

Examining the Social Construction of Highly Educated Women

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Lasmery RM Girsang^{1*}, Miletresia²

Program Studi Magister Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Bunda Mulia
Jl. Raya Lodan No. 2 Ancol, Jakarta 14430 - Indonesia

*Corresponding author: lgirsang@bundamulia.ac.id

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Abstract - This study discusses the realities faced by single female workers in urban areas who are still bound by stereotypes. It is undeniable that women remain a significant topic of discussion as there are several views that hinder women, particularly in pursuing their achievements in higher education. This article focuses on how women strive to overcome stereotypical views that limit their rights. Examine the increasingly widespread stereotypes that raise society's awareness on emerging gender-based generalizations. Thus, through recognizing gender roles, women shape their identities by constructing their own realities. Therefore, by applying an exploratory-qualitative approach, the authors found three informants in Jakarta who are challenging societal constructions. Based on the Social Construction Theory, this study shows that even though women have formal education and high jobs, they still face questions from their environment that influence their identity construction.

Keywords: Social construction; Highly educated women; Gender; Stereotype; Identity

Introduction

The discussion of women remains a timeless topic. As individuals with inherent special characteristics, women always attract attention for their progress and existence, especially in environments that contrast with the prevailing dominant culture. The patriarchal culture in Indonesia is also prone to highlighting differences in physical differences and social roles assigned to the feminine gender, as a result, stereotypes can trigger the "compartmentalisation" of gender roles in society. The gender inequality that has emerged in society has forced the feminist movement to actively advocate for gender equality, emphasising on human freedom to engage in various activities and enhance personal development. There remains a belief in society that women who strive to improve themselves are not fully accepted. Stereotypical views about women's obligation to stay at home deny women the right to pursue education and have a career. As a result, such a construction was formed. Moreover, social interactions that shape generalizations about women are not only capable of restructuring social structures but also influencing the formation of individual identities.

Inevitably, in today's society, gender has been constructed in such a way that gender identity itself is identified based on a person's sex. Referring to the statement by Franzoi & Oswald, a child grows and discovers their identity by saying "he is a boy" and "she is a girl". The depiction of gender itself can be seen in body shape, behaviour, and voice, as well as aspects of skill and agility (Ogletree, 2015) also adds that men can be described as individuals who have strong bodies, short hair, strong physiques, and can perform manual labour such as transporting goods or becoming technicians.

Meanwhile, women are depicted as having smaller bodies, slim figures, and breasts, and lacking the same energy as men, so they can only do light work, one of which is taking care of the house.

In addition, a person's gender differences also shape social behaviour and development within a culture. This then influences how social groups categorise someone (Eckes & Trautner, 2012). In general, society often categorizes gender based on body anatomy, thereby influencing social rules that regulate the roles of men and women in acting and behaving. Understanding the differences in gender roles in social life is beginning to be integrated with gender-based social role theory. Eagly & Wood (2012) explain that gender roles are believed by society because their biological and physical differences impact the way they act.

Moreover, social interactions that shape generalisations about women can alter social structures and influence the formation of individual identities. Gender roles influence social structures and societal behaviour, and vice versa. This categorization of gender roles encourages individuals to accept, internalise, and interpret specific genders. This meaning then becomes a gender identity for each sex. For example, women are identified with feminine attitudes, where these feminine attitudes exhibit warm and gentle behaviour. On the other hand, identities formed within a certain gender generate societal expectations regarding gender compliance in fulfilling roles. The researchers examined the work of Eagly & Wood (2012), which presented several studies on negative reactions to deviations from gender roles. For example, the meta-analysis on the leadership attitudes of men and women found that women who behave dominantly and competently tend to be disliked, and women are punished when they do not pay attention to others' feelings whenever they express their anger. Men who are democratically dominant are more respected, while in the study by Heilman et al. (in Eagly & Wood, 2012), men have masculine stereotypes and will be punished if they behave passively and indecisively.

Behind the stereotypical construction of women, a study illustrates how women are constructed within their environments. Starting from domestic roles, women who have experienced domestic violence can recover by improving themselves through education (Hestia Ainun Fintari, 2018). This is in line with the Indonesian government's efforts to promote gender equality in education by issuing a regulation for a minimum of 12 years of education, as well as continuing to support higher education at the diploma, bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and professor levels. However, the Higher Education Statistics data for 2020 shows that the number of female master's and doctoral graduates is lower compared to males. The number of female master's degree holders consists of 45,592 out of 95,217 graduates, and the number of doctoral graduates is 2,833 out of 7,383 graduates (PDDikti, 2020).

A woman's decision to pursue education is certainly based on various aspects, ranging from economic and financial factors, such as how women's social roles are shaped by the notion that a woman who pursues higher education will be wasting their potential because she will eventually become a housewife, or even highly educated women are considered too independent, making it difficult for them to find a partner. In fact, Hidayat in previous social study found that one of the pillars of happiness in life is if someone has good friends or community starting from family (Hanania, V & Garvin, 2022). Additionally, highly educated women are considered too independent (Christian, M., et. al, 2024), making it difficult for them to find a partner. The social behaviour that has been built is inseparable from the cultural aspects developed through the interaction between individuals and groups. Through culture, individuals are able to develop experiences, perspectives, and good behaviours towards themselves and within society.

Thus, the emergence of this phenomenon in society drives the author to approach the existing phenomenon in order to gain a deeper understanding of how the construction of women is formed based on social construction, gender, and the construction of women's identity. Thus, based on this description, the author is interested in raising the topic that examines the social construction of highly educated women.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Social Construction of Reality

Thomas Samuel Eberle (1992) emphasises that social reality is shaped by constructions made by society. The foundation of the construction theory proposed by Berger and Luckmann (1967) views society as a product of human creation or society as a product of humans (Pfadenhauer & Knoblauch, 2019). This meaning shows that the characteristics of society are shaped by interacting actors, who then play a role in reconstructing history, behaviour, and habits, as well as forming culture. The social

construction of reality emerges on the psychological side of individuals related to the sociological perspective in social psychology (Pfadenhauer & Knoblauch, 2019). This psychological aspect lies in the concept of individuals who possess measurable and diagnosable characteristics. Meanwhile, construction is a form of social process that is analysed sociologically; it originates and is created by individuals and groups from their social activities (Knoblauch & Wilke, 2016).

In addition, the discussion on social construction by Crotty, as cited in Creswell (2014) consists of several assumptions as follows: (1) The construction of meaning in humans is the result of how humans engage with the social environment or the world in which they interpret; (2) Human involvement in the social environment and the way they understand a phenomenon is based on the historical background and social perspectives embedded in their environment; (3) The foundation of meaning passed down from generation to generation is always social in nature and emerges from human and societal interactions.

Gender Stereotype Theory

Originating from the Greek words “stereos”, meaning solid and “typos”, meaning impression, a stereotypical view refers to the perception of things because they possess certain distinctive characteristics. (Chakravorty, 2014) examines the stereotypes attached to certain groups or ethnicities related to behaviour and other aspects. The stereotypical portrayal of someone is more based on an individual's subjectivity towards a particular group, whether in a positive or negative form. The subjectivity present in stereotypes is caused by the absence of a specific benchmark for a community. This means that one can directly generalise to such a group (Saguni, 2014).

Individuals tend to have perceptions that are believed these beliefs then shape views and judgments towards certain groups and ethnicities, thereby forming stereotypes themselves. Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, & Roy (2017) believe that stereotypical views refer to generalisations about certain groups. An example that can prove the stereotype in this explanation is the view of Asian students, specifically children who have good grades. Although it does not have a negative connotation, this view is a form of stereotype. Generalising this example will become an issue when children of Asian descent do not have good school grades.

On the prevalence of stereotypical views, this can raise awareness in the society on the emergence of generalisations about specific genders. One concrete form of this appears in the implementation of gender schemas. Through gender schemas, Saguni (2014) realised that there is a cognitive structure, based on perception, that organises the world based on gender grouping, both male and female. This is also acknowledged by Sandra Bem, who revealed that the culture shaped by society has differentiated the procedures for raising and educating boys and girls, both in the way they understand themselves, build perspectives about others, and even their feelings about something. Through this, it can be seen that the formation of these stereotypes creates a structure that influences the way gender is treated (in Franzoi & Oswald, 2021).

Gender becomes an issue because sex is profoundly linked with gender itself. Gender is defined as a sociocultural construct that distinguishes masculine and feminine characteristics (Eckes & Trautner, 2012). This is also caused by the gender roles that are formed in society. Related to the concept of gender roles, the differences in responsibilities assigned to men and women can be seen in the research made by Balachandra, Briggs, Eddleston, & Brush (2019). They've shown that professions in society are categorised based on masculine and feminine characteristics. Professions that refer to strength, leadership, and authority are considered suitable for the masculine gender (Karlin, England, & Richardson, 2002; Powell & Anthony Butterfield, 2015), while feminist stereotypes often refer to professions related to care or nurturing (Balachandra et al., 2019).

Construction of Identity

The construction of identity is formed from the discovery of self-identity within the social environment by George Herbert Mead in 1934. Mead focuses on the individual as a product of social activities and interactions, whereas this research focuses more on how a person engages in a continuous dialogue between internal conversations (within oneself) and external interactions in the formation of social self. The development of self-identity was also explored by Erving Goffman in 1959, who portrayed humans as social actors, where individuals adaptively display their character while considering the society around them (Brekhus, 2016). In this understanding, Goffman specifically

analysed how individuals discredit and manage their self-identity by observing the identities present in the society, thereby minimising social stigma and reducing potential harm. Through the observations of (Mead, 2015), knowledge about the relationship between the social world of society and an individual's identity forms the foundation of identity in cognitive sociology. This also verified the previous research (Limarandani, SNLAS, & Patera, 2024).

However, identity is difficult for every individual to understand and comprehend because it is very complex (Maella, Farida, Harliantara, & Prihatiningsih, 2024). An identity is formed from the perspective of the roles played by someone. This then forms a construction in the form of classification and categorization. Classification and categorization play a very important role in the formation of identity because they will create certain boundaries, making the formed identity implicit Brekhuns (2016) determined that identity can be obtained by looking at the context from different perspectives. The construction of identity is based on the existence of social organisations that have common characteristics.

Humans, who generally have adaptive characters, then form identities according to the environment in which they live (Brekhuns (2016). This then forms the authenticity of identity (an identity used to emphasise commitment to identity, where the police legally claim that identity); multidimensionality of identity (more than one form of identity, meeting with a social actor, but one who balances and negotiates the identities they possess); and identity mobility (a person's ability to adjust and adapt certain identities based on context).

Authenticity of Identity

The construction of identity is formed in every community group. Identity authenticity is the primary identity possessed by an individual, and it is their identity both in the eyes of the police and the law. The authenticity of identity is related to the individual's strong commitment to the identity displayed, supporting characteristics that reinforce the authenticity of identity, and the essential view of identity itself. The authenticity of an identity can be proven by the period of time a person has spent through that character (from past to present). An example of identity authenticity was conducted in McLead's 1999 study, which analysed the authenticity of conversations among hip-hop musicians as a form of subcultural identity study.

The results show the authenticity of the identity of "black" hip-hop musicians who embody a gritty, street-oriented lifestyle people who follow mass trends, and maintain old school authenticity. Meanwhile, the identity of "white" hip-hop musicians is often associated with commercial, softer image, and indications of inauthenticity towards their identity as true hip-hop artists. Meanwhile, Johnston and Baumann (2007) in Brekhuns (2016) analysed authenticity in identity by examining aspects such as creation, perspective, closeness to nature, institutionalised power, strategy, and specific expressions of social construction.

Multidimensionality of Identity

The modernization of society creates a more diverse and complex social network. This leads to a lack of a single identity for social actors. Social actors in the modern and postmodern eras navigate the complexities of their environments, thereby society also expands the character and identity of individuals, both in terms of location and affiliation. This makes a person's identity multidimensional. The diversity of identities can be based on social background, race, social class, or identity based on region. Brekhuns (2016) analysed the existence of collective identity among social actors, making them layered social groups, both hierarchically and distinctly. As a form of subculture, multidimensional identity introduces many individual identities as social beings, and even the diversity of identities is influenced by subculture, gender, race, ethnicity, and gender.

Mobility of Identity

In relation to multidimensional identity, a person's diverse identity certainly experiences movement. In sociological studies of identity, individuals are able to exchange, play, and enact their identities based on the contexts they face. The relationship between identity mobility is related to the situations and cultures they face. The metaphor of identity transfer can be seen in how individuals can express various facial expressions across different social networks and chat contexts.

After the implementation of the mandatory minimum 12 years of education by the Ministry of Education and Culture, women also receive facilities to continue their education such as diplomas, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, doctorates, and professorships. However, their desire to continue their education is hindered by the dilemma of social construction and stereotypes formed by the society that suggests that women do not need higher education (Lobuteva, 2021). The challenges do not end there as women with higher education face certain judgments or stereotypes regarding their character and the decisions they make.

Social Construction of Reality

The theory posits that human interactions within a social environment will shape social understanding and perspectives based on the background of the social environment in which they live (Crotty in Creswell, 2014). This is followed by the Gender Stereotype Theory, which examines the existence of gender stereotypes embedded in society, and the resulting difference in judgments between men and women. The social construction that forms as a woman is based on the existence of gender roles. Through these roles, the social construction of society gives rise to gender stereotypes.

The social construction formed as a woman is also based on the construction of women's identity in society. The construction of identity itself is a construction made by social actors in processing and presenting themselves in the social environment (Brekhus, 2016). The formation of identity construction is based on the authenticity of identity, multidimensional identity (diversity of identity within a single social actor), and identity mobility (individual attitudes in exchanging identities with one another). Social construction in society cannot be separated from interaction. The interaction between each individual plays a role in shaping reality and society's perspective towards that reality itself. In addition, the authors used previous research as a reference in compiling a study on gender stereotypes of highly educated women, their backgrounds, and efforts to overcome gender stereotypes.

Material and Methodology

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is a way to approach and describe social reality in the world. The qualitative approach will depict the stereotypical construction of women who chose a master's degree over marriage. Qualitative research is a method that is exploratory in nature and seeks to understand a meaning, which is considered by a number of individuals or groups of people to originate from social and humanitarian problems (Fensi, 2019). The qualitative approach will depict the stereotypical construction of women who choose a master's degree over marriage. In addition, Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault (2016) emphasize qualitative research to explain data obtained from written sources and words as well as behavior in the observation process.

Furthermore, Johnson & Christensen (2014) state that qualitative research is used to describe a phenomenon that can sometimes generate new ideas, hypotheses, or theories. This research is used when there is a phenomenon that is little known to the researcher but they want to deepen their understanding of this phenomenon by studying and understanding someone's experiences and perspectives.

Then, the authors applied an exploratory approach Creswell (2014) emphasized that exploration involves exploring perspectives and information from various sources. Information exploration as an exploratory approach aims to collect data broadly and systematically so that findings can be optimally explained. Exploratory research is viewed as the first and foundational step for subsequent research, where it will help solve problems from other problem formulations using different types and kinds of research (Bajari, 2015).

Therefore, this research employs a purposive sampling approach, with Etikan (2016) approach where the data collection technique is non-random. The researchers determined the criteria, and the number of sources needed and obtained three sources. Some of the established criteria are women who have obtained a master's degree, who were not married while studying, are over 25 years old, and have stereotypical experiences from their environment. Supported by data collection techniques. Siyoto & Sodik, (2015) explain through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

Lastly, data collection proceeds to the analysis. The researchers applied coding to facilitate the data analysis process so that the research results can be studied systematically. This process includes open coding, which generalises information categories, then axial coding in the form of selecting

categories based on theory and models and ends with selective coding in the form of explaining the story of the interrelation of categories (Creswell, 2014).

To ensure the credibility and validity of the research, data validity is essential as a reference for the study (Arikunto, 2019). The validity of the data applied by the researchers is based on the stages written by Sugiyono (2018) in the form of extending observations, diligence in observations, and meeting the number of references. Additionally, the data analysis process needs to use triangulation.

Triangulation is a procedure used by researchers to examine the validity of data from research subjects. This follows (Tutuko, 2013) statement which presents data triangulation as a technique to examine validity and as a standard for the data obtained by researchers. In conclusion, the authors focused on the use of data/source triangulation among other triangulation techniques (triangulation of methods, researchers, and theories).

Results and Discussion

Here is a general description of the research subjects.

Table 1. Identity of Informants

Informants	Age	Latest education	Work	Status
Informan 1	30 years old	Master at University of Indonesia	<i>Social media</i> in Alodokter, Jakarta	Not married
Informan 2	28 years old	Master at Diponegoro University	Lecturer at a private campus high school in Jakarta	Not married
Informan 3	40 years old	Master at University of Indonesia	Teacher at a private high school in Jakarta	Not married

Source: Primary data (2023)

Related to the problem formulation presented at the beginning, the author explains the results of observations and interviews with informants regarding relevant assumptions and theoretical concepts.

Construction of Highly Educated Women. This article will discuss the four components that form the informant, such as: (1) family; (2) relatives; (3) relationships, and (4) environmental factors in behaviour.

According to the informants, they all received family approval to continue their education to the master's level. This is based on a diverse background: one parent has a master's degree; received a scholarship to avoid burdening the family; and persevered in continuing education.

Then, in their interactions with each other, all respondents acknowledged that they often receive questions about the reasons they decided to pursue a master's degree. For my relatives, the decision to pursue the chosen education is considered strange in their eyes. This is not without the pressure from relatives who remind the respondents that they are still unmarried in adulthood, which is associated with the decision to pursue a master's degree and considered too smart, making it difficult for them to find a partner in the eyes of their relatives. There are concerns from their relatives that marriage is still considered a part of a woman's destiny. Also, women who are too smart can control men because, through higher education, women become smart and are considered "natty".

The following interview is summarised from the relatives of the 3rd informant:

"What is a master's degree? What are you still looking for? What does this mean? How long will you be smart at school? Be careful, men will be afraid of it!" (interview with Informant 3)

Besides the two aforementioned aspects, relationships and social environments also shape the personalities of the respondents. The ability to hold a master's degree is recognized by peers as a positive aspect in daily interactions and career advancement. The knowledge developed during master's education also plays a role in shaping attitudes in the workplace. The acknowledgment of the usefulness of a master's education is included in the following interview excerpt:

"And it seems, as I progress with my master's degree, my colleagues acknowledge, "oh yeah, your master's degree is useful too." There are also benefits to obtaining a master's degree." (interview with Informant 1/DA-2023)

Therefore, views on women's behaviour have been formed in society in general. Women are very much associated with the description of having a gentle and obedient personality, capable of managing the household and fulfilling the role of a wife. This personality description still shows that certain communities prefer women not to pursue higher education because, in the end, women will become wives and manage the household while neglecting education itself. Unfortunately, there are still environments with the same views that consider women as part of society in general.

Expectations as a Woman (Gender stereotype). Based on gender differences, there are still notions that distinguish men and women regarding social activities and roles in society. Gender generalisation means that women who have different actions or personalities will be considered deviations. For certain groups, there is still hope for women to have the same path as the views held by society in general. There are no exceptions from the perspective of parents who expect their daughter (the informant) to marry at the age of 25 and be able to manage the household.

This aligns with the perception of parents who do not consider higher education as an achievement for women. Also, the support that was eventually given by the parents after the second informant received the master's scholarship.

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Gradual changes in parental attitudes will enable them to accept their daughter's decisions rather than emphasising their previous expectations. All informants are pursuing a profession and seeking to increase their income to meet daily needs while still living at home with their parents. The relationship between parents and daughters, as well as the parents' expectations of their daughters, are starting to ease and become more accepting of themselves. All informants expressed that their parents eventually accepted that their daughters were not yet married and had become independent as their daughters desired. For example, the second informant admitted that he couldn't cook, which his parents understood because of his busy work schedule every day.

With regard to their relatives, the informants were also asked about the reasons for choosing a master's degree. They were questioned by the advice given: there's no need to be too smart and reminded them about the normal age to get married. Here, the authors emphasised that the generalisation by the informants' relatives to judge the woman stems from the common view that neglecting highly educated women does not fit the category of suitable women in the social environment. Meanwhile, those who are not married (even if they have higher education) are considered strange or become social deviations. This reflects the essence of a woman's life in marriage, from an environmental perspective.

Construction of the Identity of Highly Educated Women. Identity construction is a sign of individual identity recognition after interacting with the social environment. The development of identity can be seen through how a person demonstrates adaptive character while observing the surrounding community. As we understand the concept of identity construction, there are three core elements that individuals possess in demonstrating their character, particularly (1) authenticity of identity, (2) multidimensionality of identity, and (3) mobility of identity.

Through this understanding, there is a similarity in identity construction among the respondents. In terms of identity authenticity, the respondents' identity is that of women with postgraduate degrees. Their identity is recognized by their families and legally because they already hold the attached degree, so all activities or individuals seen by the public are women with a master's degree. As understood by the authenticity of identity, a person has an authentic character and displays a unique identity. The character of their authentic identity consists of someone who is confident, holds onto their principles and views, is eager for knowledge and experience, and does not care much about the opinions of others.

As evidenced by the attitudes of the three informants, they continued to carry out the decisions they had made, which was to pursue a master's degree until graduation, and then did not hesitate to cancel their intention to pursue a master's degree due to expressions they found unpleasant from the environment.

Evidence of the informants' self-confidence can be seen from informant 1 and informant 2, who stated that they do not feel inferior if they do not have a partner because they prioritise obtaining a master's degree. Confidence can be seen in the way they answer questions directed at the decision to pursue a master's degree.

"I feel like that, a guy who doesn't feel like he's compatible with S2 girls. "That's not just my target market, it's not the group I'm targeting to be my partner" (interview with informant 1/ DA-2023)

Furthermore, in the ongoing observation, the authors found a relationship between the motivation of the three informants to pursue a master's degree and the individual's desire to gain more knowledge. The reason that the first informant (DA) and the second informant (NI) pursued a master's degree shows their effort to support the profession they were engaged in at that time. Meanwhile, the motivation of the third informant (NA) is based on his love for archaeology. Previously, the informant idolised characters like Indiana Jones, which challenged him to pursue knowledge by obtaining a master's degree in Archaeology at a prestigious state university in Jakarta.

The identity derived from the authenticity of identity is that highly educated women have close relationships with their families, especially their parents, in the form of trust. This is confirmed by the results of observations and interviews regarding the lives of the informants at home. From informant 3 (NA), it was found that the parents believed in giving the informant the freedom to explore outside the home, and then agreed with the decision to pursue a master's degree because he was already mature in making decisions. As a consequence, the informant always communicates with their parents. Similarly, with informant 1 (DA), parental trust is evident from his father's support for the decision to pursue a master's degree.

Here is the multidimensionality of identity, highlighting the characters of the informants who are adjusting to their dual roles in the social environment. As social actors, the three informants have complex social environments with various activities. Informant 1 (DA) has roles as a daughter, sister, cousin, or niece to relatives, as a coworker, a master's student in Communication Studies, an aunt to her siblings' children, and works as a social media manager. Similar to the second informant (NI) who plays the role of a daughter, older sister, cousin, neighbour, niece to relatives, college friend, coworker, a master's degree graduate in Psychology from a prestigious university, lecturer, or works as a curriculum developer. Meanwhile, the last informant (NA) is the eldest sister, aunt to her two younger brothers, cousin and niece to her relatives, and a teacher with a master's degree in Archaeology from the University of Indonesia.

In the end, the overall roles played by the three informants resulted in adjustments in every interaction, known as identity mobility. This identity refers to the individual's effort to perform various different identities based on the context and interactions they encounter. The application of identity mobility can be seen in how the three interview respondents answered questions regarding their decision to pursue a master's degree. For example, the first informant (DA) tried to remain silent and uphold the norms of politeness towards relatives who questioned the decision to pursue a master's degree. Additionally, the informants also choose to remain silent when debating with their parents if it involves unsolvable issues and also help adjust friends who feel inferior by maintaining a professional demeanour while performing their profession.

A similar identity also appears in the second informant (NI) who performs the role of a daughter in taking care of the house. This role has increased along with his activities outside the home, as a lecturer. The informant is also able to respond when experiencing bullying from the environment and chooses to remain silent if the decision to continue with a master's degree is questioned.

The author concludes that the three informants are aware that their existence as women is still considered different from the social constructs in their environment. Their career journeys and master's studies ultimately fostered self-awareness among the respondents regarding the social treatment they received. Furthermore, the respondents interpreted the existence of different groups in their views on highly educated women, which come from family, relatives, colleagues, and social friends.

The authors conclude that the three informants are aware that their existence as women is still considered different from the social constructs in their environment. Their career journeys and master's studies ultimately fostered self-awareness among the respondents regarding the social treatment they received. Furthermore, the respondents interpreted the existence of different groups in their views on highly educated women, which come from family, relatives, colleagues, and social friends.

From their family side, support for the decision to pursue a master's degree and concerns related to marriage were more often responded to by the three informants as a form of affirmation between parents and children. However, on the other hand, for informant 3 (NA), the issue of concern regarding matchmaking is entirely the parents' view on women's lives, which require them to marry at a productive age. Meanwhile, from the perspective of relatives, there are still views (stereotypes) that differentiate between genders, which only have psychological impacts on the subjects, including feelings of stress, pressure, doubt, and sadness due to an unsupportive environment. Similar stereotypes also emerge in the work environment of the informants who still feel the difference in the attitudes/treatment they receive.

Including how to respond and interact with the environment, the three subjects decided not to provide reasons and clarifications regarding the decision to continue their master's studies discussed within their environmental layers. Differences in values and views on gender can be wisely handled by the informants.

Therefore, according to the authors' reflection on the results and discussion, the authors depict the entire process of social construction and identity construction in this research in the form of the following construction model:

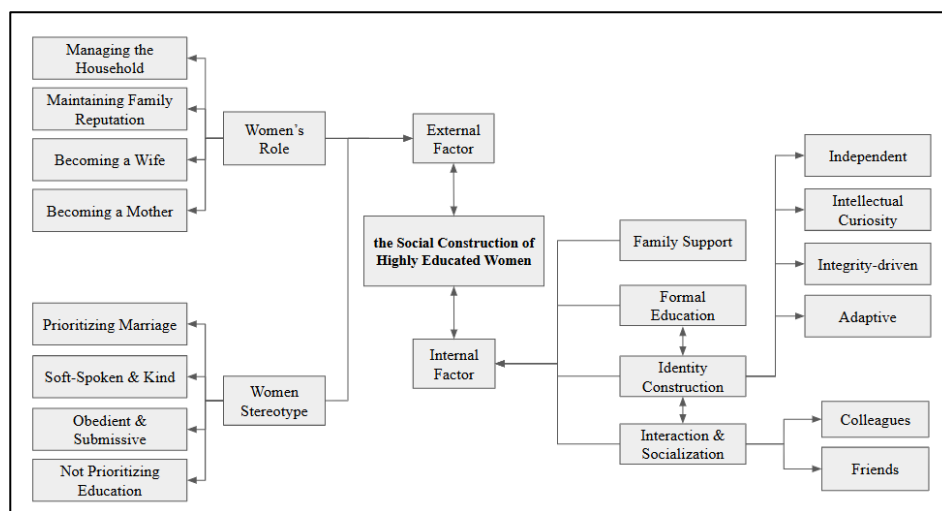


Figure 1: Social Construction Model
Source: Primary data (2023)

Conclusions

This paper that addresses issues on gender still provoke controversy in certain communities. This research found that the social construction of highly educated women results from the following internal and external factors: (1) Internal factors are indicated by family, formal education, identity construction, and interaction with the environment; (2) External factors are derived from women's roles and gender stereotypes.

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