

# Inequalities for Indonesian Men to Pursue Fashion as a Career

Muhammad Iman Adi Perkasa<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Diponegoro University, Jl. Prof. Soedarto, SH Tembalang, Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia.

**Abstract.** Indonesia's fashion industry can be growth rapidly, but did not give the equal opportunity for man who wants to pursue career in the industry, due to gender stereotype in fashion which occurs in Indonesia. In prior researches, fashion examined as gendered activity and identically with women. This study aims to testify the existences of gender stereotype and inequalities among four Indonesian men who pursue fashion as a career, by describing their subjective experiences using qualitative approach and constructivism paradigm. This study concluded that in Indonesia, inequalities existed among four subjects due to gender stereotype. It is happened after the implications of society perspectives, that fashion perceived to be a career which linked with women rather than men. Also found in this study, that inequalities and gender stereotype also affected all of the subject self-concept. These factors made their self-concept tend to be low, but also encourages two of them to achieved many things and excel in the fields of fashion. So, they can be good examples to the society who underestimated them.

**Keywords:** Fashion; Gender; Inequalities

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia's fashion industry is rapidly growing. According to Indonesian Employers Association (APINDO), 40% of Indonesia's creative economy enterprises are coming from fashion industry. In 2013, fashion sector also giving contribution of Indonesia's income with nominal of 181 trillion rupiah [1]. Alongside with Indonesia's fashion potential, APEC Women and The Economy Forum 2013 held in Bali, Indonesia, produced a wide range of agreements to open up wider opportunities for women in equal career opportunity [2].

In the terms of gender equality, opportunity should have been equal for both men and women. In prior literatures, many researchers have been investigated and examined fashion behaviors of market segmentation approach, it suggested that fashion is gendered activity. Fashion perceived to be closely linked with women rather than associated equally with both sexes [3]. The stereotype of fashion which identically with women also occurs in Indonesia and strengthens by mass media for constructing reality of people's mind, make they thought that men who pursue career in fashion is tend to be sissy and acting like women.

Further study about this issue become important, it aims not only to testify the existences of gender stereotype and inequalities for a man who pursue fashion as career in Indonesia. But also, the impacts of this gender stereotype and inequalities to their daily life by describing their subjective experiences.

Gender inequality can also have an impact on environmental damage, this is the case between women and men who behave differently in the environment.

## 2. Methodology

The paradigm used in this study is constructivism, in which the paradigm views social science as a systematic analysis of social meaningful action through direct and detailed observation. Thus, the formation of a reality depends on how everyone views it, and the researcher sets itself up as a passionate participant that bridges the subjectivity of social actors [4]. This study uses a qualitative approach, where the subject of study are four men who pursue a career in the field of fashion. As methods of data collection, this study uses in-depth interview and observation. Gender Stereotype Theory and Self

Concept Theory used to describe the subjective experiences of the research subject. Descriptive analysis method used as the analytical step with three-phase data analysis process, which is open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

### 3. Discussion

This study subjects are four Indonesian men who pursue different career in the field of fashion. First subject is a fashion blogger, the second is fashion stylist, the third is fashion designer, and the fourth is owner of local enterprise in woven and textiles. All the subjects of the study felt their environment had a belief about the roles imposed on men and women, with a set of meanings attributed to each gender. This is closely related to the focus point of Gender Stereotype Theory.

Gender Stereotype Theory also believes that sex categories that have attached to the individual, can produce gender roles that contain what and how men and women should behave [5]. For example, as a fashion blogger, the first subject found happiness by exploring his daily outfit. But, when he used tote bag to the campus, his friends told him that he looks like a housewife who wants to buy groceries in the traditional market. The second subject face a lot of more extreme circumstances, his sister once said that doing things related to fashion in fact is not something that will be done by a man. Almost all of his family did not support his career as a fashion stylist, simply because it is not a right job for a man.

The third subject may have fully support from his family as a fashion designer. It is because he has been accustomed to seeing his grandfather use a sewing machine, and almost all of his family incomes are from fashion industry. His peer group still have the same perspective as the society in Indonesia has in general, which is fashion perceived to be career that linked with women rather than men.

The circumstances that the fourth subject have to face in his society, is not having a significant difference from the others subject. But, he has further perspectives if only compared to which gender that a career in fashion fields should be taken. He does not care for what his society thinks about, because for him fashion is not only about the income for his daily life. Founding a woven and textiles enterprise in Jepara, Indonesia, he considers as a responsibility that he should take to maintain the continuity of his birthplace culture.

The existences of gender stereotype and inequalities for the four subjects as a man who pursue fashion as career in Indonesia, affecting their daily life closely related to the focus point of Self-Concept Theory. According to the theory, self-concept is the

whole self-image that includes the feelings, perceptions of a person about beliefs, the values of one's own self-relationships, such as strengths and weaknesses, and their abilities and limitations [6].

For the first and second subject, what their society thinks about fashion which is perceived to be career that linked with women rather than men, affecting how they value themselves. Even though both of them still pursue career in the fields of fashion, these factors tend to make them did not trust their own abilities and building barriers to limit themselves. Being the photo contest winner held by one of the biggest fashion magazines in Indonesia, and advanced to the top twenty of prestigious Indonesian male pageant are not enough to make the first subject believe in himself. Succeed having a career as a fashion stylist in numerous brands and notable fashion week in Indonesia, does not mean the second subject believe in himself too.

Luckily, the third and fourth subject having endless support from their families to pursue career in fashion. Still, it is not enough to make them stop doubting their own selves. What sets them apart with the first and second subject, even though their self-concept also tends to be low, they used the society's stereotype to encourage themselves. So, they can prove to the society who underestimated them, that they can achieved many things and excel in the fields of fashion.

### 4. Conclusion

This study concluded that in Indonesia, inequalities existed among four subjects which is men who pursue fashion as a career due to gender stereotype. It is happened after the implications of society perspectives, that fashion perceived to be career which linked with women rather than men. Also found in this study, that inequalities and gender stereotype also affected all of the subject self-concept. These factors made their self-concept tend to be low, but also encourages two of them to achieved many things and excel in the fields of fashion. So, they can be good examples to the society who underestimated them.

As the recommendations, it is time for researchers to eradicating inequalities by keep studying why the society act the way they did. It is because people should do the things that they love in the absence of coercion, as long as they can be held accountable for what they have been done and excel.

## References and Notes

1. J. Oetojo, "Consumer Perception on Gender Equality and Designer Performance for Genderless Fashion Brands," *Pertanika Journal*, p.137 (2016).
2. T. D. N. Masruroh & L. S. D. Irvianti "Gender Effect in Moderating Personal Factor Influence on Job Satisfaction of Lecturer Binus University, Jakarta, Indonesia," *Pertanika Journals*. p.147 (2016).
3. S. Gupta & G. W. James, "Construction of Gender Roles in Perceived Scarce Environments – Maintaining Masculinity When Shopping for Fast Fashion Apparel," *Wiley Online Library*, p.251 (2016).
4. H. N. Deddy, *Paradigma dan Metodologi Penelitian Sosial Empirik Klasik*, Departemen FISIP Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta (2003).
5. J.W. Berry, Y.H. Poortinga, M.H. Segall, P.R. Dasen, *Psikologi Lintas-Budaya: Riset dan Aplikasi*, PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama , Jakarta (1999).
6. J. Devito, *A The Interpersonal Communication Book*, (9h edition), Addison Wesley Longman, New York (2009).