The Negotiation of Non-Members of Hijabers Surabaya Community in Consuming Hijab Fashion Proposed by the Community

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Abstract

Hijab has become popular and massively industrialized as the result of hijab fashion concept. The existence of Hijabers Surabaya community is believed as the apparatus to spread the new hijab concept towards Surabaya Muslim women. However, the hijab fashion concept proposed by its community is different with the obligation value in Islam. It is assumed that hijab has shifted from religious obligation into the fashion industry. Thus, the aim of this research is to see the negotiation attitude of the non-members in consuming the hijab fashion proposed by its community. The writer also wants to see the influence of the community in spreading their concept of hijab towards the non-members regarding their identity in wearing hijab by imitating the hijab fashion concept. Qualitative method along with purposive sampling are used in this research in order to gain the data from the interview process of 21 informants who are the non-members of the community but have ever attended the community’s events. This research implies that the tactic and strategy of the informants reflect their negotiation attitude towards the hijab fashion which also emphasizes the new meaning of hijab as fashionable and modern.

Keywords: consumption, hijab, hijab style by Hijabers Surabaya, identity, negotiation, non-members

Introduction

Hijab phenomenon with its colorful and various styles has become a trend of fashion of the society in Indonesia. Hijab in Indonesia is not only being used as a religious symbol but also turns into Muslim fashion industry. The emergence of some hijab communities supports the trend of hijab fashion as many fashion industries appear. The writer notices one of the hijab communities in Surabaya, which supports and affects the hijab fashion wave towards Surabaya citizen, Hijabers Surabaya Community. According to Wahyunita as Director of Marketing and Communication of Hijabers Surabaya, they successfully attract 250 Muslim women to be an exclusive member and 800 Muslim women to be an ordinary member.

Pursuing this further, a study entitled “Pattern of Communication Among Hijabers Surabaya Community: A Study of Ethnography of Communication” by Wahyunita also talks about Hijabers Surabaya. Wahyunita said that according to Dra. Alvia Evawani, the founder and president of Hijabers Surabaya, people are not interested to put on a hijab on their head because the hijab is old-fashioned and it is used just like an ordinary way. As a result, women feel ashamed to wear hijab (Wahyunita, 2012). That is why she started using full color and many styles of hijab in order to bring out the beauty of the
wearers as well as to attract women wearing and maintaining hijab. In fact, there are no fix styles and characteristics of Hijabers Surabaya because they are open to other sources and fashion stylish as the reference towards their hijab style, like for example from public figures who wear hijab; Jenahara Nasution, Risty Tagor and Zaskia Sungkar.

As the development of hijab in Indonesia, the use of colorful and stylish hijab is aimed to attract people's attention. Hijab, which used to be unattractive, is now more concern on the eye appeal which is in contrast with the hijab proposed in Islam. A study conducted by Heri Setiawan entitled “Kuasa Jilbab (Studi Krisis Perkemangan Jilbab di Indonesia)” in 2008 mentions that Hijab as the Islam term means “covering”, “hide” or “cover” women’s head and face (eye, nose, mouth) or women’s body just like in the Middle East and South Asia (Setiawan, 2008). The obligation of wearing hijab in Islam is written in Al-Quran and some hadiths. HR Muslim in Kitab Sifat an-Nar states that there are some rules and requirements that represent a good way of dressing in Islam like the following criteria. Hijab for Muslim women must not transparent or made of slight fabric because it makes women’s body visible. Shapeless and covering all of human’s body are the hijab's criteria because it aims to prohibit men’s desire on women’s bodies. Less flashy and bright color that attracts people’s attention also become the appropriate hijab in Islam (HR Muslim, cited in Razzak 2005, p. 242).

In Indonesia, the term of hijab fashion has just been developed since a couple years ago, whereas actually Indonesian people have known the concept of hijab since the New Order era and even some Muslim women have used hijab earlier. It is supported by Setiawan’s study that historically, hijab in Indonesia was used only in terms of religious place and the occasion, like for example in Pondok Pesantren. Therefore, hijab in Indonesia was used to have the same meaning in Islam, in which based in the Middle East, as the religion term.

Yet, as it has been mentioned before, hijab is not only related to religion matter now, but it also changes into industrialization. There are some supporting media as the result of contemporary hijab fashion. Paras Magazine is one of the examples which advertises some products of veil, dress and even the accessories for modern hijab users. Besides the magazine, there is a study conducted by Deartma Mulyati in 2011 entitled Konstruksi Sosial Media Internet Terhadap Penampilan Modis Komunitas Jilbabers Surabaya that mentions the Muslim fashion blogs by Dian Pelangi (Indonesian fashion blogger and young designer), Hana Tajima (British) and also Fatima Rafiy (Belgian) that commonly been viewed by most Muslim women in Indonesia (Mulyati, 2011). The viewers start to copy and imitate the fashion of hijab shown in that blogs. Dian Pelangi also has official boutiques in 12 cities in Indonesia and one in Malaysia and has followed some fashion show like in Paris, Melbourne and Abu Dhabi to introduce her products there.

In addition, the existence of hijab community, which is based on shared identity among members, supports hijab as a fashion industry in Indonesia. The writer uses Hijabers Surabaya, the biggest hijab community in Indonesia, as the comparison because this hijab community has successfully spread their hijab style in Surabaya by conducting some regular event for public, like hijab class, ceremonial prays, hijab fest, hijab competition and so on. By putting fashion show section in almost all of their events, the writer assumes that Hijabers Surabaya concerns on modern look and fashion of hijab to be presented to the society. What about those Muslim women who are interested in using modern hijab style yet not willing to join the community? Or Muslim women who think that they are not fit with the exclusivity of Hijabers Surabaya? Since people assume that hijabers are those who join hijab community, could they (the non-members of community) identify themselves as hijaber?

Hence, in this research, the writer focuses on the hijab consumption behavior of the non-members which can be influenced by the existence of hijab community or referenced by Hijabers Surabaya style. It can be both in physical matter product and service or anything. The non-members of the community are necessary to be discussed because they also become the target consumer and audience of Hijabers Surabaya. Non-members of Hijabers Surabaya is free consumers who are not interested in making a bonded status with certain community. With the chance to participate in the Hijabers Surabaya events without the status of member, it shows that they are indirectly affected and feel the existence of Hijabers Surabaya.
In fact, sometimes those who are not bonded as a member have more creative idea and way in consuming contemporary hijab fashion. By not making themselves been bonded they can choose what suit them the most without any limitation as the result of community’s regulations. For those reasons, examining non-members behavior in consuming hijab fashion in Indonesia is more interesting because as independent parties, they have unpredictable and unexpected result. In addition, the writer focuses on the non-members as the object of the study in order to see whether they accept and agree with the hijab concept proposed by Hijabers Surabaya as general public. The writer also wants to reveal their creative tactic and strategy to be identified as hijaber without joining the community in their own which also reflect their identity.

Further, the writer uses some theories which are related to the consumption, identity, and tactic to support the analysis. As it is stated by Marx in Paterson’s book, the consumption of commodities was understood not in what it does as the use value, but in the money as the exchange value. It means that prices, brand and marketplace explain today’s commodity rather than its use (Paterson, 2006). On the other hand, mentions in his book, Cultural Identity, that individual, as subject, identifies some positions based on the way they wear, style, how they produce and perform even in constant they deal with process of struggling, resisting, negotiating and accommodating (Hall, 1996, p. 14). Thus, to see the informants’ consumption attitude, tactic and strategy, a theory by de Certeau is used. Strategies are able to produce, tabulate and impose spaces when those operations take place, whereas tactic can only use, manipulate and divert this space (de Certeau, 1984, p. 28).

Related to the hijab fashion, especially proposed by Hijabers Surabaya, Lodziak’s theory about symbolic value, which now turns the consumption of basic need of everyday life into the symbolic commodity of lifestyle, is also used in order to see how the meaning of new hijab is. Moreover, the writer aims to find out how the consumption behavior of non-members hijaber community in consuming the modern hijab along with the identity represented is and also to see their tactic in consuming the hijab concept. The writer argues that with the hijab massive industry, people who consume the modern hijab style change the value of hijab and Muslim women as general.

Method

In doing this research, related to the hijab phenomenon among society especially in Surabaya, the writer uses qualitative method as the methodology. Qualitative research is used to describe or answer a question towards phenomenon to get a deep understanding about the context or localized occurrences which is written in literal description (Ida, 2011, p. 102). To support the methodology and get more detail information for the research, the writer uses ethnography as the approach towards this research. In the book of Ethnography, Understanding Social Research, it is mentioned that ethnography is the study of people which captures the social meaning and ordinary activities (Brewer, 2000, p. 10). There are two ways of collecting data in ethnography approach; observation and interview, which are done from May until November 2013. The observation result is used as the data for this research related to the involvement of writer in the natural society and setting. For the interview, the writer uses depth interview. The writer does some informal depth interviews which are conducted just like usual two-way conversation. Depth interview is very useful to get detailed information, because sometimes the writer will get an unexpected worthy information that will be useful for the research and never thought before in the writer’s mind (Ida, 2011, p.102).

The population of the informants for this research is the outside of Hijabers Surabaya Community; the non-members of the community. It has been mentioned before that Hijabers Surabaya, as one of the biggest hijab community in Surabaya, is used as the comparison to see the hijaber identity itself. The Hijaber Surabaya Community itself is chosen for certain reasons. Hijabers Surabaya has 800 ordinary members and 250 exclusive members and influences other cities like Gresik, Kediri and Madura in consuming modern kinds of hijab style. They often work with some famous Muslim icons and designers like Jenahara, Lulu el Hashu, Zaskia Sungkar, Ria Miranda, SitiJuwariyah and many others.

In choosing the informants, the writer uses nonprobability sample, which is purposive sampling, in order to ease the data collection. It is mentioned in the book Analyzing Media Messages: Using
Quantitative Content Analysis in Research by Riffe, Lacy and Fico that purposive sampling is used because of the nature of the research project (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005, p. 101). It means that the writer sets the sampling as its possible availability. In fact, the non-members of the community as the population of this research is a separated and undetected group. They individually stand by their own without certain confession towards society. Therefore, the purposive sample allows the writer to use the appropriate sample available. By using the purposive sampling, the writer gets about 21 non-members of Hijabers Surabaya to be observed and interviewed as the population for this research. Finally, the writer reduces the population and chooses 6 informants to be used as the data because those informants provide what the writer wants in this research.

Even though the writer relies on the availability, some criteria are set in choosing the informants in order to pick potential informants who are appropriate to the focus of this research. The first criteria is they do not have membership card of Hijabers Surabaya as the verification. The writer also chooses Muslim women aged between 19-24 years old as the second criteria because mostly in around those ages, the participants’ occupation is student and beginner worker. It suits with the writer’s purpose which wants to see how hijab modern is consumed by those who have limited income, since it is interesting to be discussed as the consumption issues of hijab wave. The third criterion is the domicile of the informants which is Surabaya because the writer will see this phenomenon in Surabaya population. The last criterion of the informants is to choose those who have ever participated in the Hijabers Surabaya’s community events for at least four times.

**Hijab Motivation**

The informants show two different attitudes when they are consuming the hijab concept proposed by Hijabers Surabaya. They indicate agreement and negotiation of the proposed product. Regarding the agreement, the writer considers it to be exist based on the informants’ confession on the subject of what motivate them and when they buy the product. The informants’ opinions towards the motivation of consuming Hijabers Surabaya show that there are four reasons of why they interested in attending their events. For the first reason, one of the informants, Citra, mentioned that how to wear hijab with the variant model is the reason of her attendance. It is because Hijabers Surabaya always gives hijab tutorial in almost of every event. Citra’s interest in wearing various styles of hijab is being the motivation of why she consumes Hijabers Surabaya. It means that the hijab fashion proposed by Hijabers Surabaya is considered as the ideal one.

Another reason, as it is stated by Fitrul, is to get the idea and reference of the newest style of hijab. Those are what motivate her to consume Hijabers Surabaya. It means that by attending their events she can update her hijab fashion. Accordingly, in other words, Hijabers Surabaya can be considered as one of the roles and centers of hijab fashion wave in Surabaya. Meanwhile, the third reason is defined by Icha who stated that she came because of her idol and hijab fashion icon was being the guest star. The interesting point from her acknowledges is that the consuming here is not only occurred towards the hijab fashion offered by Hijabers Surabaya, but also towards the fashion icons hired by Hijabers Surabaya.

The last reason of why the informants are attracted to consume Hijabers Surabaya is the differences with the use of hijab. Wulan mentioned that she is interested in the modeling world. As the one who bring fashion concept in hijab, Hijabers Surabaya usually held a model hijab contest. It is correlated with the purpose of the community which is to create attractive and fashionable hijab. Wulan said that being the model of hijab has brought her closer to the hijab fashion concept. From the responses above, it can be said that the informants are not only attracted by the product sold by Hijabers Surabaya, but it is also about the happening fashion trend. From those reasons, it can be comprehended that the informants agree with the hijab fashion proposed by Hijabers Surabaya. Moreover, most of them agree that this community encourages other Muslim women to put hijab on their head, which is good.

Besides those motivations, another sign to define the approval process can be seen from where the informants buy the product. It is because buying the hijab product in the events of Hijabers Surabaya is considered as agreement towards its hijab fashion concept. Some of the informants admit that they have ever bought a hijab product in Hijabers Surabaya’s events, who are Icha and Zilvy. It indicates that they...
are hegemonized by the product sold by Hijabers Surabaya. Another informant, Icha Hablana even shows surprising response related to the product she bought. She said that though she only had 1.000.000 rupiah per month, she still would buy certain expensive product if she likes it the most and even the product is available only one piece. It means that she will pay whatever the cost for one unique hijab product as long as no one will wear the same. Icha’s acknowledgements show that she is a hegemonized consumer because she braves enough to buy an expensive product while she earns almost the same.

**Tactic & Strategy and Savvy Consumption**

The writer finds some creative ways of consumption that is categorized as tactic and strategy in consuming hijab concept offered by Hijabers Surabaya which shows negotiation. Hall mentions that negotiation here means a contradictory position, whether the consumer adopts and or opposes it (Procter, 2004, p. 69). The negotiation emerges another creative way in consuming similar pattern of hijab fashion proposed by Hijabers Surabaya. As the one who owned the tactic and strategy theory as a part of everyday life, de Certeau shows how important it is to be creative consumer because they can create their own production which is separated in the function of tactic and strategy.

The first tactic and strategy is about how economical the informants are by buying the similar product offered in Hijabers Surabaya’s events in another place which is cheaper. Place and quality are not a big matter for them to buy hijab. It means that they do not have to buy the product in the events of Hijabers Surabaya, as long as it fits them well. Their acknowledge shows that buying similar product in other places and in lower quality is their tactic of consumption. They negotiate their desire on certain product with their ability on how much money they can spend. Buying similar product in other place is the first tactic for not being manipulated by the commodity.

Wulan and Zilvy reveal the second tactic and strategy of consuming hijab fashion is by trying another approach in consuming which is to be involved in the hijab fashion as massive industry. Entering the hijab fashion modeling industry is their way to consume hijab. The writer assumes it because both informants have been participated in Hijabers Model Search Competition in 2013, but they have never been the members of Hijabers Surabaya. Hence, it can be inferred that modeling is another tactic to get involved in modern hijab and follows the hijab concept proposed by the community.

The development of hijab as fashion and trending phenomenon stimulates her to more focus on modeling, because she wears hijab. Since hijab fashion is getting popular, she thinks that being a hijab model is a good opportunity because this industry will lacked for a hijab model to promote hijab products. Their experience shows that hijab consumption is not only by spending money, time, and keep consuming. By joining such hijab model competition, they have a chance to earn money, if they win, or when they are invited to join the fashion show by certain hijab brand. They use their ability of modeling to consume hijab and earn money as well.

The last tactic and strategy is by making their own chance of alternative consuming. One of the informants, Icha Hablana, prefers to make her own product of hijab. She said that to reduce the budget of consumption, she preferred to make her own product of hijab. Based on the writer's observation in the event of Fun Week with Hijabers Surabaya on November 213, Icha Hablana was sometimes interested in certain dress and hijab, yet she did not buy. It is because she thought that the model is too simple so she can make it. Another example is when she was interested in a piece of chiffons scarf with tulle brocade on it which cost about 75.000 rupish. At first, she touched and tried to figure out the product. Then she said that it is simple and she could make it. She just needs to buy the raw materials and let her tailor do it. It is better to make it by herself, which is quite easy and cheaper than buying the actual product. To sum this up, the tactics and strategy above prove that they do not fully follow and accept what the community is purposed. Instead, they try to imitate the similar the style, pattern or model with their own ways.

Related to the negotiation attitude above, the writer assumes what type of consumer they are. In the book Consumption and Everyday Life, Paterson mentions that there are two types of consumer; sucker, which is the consumer who can easily be manipulated and accept all the things they face and savvy, which is the consumer who uses knowledge and creative way in consuming (Paterson, 2006, p. 141-143). Savvy consumer is a knowing consumer who knows what to be consumed or not while sucker is a type of
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manipulated consumer. After conducting interview and observation towards the consumption behavior of the informants, the writer concludes that they are savvy consumers, because they are not manipulated and duped by the hijab industry.

The Symbolic Value of Hijab

The development of hijab as the popular culture now emerges the massive industrialization of hijab in Indonesia. As it has been mentioned in the previous chapter, the writer assumes that the use of hijab now turns from religious term into fashion industry. It is supported by Lodziak in his book which states that the failure of consumption refers to buy what people want rather than they need. It turns consumption to an unnecessary consumption and creates the symbolic value which turns from basic need of everyday life into a symbolic commodity of lifestyle (Lodziak, 2002, p.3). It means that the value of consumption is no longer described as the people’s need. The consumer has another purpose beyond their need.

The writer finds out that all of the six informants agree with the assumption of the exchange meaning of consumption from the basic need into symbolic commodity. The first is when symbolic value of hijab fashion is turned into pleasure matter. Lodziak mentions in his book that pleasure in consumption creates lifestyle. It shows that pleasure is another symbolic value and meaning of consumption. One of the informants, Wulan, said that many people tend to wear hijab fashion because it is modern, cool and cute. With the variant of style, it improves their self-confidence. Looking chic and cool, yet turns aside the Syar’i, is the example of how pleasure beats the use value. They tend to concern more on performance rather than the obligation to wear hijab in Islam.

Besides the symbolic value of pleasure, the writer also finds out that hijab fashion influences the purposive value. Based on the informants’ acknowledge towards how they define their style, the writer assumes that they specialize the hijab fashion. They admit that they wear simple hijab in daily routines, yet wear more complicated and more fashionable ones for special occasions. It is portrayed in the picture beside when one informant shows different type of hijab style related to the occasion. Icha Hablana wears simple hijab in the left picture while wears colorful with accessories on it for wedding occasion in the right picture. It means that the use of hijab fashion concept is considered as privilege choice. Based on the fact, the writer concludes that those additional meaning values of hijab obviously represent the symbolic value of hijab fashion. In conclusion, the shifting meaning and purpose of hijab fashion proposed by Hijabers Surabaya are the new symbolic values as the result of the emergence of hijab fashion.

The Construction of Identity

Related to the meaning value of consumption, Lodziak mentions in his book that identity is one of the meanings that emerges from the consumption activity which attribute to ourselves or self-identities (Lodziak, 2002, p. 24). Basically, identity is one of the special meanings which is created because of symbolic value and particular lifestyle. Dunn also mentions in his book that there are three dimensions in identity formation, which are personal identity, social identity, and cultural identity (Dunn, 2008, p. 178-179).

As the most significant dimension, personal identity is the foundation of how a person defines their character. It is mentioned in Peterson’s book that identity can be changed as we wish, and fixity in which
we, as individual self, may choose our own wishing (Paterson, 2006, p. 56). It means that the person themselves is the one who has power to declare the identity. In the case of hijab fashion concept proposed by Hijabers Surabaya community influence general public, the informants of this research stated how they see themselves, in the hijab fashion, which is considered as their self identity as well. Most of the informants declare themselves as simple person who wear simple hijab style in daily activity. They admit that they do not like a too complicated style because they are typically a simple person. It shows that the informant of this research has a simple character.

As it has been mentioned before, that self-identity is not the only dimension of identity building, the writer finds out that the informants agree with the cultural identity dimension. It means that the informants realize that as popular phenomenon, hijab fashion concept proposed by Hijabers Surabaya influences how they wear hijab. Fitrul admitted that wearing hijab style improve her confident level and she feels it suits her. It indicates that she follows the popular culture and imitates the hijab fashion concept.

It shows that the cultural identity of hijab fashion influences her self-identity.

Another identity emerge through the hijab fashion is about the identity of class struggle. It is captured in the left pictures beside which depict one of the informants wearing hijab style. Compares to the picture in the right beside, which is a fashion show conducted by Hijabers Surabaya, both figures show similar sign of hijab. Both informant and model of Hijabers Surabaya wear dress combined with a blazer and layer hijab style. It shows that the informant imitates the hijab fashion concept of the community and applies it in her fashion style. The example above indicates that the informant tries to show her struggle towards social and economy class.

Actually, the assumption of social class struggle is supported by Veblen’s opinion in Paterson’s book about the social emulation. It explains about those in lower socio economy who wish to eat and dress in a way to emulate the trendsetter (Paterson, 2006, p. 18). With the tactic strategy to press the budget without neglecting their performance, the writer assumes that the informants try to show their struggle of social class by imitating the hijab concept proposed by Hijabers Surabaya. They consume similar sign, yet in lower price and quality to lift up their social status, that they have good taste of fashion as well. By resembling the hijab concept offered by Hijabers Surabaya community, the informant is driven closer to the community. To be a fighter of social and economy class is considered as one of the identities reflected by the informants towards their consumption behavior and hijab style.
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The next pictures are the example the writer gives to show another example of how the informant tries to imitate the hijab symbol of Hijabers Surabaya. The left picture captures one of the informants who wear hijab style, while the right picture shows three executive managements of Hijabers Surabaya Community with their hijab fashion in one tabloid. Four of those people wear similar hijab style which is turban style. The modern look might be the trigger of the informant to wear similar hijab style. It shows that the informant wants to look as fashionable as they are and resemble the fashionable and modern impression of the community. The writer assumes that by imitating the hijab style, the informant shows the identity of struggling with the fashionable look as a symbol of culture nowadays.

Conclusion

To sum it up, the hijab fashion concept proposed by Hijabers Surabaya has influenced Muslim women, both listed members and general public. Related to the consumption behavior, the writer finds that the informants, as general public agree and accept the hijab fashion concept offered by Hijabers Surabaya. In the implementation, rather than by being hegemonized, they use tactic and strategy of consumption by imitating the product, both material and immaterial, in their creative ways. Their negotiation attitude concludes that the informants in this research are called as savvy consumer, as they consume with knowledge.

Since the development of hijab modern phenomenon, especially the hijab concept proposed by Hijabers Surabaya, being a trend in society, it emerges the change value of what hijab is. Through the fashionable concept of hijab, the writer finds three shifting meaning of hijab; from a religious obligation altered into stylish, modernity and impression matters. It shows that hijab is no longer defined as its original purpose which is to cover women’s body. Instead, it is used to emerge the impression of fashionable and modern. The writer concludes that the pleasure feeling in consuming hijab fashion proposed by Hijabers Surabaya is the new meaning of hijab.

Pursuing this further, by imitating its hijab concept, the informants unconsciously put the community’s ideology and aspect to their identity in wearing hijab. The writer finds that besides the informants’ self-identity of being simply Muslim women in term of fashion, the hijab fashion concept has affected their identity. For this reason, the informants’ negotiated consumption attitude emerges their struggling and effort to be considered as fashionable as the community’s member. As a result, the new identity of the informants is the inhere of simple self-identity with fashionable socio-community identity. To accomplish this research, the writer sums up that as separated apparatus of the community, the informants accept and agree to the hijab fashion concept proposed by the community through their negotiation behavior.

Work Cited


