New public management and gendered universities: understanding the persistence of gender inequality in academia

Husni Thamrin
Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia
Nurdiana Gaus
Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Fajar Utama Ritonga
Universitas Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia, and
Sultan Baa
Universitas Negeri Makassar, Makassar, Indonesia

Abstract

Purpose – New Public Management (NPM) has been assumed to be a challenge to patronage and paternalism. However, feminist scholars have challenged such an image and argued that NPM has been the representation of men's languages and bodies from which gender inequality is perpetuated. This paper examines how NPM introduced in academia has perpetuated gender inequality, examined through the abjected meaning of women's languages and bodies to conform to NPM's defined ideal bodies of abstract workers.

Design/methodology/approach – Indonesian universities from two different geographical locations were chosen as sites to conduct the research, using interviews with 30 women academics.

Findings – This study revealed that gender inequality in Indonesian universities is persistent because women academics have practiced "an adapting stance" via employing a gendered strategy of adaptation toward two patriarchal systems: the abjection of maternal bodies and its associated discourse of motherhood, and the religious-driven roles and expectations interpreted in cultural norms and traditions.

Originality/value – This research has brought forward a new way of understanding the persistence of gender inequality in academia via the "adapting stance" of women academics through the lenses of the abjected body and language of women, coupled with religious aspects that regulate that body.

Keywords NPM, Gender inequality, Gendered universities, Women bodies, Indonesia, Gendered strategy

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

New Public Management (NPM) has widely been used in the management of higher education (HE) around the world. Its principles are adopted from those of a business or corporation, emphasizing private forms of accountability or audit culture (Shore and Wright, 1999), and it is a challenge to the old public administration. Its meritocratic values and norms suggest fairness in the assessments, measurements and reward and punishment mechanisms of performance. These values and norms have been perceived as a challenge to patronage and paternalism and have been suggested as an indication of an effort to de-gender the structures and systems of universities (Collinson and Hearn, 1994; Kreissl *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, NPM is considered a gender-neutral practice that promotes equal opportunities for both males and females to advance their careers and succeed in academia. However, feminist scholars have challenged this and pinpointed that NPM's principles hold disguised hegemonic masculine languages, images, bodies and symbols shrouded in the corporate and entrepreneurial languages of economic rationality that may systematically produce biased evaluations of the

performance of women academics and criteria of what ideal workers are (Acker, 1990). Such evaluations are constructed in the language of masculine qualities: competition, careerism, individualism, efficiency and aggressiveness (Davies and Thomas, 2002; Thomas and Davies, 2002). These languages of masculine are associated with language power that may become barriers to women's advancement to leadership positions.

Literature has noted that the persistence of gender inequality in academia has arguably been affected by the attitude of women themselves. The attitude that endorses biased evaluations and languages through adaptation is a practice that is taken for granted practice. However, such an adaptation, taken-for-granted practice has yet to be clearly and specifically explained in terms of how and in what ways women academics have engaged in such a practice. Our study examines the research and publication imperatives in Indonesian university contexts to address this issue. Our motivation to focus on these imperatives stems from Halsey (1992, p. 234) who argued that women academics "are put, or put themselves, at a disadvantage in the competition to produce research" (as cited in Bagilhole and Goode, 2001). Following this, we assumed that research and publication imperatives enacted by the Indonesian government may potentially become a hindrance to women academics' advancing their careers. As Halsey (1992, p. 234), as cited in Bagilhole and Goode (2001) asserted, "the possibility of the lack of success of women may not be only of women's doing, but rather may be being done to them".

In examining this issue, we framed our analysis around the idea of the "Gendered Strategy of adaptation," one that was generated from our data analysis. This concept helps concretize the adapting practices used by women academics. Following this, we formulated our research questions as follows:

RQ1. How do women academics strategically adapt to the demands of research and publishing within the meritocratic values of NPM?

RQ2. Do they conform to an expectation of the ideal academic and succeed in Indonesian universities?

In investigating this, we adopt Fotaki's concept (2013) on the absence of women's languages and bodies in the production of knowledge in academia. The work of Fotaki (2013) is used to analyze men's disguised languages and bodies and the absence of women in the way knowledge is produced; and how these bodies and languages are not counted as determinants of success and academic excellence in academia. Such approaches are expected to at least closely trace the trajectories of the interlocking impacts of NPM and the persistence of gender inequality in academia. Because seeing and understanding gender inequality in this way has scarcely been applied in academia (Fotaki, 2013), we expect that our research and analysis may contribute to the understanding of gender inequality in academia and to the addition of a new perspective in understanding NPM's impacts on the persistent and entrenched gender inequality in academia. A large body of literature by feminist scholars highlights the impacts that NPM has on gender (Aiston and Jung, 2015; Barry *et al.*, 2007; Fletcher *et al.*, 2007; Fox, 2005; Gaus, 2019; Hunter and Leahey, 2010; Kyvik and Teigen, 1996; Sieverding *et al.*, 2018) but none have taken the approach we use in this study.

Literature review
NPM and the misrepresentation of women's bodies and languages in knowledge production
NPM is one of the neoliberal derivative ideas and concepts that is imbued with economic rationality or market principles in the management of public services. In its economic principles, NPM advocates corporate or business techniques of audit and accountability to enforce and embody its corporate lexicons of efficiency, effectiveness, value-for-money and quality assurance (Ball, 2012; Lorenz, 2012) in the measurement of works and

organizational performance. In this way, indeed, control mechanisms or what Ball (2012) called the "performativity", and disciplinary technology or technology of the self (Foucault, 1984) in forms of performance indicators of measurable, tangible, numerical outcomes through which performance is rewarded and punished has been a striking practice (Ball, 2012; Deem, 2017). This is a way of representing how "trust" is understood and exercised (Hoecht, 2006) in this mediating set of controlling mechanisms.

As NPM is introduced to academia, its disciplinary technology has become a means of trust to hold academics accountable for their scholarly activities and to define excellence to occupy higher slots in the hierarchies (for example, senior positions). The most frequent indicator used to define excellence in academia is research and publication and their excellence is translated through the performance of numerical statistics or bibliometrics, such as among other things the number of publications and h-index, with which quality and productivity of research and publication are defined (van den Brink and Benschop, 2012). Such practice suggests that to succeed, high academic achievement must be accomplished, and women academics must show these by competing to show their statistical merits, which according to the proponent of NPM, represent the values of objectivity, rationality, impersonality or individuality. Although these values suggest a de-structuring of patronage and paternalism (Collinson and Hear, 1994), they reflect the language of men. And as such may affect how knowledge is produced and what counts as knowledge (Fotaki, 2013) and create and recreate gendered patterns in a university system and governance.

Fotaki's work (2013) on the masculine symbolic order and the unwanted female body may be useful in understanding more about the gendered patterns in a university system and governance. Drawing on the feminist psychoanalytical post-structuralist theories of Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, Fotaki (2013) constructed a theory of the disembodied symbolic order with a focus on "extra-discursive aspects of academic labor and the materiality of gender" (Fotaki, 2013, p. 1253). These aspects are analyzed through the use of language, discourse and the body. According to Fotaki (2013) the language, discourse and the body are dominated by the masculine symbolic order. The effect of such domination has excluded women in the aspects of "adequate linguistic, social, iconic, theoretical, mythical, religious and abstract scientific symbols" (Irigaray, 1985, as cited in Fotaki, 2013, p. 1256). Such conditions have limited the space and opportunity for more participation in equivalent terms in an institution.

It is not only the lack of space and opportunity for women to adequately represent themselves in their languages that contribute to the perpetual inequality in academia. The abjection of maternal bodies and the discourse of motherhood that are associated with the feminine domain are also contributing factors to such inequality (Fotaki, 2013; Höpfl, 2000; Kristeva, 1982). These bodies and the discourse of motherhood have been the product of patriarchal systems, where gender roles and expectations for women have been aligned with childbearing, childrearing and other domestic responsibilities. And these reproduction bodies are conceptualized and problematized with employment in the labor market, leading to relegating women to the assumption of unwanted bodies or unsuited/ideal academics (Harding *et al.*, 2010).

The languages and symbols of women are not the languages of knowledge production as advocated by NPM, for they are imbued with feminine traits, such as the emotional, the supportive, the caring and the empathetic (Bagilhole and Goode, 2001). Such traits are not ideal to meet the concept of "abstract workers" in carrying out the job of research and publication. Abstract workers are those whose uninterrupted commitment and devotion of time to the work and are committed to working long hours. Men with their socially-associated traits of being aggressive, single-minded, not emotional, lone individuals with no other commitments and ruthless suitably represent abstract workers (Thomas and Davies, 2002; Collinson and Hearn, 1994). Women's languages, on the contrary, depicted femininity as

emotional, empathetic, caring and supportive, which are not suited for abstract workers. These languages are suitable for responsibilities at lower ladders related to pastoral, supporting, and administrative work. Hence, women's languages are not suited for managerial responsibilities. Engaging immensely in research and publication though would mean, women, require men's ideals of aggressiveness, ruthlessness, self-sacrifice and commitment of time.

Although gender is an important dimension shaping social and interpersonal relations among members and teams in organizations to achieve shared organizational objectives (Mastracci and Bowman, 2015), the way it is defined, perceived and practiced has culturally been framed in men's realms. This potentially creates and recreates the gendered universities. The notion that universities are gendered has been addressed by many scholars (Hodgins and Mannix-McNamara, 2021; Nygaard *et al.*, 2022; O'Connor, 2018; Carvalho and Machado, 2010; Deem, 1998; Thomas and Davies, 2002). To say that universities are gendered if the academy is anchored in assumptions about competence and success, of which practices and norms are constructed on the life experiences of men, and around a vision of masculinity perceived as a normal and universal requirement for university life (Bailyn, 2003). Carvalho and Machado (2010) further argued that NPM-based organizational logic implemented in universities entails meritocratic, masculine characteristics such as rationality, individualism and high competition, which are manifested in quantifiable measurements. These characteristics are embedded in the ways academics' works are done and evaluated, suggesting merit-based management and governance in HE (Carvalho and Machado, 2010). Yet, there is a risk of this assumption in that it may reinforce the' ungenderedness' notion of HE (Carvalho and Machado, 2010), and it may reinforce the politicization of the corporeal functions of women academics (Gaus, 2019) and may perpetuate the practice of "greedy institutions" (Coser, 1974). Greedy institutions, according to Coser (1974), are those that require academics to make sacrifices in terms of time, energy, adherence and commitment (Currie and Eveline, 2011).In these greedy institutions, women can potentially be more challenged than men because of the physical, social and psychological demands of pregnancy, childbirth and child-rearing as well as gendered expectations of family obligations and investments in the household (Fox, 2010; Hochschild, 1989; Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2016). Consequently, this may conceal the fact that universities are a site where gender inequality is perpetuated (Carvalho and Machado, 2010).

The consequence of this perpetuated gender inequality is that it may create a threat to the progression of women's academic careers. The repercussions of this may leave women academics in marginalized and subordinated systems and may be forced "to adapt to inequality of genders"(Gherardi, p. 13). The perpetual gender inequalities in universities have been a stark practice, indicated by the under-representation of women academics in important managerial positions (Fotaki, 2013) that has been considered to contribute to the phenomenon of the "leaky pipeline". Past research has revealed that NPM of which meritocratic, masculine systems are predominant, has threatened the success of women academics in academia (Bagilhole and Goode, 2001; Carvalho and Machado, 2010; Harding *et al.*, 2010; Thomas and Davies, 2002).

Methodology

We intended to capture a deep and rich understanding in real settings of how Indonesian women academics have applied gendered strategies to adapt to or tradeoff the entrepreneurial and masculine ethos of NPM applied in the measurement of research and publication to conform to abstract workers or ideal academics' premises. Therefore, we applied a case study approach. The case study approach is considered an ideal approach when researchers want to understand holistically "a contemporary phenomenon (e.g. a 'case'),

set within its real-world context – especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident" (Yin, 2009, p. 18). This research was part of a large project, and some of the data provided in this paper were drawn from our data published in the *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education* (2019).

The method of data collection
Patton (1990) provided the three-cluster framework of purposeful sampling that contains sampling strategies. One of those strategies is the "typical case" (Patton, 1990). The typical case belongs to the significant case cluster in Patton's framework. Following Patton, we applied a typical case to our research since the policy of research and publication is imposed on all types of HE. Following our considered typical case, we purposively chose the type of public university. The choice of this type of university then can be considered an exemplifying case that exemplifies the typical case of how the implementation of the policy of research and publication in Indonesian HE contexts. Because we aimed to generalize our findings to two different university clusters, we diversified our case. Following Yin (2009), we set criteria to choose our sites of research. We wanted a type of public university that has good research performance that represents the upper and middle line of the cluster. Based on this, we chose independent and main clusters. We also desired a university in which women's academics are underrepresented. Lastly, we also wanted to represent the two geographical locations in the western and eastern regions of Indonesia.

Based on our criteria, we selected public universities, which we anonymized as universities A and B. University A is a university with an independent cluster, in which the number of academic women is 1.126, as compared to the number of academic men is 1.715 (HE statistics, 2019). This university is located in the western region of Indonesia. University B is the main cluster, with 684 women academics compared to 1.096 men academics (HE statistics, 2019). This university is located in the eastern region of Indonesia.

Since our research aims are to explore the experiences of women academics in adapting to the norms predominantly dominated by men's languages and bodies in research and publication, we determined women academics as our unit of analysis, whom we believe can provide rich, strong and deep data regarding the issue. Marriage, children and other domesticated roles and responsibilities, according to the literature, may have contributed to married women academics' low level of research and publication productivity (Stack, 2004). We also know that academics in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Indonesia are people with various backgrounds in religion and socio-culture. Hence, we selected married women who differed by their religion and socio-culture background.

We recruited our respondents under the auspice of faculty administrators in each university. The information about our respondents provided by those faculty administrators was used as guidance to purposively select and recruit our respondents. We contacted the prospective respondents via the contact number provided by the faculty administrators. In contacting them, we explained all necessary information related to our research, its purposes, the nature of participants' participation, data protection and confidentiality and the destruction of the data. Upon agreeing to participate, those participants were invited for interviews.

Thirty married female academics agreed to participate in this study. All married participants have employed husbands. Ten out of 30 have school-aged young children, and the remaining 20 have older children; 13 of whom are Muslims, two are Christians and the other 15 are Hindus. Although in qualitative research there is no consensus regarding the minimum and maximum numbers of respondents to recruit, Corbin and Strauss (2016) recommended a thesis of "theoretical saturation", to which researchers refer their decision to stop data collection. In our study, the theoretical saturation was reached at 30 participants.

We interviewed participants using semi-structured interviews to allow flexibility in reordering and expanding the interview contents that gave us more chances to probe the respondents (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Some interview questions were asked of respondents that emphasize the core of their perceptions and experiences regarding the research and publication imperatives for the evaluation of performance. Some interview question examples are: (1) what is your opinion on academics' obligation to conduct research and publish papers in internationally reputable journals? (2) How do you cope with this obligation? Or what have you done to meet this obligation? (3) How much has this obligation affected you? The complete interview questions are provided in Appendix 1.

The ethical considerations and benchmarks were applied before, during and post-research activities. Those ethical aspects are related to seeking entry permission, respecting the culture and norms of each university, providing information to respondents about our research and the nature of their voluntary participation, protecting the respondents' confidential information using pseudonyms in data reporting and protecting the data collected.

Our team consists of four academic researchers: one woman and three men from different disciplines. As academicians from the same context sharing the same experiences with our respondents, we certainly do have first-hand knowledge about such an issue. This would affect our interpretation of the data, which would be biased. However, our two male members may have decreased such a bias because how they perceive such an issue could have been different from those of women.

The interviews were conducted once the respondents had approved to take part in this research. The interviews were conducted at the convenience of the respondents. The interviews were conducted in the office of each respondent, using a recording device with the approval of the respondents. Each interview lasted for approximately 40 min to one hour. The women academics are identified using pseudonyms to protect their anonymity and confidentiality.

The method of data analysis
We adopted retroductive or abductive reasoning in the process of data analysis and interpretation. This involves deductive and inductive logic. Within this logic, the use of theory, prior knowledge and data are interrelated. In deductive logic, theory and prior knowledge are employed to approach the data through a relevant literature review. In inductive logic, the explanation of the data is guided by theory and prior knowledge. The interview data were analyzed using a grounded theory of data analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 2016). From this practice, all the data were coded in several stages of the coding process to obtain the core coding. From the abduction logic, we formulated our research questions, which we utilized as guidance to conduct the coding process.

From the abductive reasoning, we generated and labeled two themes: the gendered strategy of adaptation in maternal bodies and motherhood and the gendered strategy of adaptation in religious and cultural norms and traditions. We used our Indonesian language-transcribed data to code to obtain core coding (concept) and translated the core codes into English. To avoid bias, the coding and translating processes were undertaken by our research team, and they cross-checked the coding results with our respondents. In the data analysis and reporting, we used nonverbatim rather than verbatim techniques (see Table 1) (see Table 2).

NPM and Indonesian research and publications
Indonesian HE has undergone corporate reforms, marked by the enactment of the Higher Education Act of 2012, one that holds a utilitarian paradigm. This paradigm combines the

Conditions	Level 1 coding	Level 2 coding	Concepts	Core themes	Participants
Adapting strategies	Delay in research and publication There are no caregivers	Prioritizing which one is important	The gendered strategy of adaptation	Maternal bodies and motherhood	$n = 25$
	Taking cares of babies consumed much time				$n = 25$
	There is no one to help				$n = 15$
	Situations changed as children grew up More time for research and publication				$n = 14$
	Times are consumed for participation in religious and cultural activities	Doing all obligations (academics, religion and culture) all at once		Cultural and religious norms and traditions	$n = 15$
	There are social sanctions will be imposed if not participated				$n = 15$

Table 1.
Coding processes pertinent to the adapting strategies employed by female academics

No	Academic ranks	Total (2017)	Females	Males
1	Professors	5,342	1,061 (20%)	4,281 (80%)
2	Associate profssors	33,101	11,434 (35%)	21,667 (65%)
3	Assistant professors	55,196	25,082 (45%)	30,114 (54%)

Source(s): Herdiyanto (2017)

Table 2.
Academic ranks by gender

industrial or economic and traditional perspectives on the roles and functions of HE and academia. As one of its economic reforms, NPM has been introduced, in which *ex-post* accountability in assessing academic performance is utilized. Research and publication are becoming increasingly important determinants in building the prestige of HE and measuring academic progressions, promotions and successes (Gaus and Hall, 2016).

There are six types of HEIs in the Indonesian system: (1) university, (2) institute, (3) school of higher learning, (4) academy, (5) community college and (6) polytechnic (RISTEK DIKTI, 2020). The provision of HEIs is run by the government, and these are referred to as public HEIs, and the private agencies are run by civil society which are referred to as private HEIs. Both public and private HEIs are put into different clusters based on their research performance. There are four types of clusters: (1) independent clusters, (2) main clusters, (3) dependent clusters and (4) under-supervised clusters. In the Indonesian HE system both public and private, academic careers are divided into three levels. They are assistant professor (*asisten ahli dan lektor*), associate professor (*lektor kepala*) and professor (*Kepmen*/Decree of Minister No. 164, 2019). To get promoted to the next higher ladder, one of the most important requirements for academics is to provide evidence of research and publication in internationally reputable journals, particularly those indexed in Scopus. That is not all. Research and publication are also important determinants of getting monetary rewards,

remuneration (the payment honorariums and incentives that are given based on the level of performance) and research grants. To get all of those, academics must compete with each other, and the most likely successful academics in this competition are those who can work long hours and have a full commitment of time toward work. What this practice indicates is the importance of individualism, competition, careerism, and rationality. These lexicons perfectly represent men's images as ones who can dedicate time and commitment to the work, without being distracted by other responsibilities outside the job itself. Unfortunately, those variables have historically been used to define what ideal workers or ideal academics are (Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2017).

While Indonesia is highly ruled by a gender system that holds descriptive and prescriptive gender stereotypes for women and men, it creates social hierarchical structures in which women are positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy. Women's roles have been prescribed as those suitable in feminized jobs, such as homemakers, rearers of children, caregivers of family members and doers of housework cores (Gaus, 2019).

In light of this, notions of what it means to be an ideal worker, within a meritocratic, individualized, rational and competitive system of NPM, may intersect with the condition of women. As a result, women academics may be placed in, or place themselves in, a disadvantageous position. In this situation, academic women are left with a matter of "choice" (Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2017), prioritization and balancing decisions. This means that if they decide to have academic careers, they have to be able to choose which to prioritize: domestic responsibilities or careers. And if they decide to balance domestic responsibilities and careers, they have to be able to perform dual responsibilities. Even if they choose to take up dual responsibilities, they still need to decide whether to adopt masculine norms or cultures to succeed, or to still cling to their feminine norms. To cope with this issue, many women academics employ someone who can help them with housework duties. However, given that the salary levels of academics in Indonesia are relatively low, not many such middle-class families can afford to do so, particularly in a family where only one of the spouses works. To solve this, female academics oftentimes seek assistance from their immediate families. Such conditions are exacerbated by the meritocratic principle of NPM in job evaluation related to research and publication, where full commitment and time devotion are prerequisites for meeting the objectives set up by the government and institutions. In this regard, women's academic careers may be jeopardized and they do not fit the ideal academic model. Thus, this may create gender patterns, practices and modalities that may reinforce that HE in Indonesia is gendered.

The situation depicted above has a potential risk of making Indonesian HE a site where gender gaps or inequality are reinforced. The under-representation of women academics at various academic levels and in managerial positions is one indicator that supports our thesis. The total number of academics in Indonesian HE in 2017 is 271,204 (Herdiyanto, 2017). In total, 116,104 (45%) are female academics, while 155,100 (55%) are male academics (Herdiyanto, 2017). This figure shows that there are roughly equal numbers of women and men in academics. Women academics, on the other hand, hold lower positions in the academic hierarchy than men.

In senior management roles, in this case, rectors, in both public and private universities have been dominated by males (see Table 3).

No	Positions	Public universities (%)		Private universities (%)	
		Females	Males	Females	Males
1	Rectors	10%	90%	15%	85%
2	Deans	20%	80%	30%	70%
Source(s): Aruan (2019)					

Table 3.
Senior management roles by gender

The figures in table two above signify gender gaps or inequality in Indonesian HE. We are interested, subsequently, in understanding why such inequality has been taking place in Indonesian universities' career systems and structures.

Findings and discussions
As explained earlier, the interpretation of our data are based on the "gendered strategy of adaptation" idea that we construed from the retroductive reasoning in which we did deductive and inductive approaches.

The gendered strategy of adaptation: maternal bodies and motherhood
The data from the interview indicated that women's academics have been employing their gendered strategy of adapting to their precarious condition, as Mira lamented:

> I could still recall the time when I had my second child. It was a difficult time for me as I had to conduct my academic work and motherhood simultaneously. I had no one to assist me in looking after my newborn child, while at the same time I also had to look after my two-year-old daughter. Can you imagine how difficult it was at that time? Activities other than teaching were beyond my priorities (*with a young child*).

Mira reached her critical and precarious condition at a point where the maternal body meets motherhood simultaneously. The story told by Mira of University A dismantles how difficult it is for her to make choices about which domains should be prioritized when a new baby and other younger children are present to look after. As an academic with abundant workloads, it would be hard for her to equally spend time on each of the loads. Prioritizing careers at the expense of family would not be a good choice for her. For her, family, particularly the interests of her children, is the utmost priority. Moreover, in Indonesian cultural norms, childcare and nurturing responsibilities are attached to women's and feminine domains. Women neglecting these responsibilities will be labeled as irresponsible, immoral and bad women. Therefore, she chose to sacrifice her career development by withdrawing temporarily from research activity and focusing more time on teaching. This is a safe strategy to sustain her career and family simultaneously by refraining and resuming later (when the children are already grown up and need little care); "as my children grew up, I managed to spend much time undertaking research and publishing in international journals".

This is acknowledged by Lisa of University B, saying: "throughout my career, the most difficult time was when I had to take care of my young children." But, as my children grew up, I could focus on research and publication as I already had a lot of time *(with grown-up children)*. The same issue was articulated by Lisa's colleague, Dewi, uttering: "I have three daughters who are now studying at a university and senior high schools. I have no problem with the policy at all, as I now have more time" *(with three grown-up daughters.)* This will cause these women to play a "catch-up" game later in their careers (Symonds *et al.*, 2006, cited in Bentley, 2012), with the consequence of a delay in their career development.

What Mira and Lisa describe is one example of the unwanted bodies of maternity and motherhood, or the reproduction bodies, as (Gatrell, 2008) called them, considered not ideal bodies to meet the abstract workers' NPM entails. These abstract workers are defined in masculine languages as those who can work long hours without interruption or being constrained by other obligations. Feminine bodies are not capable of performing, for they are the bodies that have limited choices and are reluctant to make sacrifices for public domains. They are more committed to private domains that are not suited for the job of research and publication. The "perfect academic" is characterized as someone who "gives total priority to work and has no outside interests or responsibilities" (Bailyn, 2003, p. 139). And the choice between motherhood and career would create "leaky bodies" (Gatrell, 2008).

These stories can be understood as the tacit practice of embodied work in research and publication surrounded by the masculine, entrepreneurial ethos that forces women academics to adapt their bodies and languages to it to keep being in the center of hierarchies (Acker, 1990; Fotaki, 2013). This adaptation has an impact on socially constructed gender roles and expectations, defining family and household responsibilities, as well as child rearing, as feminine domains alongside childbearing. While work and family/household responsibilities "can compete for the limited resources of individuals, in ways that may be difficult to reconcile" (Fox, 2010, p. 1001), NPM's system, which involves men's values, has continuously been applied in what is called "the greedy institutions" (Coser, 1974) or "greedy universities," as we call it. Much past research has reported the nature of the embodied work of the NPM's work measurement system and how this has adversely affected women academics around the world: such as in Australia (Bentley, 2012; Currie and Eveline, 2011), in the United Arab Emirates (Dickson, 2019), in Indonesia (Gaus, 2019), in Canada (Acker and Armenti, 2004), in the UK (Arifeen and Gatrell, 2020; Fox and Faver, 1985; Santos and Van Phu, 2019), in the USA (Deutsch and Yao, 2014) and in Finland (Huopalainen and Satama, 2019). With this continuing phenomenon of the exclusion of women's bodies and languages in the structure and system of work in academia, women academics continue to build their exteriority and marginality to the center of knowledge production, and it continues to perpetuate gender inequality in academia (Chandler *et al.*, 2004; Gatrell, 2008; Hochschild, 1989). Bearing this in mind, it is reasonable to consider that Hochschild (1989) argued that the underrepresentation of women academics in the higher slots of hierarchies is not because of discrimination performed in organizations and institutions, nor is it because of the lack of role models, but rather the career system itself, which interacts with the unwillingness or reluctance of men to share the raising of children and the doing of household and family work.

The gendered strategy of adaptation: cultural and religious norms and traditions
It is interesting to note that women academics in our study show their critical and precarious condition when their maternal bodies and languages are defined as the main doers or players of cultural and religious activities in their respective cultural villages or *"desa adat"*. The story told by Santi, a Hindu woman at University B, discloses how cultural and religious roles and expectations have restricted her capacity to allocate more time to research and publication. With the addition of cultural and religious roles and expectations, she has been asked to perform triple work: academic, familial and cultural and religious tasks of equal importance. In these orders, she has chosen to allocate more time for her contribution to religious and cultural roles at the expense of her academic work and family, as she fears social sanctions in the form of social exclusion and alienation from their cultural village. As she puts it:

> You know we have many religious ceremonies and festivities that require the full participation of us women. If we do not participate fully, we will get social sanctions. For me, I spend 40% of my time on these activities, 30% on my family and the rest of the time is for my academic activities. So, can you imagine? How can we have more time to conduct research and publication? (*two young children*).

Because of the utmost importance of these activities, women academics have no courage to break or at least ignore their obligations. With the limited capacity of their resources, these women try to reconcile these three work demands. The way they adapt these is through a strategy as well. For example, she created her strategy to cope with the ceremonies that coincided with their academic responsibilities. She brought the traditional costumes with her and used her campus room as a dressing room. She was even willing to sacrifice the comfort of her body by wearing the traditional wigs (*Sanggul*) on her head from home to campus, and kept her makeup on the whole day with a funny feeling, as she confessed:

I sometimes have to bring my traditional costumes in my bag as I usually have many cultural and religious ceremonies and rites to attend. So, to change my clothes, I simply need to change here in this room. And I have to come here to this campus with my '*Sanggul*' (traditional Indonesian wigs, usually worn by women to attend traditional events) and my make-up on, and I have to keep being like this until I get back home. Sometimes, I feel funny myself (*with adult children*)

What Santi and Ida have created is a depiction of a gendered culture and religion that continues to place women in marginalized and subordinated statuses and roles. The way Santi and Ida deal with the cultural and religious roles and expectations reflects the abjection of women's bodies as the ones that are not free from the social demands in which they live. To be recognized as obedient women as society expects, while at the same time keeping their academic and familial responsibilities, they have to be able to make sacrifices by letting their bodies be exploited through their strategy of adaptation that undervalues the worth of their bodies. While the ideal bodies NPM demands are those with lone bodies without any other commitment, women's status in our study may be excluded from the territory of academic knowledge production and the higher hierarchies. They are not abstract workers and thus, gender inequality remains in place.

The status of women as exemplified by Santi and Ida reflects the distinct form of gender inequality as a result of the combined influence of cultural and religious legacies which are interpreted and embedded in the institutional setup of religious communities. In most societies, religion has significant roles and contributions to gender inequality and the defining of women's social status (Klingorová and Havlíček, 2015). Religion promotes different kinds of norms and traditions to define gender role expectations and patriarchal systems that are built on men's privilege. Some religions expect women to perform their defined roles as homemakers with family-related responsibilities. In the case of women academics at University B, their religious-based social statuses and roles represent gender inequality since these roles and statuses are the product of the interference of religion in regulating them.

Hindu women in University B are confronted with the intersection between the culture of patriarchy, and religion that shapes their roles and expectations. Women's roles and responsibilities are socially constructed in the middle because culture and tradition are heavily influenced by religious values. Academic careers have added these roles, forming and attributing Hindu women with triple roles and responsibilities (rather than dual, as most women face). Hindu women in general have an important, special and noble status as manifested in their scriptures, *Purana and Itihasa*. In *Yajur Weda XIV, verse 12*, women's special status is portrayed as that of excellent pioneers and supporters who feed and commit to earthly rules. Women are noble creatures viewed as the properties of families that represent glory, victory, long life, prosperity, wealth and fertility (Purawati, 2019). In a particular Hindu community in Indonesia, they have a particular scripture, called *Manu Smerti*. In *Manu Smerti,* the special and noble status and role of women have been conceptualized as simply practicing *Dharma* (absolute and eternal truth), raising children, caring for family members, and becoming central actors in ensuring religious and cultural rituals to running smoothly in each of their *Banjar* (Purawati, 2019). Hindus in Indonesia share different characteristics with Hindus in India and Nepal, including their calendars, rituals and ceremonies. Many of these rituals and ceremonies have taken far more time from the women in our study than they do from their academic duties. Within these ceremonies and rituals, women are required to become central actors in preparing everything necessary for the smooth running of cultural and religious events. With this added value, Hindu women in our study face unique challenges compared to women academics in other parts of Indonesia.

Klingorová and Havlíček (2015) found that Hinduism has a high level of the practice of gender inequality. Following this, NPM, along with greedy universities, has abjected

women's bodies and has exploited them by demanding they contribute more amid their surrounding restricted circumstances and capacities brought by the interpretation of cultural and religious texts.

Putting these stories together, and following (Gherardi, 1995), we confirm our initial supposition that universities, like other organizations, are the reflection and representation of the environment in which they reside. As a result, the confluence of local cultural and religious values as embedded in organizational culture or logic can distinctively give different colors and paths in the practice of gendered universities and gender inequality for Indonesian universities under this study.

Conclusion

Although NPM has been regarded as a nongendered bias system of politics in the management of academic communities and as a challenge to the norms and values of "patronage and paternalism" (Collinson and Hearn, 1994), it, indeed, promotes gender bias, reflected in the demands made by the "greedy" universities shrouded with entrepreneurial and corporate ethos. While women academics under this study can only perform a taken-for-granted acceptance via employing the gendered strategy of adaptation, they will continue to be marginalized and excluded in the process of knowledge production. This will reinforce the making and remaking of universities as sites where the process and creation of gendered practice and inequality are produced and perpetuated. As a result, based on the stories told by female academics, Indonesian universities can be understood as places where gender inequality is produced and perpetuated.

This study has to some extent provided evidence from Indonesia's university contexts on how the interrelated factors or relationships have perpetuated gender inequality. Firstly, the relationship between masculine technocracy's (NPM) bodies and languages intersect with the local cultural and religious values of women academics. Secondly, the relationship between local cultural and religious values creates gender roles and expectations for women with household and family responsibilities. Thirdly, the taken-for-granted stance, or what we term in this study as the gendered strategy of adaptation makes gender inequality unseen and taken as a normal practice. Taken all together, we argued that these are the factors contributing to the persistence of gender inequality in academia. Therefore, in order to mitigate gender inequality as the impact of merit-based evaluation entailed by NPM, particularly for women academics in Indonesia, it would be wise for the government to readdress its implementation of NPM by considering a contextual aspect. The situation of women academics in Indonesia is different as a result of the influence of the culture and religion. In line with this, it would be important to give more discretion to women academics at the University B in particular, or in other context similar to that of the University B, by applying a qualitative, peer-review assessment and evaluation mechanism to their scholarly work. In this form of mechanism, women academics are allowed to describe their constrained situations that impede their work performance, particularly in research and publishing. Following this mechanism, other work performance measures should be promoted as a substitute for measures of research and publishing, for example, their religious and cultural contributions in their *desa adat* or in their communities. The idea behind this substitute recommendation is vested in the view that the cultural and religious contribution women academics have made can be viewed as a form of community service, one part of three scholarly works in universities, or what is known in Indonesia as *tri darma perguruan tinggi*.

Although a large body of literature has reported the causes of persistent gender inequality in academia, it has revolved around cultural and patriarchal systems. Our study reveals an important determinant that has not been widely discussed in the literature (except for Arifeen and Gatrell, 2020), which is religious values. With this new finding, our research then

contributes to the literature on gender inequality in academia concerning the study of local cultural and religious values from a rarely heard context like that of Indonesia. This, then, indicates that studying gender inequality in academia at the intersection of cultural and religious norms via the lens of bodies and languages of femininity may contribute to a clearer understanding of why such a phenomenon occurs and persists. Accordingly, this may be used as a new alternative way to explore gender inequality in academia in detail, not only for academic practitioners but also for policymakers in HE. Also, the results of our study may provide a clearer understanding of the gendered values of NPM that hinder women academics from becoming productive bodies to fill higher hierarchies. Following this, it is not overly ambitious to say that the gender inequality in academia manifested in the underrepresentation in senior positions as analogized in "leaky bodies" and "leaky pipeline" may not be caused by women themselves, but by other instruments of career systems made by others (Halsey, as cited in Bagilhole and Goode, 2001; Hochschild, 1989). Women academics are disadvantaged in the competition to produce research in these instruments and systems. As a result, attempts to disembody the practice of research and publication through a work measurement that accommodates the representation of languages and bodies of female academics are critical.

This study has only examined the experiences of married women academics with children, excluding those of unmarried women, single women with children, married women without children and male academics. It would be important for future research to include these different backgrounds of respondents to compare and understand their problems, constraints and experiences in dealing with this policy.

The other issue that needs to be focused on is related to the form of the research approach. This research used qualitative research with only one instrument to collect data. Future research may focus on the application of more instruments to collect data and in the form of an ethnographic approach to obtain more in-depth data to understand more about issues being faced by Indonesian women academics.

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Appendix
Semi-structured interview questions

Background information

(1) Can you tell me a bit about how you came to be working here at X university?

- How long have you been working here?
- Where did you work before?
- Why did you want to work here?

(2) Can you tell me a bit about your current role?

- Briefly, what area do you teach and/or research?
- What are the important aspects that influence your role and responsibility? (For example, your discipline? Or other?)
- How have you performed your role and responsibility? (For example teaching, research and publication?)
- How do you feel about performing these?
- Do you have any additional roles or responsibilities?

Government Policy:

(1) Are you aware of the governmental policy (2012) [UU Dikti no. 12 tahun 2012] (Particularly related to teaching, research, and publication).

- What do you know about the policy?

- Has this been communicated to you? If so how?
- Has this influenced what you do in your day to day job? If so how?
- Has this lead to changes within the organization?

(2) What is your opinion on academics' obligation to conduct research and publish papers in internationally reputable journals?

- Do you agree or disagree?
- If you agree, please provide your reasons (what has enabled you from meeting that obligation?)
- If you disagree, please provide your reasons (what have restricted you to meet that obligation?)

(3) How do you cope with this obligation? Or what have you done to meet this obligation?

- Do you have some strategies to come to terms with that obligation?
- What do you think of those strategies you have applied?

(4) How much has this obligation affected you?

- Have your careers been delayed?
- How have the changes made you feel?
- Have you had any say in how these changes were implemented?
- Have there been any problems with implementing these changes?

Corresponding author
Nurdiana Gaus can be contacted at: nurdianagaus@uny.ac.id