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Class Clash in Digital Space: Habitus, Capital, and Symbolic Violence

Dewi Christina Marbun*, Eriyanti Nurmala Dewi, Nurizky Adhi Hutama

Universitas Informatika dan Bisnis Indonesia
Jl. Soekarno-Hatta No.643, Sukapura, Kec. Kiaracondong, Kota Bandung, Jawa Barat 40285, Indonesia
*Email Korespondensi: dewichristinamarbun@gmail.com

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Abstract *- This study aims to explain how a symbol of job seeking vulnerability was appropriated by an agent rich in capital, how symbolic violence operated and was contested in the resulting discourse, and what the reception reveals about class relations on a professional platform. The findings show that symbolic violence worked through two mechanisms: an inverse appropriation, in which a dominant agent borrowed the symbol of the dominated, and an inspirational discourse that turned unequal visibility into a lesson in personal branding. Unlike classic accounts of symbolic violence, the violence in this case was widely recognised and openly named, especially by self identified job seekers. Yet recognition did not undo it, because the visibility gained had already been converted into commercial value and some job seekers themselves adopted the inspirational reading. The study proposes the notion of contested but effective symbolic violence for research on digital class relations, while its single-case design does not generalisation LinkedIn as a whole.*
Keywords*: Pierre Bourdieu; Norman Fairclough; Symbolic Violence; Class Conflict; LinkedIn*

Abstrak - Penelitian ini bertujuan menjelaskan bagaimana simbol kerentanan pencari kerja diambil alih oleh agen bermodal besar, bagaimana kekerasan simbolik bekerja sekaligus digugat dalam wacana yang muncul, dan apa yang diungkapkan resepsi publik tentang relasi kelas di platform profesional. Dengan memadukan Analisis Wacana Kritis tiga dimensi Norman Fairclough dan konsep habitus, modal, serta kekerasan simbolik Pierre Bourdieu, penelitian ini menganalisis tiga teks yang diproduksi Prilly, 167 teks resepsi dari 150 akun LinkedIn (67 unggahan, 3 artikel, dan 97 komentar), satu jajak pendapat LinkedIn, dan 12 laporan media. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa kekerasan simbolik bekerja melalui dua mekanisme: apropriasi terbalik, yaitu ketika agen dominan meminjam simbol milik kelompok yang didominasi, dan wacana inspiratif yang mengubah ketimpangan visibilitas menjadi pelajaran *personal branding*. Berbeda dari pemahaman klasik tentang kekerasan simbolik, kekerasan dalam kasus ini dikenali dan disebut secara terbuka, terutama oleh warganet yang mengidentifikasi diri sebagai pencari kerja. Namun, pengenalan itu tidak menghentikannya, karena visibilitas yang telanjur diperoleh sudah terkonversi menjadi nilai komersial dan sebagian pencari kerja justru mengadopsi pembacaan inspiratif. Penelitian ini menawarkan gagasan kekerasan simbolik yang digugat namun tetap efektif bagi kajian relasi kelas digital, dengan catatan bahwa studi kasus tunggal tidak mengeneralisasi LinkedIn secara keseluruhan.
Kata Kunci: Pierre Bourdieu; Norman Fairclough; Kekerasan Simbolik; Benturan Kelas; LinkedIn

Introduction

Digital space is never truly neutral. Although it appears open to everyone, a digital platform is an arena where meanings are contested and where power relations, class differences, and symbolic domination operate quietly but tangibly. This became visible on 25 January 2026, when the actress, producer, and entrepreneur Prilly Latuconsina announced that she had activated the #OpenToWork badge on the professional networking platform LinkedIn, less than a week after resigning from Sinemaku Pictures, the production house she had co-founded in

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2019 (CNA, 2026) (Validnews, 2026). In her post she wrote that she wanted to try *"offline sales experience"* as a personal challenge outside the film industry.

The response was immediate. Four days later, Prilly reported on Instagram that she had received 32,744 connection requests, and media headlines soon rounded this figure into "more than 30,000 offers" (Indonesia, 2026a). On 30 January she began working as an offline sales representative for Sensodyne at Summarecon Mall Bekasi, the same toothpaste brand that her LinkedIn headline already named her as ambassador for (Masna & Mamonto-Shrestha, 2026). From that point, netizens began to read the whole sequence as a brand campaign, and the early admiration turned into criticism that the act was insensitive toward people who were genuinely struggling to find work (Yasmin, 2026). On 4 February 2026 Prilly published an apology video on Instagram, acknowledging that her *"position and life experiences are not the same as everyone else's"*, while her LinkedIn account had by then become inaccessible (Khoiri, 2026).

This criticism did not arise in a social and economic vacuum. According to Statistics Indonesia (BPS), 7.46 million Indonesians were unemployed in August 2025, with an open unemployment rate of 4.85 percent (Indonesia, 2025), and university graduates have been among the groups most affected (Salma, 2025). A report by LPEM FEB UI in late 2025 recorded roughly 45,000 undergraduate and 6,000 postgraduate graduates who had become discouraged job seekers (Zulfikar, 2026). At the same time, inequality has deepened: the middle class shrank from 57.33 million people in 2019 to 47.85 million in 2024 (Redaksi, 2025). In this context, the #OpenToWork badge was not a neutral profile ornament for many Indonesian users.

It is important, however, to separate what the badge officially is from what it has come to mean. LinkedIn introduced the green #OpenToWork photo frame in mid-2020 as one of several features to help members signal their availability to recruiters during the COVID-19 crisis (LinkedIn, 2020). Its established, platform defined meaning is therefore functional: it announces availability. Its social meaning is more contested. Sociological studies of job searching show that platforms such as LinkedIn require job seekers to present themselves as marketable brands, and that this requirement disadvantages people with thin networks and little recognised capital (Gershon, 2017) (Sharone, 2017). In Indonesia during the period of this case, communication practitioners explicitly described the badge as a symbol *"closely tied to uncertainty, vulnerability, and the quiet resilience of job seekers"* (Masna & Mamonto-Shrestha, 2026). In this article, the reading of the badge as a marker of economic vulnerability, and the metaphor of a "digital white flag", are therefore treated as interpretive claims about its meaning in the Indonesian context of early 2026. They are examined against the data in the analysis rather than assumed as properties of the feature itself.

Scholarly inquiry into symbolic violence in digital space has grown in recent years. Widiatmojo used Bourdieu's framework to show how photographic habitus in a Facebook photography community functions as a medium of patriarchal domination over women (Widiatmojo, 2016). Research on "crazy rich" content on Instagram, published in this journal, applied Bourdieu's theory of practice to show how the display of economic, symbolic, and social capital produces social recognition that sustains class hierarchies (Wibowo et al., 2025). Within Critical Discourse Analysis, Cenderamata and Darmayanti applied Fairclough's three dimensional model to celebrity news and showed how media outlets frame the same event according to their own interests and ideological orientations (Cenderamata & Darmayanti, 2019). At a broader theoretical level, Ignatow and Robinson argue that Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus, and capital extend to digital practices, which tend both to reflect and to convert existing forms of capital (Ignatow & Robinson, 2017).

Two gaps remain, and they define the theoretical contribution of this study. First, existing studies mostly follow symbolic violence as it travels downward: the dominant display

their capital, or impose their own cultural standards on the dominated. Much less attention has been paid to the reverse movement, in which an agent rich in capital borrows a symbol that belongs to the experience of the dominated, in this case the badge of the job seeker. Second, classic accounts define symbolic violence as violence exercised with the complicity of those who suffer it, because they misrecognise it as natural (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Digital platforms, however, allow the dominated to name such violence publicly and in real time. This raises a question that previous studies have rarely been able to observe within a single discursive event: what happens to symbolic violence when misrecognition and open recognition occur at the same time? The Prilly Latuconsina case offers a rare opportunity to examine both questions on a professional platform, which has received little attention compared with Instagram, TikTok, or Facebook.

This study rests on two theoretical frameworks. The first is Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice, particularly the concepts of habitus, capital, and symbolic violence (Airoldi, 2021). Habitus is a system of durable, acquired dispositions, capital takes economic, cultural, social, and symbolic forms, and a field is a structured space with its own rules, in which the possession of appropriate capital and habitus determines one's position (Malik et al., 2025). Symbolic violence is domination that works not through physical coercion but through meanings and classifications that the dominated accept as natural and legitimate (Bourdieu, 1991) (Joseph, 2020). The second framework is Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which examines a text at three interrelated levels: the text itself, the discursive practice of its production, distribution, and consumption, and the social practice in which it is embedded (Fairclough, 1992) (Fairclough, 2013). In this framework, media and digital platforms never stand in a neutral position, they take part in shaping public opinion and reproducing power relations through language (Juniarti & Asropah, 2025). Fairclough's model provides the analytical procedure, while Bourdieu's concepts provide the explanation at the level of social practice.

Accordingly, this study aims to explain how a symbol of job seeking vulnerability was appropriated by an agent rich in capital, how symbolic violence operated and was contested in the discourse that followed, and what the public reception reveals about class relations on a professional platform. The intended findings are, first, a description of the discursive mechanisms through which symbolic violence worked in this case, second, a mapping of how audiences in different positions decoded the act, and third, a conceptual proposition about symbolic violence that is recognised yet remains effective. The study addresses three research questions. First, how are Prilly Latuconsina's habitus and capital inscribed in the texts surrounding her use of the #OpenToWork badge? Second, through which mechanisms does symbolic violence operate in the resulting discourse, and how is it contested? Third, how do public readings of the act reflect class relations in Indonesia's digital space?

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative approach within a critical paradigm, using a single-case design. Qualitative research is suited to exploring the meanings that individuals and groups attach to a social phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and the object of this study, the digital discourse surrounding Prilly Latuconsina's #OpenToWork badge, is textual, interpretive, and shaped by power relations that cannot be reduced to numerical variables. Epistemologically, digital cultural practices are treated as an arena in which meaning, class identity, and power relations are continuously produced, contested, and reproduced (Surber, 2018).

The analysis follows Fairclough's three-dimensional model (Fairclough, 1992) (Fairclough, 2013). The textual dimension examines lexical choices, modality, presupposition, forms of address, and intertextuality. The discursive practice dimension examines how texts

were produced, how they were distributed and recontextualised across platforms and media, and how audiences consumed them. The social practice dimension relates these findings to the ideological context and power relations of the field. It is at this third level that Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and symbolic violence are used as interpretive tools, so that the #OpenToWork badge is read not merely as a technical feature but as a sign whose meaning becomes contested when it is used by an agent whose habitus and capital differ sharply from those of most of its users.

Data Sources and Corpus

The data were documented by the researcher between 8 and 14 April 2026 through screenshots, screen recordings, and PDF captures of publicly accessible LinkedIn content and online news. Documentation was chosen because digital content is dynamic and can be edited or deleted at any time (Alyusi, 2019). This proved important in this case: because Prilly's LinkedIn account became inaccessible in early February 2026, the 1.097 comments on her original post could no longer be retrieved. The reception corpus was therefore built from public LinkedIn posts and comment threads in which other users discussed the case. This is a limitation, but it also has an analytical advantage, because these threads are where the controversy was debated at length rather than merely reacted to.

Each text was archived as a capture together with its source information: the platform and the account or URL, the date of capture, the host thread for comments, and, where visible, the post or comment to which it responded. Because LinkedIn displays only relative time stamps, the publication date of posts and comments was recorded as the time stamp shown at capture and converted into an approximate date range, while exact dates were recorded for LinkedIn articles and media texts. Texts that had been deleted or had become inaccessible before capture, including Prilly's original post and the comments on it, could not be archived from their original location. When such a text had been reproduced elsewhere, it was analysed through that reproduction and the source was recorded. Prilly's post was analysed from a screenshot showing a time stamp of three minutes after publication, checked against the version shown in a 20Detik news video, and her two Instagram videos were analysed from reposts by 20Detik and online media (Table 1). Texts that were edited or removed after capture were analysed in the version archived at the time of capture, and posts that LinkedIn marked as edited ("Diedit") were analysed in their visible edited form.

The documentation archive contained 201 files: 111 JPEG images, 65 PNG screenshots, 22 PDF files, and 3 screen recordings. Seven PDF files only compiled screenshots that were already in the archive, and one PDF was a journal article kept as a reference, these eight files were removed, leaving 193 files from which the corpus was drawn. Texts were included if they (1) were produced by Prilly or explicitly referred to her #OpenToWork activation or the related campaign, (2) were publicly accessible without special permission, (3) were published between 25 January 2026, the day the #OpenToWork post appeared, and 9 March 2026, and (4) expressed an evaluative stance toward the act, Prilly, the brand, or the platform. The end date of 9 March 2026 was set at one month before the last day of LinkedIn capture (9 April 2026). At capture, every LinkedIn post and comment in the corpus displayed a relative time stamp of one month ("1 bln", 7 texts) or two months ("2 bln", 156 texts), and one comment whose time stamp was not legible appeared in a thread posted two months earlier. No captured text displayed a time stamp in weeks, days, or hours, so no text published after the end date entered the corpus. The three LinkedIn articles were dated 27 January, 3 February, and 6 February 2026, and the dated media texts were published between 26 January and 9 February 2026. Three types of texts were excluded: duplicate captures of the same text; 47 replies written by the authors of host threads to commenters on their own threads, which were treated as context because each

author's stance was already represented by the main post; and 3 comments that expressed no evaluation, namely a joke, an emoji-only reaction, and a question about whether the account had been deleted.

Table 1. Composition of the Research Corpus

Category	Texts included	n	Use in analysis
Texts produced by Prilly Latuconsina	LinkedIn #OpenToWork post with profile headline (25 January 2026), Instagram video on 32,744 connection requests and the Sensodyne sales job (29 January 2026, captured via a 20Detik repost), Instagram clarification video (4 February 2026, captured via media reposts)	3	Textual analysis
LinkedIn reception texts	67 standalone posts, 3 long form LinkedIn articles, and 97 comments or replies in 8 discussion threads, written by 150 distinct accounts	167	Consumption: social practice
LinkedIn poll	Poll by Jojo S. Nugroho on the conduct of Prilly and Sensodyne (485 votes)	1	Consumption: triangulation
Media and industry texts	9 online news reports (Antara, Bloomberg Technoz, Cantika, CNA, CNN Indonesia, Inilah.com, Parapuan, Republika, Validnews), 1 trade media analysis (Campaign Indonesia), 1 consultancy blog (Maverick), and 1 news video (20Detik)	12	Production and distribution: triangulation
Total		**183**	

Source: Research data, 2026.
Excluded: 8 compilation or reference files, duplicate captures, 47 replies by thread authors, and 3 non evaluative comments.

As Table 1 shows, the final corpus consists of 183 texts. The three texts produced by Prilly form the object of the textual analysis. The 167 reception texts, written by 150 distinct LinkedIn accounts, form the core material for analysing consumption and social practice. The LinkedIn poll and the 12 media and industry texts were used to reconstruct the production and distribution of the discourse and to triangulate the findings.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis proceeded in six steps. In the first step, all images were transcribed into text, the videos were transcribed. Each reception text was assigned an identification number and recorded in a coding sheet together with its author's displayed name and headline, format (post, article, or comment), host thread, the text it responded to where visible, source file, capture date, and time stamp. In the second step, the unit of analysis was defined. For Prilly's texts, the unit was the clause or sentence. For the reception corpus, the unit was one complete text: each post, each article, and each comment counted as one unit regardless of its length, and a post that ran across several screenshots was counted once. When one account produced several texts, each text was counted as a separate unit, because the same person could take different positions in different threads. This applied to 12 of the 150 accounts, which together produced 29 of the 167 units (two to four texts each); the other 138 accounts produced one text each. To check that these repeated authors did not distort the results, the distribution of reading positions was recalculated using only the first text of each account. The order of the reading positions remained the same: oppositional 30.7%, negotiated 27.3%, dominant 26.7%, and cynical-apathetic 15.3%, compared with 30.5%, 29.3%, 25.7%, and 14.4% for all 167 units.

In the third step, textual features were coded using the categories in Table 2, namely lexical choice, modality and evaluation, presupposition, forms of address, and intertextuality. In the fourth step, discursive practice was coded. Production and distribution were traced through the sequence of texts and the way key claims, such as the number of connection requests, were recontextualised as they moved across media. Consumption was coded using reading positions adapted from Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding model (Hall, 2019): a dominant reading accepts the preferred meaning of exploration and inspiration, a negotiated reading accepts the premise but qualifies it, and an oppositional reading rejects it. Two subtypes emerged during coding and were retained: an emulative dominant reading, in which readers announced that they had activated the badge “like Prilly”, and a professional technical negotiated reading, in which the case was assessed through marketing, public relations, or crisis communication frameworks. A fourth position, the cynical apathetic reading, was derived inductively from texts that treated the episode as a routine publicity cycle and disengaged from moral evaluation. Each unit was assigned one reading position, when a text contained more than one, it was coded according to its concluding evaluation (Saldaña, 2021).

Many texts contained both praise and criticism, so the rule of coding by concluding evaluation was applied in four steps. First, the coder identified the evaluative move that closed the text or that the rest of the text built toward, such as a final judgement, a recommendation, or a question addressed to readers. Second, a text was coded dominant only if criticism was absent or explicitly dismissed, as in Arief M. Nugroho's comment that there was "tidak perlu ada maaf" ("no need for an apology"), and oppositional only if its concluding evaluation rejected the act without a balancing concession. Third, a text that granted both merit and fault, or that concluded that both were valid, was coded negotiated. Maicel A., for example, called the act "jenius dari sisi strategi" ("genius in terms of strategy") but concluded that "sensitifitas terhadap konteks sosial juga penting" ("sensitivity to the social context also matters"), and Rizky Mileno described Prilly's "unfair advantage" while concluding that both paths to visibility were "valid"; both texts were coded negotiated. Fourth, when praise and criticism were both subordinated to the claim that the episode was staged publicity, the text was coded cynical-apathetic. When the structure of a text left its conclusion unclear, the evaluation in its final sentence was used.

In the fifth step, the position from which each reader spoke was coded using information displayed in the text and the profile headline: self identified job seeker (the text states that the author is unemployed or seeking work), executive or owner (for example founder, CEO, director, head, or general manager), employed professional, organisational or media account, or unclear. This indicator is a proxy for position within LinkedIn's professional field, not a direct measure of social class, and it is treated as such in the analysis. In the sixth step, the coded material was interpreted at the level of social practice using explicit criteria, also listed in Table 2. A claim about habitus was made only when a disposition was visible in lexical or framing choices, a claim about capital was made only when a text named or presupposed resources such as fame, networks, or businesses as the cause of an outcome, and a claim about symbolic violence required both a classification that disadvantages job seekers being presented as natural or inspiring and evidence that at least some of those it disadvantages accepted it. Recognition was coded when readers explicitly named privilege, class, or unfairness.

Table 2. Coding Framework and Criteria for Interpretation

Dimension	Code	Operational criterion	Example from the corpus
Text	Lexical choice	Words that frame work as choice or necessity, explicit class vocabulary	*“challenge diri”, “rakyat jelata”*

Dimension	Code	Operational criterion	Example from the corpus
Text	Modality and evaluation	Expressions of obligation, certainty, or moral judgement	*"tidak perlu ada maaf"*
Text	Presupposition	Assumptions taken for granted by the text	*"bukan dimaksudkan untuk mengambil kesempatan siapa pun"*
Text	Address	Simulated personal address to a mass audience	*"Hi, everyone!"*
Text	Intertextuality and interdiscursivity	References to other texts, mixing of discourses such as career exploration and survival	"30k job offers"
Discursive practice	Dominant reading (incl. emulative)	Accepts the meaning of exploration and inspiration: or announces one's own badge activation following Prilly	"Learning Agility", *"Tetap #OpenToWork"*
Discursive practice	Negotiated reading (include professional technical)	Accepts the premise but qualifies it, or assesses the case through PR, marketing, or crisis frameworks	"unfair advantage... valid", SCCT analysis
Discursive practice	Oppositional reading	Rejects the act and names privilege, class, or insensitivity	*"beda kls kita bos"*
Discursive practice	Cynical apathetic reading	Treats the event as a routine publicity cycle, disengages from moral evaluation	*"berbuat -> viral -> klarifikasi"*
Social practice	Habitus	A disposition is visible in lexical or framing choices	Work framed as an adventure
Social practice	Capital	A text names or presupposes resources as the cause of an outcome	*"karena hanya dia public figure"*
Social practice	Symbolic violence	A disadvantaging classification is presented as natural or inspiring and is accepted by some of those it disadvantages	Job seekers activating the badge "like Prilly"
Social practice	Recognition	Readers explicitly name privilege, class, or unfairness	*"hak istimewa (privilege)"*

Source: Research data, 2026.
Adapted from Fairclough (Fairclough, 1992) (Fairclough, 2013), Hall (Hall, 2019), and Bourdieu and Wacquant (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

Table 2 therefore links each analytical category to the textual evidence required before a theoretical claim is made. Counts of reading positions are reported in the results only to describe the composition of the corpus: they are not used to estimate the distribution of opinion among LinkedIn users in general.

Validity was strengthened through source triangulation, comparing Prilly's own texts, the reception texts, the poll, and media coverage (Ilhami et al., 2024) and through theoretical triangulation between Fairclough's CDA and Bourdieu's theory of practice (Malik et al., 2025). Negative case analysis was also applied: cases that did not fit the initial expectation, such as dominant readings by job seekers and oppositional readings by executives, were examined rather than set aside. All coding decisions were recorded in a coding sheet that serves as an audit trail. Regarding research ethics, only content that was publicly visible was collected, and no private messages or restricted groups were accessed. Quoted accounts are identified by their

publicly displayed names because they wrote as public commentators on a public controversy, and quotations are limited to what the argument requires, in line with the ethical guidelines of the Association of Internet Researchers (Franzke et al., 2020).

Results and Discussion

Textual Analysis: Deconstructing the Discourse of the #OpenToWork Post

The first dimension of Fairclough's CDA focuses on the linguistic features, lexical choices, narrative structure, and intertextuality of Prilly's LinkedIn post. Textual analysis in this framework does not stop at the surface meaning of a text: it asks how apparently simple language choices carry ideological content and power relations.



Figure 1. Prilly Latuconsina's #OpenToWork Post on LinkedIn
Source: LinkedIn Prilly Latuconsina, 2026

1. Linguistics: Humble to Dominate

The post opens with a humble and inviting greeting: *"Hi, everyone! Jangan kaget dulu ya"* ("Hi, everyone! Don't be surprised just yet"). This opening is a strategy to neutralise negative responses before the main message is delivered. The phrase *"jangan kaget"* ("don't be surprised") implicitly acknowledges that what follows is unusual and potentially shocking. In textual terms, it is a form of anticipation: the writer comments on how her own text might be received before the audience has read it.

The greeting "Hi, everyone!" also creates an impression of closeness between Prilly and a highly diverse audience. Fairclough calls this synthetic personalization (Fairclough, 2013), a technique that simulates personal address to each individual within a mass audience (Filipescu, 2022). In marketing communication, this strategy constructs an appearance of equality between communicator and audience, regardless of the social distance that actually separates them.

2. The Exploration Frame: Work as Choice, Not Necessity

The narrative of the post consistently uses a frame of exploration and learning. Prilly writes that she activated the badge *"bukan karena kekurangan aktivitas, tapi karena lagi ingin belajar hal baru"* ("not because of a lack of activity, but because I want to learn something new"). This phrase explicitly separates her act from the economic motivation that drives most users of the feature, and recasts the badge as a sign of desire and curiosity rather than need.

The phrase *"penasaran untuk challenge diri di ruang yang berbeda"* ("curious to challenge myself in a different space") is equally significant. The word "challenge" frames field sales work not as a site of struggle for survival but as an experimental arena. In Bourdieu's terms, such a disposition can only be held comfortably by a subject whose accumulated capital can absorb the risk of failure without serious economic consequences. The closing phrase *"Masih dalam fase eksplorasi dan terbuka untuk ngobrol yaa. Happy to connect"* ("Still in the exploration phase and open to chat. Happy to connect") reinforces a frame that is tentative, enjoyable, and free from pressure. The post ends in a tone that is almost recreational.

3. Contradiction: Colliding Symbols

On the profile section that appears with the post, Prilly's identity is stated as "Brand Ambassador Sensodyne" (Figure 1). Within a single visual frame, the #OpenToWork badge conventionally signifies *"saya membutuhkan pekerjaan"* ("I need a job"), while the headline signifies an existing commercial contract with a major brand. This textual contradiction does not by itself prove intent, but it created the textual condition in which symbolic violence could operate: the act could present itself as natural, spontaneous, and legitimate, precisely the way symbolic violence avoids being seen as violence (Celikates, 2024).

The later offer from Sensodyne inviting her to work as a sales representative made the contradiction more pronounced. A sign that carries too many overlapping meanings loses its communicative clarity and may even become deceptive (Selg & Ventsel, 2022). Readers familiar with marketing discourse read the combination as a planned campaign rather than an authentic expression of job seeking, as the analysis of consumption below shows.

4. Intertextuality: The Social Meaning of the #OpenToWork Symbol

At the intertextual level, the badge does not exist in a vacuum. As noted in the introduction, LinkedIn introduced it in 2020 as a functional signal of availability during the pandemic (LinkedIn, 2020). The claim that it carries a stronger social meaning of vulnerability in Indonesia is not only the researcher's interpretation, it is articulated by the users themselves in the corpus. Maulida Rahmi, a digital marketer who described herself as still looking for work, wrote: *"banyak dari kita menggunakan lencana yang sama karena kita benar-benar membutuhkan pekerjaan"* ("many of us use the same badge because we really need a job"). Fitri Haryanti Harsono wrote that she had been unemployed for a year and that her badge had *"belum turun pangkat"* ("not yet been taken down"). A Threads post quoted in trade media stated that *"label open to work itu simbol survival in this economy"* ("the open to work label is a symbol of survival in this economy") (Masna & Mamonto-Shrestha, 2026).

These texts show that the reading of the badge as a marker of vulnerability is grounded in how Indonesian users themselves describe it. The metaphor of a digital "white flag", which signals surrender to hardship while asking for help, remains the researcher's interpretive summary of that meaning. When a symbol so loaded with emotional and class significance is used by someone who does not share that position of vulnerability, two unequal discourses are mixed: the career exploration discourse of the privileged and the survival discourse of job seekers. Fairclough describes this mixing of discourses as interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 1992) (Farrelly, 2020), and in this case it distorts the symbol's meaning for those who depend on it most.

5. Clarification: A Belated Acknowledgment

In her clarification, Prilly stated *"Aku ingin menegaskan bahwa sejak awal aku tidak pernah berniat untuk bersikap tidak sensitif, apalagi tidak empati terhadap situasi yang sedang banyak dihadapi oleh orang-orang saat ini. Aku sadar posisiku dan pengalaman hidupku tidak sama dengan semua orang"* ("I want to emphasize that from the very beginning I never intended to be insensitive, let alone lacking in empathy toward the situation that many people are currently facing. I am aware that my position and life experiences are not the same as everyone else's").



Figure 2. Prilly Latuconsina's Clarification as Quoted by Inilah.com
Source: Inilah.com, 2026

Figure 2 presents this statement as it circulated in online media. The phrase *"aku sadar posisiku dan pengalaman hidupku tidak sama dengan semua orang"* is an explicit acknowledgement of the gap in habitus and capital between Prilly and most LinkedIn users. At this moment, symbolic violence that had operated invisibly was brought to the surface and acknowledged by the agent herself. Yet the same clarification also framed the badge as a way *"untuk membuka peluang kolaborasi lintas industry"* ("to open cross industry collaboration opportunities") and stressed that it was *"bukan dimaksudkan untuk mengambil kesempatan siapa pun"* ("not intended to take anyone's opportunity") (Technoz, 2026). This wording presupposes that the possible harm was a zero sum loss of job opportunities, which no one had demonstrated, and leaves untouched the harm that critics actually named: the borrowing of a symbol of struggle.

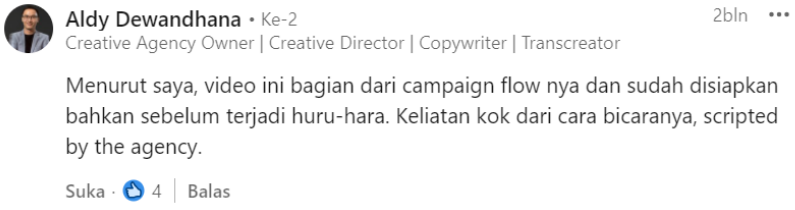


Figure 3. Aldy Dewandhana's Comment on the Clarification Video
Source: LinkedIn Aldy Dewandhana, 2026

The acknowledgement also arrived after the discourse had already formed. As Figure 3 shows, Aldy Dewandhana, a creative agency owner, questioned the authenticity of the clarification itself, writing that the video *"bagian dari campaign flow nya dan sudah disiapkan bahkan sebelum terjadi huru-hara... scripted by the agency"* ("part of the campaign flow and prepared even before the uproar... scripted by the agency"). Whether or not this is true, the comment shows that for part of the audience even the apology was read as a planned discursive product rather than an authentic expression of remorse.

Discursive Practice Analysis: Text Production, Distribution, and Consumption in Digital Space

The second dimension of Fairclough's CDA examines discursive practice, that is, how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed. The analytical focus shifts from what is said to how a text is made, circulated, and interpreted by different parties.

1. **Text Production: Between Spontaneity and Construction**

Prilly's post was not a single text but part of a chain of texts. Her resignation from Sinemaku Pictures was announced on 19 January 2026 (Cantika, 2026), the #OpenToWork post followed on 25 January, on 29 January an Instagram video thanked *"perusahaan, teman-teman organisasi, pelaku usaha dan brand"* ("companies, organisations, business owners and brands") for 32,744 connection requests and announced a part time sales job (Indonesia, 2026b), the sales appearance at a Sensodyne booth took place on 30 January (Masna & Mamonto-Shrestha, 2026), and the apology video followed on 4 February (Awaliyah, 2026). Read together, three features point toward planning: the ambassador headline that coexisted with the badge, the speed with which the brand's job offer appeared and was accepted, and the polished format of the clarification video noted in Figure 3. Sensodyne did not publicly confirm a campaign, and some commentators explicitly marked the link as *"allegedly, unconfirmed"* (Veti S.). The analysis therefore treats the campaign reading as the public's interpretation of the text chain, not as an established fact.

What matters most is not proving or disproving the intention behind the text. As Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding theory affirms, the meaning of a text is not determined solely by its producer but is shaped by how audiences in different social positions decode it (Hall, 2019). The analytical focus therefore rests on the social effects of the text, irrespective of the producer's intentions.

2. **Text Distribution: Capital as a Viral Engine**

The post spread quickly. A news video captured it with 13,660 reactions, 1,097 comments, and 208 reposts, and within four days Prilly reported 32,744 connection requests. In Bourdieu's terms, her capital worked as an engine of distribution. Her symbolic capital as a national celebrity attracted attention and media coverage, her social capital, in the form of a large cross platform following, carried the content beyond LinkedIn, and her cultural capital, visible in a fluent and carefully paced writing style, made the text easy to share and debate. Because platform metrics are not public, this study cannot show whether LinkedIn's algorithm prioritised her content. What the data do show is how capital translated into attention.

The data also show how a number was transformed as it moved through the chain of texts. Prilly's own statement referred to *"30 ribu connection request"* ("30 thousand connection requests"). A national news headline rendered this as *"Dapat Lebih dari 30 Ribu Tawaran"* ("Gets More than 30 Thousand Offers") (Indonesia, 2026b), and in the reception corpus it became "30k job offers" and *"lebih dari 30.000 tawaran pekerjaan"* ("more than 30,000 job offers"). Fairclough describes such movement of meaning across connected texts as an intertextual chain (Fairclough, 1992). Here, the recontextualised figure itself became a piece of

evidence in the class argument, because a connection request was reread as a job offer that ordinary job seekers could never expect.

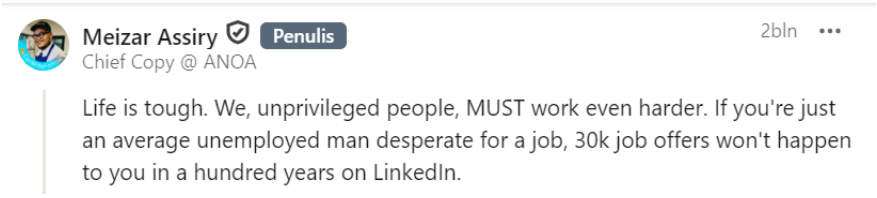


Figure 4. Meizar Assiry's LinkedIn Post
Source: LinkedIn Meizar Assiry, 2026

Figure 4 shows how this recontextualised number was used. Meizar Assiry, a chief copywriter, wrote: *"Life is tough. We, unprivileged people, MUST work even harder. If you're just an average unemployed man desperate for a job, 30k job offers won't happen to you in a hundred years on LinkedIn"*. The post is more than an individual jab. It is a structural observation about how capital determines reach in a space that is often imagined as equal. At the same time, its conclusion, that the "unprivileged" must simply work harder, turns the recognised inequality back into a demand for individual effort, a pattern discussed further below.

3. Text Consumption: Reading Positions in the Reception Corpus

Table 3 shows the distribution of reading positions across the 167 reception texts, broken down by the position from which readers spoke.

Table 3. Reading Positions by Reader Position (n = 167)

Reader position	Dominant	Negotiated	Oppositional	Cynical apathetic	Total
Executive or owner	7	12	7	5	31
Employed professional	23	25	25	13	86
Self identified job seeker	5	5	9	1	20
Organisational or media account	5	3	0	0	8
Unclear	3	4	10	5	22
Total (%)	**43 (25.7)**	**49 (29.3)**	**51 (30.5)**	**24 (14.4)**	**167 (100)**

Source: Research data, 2026.
Dominant includes 7 emulative texts, negotiated includes 21 professional technical texts.

As Table 3 shows, no single reading dominated the corpus. Oppositional readings were the largest group (51 texts, 30.5%), followed by negotiated readings, including professional technical ones (49 texts, 29.3%), dominant readings, including emulative ones (43 texts, 25.7%), and cynical-apathetic readings (24 texts, 14.4%). Two patterns stand out. First, reading positions were associated with format: standalone posts were more often dominant (28 of 67 posts, 41.8%), while comments were more often oppositional or cynical (60 of 97 comments, 61.9%). Second, self identified job seekers produced the highest share of oppositional readings (9 of 20, 45.0%), compared with executives and owners (7 of 31, 22.6%). However, the relationship was not deterministic. Executives also wrote oppositional texts, and five of the twenty self-identified job seekers adopted dominant or emulative readings. This finding corrects a simpler assumption, present in an earlier version of this analysis, that dominant readings came mainly from people in senior positions. In the corpus, dominant readings came most often from employed professionals, especially in human resources, career content, and branding, and from organisational accounts, five of whose eight texts were dominant.

The dominant reading accepted the preferred meaning of exploration and inspiration. Anton Hendrianto, a human capital consultant, analysed Prilly as a *"Model Bakat Strategis"* ("Strategic Talent Model") who embodies *"Learning Agility"* (Figure 5).

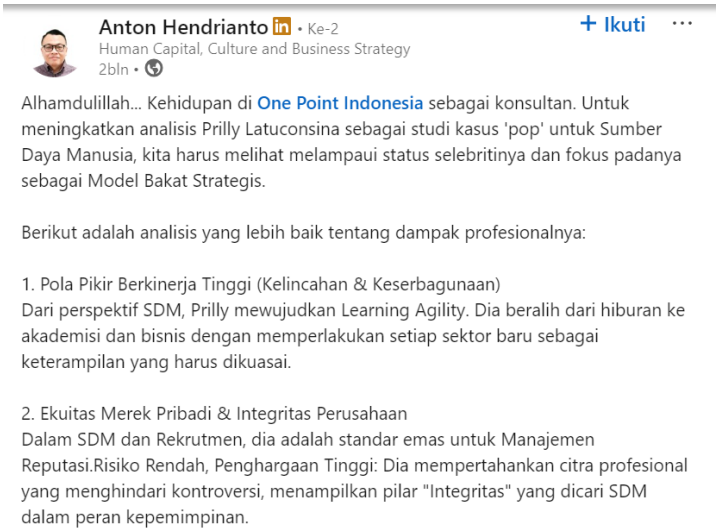


Figure 5. Anton Hendrianto's LinkedIn Post
Source: LinkedIn Anton Hendrianto, 2026

Figure 5 illustrates how the act was translated into the vocabulary of human resources management, in which a celebrity's privilege becomes a set of transferable competencies. Vika Indriyasari K, a SEA commercial director, similarly wrote that the act was *"pengingat yang kuat bahwa tidak ada yang namanya 'terlambat' untuk mempelajari sesuatu yang baru"* ("a powerful reminder that there is no such thing as 'too late' to learn something new"), as shown in Figure 6.

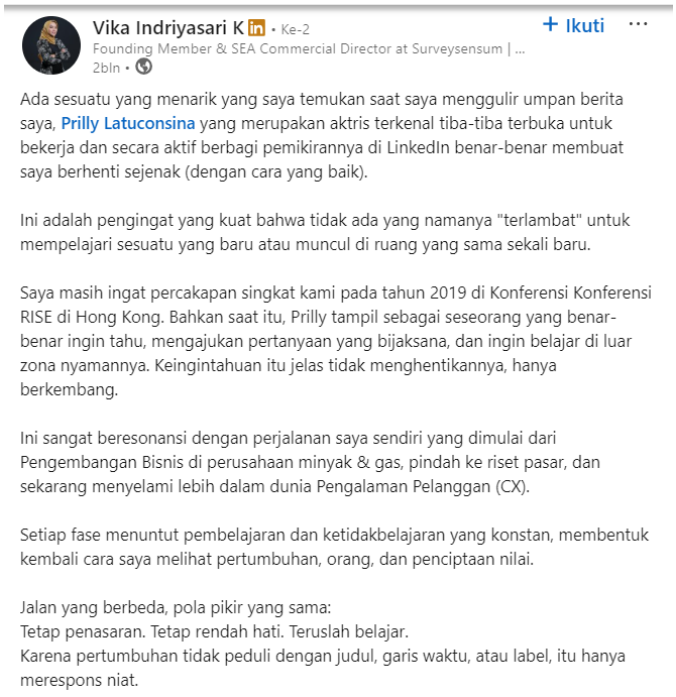


Figure 6. Vika Indriyasari K's LinkedIn Post
Source: LinkedIn Vika Indriyasari, 2026

Figure 6 also matters for what happened afterwards. In a later reply on the same thread, Vika wrote that she had just discovered that the act *"sebenarnya adalah ide pemasaran yang jenius!"* ("was actually a genius marketing idea!"). The revelation of a commercial motive did not move this reader toward critique; it was absorbed into admiration for marketing skill. Arief M. Nugroho went further, arguing that *"ybs memang sedang mendidik market, tidak perlu ada maaf"* ("she was in fact educating the market, there is no need for an apology"), as shown in Figure 7.

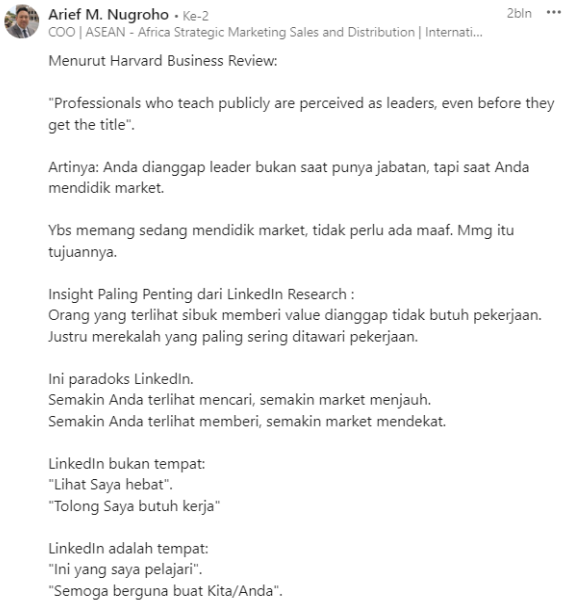


Figure 7. Arief M. Nugroho's Comment
Source: LinkedIn Arief Nugroho, 2026

Figure 7 shows the dominant reading in its most explicit form, in which even the apology is treated as unnecessary. A distinctive variant of the dominant reading was emulation. Seven texts announced that their authors had activated the badge, or kept it on, because of Prilly. Erma Nurtika Rahayu wrote *"Tetap #OpenToWork walau saingan kita Kak Prilly... growth has no title"* ("Still #OpenToWork even though our competitor is Prilly... growth has no title"), and Aprilia Hidayana asked *"kenapa aku yang masih on the way harus takut mencoba?"* ("why should I, who am still on the way, be afraid to try?"). Four of these seven authors identified themselves as job seekers. In their texts, the symbol of vulnerability is not defended against appropriation, it is resignified, following Prilly, as a symbol of growth.

The oppositional reading rejected the act and named the inequality behind it. Nurin Tamam, a business analyst, wrote that Prilly was *"becandanya di platform yg serius, di lingkup kawan-kawan yg banyak butuh motivasi buat survive dalam karir dan kehidupan"* ("joking around on a serious platform, among peers who badly need motivation to survive in their careers and lives"), as shown in Figure 8.

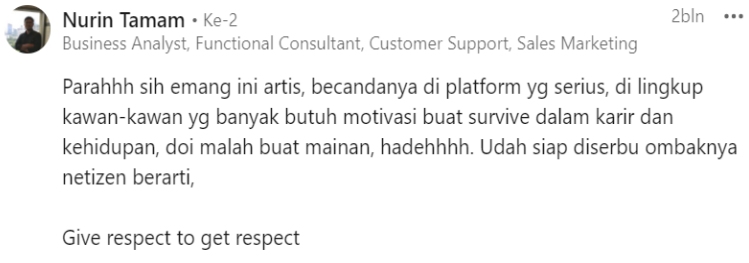


Figure 8. Nurin Tamam's Comment
Source: LinkedIn Nurin Tamam, 2026

Figure 8 represents a frequent theme in the oppositional texts, namely that LinkedIn has its own norms of seriousness that the act was seen to violate. Rian R. was more direct, calling it *"trick marketing kotor... org cari kerja susah bgt dsni"* ("a dirty marketing trick... people find it really hard to get a job here"), as shown in Figure 9.

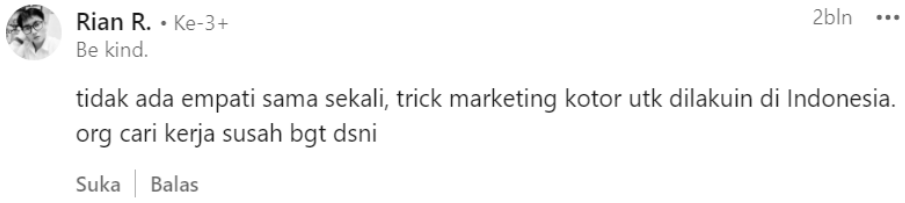


Figure 9. Rian R.'s Comment
Source: LinkedIn Rian R, 2026

In Figure 9, the moral judgement is directly tied to the condition of job seekers in Indonesia. Hari Pamuji, whose headline listed only his university degree, wrote that *"orang yang belum dapet kerja dan urusan perut jangan suka dihina dan di cemooh"* ("people who have not found work and are struggling to feed themselves should not be insulted and mocked"), as shown in Figure 10.

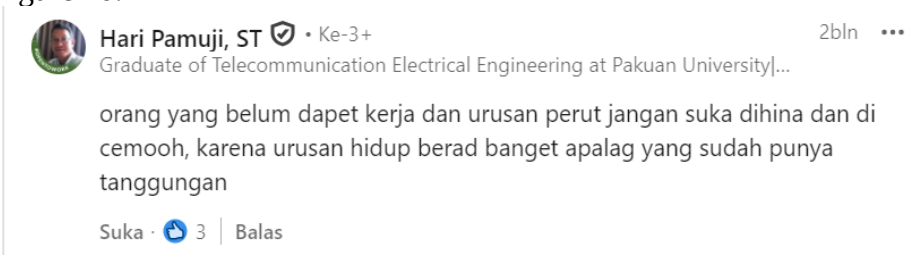


Figure 10. Hari Pamuji's Comment
Source: LinkedIn Hari Pamuji, 2026

Figure 10 shows how the act was experienced not only as insensitive but as humiliating. Tomi Saja summed up the class contradiction in a single phrase, *"pengangguran yang kantongnya gak pernah nganggur"* ("an unemployed person whose pockets are never unemployed"), as shown in Figure 11.

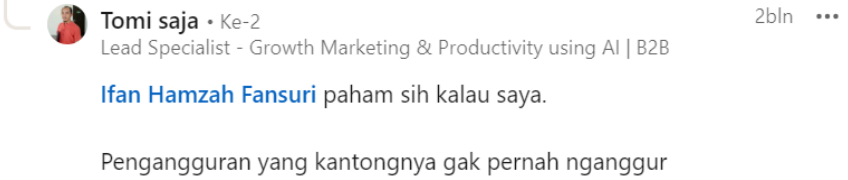


Figure 11. Tomi Saja's Comment
Source: LinkedIn Tomi Saja, 2026

Figure 11 captures the contradiction between the sign of unemployment and the reality of wealth. Other oppositional texts used explicit class vocabulary. Ardian wrote *"beda kls kita bos dia artis sinetron"* ("we're in a different class, boss, she's a soap opera star"), Drajat Priadi listed *"perbedaan starting line"* ("different starting lines") and *"hak istimewa (privilege)"* and called the comparison *"false equivalency"*, and Azis Azis enumerated Prilly's businesses, from her production house to a fashion label, a bakery cafe, and a football club. Hando Mersa, an area business manager, put the structural argument most clearly: *"Indonesia bukan kekurangan lowongan kerja. Indonesia kekurangan kesempatan yang adil"* ("Indonesia is not short of job vacancies. Indonesia is short of fair opportunities").

The negotiated reading accepted the premise of the act while qualifying it. Its most common form in the corpus was professional technical: practitioners in public relations, marketing, and communications analysed the case through crisis communication theory, brand positioning, or audience research. Jojo S. Nugroho, a public relations lecturer and consultant, analysed it through apologia and Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), concluding that Prilly's apology was *"sudah tepat dan efektif"* ("appropriate and effective") and asking why Sensodyne remained silent, as shown in Figure 12. In an earlier poll post, Nugroho had also described the brand as *"pasta gigi sensitif yang tidak sensitive"* ("a toothpaste for sensitive teeth that is itself insensitive").



Figure 12. Jojo S. Nugroho's LinkedIn Post on Sensodyne's Silence
Source: LinkedIn Jojo S. Nugroho, 2026

Figure 12 shows the professional technical reading at work. It is critical of the brand, but it frames the event as a crisis communication problem to be managed rather than as a class injury. Other negotiated texts recognised inequality but resolved it through individual effort. Rizky Mileno wrote that *"di sinilah unfair advantage berperan"* ("this is where unfair advantage plays a role") but concluded that both paths, one viral post and years of consistency, are *"valid"*, Sopiah Zharamico, who had been unemployed for months, contrasted her situation with Prilly's before urging fellow job seekers to build their personal brand. Meizar Assiry's call for the "unprivileged" to work harder (Figure 4) belongs here as well.

The fourth position, the cynical apathetic reading, doubted the authenticity of the whole event and treated it as routine brand engineering. Abdul Ghofir observed that the pattern of going viral, clarifying, and apologising is common in Indonesia and *"pelaku malah menjadi terkenal"* ("the perpetrator actually becomes more famous"), as shown in Figure 13.

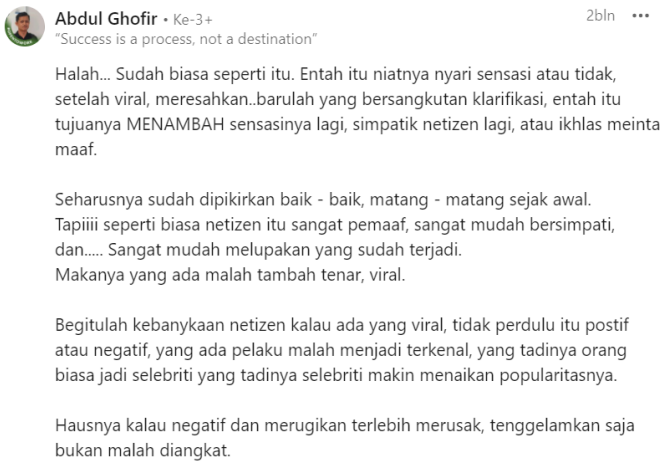


Figure 13. Abdul Ghofir's Comment
Source: LinkedIn Abdul Ghofir, 2026

Figure 13 expresses a scepticism directed less at Prilly than at the whole cycle of online controversy. Marieta Pinky, a company president director, condensed this cycle into a formula: *"berbuat -> viral -> klarifikasi -> minta maaf -> damai -> masalah dilupakan" (*"act -> go viral -> clarify -> apologise -> reconcile -> issue forgotten"), as shown in Figure 14.

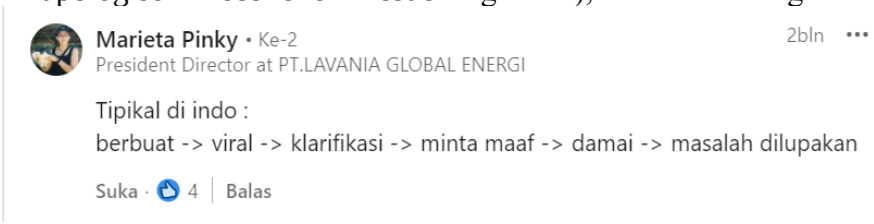


Figure 14. Marieta Pinky's Comment
Source: LinkedIn Marieta Pinky, 2026

Figure 14 points to a deep scepticism toward the sincerity of public figures apologies in Indonesia's digital landscape. Notably, the same author also wrote an oppositional comment in another thread, *"Jadilah publik figure dulu maka pekerjaan akan datang kepadamu"* ("Become a public figure first and work will come to you"), which illustrates that reading positions belong to texts rather than fixed types of people.

Social Practice Analysis: Habitus, Capital, and Symbolic Violence in Digital Space

The third dimension integrates the textual and discursive findings with the broader ideological context and power relations, using Bourdieu's theory. It is at this level that the analysis is drawn together to explain how class operated in this case.

1. Prilly's Habitus: The Invisible Dispositions of Class

In Bourdieu's theory, habitus is a system of dispositions internalised through a long process of socialisation, shaping how a person thinks, acts, feels, and perceives the world as a product of the class position she inhabits. Habitus cannot be observed directly, but it is visible in choices, expressions, and actions, including word choices in a LinkedIn post.

Prilly's habitus as a celebrity, producer, lecturer, and entrepreneur appears in the texts as a set of distinctive dispositions: a conviction that every social arena is open for entry, confidence in her ability to move across fields, and a tendency to see discomfort as an opportunity for growth rather than a threat. These dispositions are not morally wrong; they are the natural product of a life lived with substantial capital. They become problematic when this habitus enters a field populated by agents whose habitus is fundamentally different. The

clarification, with its statement that *"posisiku dan pengalaman hidupku tidak sama dengan semua orang"*, shows the same habitus from another angle: the gap is named as a difference of personal experience, not as a structural inequality, so that even the acknowledgement remains within the vocabulary of the dominant position.

2. Capital and Inequality in the LinkedIn Field

LinkedIn, as a professional platform, is far from a neutral arena. In Bourdieu's terms it is a field with its own rules that determine a person's position and power. Users with high symbolic capital are more readily recognised, followed, and admired, and they enjoy disproportionate access to visibility, opportunity, and influence. Studies of job searching on the platform show that it rewards those who can present a branded self and penalises those who cannot (Gershon, 2017) (Sharone, 2017). The Prilly case shows this logic in an extreme form. Within days of activating the badge, she received tens of thousands of connection requests and a series of job and collaboration offers, not because of a record in retail sales but because her celebrity capital was converted almost instantly into field specific capital on LinkedIn.

This is the structural core of the conflict: a feature designed to help those who lack capital proved most effective for someone who already had it in abundance. Ordinary job seekers in the corpus repeatedly made this comparison themselves. Agus Budiyono, a welder, wrote *"coba saya yg open to work gitu. Boro2 ada yg nawarin kerja, dikomen aja juga kagak"* ("try it when I'm open to work. Forget job offers, nobody even comments"), and Herry Gunawan wrote that after months with the badge only one headhunter had contacted him. Sandi Ruswendi linked the case sarcastically to national policy, as shown in Figure 15.

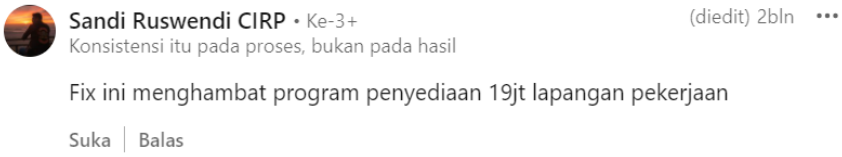


Figure 15. Sandi Ruswendi's Comment
Source: LinkedIn Sandi Ruswendi, 2026

Figure 15 shows Sandi Ruswendi's remark that *"fix ini menghambat program penyediaan 19jt lapangan pekerjaan"* ("this will surely obstruct the programme to create 19 million jobs"). Though hyperbolic, the comment connects the actions of a dominant agent in digital space to the state's unfulfilled promises in the labour market, the same connection made by M Farid Jauharuddin, who asked *"Mana janji 19 juta lapangan pekerjaan?"* ("Where is the promise of 19 million jobs?").

3. Symbolic Violence: Inverse Appropriation and Normalization

Symbolic violence in this case operated through two mechanisms. The first is inverse appropriation. In the studies reviewed earlier, symbolic violence travels downward: the dominant display their capital, as in the crazy rich content analysed by Ganjar Wibowo (Wibowo et al., 2025), or impose their cultural standards on the dominated, as in the patriarchal photographic habitus described by Widiatmojo (Widiatmojo, 2016). Here the movement is reversed. A dominant agent borrowed the symbol of the dominated, the badge of the job seeker, and used it as an instrument of self presentation and, in the public reading, of brand promotion. The symbol underwent a distortion of meaning that weakened its social function for the vulnerable groups who rely on it. Veti S., a brand strategist with 19 years of experience, named this mechanism precisely: *"borrowing the aesthetics of struggle to sell toothpaste isn't innovative marketing. It's lazy, privileged"*.

The second mechanism is the normalisation of inequality through inspirational discourse. Readers who praised the act as learning agility and courageous exploration

reproduced the idea that career mobility and exploration are open to anyone, without acknowledging that such freedom is available only to those with sufficient capital. Inspirational discourse conceals the structural problem, and this is the essence of symbolic violence: it works best when it does not appear as violence at all (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The clearest evidence of misrecognition in the corpus comes from those whom the classification disadvantages. When job seekers such as Erma and Aprilia adopted the badge "like Prilly", or when Rahmadika Arga asked *"kalau Prilly Latuconsina saja main LinkedIn, kita yang 'rakyat jelata' ini masa masih gengsi?"* ("if even Prilly Latuconsina is on LinkedIn, how can we 'commoners' still be too proud?"), the dominated took up the dominant agent's categories as their own. Even the class vocabulary of "commoners" here serves a self help conclusion rather than a critique. This confirms, in a digital professional field, Widiatmojo's finding that symbolic violence depends on its acceptance by those it disadvantages (Widiatmojo, 2016).

4. Recognised yet Effective: The Limits of Critique in the Digital Field

The case also challenges a central assumption of classic accounts. If symbolic violence depends on misrecognition, open recognition should weaken it. In this case recognition was widespread. Almost a third of the reception texts were oppositional, and many of them named privilege, class, or unfairness directly. The LinkedIn poll conducted by Jojo S. Nugroho, shown in Figure 16, points in the same direction.

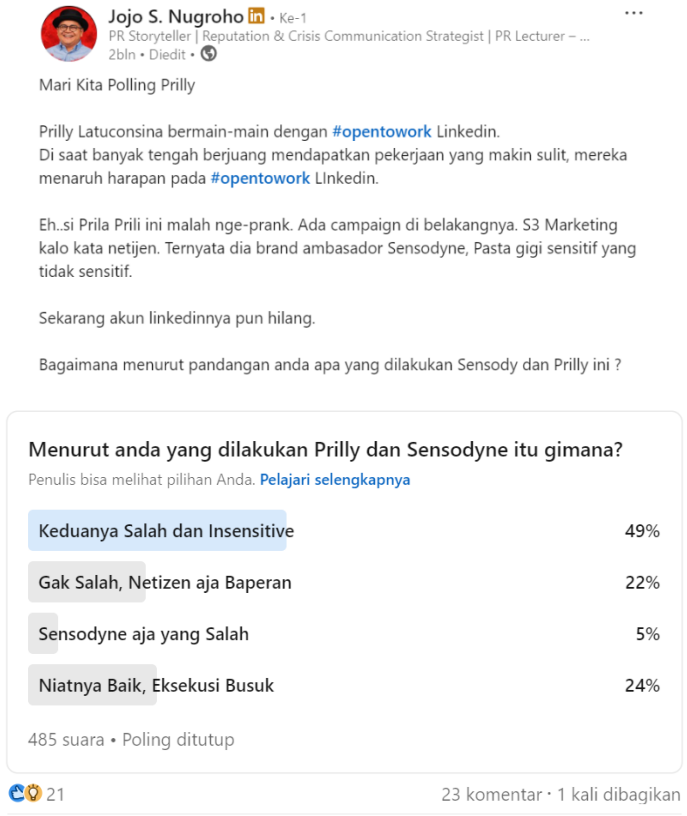


Figure 16. Jojo S. Nugroho's LinkedIn Poll
Source: LinkedIn Jojo S. Nugroho, 2026

As Figure 16 shows, of 485 votes, 49% chose *"Keduanya salah dan insensitive"* ("Both are wrong and insensitive"), 24% chose *"Niatnya baik, eksekusi busuk"* ("Good intention, rotten execution"), 22% chose *"Gak salah, netizen aja baperan"* ("Not wrong, netizens are just oversensitive"), and 5% chose *"Sensodyne aja yang salah"* ("Only Sensodyne is wrong"). Although the poll is not a representative survey, it shows that most participants in this professional audience recognised a problem, while a substantial minority defended the act.

Yet recognition did not undo the symbolic violence, for three reasons visible in the data. First, the visibility had already been converted into value before the critique peaked. As the author of one discussion thread observed, as a campaign its key performance indicators had arguably been achieved once it became a topic of conversation and organic news coverage, and the connection requests, media exposure, and brand association could not be withdrawn by criticism. Second, critique was absorbed into the familiar cycle of virality, clarification, apology, and forgetting that the cynical readers described (Figures 13 and 14). Fanny Yulianingsih asked whether this *"formula aman"* ("safe formula") risks perpetuating the repetition of mistakes. Third, much of the critique was either personalised, attacking Prilly's character rather than the structure, or professionalised, turning the event into a case study in crisis communication (Figure 12). Both moves shift attention away from the class relation that the oppositional readers had named. Celikates argues that critique is a practice that can break systematic misrecognition (Celikates, 2024). This case extends that argument by showing a limit specific to digital fields: critique can become highly visible and still be absorbed into the attention economy that produced the original act. The study therefore proposes the notion of contested but effective symbolic violence.

5. Public Reactions as Class Conflict

The polarised and emotionally charged reaction is the most tangible manifestation of the class conflict examined in this study, but the data show that this conflict is not a simple matter of pro versus contra. Some readers criticised Prilly while defending the brand, others accepted her good intentions but criticised the execution, others read the whole event as a gimmick and chose apathy, and some declined to engage at all. Junaedi Edi, who described himself as a job seeker, expressed this last position, as shown in Figure 17.



Figure 17. Junaedi Edi's Comment
Source: LinkedIn Junaedi Edi, 2026

In Figure 17, Junaedi writes that as a job seeker he saw Prilly's profile with the green frame and remained calm, *"karena saya percaya semua orang punya rejekinya masing2"* ("because I believe everyone has their own fortune"), adding that what matters is to keep striving and praying. His response shows that recognition of difference does not automatically lead to critique, it can also lead to acceptance framed in religious or moral terms. This diversity of reactions reflects a class structure that cannot be explained solely through the binary of rich and poor. It must be understood through the way habitus, capital, and life experience generate different ways of reading the same sign, and through the way the format of the platform, standalone posts versus comment threads, shapes which readings are voiced.

Compared with previous studies, the findings confirm, extend, and challenge existing understandings in specific ways. They confirm that digital platforms reproduce hierarchies through the recognition of symbolic capital (Ignatow & Robinson, 2017) (Wibowo et al., 2025) (Widiatmojo, 2016). They extend this work in two directions: by showing an inverse appropriation in which the dominant borrow the symbols of the dominated, and by showing how the recontextualisation of a single number across an intertextual chain can turn into evidence in a class argument. They also echo Cenderamata and Darmayanti's observation that media frame celebrities according to their own interests (Cenderamata & Darmayanti, 2019), since coverage in this case moved from describing a positive public response (Cantika, 2026)

to analysing a tone deaf campaign (Masna & Mamonto-Shrestha, 2026). Finally, the findings challenge two assumptions: that symbolic violence requires misrecognition to remain effective, and that reading positions map neatly onto class positions. In this case, the violence was openly recognised and remained effective, executives produced oppositional readings, and job seekers produced dominant ones.

Conclusion

This study analysed Prilly Latuconsina's use of the #OpenToWork badge on LinkedIn in January and February 2026, combining Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis with Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and symbolic violence. Based on three texts produced by Prilly, 167 reception texts from 150 LinkedIn accounts, one poll, and 12 media reports, it reached three findings that answer the three research questions.

First, the lexical choice *"penasaran untuk challenge diri"* ("curious to challenge myself"), delivered in a casual tone within an exploratory narrative, reflects dispositions that treat sales work not as an economic necessity but as an adventure. Such dispositions can be held comfortably only by someone whose accumulated economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital far exceeds that of most LinkedIn users. In this case, habitus left visible traces in the most ordinary textual choices, including the way the clarification framed the gap as a matter of personal experience rather than structure.

Second, symbolic violence in this case operated through two mechanisms: the inverse appropriation of a symbol of job seeking vulnerability by a dominant agent, and the normalisation of inequality through inspirational discourse. The coexistence of the #OpenToWork badge with the headline "Brand Ambassador Sensodyne" created the textual condition for the first mechanism. The second was visible not only among professionals who praised the act as learning agility but also among job seekers who adopted the badge "like Prilly", which is the clearest evidence of misrecognition in the corpus.

Third, public readings of the act formed four positions: dominant, negotiated, oppositional, and cynical apathetic. Self identified job seekers produced the highest share of oppositional readings, but the relationship between reading and position was not deterministic. Executives also wrote oppositional texts, job seekers also wrote dominant ones, and the format of the text mattered: standalone posts tended toward inspiration, while comment threads tended toward critique.

The main contribution of this study is conceptual. The case shows a form of contested but effective symbolic violence: violence that is openly recognised and named, yet remains effective because the visibility it produced had already been converted into value, because critique was absorbed into the cycle of apology and forgetting, and because some of those it disadvantaged adopted its categories. What the case demonstrates is limited to this event and this corpus. It does not show that LinkedIn as a whole reproduces class domination. What it suggests for broader research on digital platforms is that professional platforms deserve the same critical attention as entertainment platforms, and that the relationship between recognition and the persistence of symbolic violence should be examined across more cases.

This study has several limitations. Because Prilly's LinkedIn account became inaccessible, the comments on her original post could not be analysed, and the reception corpus was drawn from discussion threads elsewhere on LinkedIn. The data were documented retrospectively in April 2026 and may not include texts that had been deleted earlier. Reader position was inferred from publicly displayed information and is a proxy rather than a measure of class. The study also did not include other platforms, such as Instagram, Threads, or X, where much of the debate also took place. Future research could compare several cases of celebrity

use of job-seeking symbols, include multiple platforms, and combine discourse analysis with interviews with job seekers to understand how such symbols are experienced over time.

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