

Barrier in Design Innovation of Fashion Business: Evidence from Indonesian Moslem Fashion SME

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore barriers that prevent Moslem fashion industry to adopt and indulge more innovative apparel and accessories design. As Moslem fashion gains more popularity in Indonesia, Moslem fashion is now adapting a more modern and contemporary approach rather than using the traditional method in designing the apparel and accessories product lines for the customers. Nevertheless, Moslem fashion industry also faced barriers in pursuing and creating an innovative product design in order to gain the competitive advantage in the industry. There were 70 personal communications conducted from SME Moslem fashion key persons across Indonesia. This research applied qualitative approach, mostly using semi-structured interview's techniques in exploring the barriers of innovation from each SMEs. As the result, it was found that human resource barrier (lack of skills and shortage of skilled staffs), operational resource barrier (rare raw materials and difficulties to find a high-quality material), financial problem (high cost in innovation, lack of fund and poor financial management) and imitations from competitors were the most prominent factors that prevent Moslem fashion SME brands to create innovative apparel design and innovative fashion product lines.

Hambatan dalam Inovasi Desain di Bisnis Fesyen: Studi pada Perusahaan UMKM Fesyen Muslim di Indonesia

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi berbagai hambatan yang dialami oleh industri busana muslim, yaitu dari kalangan pengusaha UMKM di Indonesia. Semakin populernya tren busana muslim di Indonesia, Industri busana muslim saat ini mulai mengadopsi pendekatan yang lebih modern dan kontemporer dalam membuat desain produk dan aksesoris dibandingkan pendekatan yang lebih tradisional. Dalam hal membuat desain produk baru, industri busana muslim juga mengalami beberapa hambatan. Sejumlah 70 komunikasi personal telah dilakukan terhadap para pelaku usaha dan karyawan kunci dari UMKM busana muslim di kota-kota Indonesia. Penelitian ini mengadopsi pendekatan kualitatif, dengan menggunakan wawancara semi terstruktur dalam mengambil data penelitian. Dalam menjalankan bisnisnya, para pelaku UMKM busana muslim menghadapi beberapa hambatan, yaitu: hambatan sumber daya manusia (pekerja yang tidak terampil dan kurangnya karyawan yang memiliki kapabilitas yang baik), hambatan operasional (permasalahan bahan baku seperti kesulitan mendapatkan bahan baku yang unik serta kesulitan mendapatkan bahan baku berkualitas), hambatan keuangan (biaya tinggi, kurangnya dana, dan pola manajemen keuangan yang tidak terstruktur), serta imitasi produk oleh kompetitor. Faktor-faktor inilah yang menghambat proses inovasi pembuatan produk baru yang dirasakan oleh pelaku usaha UMKM busana muslim di Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

Research on SME is in a high demand since SME was contributed to the national economic development (Anton et al., 2015). In Indonesia, SMEs employ almost 97.24% of the total workforce which means that the economy will grow when the SMEs grow as well (Jaswadi et al., 2015). In order to develop its business, SME tends to face many challenges, ranging from the classic financial challenge to innovation challenge (Iriyanti & Azis, 2012). These challenges might apply to all types of industries, from the semi-manufacturing SMEs to creative industries. Especially with the creative industry sector, this sector is also has been a potential source of GDP in the near future (Zuhdi, 2012). By 2016, the creative industry has contributed around 7.44 % to the national GDP in Indonesia, the percentage was converted to nearly 922.58 trillion Rupiah (Sabdarini, 2017).

Creative industry is divided into 15 sub-sectors, namely architecture, design, fashion, craft, culinary, computer and software service, music, art product and market, publishing, advertising, interactive game, research and development, visual art, tv and radio, film and photo (Departemen Perdagangan RI, 2014). Between the aforementioned sub-sectors, fashion is among the top contributor to the national GDP (LPPM_Unpad, 2014). By 2016, the contribution of the fashion industry to national GDP was almost 1.21 % which was nearly 16.26% of the total creative industry contribution to national GDP (Kementerian Perindustrian RI, 2018).

Fashion industry is characterized by the agile changes of the customer demand in the new apparel design. Fashion companies need to update its newest product lines with the newer versions on a frequent basis to meet the changing demands (Zhang & Di Benedetto, 2012). One of the newly-developed segments in fashion is the Moslem fashion industry.

In Moslem fashion, hijab is one of the important icons and terminology. Hijab is used by woman to cover almost all part the female body

except for her face and palms (Hanzaee & Chitsaz, 2011). Hijab is also used interchangeably with the other fashion terms on loose clothing such as long skirts, tunics, and headscarf (Jones, 2007).

According to Islam, it is obligatory for all mature women to cover themselves with hijab except for their face and palms. Quran Surah Al-Ahzab verse 59 contains:

“O Prophet! Say to the wives of the believers, ‘Let them cover their veils all over their bodies.’ So that they are easier to recognize, so they are not disturbed. And Allah is ever Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Al-Ahzab: 59).

This statement indicates that it is obligatory for the adult Moslem women to use hijab. Nevertheless, there is a common misunderstanding that when women wear hijab, it does not mean they have to ignore the beauty factor in their fashion. Beauty is the right of human being, especially for women (Hanzaee & Chitsaz, 2011; Woldesemait, 2012).

Nowadays, Moslem fashion has become a new trend in the worldwide fashion. Moslem fashion is perceived not as the formal, traditional and old-fashioned style just like on the older generation (Destria & Iskandar, 2013). Moslem fashion industry became one of the fastest growing fashion industry in the world (Hanzaee & Chitsaz, 2011). Even some famous fashion brands such as Tommy Hilfiger, DKNY, and Dolce & Gabbana launched Moslem fashion lines such as hijabs, abayas, gowns, and loose trousers, especially on the Moslem religious celebration such as the Eid. Not only the world-class luxury labels, the modern young adult fashion label such as Uniqlo is also launched a trendy Moslem fashion collection such as long-dresses and hijabs (Aly, 2017).

Moslem fashion needs future development. The choice of color and design is necessary to create an appearance that matches the values, traditions, personal style and tastes (Tarlo, 2007; Chen et al., 2014). In addition, globalization is also made the expansion and

development of Moslem fashion become more complete, it gave not only the outward appearance of religious image but also the combination of modernization and westernization in producing fashionable apparels (Lewis, 2007; Woldesemait, 2012).

In Indonesia, the evolution of Moslem fashion industry has been immersed closer to the contemporary and modern styles. Several factors contributes to the development of the Moslem fashion industry such as the introduction of Hijabers Community, Moslem fashion show, and Moslem fashion bazaar (Kemenperin, 2016). In the terms of national economics, Indonesian Moslem fashion brands have started to contribute about 54 trillion rupiah to Indonesia's national GDP. In addition, Moslem fashion industry has contributed to reduce the unemployment rate by hiring around 1.1 million people for the industry (Kementerian Perindustrian RI, 2017).

Fashion business -including the Moslem fashion industry- is highly competitive, the consumer asks for constant new product lines in every season (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Change means that a frequent innovative product design is ineluctable in the fashion industry. Fashion industry players need high level of innovativeness in designing new product lines to gain competitive advantage in the fashion market (Ünay & Zehir, 2012). Fashion companies must put their best to increase the variety of fashion apparel lines since product life cycle for fashion product is short. An innovative product design is needed to answer consumers' demand who always want to adopt the newest fashion trend (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010).

Fashion design innovation may be implemented in the form, function, or style, that reflecting social, cultural, and environmental change that is unique to a certain point of time in a particular geographical setting (Zhang & Di Benedetto, 2012). For example, Organza hijab is a fashion trend in Indonesia in 2017. Before, Organza hijab is not a trend since women prefer to use simple hijab, while Organza hijab is defined as the luxury and sophisticated hijab.

Fashion design innovation is also described as the improvement in product quality, where there is an increase in value from the consumption point of view (Pesendorfer, 1995).

Design innovation adoption is embedded with the certain level of uncertainties and risk within the business, although it provides opportunities for the company to gain competitive advantage in the market. To implement innovation in the company, organization faces various barriers (Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010). Innovation barriers can be described in several categories, some researcher divided barriers as internal and external barriers (Hadjimanolis, 1999; Madrid-Guijarro et al., 2009; Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010), while the other divided them by categorizing the source of the barriers such as finance-related barriers or technological-related barriers (Demirbas, 2010; Werner & Jurgen, 2012). This paper will organize innovation barrier based-on the source of the problem.

This study will explore the innovation barriers that obstruct the Indonesian Moslem fashion SMEs when implementing new design for the apparels. The first research question in that we try to answer is: What are the barriers that hindering Moslem fashion SMEs to pursue innovation? The second research question in this research is: How does the barrier in design innovation affect the Moslem fashion business? This research will add more understanding on the way Moslem fashion SMEs struggling with the obstacles in the attempt of pursuing an innovative apparel design. This result also will add more understanding in the way Moslem fashion SMEs handling the obstacles, so that the business will be kept running and developing.

METHOD

This research used qualitative method in order to describe a barrier in product design innovation in Moslem fashion for SMEs in Indonesia. This research used interview method to take the sample and performed a content analysis to synthesize the result of the interviews. One of the mostly used methods to collect data

on innovation is by conducting interviews for exploring the practice of innovation in the company (OECD & Eurostat, 2005; Ren, 2009).

This research uses primary data from semi-structured interviews to identify barriers in apparel design innovation in the Moslem fashion SMEs. The questionnaire consists of checklist of barriers that needs to be filled by the interviewees. A set of open question related with each barriers is also prepared by the interviewer to be asked and confirmed by the respondents. The set of closed and open question is embedded in the Appendix section. The interviewees were entrepreneurs and key em-

ployees in the Moslem fashion SMEs. 70 personal communication consists of face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews were made between March-October 2017. The interviewees are the key personnel in the Moslem fashion SMEs from Bandung, Sumedang, Cimahi, Jakarta, Bogor, and Surabaya in Indonesia.

This research used systematic literature reviews to list the classification of innovation barriers (Sandberg & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2014). From the extensive literature reviews process, this research classified the design innovation barriers in Table 1. The Barrier classification in Table 1 was also resulted from various inter-

Table. 1 Barriers in Adopting Innovation

Innovation Barriers		Sources
Financial Barriers	Lack of financial resources	Tabas, Beranová, & Vavřina, 2011 Larsen & Lewis, 2007
	High cost and poor financial management	Madrid-Guijarro et al., 2009, Arvidsoon & Nessen, 2015
Human Resource Barriers	Low management commitment	Madrid-Guijarro et al., 2009
	Resistance to change	Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010 Stendahl & Roos, 2008
	Low skill competency	Stendahl & Roos, 2008
	Lack of competent staff	Ren, 2009
	Lack of innovation priorities	Ren, 2009
Operational Barriers	Lack of tools	Ren, 2009
	Difficulties in obtaining raw materials	Hadjimanolis, 1999
	Lack of R&D activities	Larsen & Lewis, 2007
Legal and Economics Barriers	State law	Hadjimanolis, 1999 Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010
	Local laws	Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010
	Inflation rate	Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010
	Exchange rate	Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010
	Purchasing power of consumers	Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010
Competitor Barriers	Competitor threat	Larsen & Lewis, 2007 Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Category	Characteristics	Number of samples
Respondent's gender	Male	8
	Female	62
Respondent's age	Below 30	36
	Above 30	34
Management role	CEO	53
	Production manager	4
	Designer	7
	Store manager	6

views with the respondents. Several categories were added later, after several respondents explained about the barriers that they faced. For example, the competitor barrier was added later, thus this research also added the theory in the literature review section after the interview process.

As for the interview process, the interview is begun with handling paper, where the interviewee needs to do the checklist in barriers that their SMEs faced. After that, an extensive semi-structured interview was conducted in order to explore each barrier faced by the company. The interviewees were also encouraged to explain more about barriers that were not on the checklist. There were 33 open questions on the interviewer table, but usually, not all question were asked to the respondent, especially when the respondent is evasive and reluctant to an-

swer the questions. Some questions were also not relevant to the operation of the SMEs. For example, the company who outsourced the production process were reluctant to explain about the production process.

Each interview was recorded to avoid any error in encoding data as well as to make it easier for in the interpretation and analysis process. This research applied content analysis in exploring each barrier faces by Moslem fashion industry personnel. Content analysis is a technique to find and conclude a pattern by identifying the research object characteristics objectively and systematically (Lai & To, 2015). After that, validity test will be performed by confirming the interview result with several selected samples to make sure that the result of the research is coherent with the design innovation barriers faced by Moslem fashion SME brands.

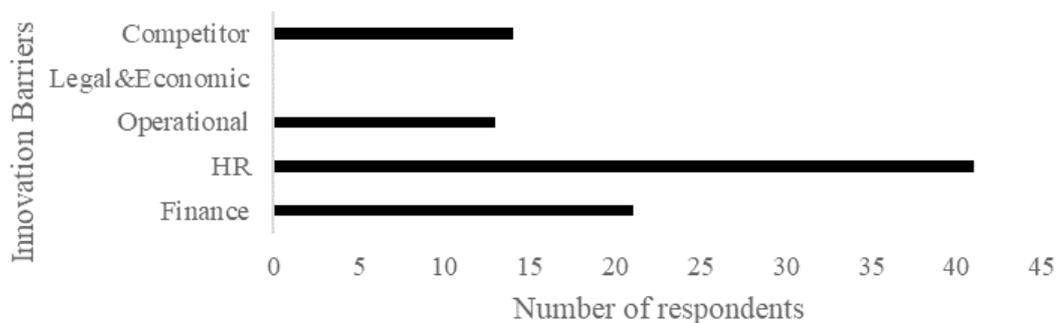


Figure 1. Innovation Barrier in Moslem Fashion SMEs

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the characteristics of the interviewees in this research. Most of them are women and have a role as a CEO in the company.

From Figure 1, it can be concluded that most Moslem fashion SMEs suffered from human resource or employee related barriers in adopting innovation in the business. 41 respondents complained various employee related barriers as the obstacle in creating an innovative product design. Second, the financial barriers that were complained by 21 respondents. As for the operational related barriers, 13 respondents complained of the problem related with raw materials. As for the competitor barriers, 14 respondents explain about competitor activities that occurred in the Moslem fashion SMEs.

Table 3 provides more detail information in design innovation barriers faced by Moslem fashion SMEs. The highest number of barriers is low competency of the employee in the company, while threats from a competitor who copying the design, shortage of highly-skilled staff, and difficulties in obtaining raw materials were contributed as the next barriers that hindered design innovation in Moslem fashion SMEs.

Design innovation is described as the needs for designer to apply innovative ideas in designing apparel for the product lines. Unfortunately, several barriers have been found based-on the interviews with key personals that

hindered the design innovation approach within the Moslem fashion business run by SMEs.

Financial Barriers

Financial barrier is occurred in the organization as lack of financial resources (Tabas et al., 2011). Lack of financial resources also has similar terms such as, undercapitalization and insufficient funds (Larsen & Lewis, 2007). The other financial barrier is associated with cost and it is also presumed to be one of the most significant barriers in implementing innovation in the company. The high cost for the research and development activities is often associated with product design activities in the company (Madrid-Guijarro, et al., 2009). Overall, SMEs mostly suffered from a poor financial management within the company (Arvidsson & Nissen, 2014).

Moslem fashion SMEs also faced difficulties in financing the design innovation process. Most of the industry players explained about insufficient funds for the design innovation activities. The main characteristics of the fashion industry are the fast-seasonal change and a high turnover that demands the company to keep producing innovative apparel lines. Company needs to be the trendsetter or follow the ongoing trend, so that the customer will be willing to buy its product. This result follows Tabas et al. (2011) and Larsen and Lewis (2007) who mentioned that lack of lack of funds prevent SME to funding the innovation-related activities.

Table 3. Details on Innovation Barriers in Moslem Fashion Industry

Innovation Barrier		Frequency
Financial Barrier	Lack of funds	8
	Poor financial management	5
	Cost	8
Human Resource Barrier	Low competency	37
	Shortage of staff	14
Operational Barrier	Difficulties in obtaining raw materials	13
Competitor Barrier	Competitor copying product	14

The lack of the funding is related with the higher cost to make an innovative product design. For Moslem fashion designer, the fresh idea for new product design will be best come from the newest fashion shows. For SME, it is almost impossible to attend worldwide fashion shows such as Paris fashion week or Milan fashion week. The only exception is that SME is able to obtain a sponsor who is willing to pay for the trip. The cost constraint to perform innovation follows Madrid-Guijarro et al. (2009) who mentioned that cost was highly significant that obstruct innovation in the company. The cost to attend the fashion show is too high, thus most SME fashion brands could not afford the high cost, or either they simply do not have enough budget to cover the traveling cost. The alternative for SME Moslem fashion brands is to search the idea, design inspiration and trend from social media and fashion television.

Most SMEs claimed to use social media, especially instagram. This social media as their source of inspiration to make an innovative product design. In addition, SMEs also regularly check the newest trend from online fashion marketplaces such as Berrybenka, Zalora, and Hijabenka. The internet is the solution that can help SMEs to lower the design innovation budget for the new product development activities.

Poor financial management is also a barrier faced mostly by Moslem fashion SMEs. This finding follows Larsen and Lewis (2007) who mentioned that financial management was a problem that prevents a company to pursue innovation activities. SMEs tend to find it difficult in planning and preparing pricing calculation, financial budget and profit analysis. They often make a wrong calculation for the pricing, as it resulted to the loss, or the profit was not reaching its potential for the SMEs. Additionally, SMEs preferred to prepare the short-term budget, or even a daily budget. It prevented them to make a long-term financial planning for the growth of the company. The very short-term budget made SMEs failed to make design innovation budget as the priority. For example, although

it will be very costly to attend the worldwide fashion show, but it is still manageable to attend the local fashion shows, as attending local fashion show does not require such a high budget. Nevertheless, SMEs failed to attend even the local fashion shows since they did not prepare the budget, especially the travelling and lodging budget. SMEs focus more on the daily expenses in the business.

Human Resource Barrier

Human resource barrier is related with the condition of the employee in adopting innovation in the company. Problem such as the ignorance to change in implementing innovation (Stendahl & Roos, 2008; Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010), low competency to implement the innovation (Stendahl & Roos, 2008; Sandberg & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2014), limited number of highly-skilled employees (Ren, 2009), lack of commitment from management to pursue innovation (Madrid-Guijarro, et al., 2009), and lack of skill to make innovation as the main priority in the company (Stendahl & Roos, 2008; Farida, 2016; Sutapa et al., 2017; Witiastuti et al., 2017) are the human-related problem that prevent the company to pursue innovative activities in the company.

HR barriers is associated with problem related with the employee of the company. Fashion industry employee need to master some fashion specific-skills such as pattern-making, sewing, bead sewing, cutting, and embroidery. Those skills are utterly important to transform an innovative new product design into a new apparel line. There was a frequent misunderstanding between the operational team who will make the apparel and the designer who create the innovative design. The misunderstanding occurred when the design team explained about the drawing that will be transformed into the new apparel.

The operational staff created a product line or prototype that was not the same with the original design of the apparel line. It frequently created arguments and problem between the production and design team in the SMEs. This

problem was also occurred when the production is outsourced to the contract tailors. They frequently failed to comply the original design of the new apparel. They failed to follow the design because they do not possess prior knowledge to incarnate the complicated design into a high quality and original product. This finding follows Stendahl and Roos (2008) who found that low competency created problem in making new innovative product for the organization.

A lot of respondents stated that fashion-related skills such as cutting, sewing, bead sewing, pattern-making, and embroidery are considered rare in the labor market. It is hard for the company to find highly-skilled tailors, even those with a certificate often could not follow the expected design of the apparel. This finding follows Ren (2009) who found that lack number of qualified staff prevents the organization implementing innovative activities. The lack number of skilled employees made most Moslem fashion SMEs do not have much choice to hire an under-qualified employee. There should be a matched skills and team work between the designer and the production team to create an innovative apparel lines.

The lack of skills in the SME organization body invented problems such as the increase number of low quality products, production delay, and complaint from retailer and customer. Production delay caused loss for the company. It happened since fashion is a fast-changing industry, failed in meeting the production deadline resulted in product late selling. Launching new fashion design needs a good timing since SME races tightly with its competitor. Customer will buy products from the SME that sell it on the first hand. The late sales of the new apparel design with similar features will make the SME suffered a loss of sales.

Operational Barrier

Operational-related barrier is associated with tools, raw materials, and R&D activities in the company. Most companies found that the tools used in pursuing innovation are not

enough to solve the risk and uncertainty derived in the cost of innovation (Ren, 2009). Moreover, the difficulty in getting raw materials in new product design innovation is also occasionally occurred within the company (Hadjimanolis, 1999). Lastly, the lack of R&D activities in the company also prevent the company to perform an innovation, especially in designing new product lines (Larsen & Lewis, 2007).

Laws such as labor and consumer protection policies and federal & local laws are legal factors that prevent innovation in the company (Hadjimanolis, 1999; Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010). In addition, economic factors such as purchasing power of consumers, exchange rate, and inflation rate also proved to hinder innovation in the company (Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010).

The respondents mostly mentioned about the difficulties in obtaining rare raw materials. SMEs tend to buy the raw materials from local factories or local suppliers. Local factories has a very limited new design in raw materials. Meanwhile local textile or accessories suppliers also needs time to have rare material stocks. It halted the transformation process of innovative product design into innovative fashion products. This limitation was affecting the number of new products offered to the customers. Limited stocks made Moslem fashion SMEs sell the product in limited numbers. Later when the product became a trend in the market, many competitors imitated the product that made SMEs could not obtain additional profit in that particular season. This finding follows Hadjimanolis (1999) who stated that difficulties in obtaining raw materials prevents the company to create an innovative product to gain competitive advantage.

Next, it is difficult for SMEs to look for a sufficient high-quality raw materials. Some suppliers need to import the product so that the materials will be available to the Moslem fashion SMEs. It created delay in producing and launching new product lines for the SME. This finding follows Hadjimanolis (1999) who find that raw material is an important barrier that

frequently occurred in the business that prevent the company to make an innovative product.

Competitor Barrier

The last barrier that commonly found that prevent company to make an innovative product is the threat from the competitor (Larsen & Lewis, 2007; Saatcioglu & Özmen, 2010). In order to create an innovative product, a company might invest an abundant source of money. The failure to protect the patent or copyright to produce the product will make it easier for the competitor to copy the innovation.

As for the competitor barrier, the problem in the fashion industry is that the fashion end product such as clothes and accessories cannot be patented. It will be easy for competitors to imitate the product design with some minor or major modification. Imitation by competitors may lower the employee's moral to keep thinking and creating a breakthrough fashion product. This finding follows Larsen and Lewis (2007) and Saatcioglu and Özmen (2010) who found that competitor obstruct company to make an innovation. SMEs need to keep creating innovative apparel and accessories in every seasons. Although competitors might imitate the product, an innovative SME will be the pioneer of the new apparel design, thus the SME will gain commercial advantage in selling the product.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Moslem fashion SMEs met several barriers in making an innovative product design for the customers. Those barriers are employee or HR barriers, financial barriers, raw material barrier or operational barrier, and competitor barrier. For the HR barrier, the low skill of the employees and the lack number of highly-skilled employees were the biggest obstacle for the SME to make an innovative fashion design, especially in turning the innovative design into a new product line. Related with the operational barrier, problem came related with raw materials to make the Moslem fashion product. The

problems are difficulty to look for the rare raw materials, especially the materials with a rare design, and difficulty to have a sufficient number of high-quality raw materials from the local factory or local supplier.

As for the finance-related problem, Moslem fashion SMEs mostly faced inadequate capital to funding the innovative action in design. In addition, they also failed to make innovation as their budget priority and they faced problems with managing the financial matters in the organization. Lastly, barrier from competitors who frequently imitate product design also made management to think more to create an innovative product design for the industry.

In details, in the HR barrier, lack of skills is caused by rarity of skilled workers on the job market, while in general barrier of SME, lack of skilled is usually caused by inability of SME to pay skilled workers, although they are available on the job market. As for the raw material barrier, if SME would like to find just raw materials, not the unique one, they are available on the market or in the textile factory in a huge sum. Nevertheless, in order to create an innovative fashion design, a unique raw material is needed so that it will create a distinct and unique fashion product. Lack of funds and inability to create a proper budget is common for SME. For the Moslem fashion industry players, they do not prepare the budget to attend local fashion shows.

The limitation of this study is on the number of samples taken for the research, while Indonesia has a lot of big cities, this study only took the samples from six cities that consist of 70 SMEs. For the next research, the quality of samples taken will be increased by adding more samples from various cities. Another quantitative research may also increase the understanding of barrier in design innovation, specifically for Moslem fashion SME or fashion industry in general.

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