2017) that instead argued that PR was more of a masculinized profession. However, in its discussions, it can be seen that in fact, the dichotomy that has been discussed prior to 2012 (e.g., Simorangkir, 2009, 2011) is still intact. Public relations profession is considered a masculine profession in industries such as coal, oil, plantations, and gas, but is considered a feminine profession in the hotel, fashion, cosmetics, and food and beverage industries.

There seems also to be a misunderstanding about gendered leadership and the sex of the practitioners. Feminine leadership is automatically linked to women leaders and masculine leadership is automatically linked to men leaders. In reality, feminine and masculine leaderships do not depend on the sex of the leaders. The fact that industries such as oil and gas are considered masculine causes men to be preferred for these industries, and women for the hotel and fashion industries. Leadership research typically differentiates gender from sex. Whereas gender is regarded as a set of traits that are culturally labelled as male or female, and sex is viewed as linked to biological attributes. Therefore, masculine leadership is linked to male gender traits of aggressiveness, assertiveness, objectiveness, independence, rational thinking, ambitiousness, and impersonalness (Shanmugam et al., 2007, p. 103) while feminine leadership qualities are associated with female gender traits of sensitivity, expressiveness, intuitiveness, warmth, emotionalness, tactfulness, gentleness and cooperativeness (Park, 1996; Shanmugam et al., 2007).

In reality, both men and women are required to be able to do heavy work in the form of managers and also communication technicians. Private industry, especially multinational companies that place PR as a management function, did not find any indication of gender discrimination. Women's PR is also doing the work of managers and communication technicians. In a crisis situation, women's public relations management is more dominant as a communication facilitator than an expert prescriber. This is due to differences in

perceptions that are formed from the identity and role of women as good listeners, patient, concerned with humanitarian issues, flexible in negotiations, and have an attractive appearance and have communal feminine characteristics with the aim of growing public sympathy and being able to change public perceptions and opinions of the image and reputation of a company or organization. If the company is not experiencing a management crisis, PR women and men have the same role as expert prescriber, communication facilitator, problem solver, and communications technician (Kriyantono, 2019). The correlation between gender identity and differences in gender roles with the dominance of women's and men's PR roles is not prominent except during crises.

Prayitno (2001) claims that one of the biggest challenges to the growth of public relations is that the decision makers in organizations often misunderstand or misperceive public relations activities. PR is seen as close to image selling by hiring beautiful and attractive women by simply saying something that satisfies the organization (Prayitno, 2001). The media's portrayal of PR including in Hollywood movies, also reinforced PR's bad image (Miller, 1999).

The findings of this research show that the state of the art of the research on gender in Indonesia's PR over the past decade lack diversity in its research methodology and approach. Though qualitative research methods are frequently used in social sciences – including feminist critical research – due to its effectiveness in uncovering social trends, opinions and attitudes based on the lived experiences of the research participants (Khoah et al., 2023), more diversity in the research approaches and methodology will contribute more richly to the much needed up-to-date on the current state-of-the-art of gender research in Indonesia's PR. A quantitative research study involving a large sample, for instance, may provide a more generalizable data that paints a bigger picture of Indonesia's PR industry in regards to gender. Therefore, a wide array of recent research studies using different research approaches and gender theories is ideal to fulfil the gap in the research on gender in Indonesia's PR.

Arguably, a research study focusing on the capital city of Jakarta can still be at a macro level since Indonesia's economy and politics is highly centered in Jakarta and the Java Island. However, Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago, with 17,508 islands (Andréfouët et al., 2022). Public relations should be grasped at the micro (individual), meso (organizational), and macro (societal) levels (Ihlen, 2022). A truly macro-level research would put into consideration Indonesia's diverse cultures, social forces, social interactions, conflicts and powers (Ihlen, 2022). Also, feminist

critical research would consider the voices of the ‘others’ that are often marginalized. Moreover, since February 2024, Jakarta is no longer the capital of Indonesia (CNN Indonesia, 2024).

Conclusion

Scholars have noted that feminist scholarship within public relations is ‘narrowly focused’ (Aldoory, 2007) and ‘too White and too first world’ (Golombisky, 2015, p. 389). The discipline is ‘resistant to both women and feminism’ (Rakow & Nastasia, 2018, p. 354) and, when it does consider women’s experiences, it mainly focuses on women who are white, middle class, heterosexual, and American (Golombisky, 2015). Rarely does it challenge gender stereotypes while diversity is often understood in terms of quantity (Aldoory, 2005). As Pompper argues, public relations scholars ‘consistently fail to critique vestiges of patriarchy’ (2014, p. 69).

In social research, a study can be conducted at the macro (societal), meso (organizational) or micro (individual) level (Ihlen, 2022). While plenty of research have been conducted on PR in Indonesia, especially at a meso level, not many focus on gender, and even fewer at a macro level. This leads to a dependence on outdated literature and, most of the time, on Western literature when conducting research on gender in Indonesia’s PR industry.

This study employed a systematic review of 14 published articles in academic journals, conference proceedings and scholarly theses from 2012 until June 2023. The following key themes were identified: 1. Leadership in PR, 2. Lookism, 3. Gendered PR roles, 4. Gender and career competence, 5. Gendered stereotypes, 6. Gender gaps in the PR industry, and 7. Feminist PR scholarship.

A major theme found in the literature is the dichotomization of the PR industry into masculine and feminine. However, it must be noted that gender in the PR field is not merely a matter of the ratio of female to male practitioners working in a certain company, but rather refers to the type of industry that PR women or men enter, the role and function of PR in a company, their position and competence as PR in developing management concept and strategy.

Another major theme found is the discrimination toward women in PR regarding salary and positions. However, the pursuit for information on the employment rates and the salaries of women in PR has been fruitless because these data are not available. However, based on available literature, certain industries are perceived to earn more (traditionally masculine fields).

This systematic review of research published over the past decade indicates that there have been few

publications about gender in Indonesia’s public relations industry. The existing ones are at a micro and meso levels, focusing on specific individuals and companies. Those that come closest to the macro level focus only on the Jakarta capital area.

The researcher would like to call for more research on gender in Indonesia’s PR industry at a macro level. A research study on gender in Indonesia’s public relations done at a macro level could help describe how public relations as a practice is linked to broader changes in the Indonesian society: What PR does in Indonesia’s society, how PR changes Indonesia’s society, and how the PR industry in Indonesia is changed by society (Ihlen, 2022). As an academic discipline, public relations should not merely produce technical or applied knowledge, especially limiting the knowledge to specific organizations only. Instead, it should reflect the practice if it is to adapt to change (van Ruler, 2021). To this point, there is a great need for updated research on the aspects that were discussed a decade ago (salary gaps, status, roles, glass ceiling, stereotypes). New research may interrogate whether these conditions still prevail today. For instance, there is a consensus in PR scholarly literature that most PR practitioners in Indonesia are women. Is that still the case today?

There is also great need to analyze different types of discrimination that happen within the PR industry (ethnicism, sexism, lookism, ageism, religious discrimination, and more). New research should involve larger populations, not only focusing on specific organizations and regions. Indonesia is the world’s fourth largest nation. The PR industry and experiences of the practitioners may vary greatly from one province to another.

The researcher would also like to call for more inclusivity in the academic processes shaping PR disciplinary knowledge. Academic journal editorial boards, research conference organizers, research grant providers, and universities must welcome, if not encourage more diversity in research on gender in PR. This will greatly contribute not only to the state of the art of research on Indonesia’s PR, but also the whole PR discipline as it will help close the research gap that exists due to the lack of publications that are “not part of the standard White, heterosexual, American experience” (Vardeman-Winter & Place, 2017).

When it comes to research on Indonesia’s PR industry at a macro level, very few research has delved into how gender impacts the occupational culture and identity. The few journal articles employing a macro-level research explored the field’s ‘feminization’ and ‘lookism’ (Simorangkir, 2011, 2013) and prevalence of stereotypes (Saputro et al., 2017). Therefore, there is an urgent

need for more empirical research on the PR industry of Southeast Asia's largest economy (Benjamin, 2016). Such research not only should explore the participation of women and the impact of gender and other intersectional factors on the PR field, but should also employ diverse research methods, both quantitative and qualitative.

This study has highlighted the current state of research on gender in Indonesia's PR industry and has identified areas that need more attention. The researcher argues that 14 articles in the span of one decade is much too few. However, this study has not analyzed the status of gender research on the PR industry in other nations. Therefore, it is not known how Indonesia compares to other nations. It is recommended that future studies include data on other nations, e.g. ASEAN, Asia as well. Another limitation to this study is that it does not explore the reason of the limited publication and/or research on gender in PR in Indonesia. Limited proficiency in the English language may be a reason for the low number of publications in journals published in English – though this study also explored publications in Bahasa Indonesia. It could also simply be due to a low level of interest in gender research on PR. In any case, empirical data is needed to answer this. Future research could employ in-depth interviews with Indonesian public relations scholars to explore the reason behind the low number of research publications.

The results from this study contribute to the feminist critical perspectives on communication scholarship that emphasizes the need for inclusion of diverse women's voices, so to not rely on Western scholarship alone. The publication of more research on gender in Indonesia's public relations will contribute more voices that were previously excluded and were marginalized. In fact, the researcher also encourages more research publications on gender in PR in other nations that are often underrepresented.

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