

**Cross-Cultural Understanding**

# **FASHION AS AN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

**Chapter 14**

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# Learning Objectives

1. Explain the relationship between fashion, clothing, and culture?
2. Describe how fashion and clothing represent someone's culture?
3. Explain the relationship between fashion, clothing, and a person's social identity?

# 01

**Fashion as a tool  
of communication**



# Fashion as a tool of communication

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Thomas Carlyle (1987), as cited in Rachmawati (2018) mentioned that clothes become 'emblems of the soul'.

# Fashion as a tool of communication

- As Umberto Eco (1973), as cited in Rachmawati (2018), said 'I speak through my cloth'.
- All forms of fashion, clothing and make-up are seen as forms of artifactual communication. This means that artifactual communication is defined as communication that takes place through clothing and the arrangement of various artifacts such as make-up, accessories, clothing, jewelry, home furniture, home decorations, and so on.

(Rachmawati, 2018)



# Fashion as a tool of communication (Cont'd)

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The clothes we wear have several functions. They are:

1. To protect from various weathers
2. To protect when playing sports so that injuries do not occur
3. To hide certain parts of our bodies

(Rachmawati, 2018)



# Fashion as a tool of communication (Cont'd)

## Examples

The easiest example is the writings or pictures that are commonly written on T-shirts. It could be that when you choose a certain t-shirt with a certain text or image, you will definitely like the text or image or at least represent who you are. Someone who likes traveling will most likely be interested in choosing a t-shirt with images of world icons such as the Eiffel Tower or Borobudur Temple.

**(Rachmawati, 2018)**



Image by [habitz.store](https://www.habitz.store)

# Fashion as a tool of communication (Cont'd)

## Examples

Fans of a particular band or singer can usually be seen in their character and expressions on the t-shirts with the image of the idol stars they wear. Usually, you'll be able to see this sort of thing at a concert location, an album release location, the premiere of a certain film, and the launch of a new book by a famous author.

(Rachmawati, 2018)



Image by Amazon.id

# **Fashion as a tool of communication (Cont'd)**

A person can easily send a certain message about their character through fashion items including the clothes they wear. In accordance with the opinion of Malcolm Barnard that clothes are chosen based on or according to what will be done on that day, on what event they will attend, how someone's mood at that time, who they will meet, and so on. All of these choices further emphasize that fashion and clothing are used to send messages about one's self to others.

**(Rachmawati, 2018)**

# Fashion as a tool of communication (Cont'd)

Someone who likes the latest fashion trends will usually tend to choose clothing models such as skirts or jeans with the most stylish models but still match their character. So for example, she is a typical girl with a girly character, she will tend to choose a cute skirt or a pink top with a beautiful floral motif combined with high heels and so on.

**(Rachmawati, 2018)**



# Fashion as a tool of communication (Cont'd)

Malcolm Barnard (2009) states that people make inferences about who they are in part by what they wear. Other people's views at least represent your social class, your attitude (liberal or conservative), your seriousness or casualness, your political affiliation (the party you belong to), your glamour, your sense of style, and maybe even your creativity in the way you dress.

**(Malcom Barnard, 2009, as cited in Rachmawati, 2018)**



# Fashion as a tool of communication (Cont'd)

- When you wear a Rolex watch, people may acknowledge you as a rich person with a sense of elegance.
- When you feel proud when you wear an alma mater jacket that expresses your character as part of a particular college.
- An engagement ring or wedding ring is an example of jewelry that communicates a person's identity.
- Someone who wears tattoos or piercings on the lips or ears communicates that she/he is part of a certain group or is conveying a message about his/her identity and character.

People make inferences about who they are in part by what they wear

**(Malcolm Barnard, 2009, as cited in Rachmawati, 2018)**



Image by [fashionablymale.net](https://fashionablymale.net)

# Fashion as a tool of communication (Cont'd)

Basically, fashion style is a clear status indicator. In the Muslim world, clothing and fashion can reflect the identity and religiosity of the wearer. Malcolm Barnard also said that Muslim clothing can have certain meanings, for example as symbols of ethnic and political content. In Malaysia, Muslim clothing is used to differentiate between Malays and Malaysians of Indian descent or Malaysians of Chinese descent.

**(Malcolm Barnard, 2009, as cited in Rachmawati, 2018)**



# Fashion as a tool of communication (Cont'd)

Muslim clothing can also be displayed as a symbol of resistance to certain regimes as happened in France and several countries on the European continent where Muslim clothing is prohibited from being used in public places, including all forms of symbols that symbolize certain religions such as rosary necklaces and so on. In this case, the meaning of Muslim clothing always depends on the context.

**(Rachmawati, 2018)**



# Fashion as a tool of communication (Cont'd)

Hobbies are one of the ways people communicate themselves to others. For example, someone who has a hobby of collecting various fashion items from bags, shoes, sandals, jewelry (necklaces, bracelets, rings, anklets, earrings), watches, hats, belts, and various other accessories to support appearance; then it can be said that he/she is a type of person who is very attentive and cares about his/her appearance.

**(Rachmawati, 2018)**



# Fashion as a tool of communication (Cont'd)

The theme and color of the make-up worn by a person can also reflect his personality. Someone who doesn't really like to dress up and only uses light powder and lipstick wherever she goes is usually a natural and hassle-free person. The most important thing for her is comfort. A typical person like celebrity Paris Hilton, for example, can already be determined that she tries to imitate herself like a princess by wearing all kinds of beautiful, glamorous, luxurious, and expensive fashion accessories. With the fashion style she wears, she seems to want to 'talk' to the world that her taste is upper-class taste and the character she displays is a luxurious character.

**(Rachmawati, 2018)**





# 02

## Fashion as Culture

# Fashion as Culture

Apart from being a medium of communication, fashion can also be categorized as part of the culture. Malcolm Barnard stated that fashion and clothing as a cultural phenomenon thus argued that clothing made a statement. This section looks at different cultural concepts so that it can be stated the types of cultural phenomena of fashion and clothing.

**(Malcolm Barnard, 2009, as cited in Rachmawati, 2018)**

# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

In his book *Keywords*, Raymond Williams (1983), as cited in Irawanto, B (2008) states that culture is one of the two or three very complicated words in the English language. He then distinguished the meaning of these three words.

1

Cultured people

Refers to people with developed minds. In other words, people who have an open mindset and are willing to accept change are people who are considered cultured.

**(Raymond Williams, 1983, Rachmawati, 2018)**

# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

2

Culture

'Culture' has the meaning of cultural activities or interests; which means that everything that is the result of human creation can be called culture.

**(Raymond Williams, 1983, Rachmawati, 2018)**

# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

3

Art and intellectual works

Refers to the means of processes which in this context means art and intellectual works. Humans make a work of art and intellectual works of course have a specific purpose for the common good.

**(Raymond Williams, 1983, Rachmawati, 2018)**

# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

In the context of fashion as a culture, fashion is defined as something that is experienced, explored, communicated, and reproduced by social order. Furthermore, Desmond Morris in *Man watching: A Field Guide to Human Behaviour*, clothing plays a role as a cultural display because it communicates our cultural affiliation.

(Desmond Morris, 1977 Rachmawati, 2018)



# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

An easy example is that you will not find it difficult to identify a person's country or region based on the clothes they wear. If you see a man wearing a black red checkered skirt and long socks, then you will recognize that the man is wearing Scottish clothing. Or for example, during the independence ceremony on August 17, there were several people wearing traditional clothes from their respective regions of origin: Papua, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Bali, Central Java, and so on.

**(Rachmawati, 2018)**



Image by kaskus.co.id

# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

All typical clothes or traditional clothes have their own characteristics and are considered to represent the character of the people of a particular country or region. In addition, Indonesia has a variety of traditional wedding dresses where the models, patterns, materials, and accessories vary from one region to another. On the island of Java, there are various kinds of traditional wedding dresses ranging from West Java, East Java, Central Java, and DIY Yogyakarta brides.

(Rachmawati, 2018)

Image by rimbakita.com



# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

Indonesia also has a distinctive clothing identity in the form of batik. The variety of batik patterns and motifs is also very diverse depending on the area where the batik comes from. There are various types of Pekalongan batik, Madura batik, Solo batik, Papuan batik, Magetan batik, kawung batik, and so on. Each region has its own style and motif that is adapted to what is typical and unique in the area.

**(Rachmawati, 2018)**



# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

(Batik Examples)

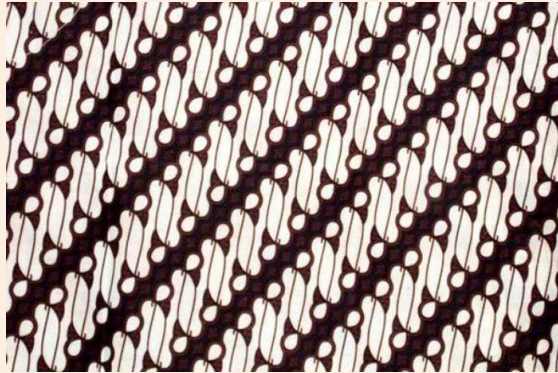


Image by grid.id

For example, the typical Solo batik, which has round or floral patterns, and the motifs tend to be diagonal and stripes, because the background of the Solo community is thick with the tradition of the palace.

(Rachmawati, 2018)

# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

(Batik Examples)

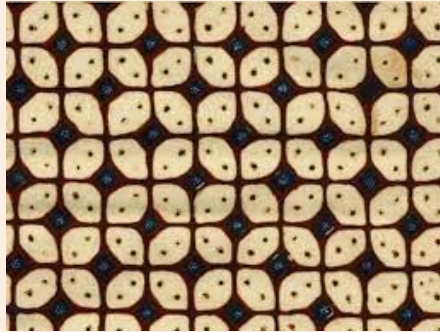


Image by haloedukasi.com

The oldest type of batik in the world is batik kawung which the motif is an illustration of the kawung fruit or palm fruit. This type of kawung batik has a lot of enthusiasts ranging from the young to the old, so even now there are still quite a lot of devotees even though there are many other types of batik that keep popping up.

(Rachmawati, 2018)

# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

(Batik Examples)



Image by kuka.co.id

Another type of batik that is also quite distinctive and popular is the type of Madura batik which is dominated by colors that tend to be striking such as red, orange, green, or bright blue. This is adapted to the character of the Madura themselves who like bright colors.

(Rachmawati, 2018)

# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

(Batik Examples)



Image by bagaskara.co.id

Sidomukti Magetan batik which has a calm pattern with the basic motif of an image of a bamboo tree because the main commodity of this area is bamboo. So by highlighting the characteristics of the area, it is hoped that certain types of batik patterns and motifs can be easily distinguished from other types of batik patterns and motifs.

(Rachmawati, 2018)

# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

With such a variety of patterns and motifs of batik from various regions in Indonesia, it is not surprising that later batik was designated by UNESCO as one of the world's cultural heritage fabrics. Now batik with many colors, patterns, and motifs has been known not only in Indonesia but to all corners of the world.

# Fashion as Culture (Cont'd)

Now batik is one of the pride for Indonesia because it has become a national cloth icon that has been recognized for its beauty and originality by the international community. If batik has been recognized as a national cloth and part of Indonesia's national identity, then there are also dozens of other types of traditional fabrics that are widespread in various regions in Indonesia. One of them is ulos and woven fabrics whose beautiful patterns and motifs cannot be doubted.



Fashion is part of a culture where fashion can also be considered as a medium of communication, in this case, it is included in the category of non-verbal communication. Fashion and clothing can be used to convey non-verbal communication messages because they do not use spoken words or words.



Fashion conveys an indirect message about who one is, what one's character is, and consciously or unconsciously; A person's fashion choices are much influenced by how he/she dresses and wears certain items in his/her daily life.

## Project

Please go somewhere, for example, to a shopping center, to a tourist spot, to a campus, to a school, to a course, to a concert venue, to a bookstore, to the cinema, to the office, to an educational exhibition or cultural exhibition or an automotive exhibition, and to various other bustling centers. What you need to do next is sit down and observe how the fashion choices of some of the people there are. Of course the fashion choices between people going to the shopping center and people going to college or going to work or those going to a concert will be very different. Those who want to go to work of course choose the type of fashion that is formal or semi-formal, while those who aim to watch a concert or go shopping usually tend to dress much more casually, informally, and tend to their liking. Please you make a short essay that tells about the results of your observations. (Free-themed essays in free-form depending on what you see and observe). Link it with the theory and explanation that has been explained above

**THANKS!**



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