

## VISUAL ETHNOGRAPY FASHION AESTHETIC REVIEW AT JAKARTA HIJABERS COMMUNITY

Purnamasari, Ratih <sup>1</sup>✉

<sup>1</sup> Graduate Program Indonesia Art Institute Yogyakarta

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### Abstract

Hijab as the religious fashion symbol was born and developed in Indonesia as a visual artefact which represents one of abedient values of a female muslim towards Islam regulations. In its historical journey, hijab has experienced many 'cultural dialogues' in a very long period of time that leads it to be one form of a nation culture. Jakarta Hijabers Community as one of Islamic Communities participates in taking roles to make hijab as visual culture at once as the resuscitation for its members about the aesthetic value in daily life. This research digs deeper about the meaning change occuring in hijab fashion development from visual aspect through Jakarta Hijabers Community. Data collection was done through interview completed with questionnaires data. The analysis was by using domain analysis, taxonomy, and component. The result of the research showed the existence of some factors that trigger the emergence of aesthetics value at hijab as Muslim fashion and national mission towards the usage of hijab in order to be accepted positively by the society.

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## INTRODUCTION

If seen from the needs side, hijab can be categorized into clothing necessities, in which parts of clothes or fashion that has been the important aspect in daily apperance. Hijab or in another word is veil actually comes from the word *khimaar* (plural, *khumur*) which in Arabic it means cover, to cover the head, nect, until chest of women (Ismiaulia, 1991: 45).

Hijab becomes a visual culture and can be categorized as an art work with design touch, intelectuality, and skill in the field of fashion. In the life of modern society life, design is cultural operation that touches the deepest side and the importance of enjoying

the world (Sachari, 2007: 2). The display of design work always becomes the main part of visual style that creates aesthetic value and enhance the most real taste in fashion. The style becomes the mood of modern human existence: You have style, then you exists! If you don't have style, be ready to be considered "extinct" (Ibrahim, 2011: 26).

This shows that the society is demanded to "hunt the style" as something as the legalization of their existence in the modern world. The style hunts that happen causes the spiritual resurrection of Indonesia middle society (Utama, 2015: 113).

Nowadays hijab is transforming to be a lifestyle in the field of fashion that develops in the society. That lifestyle becomes the

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✉ Corresponding author :  
Address: Indonesia Art Institute Yogyakarta  
Email : raaatiiih@gmail.com

narration on the creative process in someone that contains certain value in the view of the surrounding environment (Chaney, 2011: 156). Hijab is defined not only more than just visual symbol of female muslim but also starts to become more modern. Hijab as if becomes a global sign, a symbol of Muslim society identification symbol in Indonesia among other countries in the world. This hijab lifestyle causes the emergence of certain worry on the concept that can be formed in youth mind, which is the process of modification that generates hijab from its definition and its initial function (Ibrahim, 2008: 2).

That worry in fact does not happen at one of groups in the society which is considered succeed in reflecting the visual culture in the form of modern hijab mode without ignoring its definition and initial function. They are Jakarta Hijabers Community (JHC). This community raises the usage of modern hijab as the point of view in spreading positive values and women as the main figure in holding the vision and mission in it.

There are some reasons behind the formation of a community, one of them is because of the similarity in interest, care, and importance (Maryani, 2011: 62). In line with JHC, the formation of this hijab community occurs on the initiation of the women with the same interest and enthusiasm in the field of Muslim fashion. They are the people that are aware of the obligation in running the religion orders to wear hijab, however they do not want to be left behind by the development of fashion industry modernity (Alghifari, 2003: 14).

One of the biggest suggestion that is easy to be implemented to influence the society is the utilization of the media. Media, either printed one like newspaper and magazine, or electronical media such as television or internet, have many important roles in creating "image culture". Those popular media deliver many information that can touch the taste of users personal

interest. Included Hijab, which in publication media nowadays showed in various form of style modification that emerges self-beauty and support the appearance of whoever wearing it.

Beside that, the society easiness in accessing internet becomes one of shortcut from the distribution of this modern hijab style. From the internet, the society autodidactly can learn the steps of wearing modern hijab with various techniques. Until the society can easily becomes the follower or in another term is the fashion follower, and the media as if has become the bridge of how modern hijab transforms to be visual culture that is popular in the middle of the society nowadays.

The explanation of that condition becomes a form of restless and as the background of this research, in which it triggers the deeper curiosity about the meaning change that happens in hijab development from some aspects, either visual aspect, design aspect, or aesthetical aspect thourh Jakarta Hijabers Community. This research will see how popular culture takes roles towards the change of modern hijab visual style that develops in Indonesia society through Jakarta Hijabers Community. And how is the shifts of visual style and aesthetic value in modern hijab design at Jakarta Hijabers Community reviewed from the visual ethnography study.

The importance of conducting this research is to study the shift of visual style and aesthetic value in modern hijab design as the part of cultural transformation process that happens in Indonesia and especially in Jakarta.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research was conducted by using interview technique with visual ethnography approach. The purpose is to understand further the existed cultural differences and to have deeper instropection compared to only using the interview (Engstrom, 2009:

20). The researcher obtains the data by doing short observation in the field related to how to apply modern hijab model used by the participants of that community activities. The researcher also had active participation into the community and registered as the member. This was done to see how hijab is presented as the visual culture that shows the personal characteristics of the people wearing it.

This research was done at some places, because this community became the object of the research, Jakarta Hijabers Community did some location activities that always moving in Jakarta. The research was conducted since January 2013 at the second activity since this Hijaber Community was formed in November 2012 ago. This research was conducted when there was meeting or events conducted by Jakarta Hijabers Community in Jakarta and around the city in 2013-2014.

**RESULT DAN DISCUSSION**

As explained beforehand, that modern hijab style worn by Jakarta Hijabers Community has visual element that makes specialty in this research meant into art world, because the elements of that modern hijab cannot be apart from fine art talk which sometimes becomes bias in its view scopes. The visual elements of them is the line, the color, its form, the volume, and the surface. Basically there is different version about the visual elements according to some experts. However, in this analysis it is limited based on modern hijba visualization which generally occurs in this community.

**The Line Element**

Generally hijab worn by each member of the community has similarity, which has combination of two line elements, they are wave line and curve line, in which these two lines give dynamic and flexible impression.



Figure 1. The Example of Visual Element “Lines” Obtained in Modern Hijab (Source: Instagram Jakarta Hijabers Community (2013))

Both of these lines leave rigid and monotonous impression. The lines like these were born from the hand expertise in twisting or pinning in the process of hijab modification. The ability like this that makes hijab as the ordinary thing that becomes the work that contains many values.

**The Color Element**

One of things learnt in the happening culture at Jakarta Hijabers Community is the color. In some activities, this community raises the color as the fashion theme worn in a meeting. For instance at the meeting for monthly religious assembly in January 2013, this community raised theme color ‘cream caramel’ as the dress code at that meeting. Next in February 2013, they raised theme color ‘white harmony’, in March 2013 they raised color theme ‘black’, in September 2013 they raised theme color ‘grey’, and in some other months they also raised different color themes. In some observation at some meetings, generally the members frequently created a color combination that is not conspicuous or called as pastel colors.



Figure 2. Hijab Day 2014  
(Source: Instagram Jakarta HC (2014))

Pastel colors frequently used by them in strengthening identity and their non-verbal communication characteristics. Those color themselves are believed to be able representing the emotions of each user. For example at pastel color is considered having soft meaning, purity, modest, and symbolizing positive value, and the beauty in pale colors that can give feminism impression.

**The Form Element**

There are some kinds or forms of hijab developing nowadays and popular among the society, they are Paris Hijab, Pashmina, and Turban. From the result of one of questionnaire items, Pashmina Hijab is the hijab type loved the most by the users.



Figure 3. The Result Analysis of Questionnaires item 3 The Development of Hijab Style Form  
(Source: Blog Siti Juwariyah (June 17th, 2014))

Table 1. The Result Analysis of Questionnaires item 3 The Development of Hijab Style Form  
(Source: Blog Siti Juwariyah (June 17th, 2014))

After looking at the development of hijab style that is very rapid, now I prefer hijab style:	a. Pashmina (Rectangle Hijab)	22
	b. Modified Paris Hijab	8
	c. Turban	0
	d. Rectangular Cotton Hijab	0
	Total	30

Pashmina becomes popular because it is succeeded to be displayed with various forms from Jakarta Hijabers Community. Different from the era before hijab experienced development in Indonesia, hijab visual culture was presented only with limited forms and styles.

**The Volume Element**

The analysis about the volume related to the mass and content that give effect to the body. There are volume differences when someone uses Pashmina hijab that has chiffon material with Pashmina hijab that has Cashmere material. That difference is based on the trait of its own material. Chiffon has light volume because its material made of soft yarn and transparant, while Chasmere material its trait is 'heavier' and made of mixed wool, until this kind of Pashmina is impressed thick and solid.

Beside related to the mass, the analysis about volume also obtained in the case of the content, from visual display of Paris Hijab, with the usage of Turban. The usage of Paris Hijab now matter what the modification is, generally it covers the neck part, ini makes the space between the head and the body empty. Turban is rarely utilized by the society because it is felt only suitable to be used by certain types of faces.

**The Surface Element**

The popular hijabs that are mostly worn have flat surface consisting of some sizes. Paris hijab mostly with size 110 cm x 110 cm. While Pashmina Hijab generally with size 150 cm x 50 cm or 200 cm x 75 cm. Pashmina hijab is in greater demand. Strengthening the statement at the first questionnaire the third item in which the many respondents chose Pashmina hijab as their tendency to wear everyday.

The visual elements mentioned above have built a kind of aesthetic value. This is in line with what has been mentioned by Sudiran in his book, that the aesthetic value saved a number of quality in the form of unity, balance, and contrast that arranged from the line, the color, the form, and the harmonious tone (Sudiran, 2011: 49). The aesthetic value itself functions as the learning values that occur when the creation activities happens and appreciation in understanding the material culture. The value accepted from the aesthetic experience of someone can be understood as a kind of kindness and becomes the reflection on the behavior in applying that beauty itself (Tridjata, et. al., 2008: 42).

The process of hijab transformation that occurs more than one decade is a proof of learning that Indonesian society is aware of innovation and technology understanding. Beside that, there is awareness function that occurs through appreciation development towards the things in the form of historical value and cultural heritage, the resuscitation concerning the importance of building identity, and the resuscitation on the importance of improving a visual quality.

Jakarta, as a metropolitan country and the center of cultural growth in Indonesia, becomes the fertile field for planting the life values through various ways. One of them is by utilizing the aesthetic value that has certain roles for resuscitation, to teach, and to make it as the culture of the society at a form of new culture, which is the transformation of wearing hijab style. Jakarta Hijabers Community as the community which

accommodates expression and appreciation of muslim societies with the style that has been one of popular cultural product, that is as alternative media that represents modern lifestyle without leaving religious values.

Nowadays, modern hijab style brought by Jakarta Hijabers Community can be enjoyed and used by all stratum of societies either ones who attached to communities or not. This shows that the society has had insight and knowledge to behave towards the shift of hijab meaning that is developing right now, and become the sign of awareness enhancement about the aesthetic value and fashion function in creating and looking after the role and the responsibility of the culture attached in life.

Involved in this community gives many experiences and knowledge. As the reflection of a group of Jakarta modern society, this community also develops sufficiently modern thinking pattern, one of them is the organization system that does not bind and burdensome its members. Even some of their activities also have orientation on the things that can improve the life quality of its members. For instance the religious activity routinely done every month, charity activity, hijab day out, where the members got chance to open their insight through the meetings with learning based with the figures from various field of sciences.



Figure 4. Taking a Photo Together After Recitation Activity "The Answered Pray" (Source: Instagram Jakarta HC (2014))

Basically, this community exists because of the same interest which is

fashion that is made as preaching media in which with the attraction of visual culture that they raised can open the new path in learning various aspects of life. In a interview with Syifa, the chair of this community, she delivers that by using good clothes, with the hijab that characterize each of us expects us to learn and get new understanding about the norms, ethics, and aesthetics. Beside that, she added, through muslim fashion worn in every meeting can lead us to other learning out of fashion itself.

Indirectly, through this community (especially the members) are taught to innovate through their visual hijab style. Almost in every meeting, this community conducts hijab tutorial activity, which is a program to publish certain modern hijab style to the society with the purpose to add references of hijab to the members and practice it or demonstrate it in front of the members. In this activity, the aesthetic values of a work presented as the part of creation process and appreciation in understanding certain material culture.

Almost all members chosen as the respondents in this research admits the

existence of change in their hijab style. Initially they used hijab in the simple and modest way whitout many modifications. Some possibilities of the occurance of that shift caused by the first, the limitation of knowledge in modifying the hijab. Beside that probably also because there were not many medias that facilitated the society to do creation. The second, the awareness of aesthetic value in the society about modern hijab style did not emerge yet which contained various values in it.

Instead of those possibilities, they (the members) also mention some names of public figures who become the pioneers and propels them to take a part in conserving modern hijab style. These public figures are the ones who become the inspiration in style in Indonesia and outside Indonesia, known and working on fashion world. A half more is known because of their network in entertainment world and frequently appears in media "one million people" which is television.

Some of those public figures are wellknown designers such as Dian Pelangi,



Figure 5. 1) Dian Pelangi, 2) Siti Juwariyah, 3) Zaskia Mecca, 4) Zaskia Sungkar, 5) Ghaida, 6) Nuri Maulida, 7) Dina Tokio, 8) Hana Tajima

(Sources: Blog Dian Pelangi, Instagram Dina Tokio, Hana Tajima, Zaskia Mecca, Nuri Maulida, Zaskia Sungkar, Ghaida, and Siti Juwariyah (June 24th, 2014))

Modern Hijab Designer Siti Juwariyah, Beautiful Actrees Sazkia Adya Mecca, Nuri Maulida, Zaskia Sungkar, and Marshanda (who that time still wore hijab).

The names from abroad who becomes their references are like Dina Tokio, a hijaber and fashion blogger from England, and Hana Tajima, a hijaber, fashion blogger from Japan. Their fashion style and hijab style can be said as the trend center of hijab visual style development and muslim fashion in Indonesia, especially muslim youths in Jakarta.

The aesthetic values of the display of those inspirators can be categorized as the learning process for the followers. They do not only utilize television in "hunting" the style indicating a character, but also utilizing media closes to them, even it becomes their "new breath" in obtaining information everyday. For example printed media such as the book and magazine, digital media and internet access such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and blog.

Those media are popular and loved, especially digital media with the internet, because it is very easy and can be accessed quickly. They do not need to go to the bookstore or magazine store to obtain information about hijab world and trending fashion recently and becomes the lifestyle of the urban society in general, because all information needed exist in hand through smartphone with those media have important role in showing the aesthetic role as the learning for the users. Even though displayed in the form of photo news, however nowadays hijab cannot be considered just belongs to "taboo" material anymore and not classy, because one of this news has proven that hijab gets sufficiently high appreciation in the society.

## CONCLUSION

Fashion is one of popular culture results which has strong relationship with

the youthsters trend. In this research, fashion becomes the main talk which is correlated to the people who brings it, who are the group of youthsters named Jakarta Hijabers Community which makes fashion especially modern hijab style as the form of their islamic teaching to the society.

Beside becoming the media of personal expression of each member, their hijab style also becomes a form of visual communication which its influence is stronger than using verbal communication. The result of this visual communication is the emergence of "urban" human that now appear as the icon that brings image, revealing the authenticity in its existence mode in mass media.

The power of visual communication itself gives impact towards developing mode followers. It is inevitable that the formation of image with aesthetic values in modern hijab becomes the society runway to have the same lifestyle: narcissism culture, hedonism, and consumerism as the negative effect of the appearing popular culture which appears in the form of capitalism. All comes into the effect of globalization in which each of its culture is inevitable from the stream of industrialization and commodities. In another point of view, the aesthetic brought through the visual message of a modern hijab succeed attracting the people's attention. The effect of the attention given is the existence of activities catching and appreciating a style and culture of hijab, in which those things can grow the sensitivity on the norm and ethics in the existing environment.

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