

Gender And Body: Youth Discussion About Self-Identity Construction on Interpersonal Communication

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ABSTRACT

Youths are facing unprecedented change and uncertainty, such as gender equality, mental health, industry, and the corporation of the adult world. The rise of the issue of gender equality in Indonesia is accompanied by changes in construction society in the depiction of gender. This research is using multi-method qualitative approach, focus on exploring the narratives of youths as they fixed their self-identity with in-depth interview. The theory that is using in this study is Anthony Giddens' theory: modernity, and self-identity. It portrays the condition of young people who are attached to society's constructs about interpreting gender. Gender and body are not only talk about men or women but show in performance and controlled by society. This research found that showing the masculine and feminine side did not change the self-identity of the subjects.

Keyword : *construction; gender; gender identity; self-identity; youth*

INTRODUCTION

The rise of the issue of gender equality in Indonesia is accompanied by changes in construction society in the depiction of gender. Where gender equality comes as a result of social inequality that occurs in society regarding the rights and obligations of each gender. Gender equality is not always seen as a right and an obligation without any consideration of the social system in society. Where are some societies define gender equality with all men and all women have the same rights and obligations in society. On August 19, 2022,

Indonesia's netizen is viral by a video about University of Hasanudin freshmen whose got expelled, because of claiming as non-binary (Bhayangkara, 2022). A video spread of the expulsion of a new student at the new student admissions event. The students stated that he was a non-binary, that is, between two genders, male and female (Detik.Com, 2022). This event caused uproar, furthermore from spreading on social media. It is not the actual situation of the meaning of gender equality in Indonesia. Like them consider everything, be it rights or obligations,

absolutely the same as men and women woman.

Society has provided a dividing line between women and men. Society forms categorizations and boundaries on the roles of men and women. Limits that are considered normal and carried out continuously so that they are considered as something that is right by the community. This is called social construction, where something is considered as a true reality because it is carried out continuously and guaranteed together by a group somewhere. Men and women will always be a differentiating entity with conditions such as sex and gender. All of that is seen in the biology and the roles played by these two humans. both have always been interpreted by the same thing between men and women. The community believes that 'almost without thinking, what gestures, styles of dress and grooming, and ways of walking and talking are considered "normal" for men and women. If a male act "masculine," if his posture, talk, friends, dating, and job conform to masculine norms, his gender identity as a man will be taken for granted. If a male act "feminine," he may not be considered a "normal" man' (Seidman, Nancy, and Meeks, 2006), that is, all normal body language is when men have masculine characteristics and women have feminine characteristics. This categorization forms gender identity.

In the book *The Social Construction of Reality*, it is explained that humans cannot capture and see the reality of this world perfectly. This means that humans cannot see the

actual reality, but humans can only create something called "perceived reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Perceived reality is a reality that has been perceived from a social construction that is built through someone's point of view. The theory that will be used in this study is Anthony Giddens' theory, namely modernity, and self-identity. This theory explains how self-identity is an explanation of one's life. A person's actions and influences are formed from their environment so that they can explain and describe how that person's "identity". On the other hand, Giddens also explains that the social structure is formed through a series of repeated actions of individuals, which then become a system.

In structuration theory, Giddens emphasizes "social structures are formed through a series of repeated individual actions, which then become a system". Social structure, according to Giddens, is not impossible to change. Changes in the social structure can occur if there are individuals who start leaving the existing system, replacing it, or making updates within the system. However, further according to Giddens, being an agent of change is not easy.

Society will try to reject you if you don't want to fit in the general rules that apply and are believed by many people. The same thing was studied by a sociologist, Harold Garfinkel in 1960. His research showed that when there are people who act out of habit, there will be other people in the environment who will react negatively (anger) to defend the collective

understanding of what was agreed upon as normal behavior.

As Giddens said, everyday actions are then strengthened, made into habits, and repeated to become an expectation, and a set of expectations about how one should behave is what makes social forces and social structures. Society has a form or structure, which can affect every member who is incorporated into it. According to him, today is a period of late modernity, because according to Giddens, postmodernists recognize that identity is something that is 'fragmented', this does not represent the current condition of society. According to Giddens, individuals may think that their identity is something complex and multi-faceted. However, they also realize that their identity is a group that becomes one, not separated at all.

The characteristics of late modernity, as Giddens said, include the following 1.) The self is not something that is already there when we are born, the "self" is something dynamic; 2.) The self is the mind that is constructed by the individual; 3.) We all determine our own 'lifestyle'; 4.) Relationships are said to be true relationships if they are 'equal' in nature, where everything must go through the negotiation stage. In this case, democracy in an intimate relationship is highly recommended; 5.) We accept that 'knowledge' is certain, and may be proven wrong in the future; 6.) We must believe in our daily life and the relationships we are having with other people, otherwise, we will always think about unpleasant

things. Trust becomes a necessity when we no longer have complete information about social phenomena as a result of increasing estrangement both in terms of time and space. Trust is defined as stability in a person or system, related to existing results or events, and this stability manifests as belief in sincerity or love of neighbor, or in the truth of abstract principles; 7.) We can accept risks, and choose future actions to anticipate things that will happen later. The media reminds us of the risks that might occur (Ritze, 2005).

According to Samovar (2007), gender identity is a person's meaning and interpretation of 'male' and 'female'. So that gender is always associated with sex. In fact, according to Lips (1988), gender is not a product of sex which is anatomical, gender indicates male and female; while gender is socially, culturally, and psychologically constructed to be masculine and feminine. Gender is a condition in which individuals are born biologically as male and female, then acquire social categorization as male and female through the attributes of masculinity and femininity which are often supported by the values or symbol system of the society concerned (Branston & Stafford, 2010). According to Campbell and Storo (1994), gender stereotypes are how a man and a woman should behave, in which stereotypes arise from the cultural background of a place and develop in the process of interaction which demands differences in behavior in the personal and private spheres.

Self-concept are all the ideas, thoughts, beliefs and beliefs that individuals know about themselves and influence individuals in dealing with other people (Stuart & Sundeen, 1998). Meanwhile, according to another understanding, self-concept is the way an individual sees himself as a whole, both physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually (Beck, Williams, & Rawlins, 1986). According to William D. Brooks (1976), self-concept is "those physical, social, and psychological perceptions of ourselves that we have derived from our experiences and interactions with others" (Brooks & Emmert, 1976).

According to DeVito in 2008 argued that "a self-concept is your image of who you are; your subjective description of who you think you are" (DeVito, 2008). This means that self-concept is how we describe ourselves to ourselves. The ability to express how we understand ourselves in detail. Self-concept is formed due to interactions carried out with other people.

The following are expectations of competence by gender:

Tabel 1

Masculin	Neutral	Feminin
Instrumental behavior	Action on fact	Expressive behavior
Direct achievement	Balance study	Unique achievement
Skilled on forming obedience	Sensitive tu current issues	Good at alliance
Negotiation/ competition	Think fast	Assistan/ mediation
Proactive	Creative	Reactive
Analitical/able to solve and make decision	Social skill	Knowledge for self
Impactful		Nonverbal sensitivity

Source: Sargent (1981)

The younger generation grows and develops through many opportunities with various perspectives and priorities. Discussing about the younger generation or 'youth' means trying to understand them as a group who grew up together

negotiating for their future in the national and cultural context in which they live (Wyn & White, 2017). Youth as an age category starts from the age of 13 to the age of 25. In many countries, the experience and meaning of youth itself changes actively following the construction that is built from the group identity they have. Today's young generation lives in a place where local and national identities are affirmed and shaped and strictly guarded.

Youth are facing changes and uncertainty, such as gender equality, mental health, industry and career, and the corporation of the adult world. Kondakciu, et all (2022) said, that millennials were pervading discourse of authenticity or desire for social media to craft and perform a perceived "authentic self" online. It shows both genders fluidly and genders policing. Further, it reveals how individuals negotiate and navigate their gender self-presentation online, in an agentic manner or protective measure. Fugulini, et all (2022), youth experience marginalization during the transition into adulthood, with their ideas, opinions, and contributions being unwelcomed due to their ethnicity and gender. The current youth situation is characterized by dissolution family; increased child abuse and domestic conflict; drug and alcohol abuse; sexually transmitted disease; bad education and schools; and increased criminalization, imprisonment, even dealing with media, specifically on social media. According to the dominant discourses in media, politics, and academic research, the daily life of the growing youth segment is increasingly unstable, cruel, and dangerous. This research begin with statements about

how young people's attention to gender issues generally begins about gender issues information and education that spread widely on social media. Youth are interested in adopting the values of gender equality. Furthermore, young people need to get an appropriate understanding of gender to treat people humanely.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is using multi-method qualitative approach, focus on exploring the narratives of youths as they fixed their self-identity with in-depth interview. In this research, the type of research used is descriptive qualitative method, so that researchers can explain the data that has been found. The primary data in this study were interviews with two males and two females students around 18-23 years old. The secondary data used in this research comes from relevant books or journals as a complement in explaining the research in depth.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Meaning Making about Gender and Body Constructions

Family is the smallest institution of society and is the first place to teach various things to a child. Parenting and education given by parents shape the mindset and behavior of a person in interacting in society. According to Marcia (1993), family background, significant others, expectations from the social environment (including extended family, school, and peer groups), exposure to variations of identity, and also how adult figures provide a solid foundation of identity. Parents are a source of inspiration and information, identification figures for children, so parents' attitudes and behavior will influence the formation of children's attitudes and behavior (Marcia, 1993). Parents, extended family, and social environment will also contribute to one's expectations.

This research found the data from four university students with different backgrounds. It shows by giving the names by codes above the table below. Here is the basic information about their meaning-making about gender and body constructions.

Table 2. Table 2. Information A,F,I,R

Informants A, F, I, R		
Masculin	Neutral	Feminin
Instrumental behavior	Action on fact (F, I)	Expressive behavior (A, R)
Direct achievement (A, R)	Balance study (A, F, I, R)	Unique achievement (I)
Skilled on forming obedience (R)	Sensitive tu current issues (A, F, I, R)	Good at alliance (A, F, I, R)
Negotiation/ competition (A, F, I, R)	Think fast (A, F, I, R)	Assistan/ mediation (F, I, R)
Proactive (A, F, I, R)	Creative (A, F, I, R)	Reactive (A, F, I, R)
Analitical/able to solve and make decision (A, F, I, R)	Social skill, all skill, depend on the context (A, F, I, R)	Knowledge for self (A, F, I, R)
Impactful (A)	Combining, it needed more for current condition (A, F, I, R)	Nonverbal sensitivity (F, I)

Public (A, F, I, R)	Both (A, F, I, R)	Domestic (A, F, I, R)
Darker fashion style (A, I)	Both, depend on the occasion (A, F, I, R)	Warm and colorful fashion style (F, R)

Cultural construction has an important role in giving an understanding of gender and giving positioning of feminine or masculine characteristics. Gender is a difference between sex, women, and men whose nature from the beginning has had its respective roles following what is constructed by the local culture to the role, nature, position, and position in the community (Hamid, 2003). In general, gender is described as feminine and masculine (Mosse, 1996). Gender is only a difference in function and role in social relations between women and men formed from society, created from social processes long culture so that it can differ from one place to another (Hereyah, 2012).

Men and women are faced with certain categorizations which are the result of gender stereotypes. Men are perceived as masculine and women are perceived as feminine. Whereas basically, the masculine and feminine sides exist in every human being, both men and women. Which side to develop later will depend on cultural changes. This is reinforced by the opinion of Margaret Mead who explained that the masculine and feminine sides that stand out in a person are a form of cultural product. According to Simone de Behavior, a person is not born male or female but is made by culture to be male or female (Mitchell, 1974).

Nowadays, the culture regarding the distribution of bias in gender is determined by the local community such as men who become dominant in the

household or outside the home and women who are at home to take care of various household needs ladder. The dominance of men is seen in a patriarchal culture so it occurs in social construction which states that women are weak and cannot be hurt, both mentally and physically (Sakina and Siti, 2017) even though they are women or men can have an equal position.

The understanding of masculine men from an early age was instilled by their parents, either directly or indirectly. Because from the beginning society has divided gender into masculine and feminine, irregularities arise when the gender identified takes action outside of these characteristics. For example, hanging out with more girlfriends than boyfriends; doing indoor activities more often than outdoor activities, wearing a certain type of fashion or clothing that is not intended for gender categories such as wearing certain colors; do not buy any kind of not matching gender accessories such as using umbrella and paint nails for boys or smoking cigarette for girls. The society around the man assumes that he is not manly just because he uses things that are considered certain items that can only be used by women and are interpreted to indicate things related to the feminine side, or vice versa.

One of the main reasons is that there are things that show indications of patriarchal values in them that will be more commonplace and easily accepted in society. Men are often given gender stereotypes and must have an identity that shows that they are strong, brave,

dominant, and other things that highlight the masculine side. Showing the opposite side would be scorn in society. Men under certain conditions are forced not to have a feminine side at all. Even though having a feminine side is not something that is wrong with being possessed by men. So that informants feel they have to portray themselves with only one gender identity, namely feminine or masculine.

Because gender is constructed, it is not fixed. But it often missed-leading to sexuality. This will be different when women show a masculine side. Even though it will still be something different from what society generally believes, the rejection of this seems not as significant when men show their feminine side. Showing the feminine side by men tends to raise questions regarding their sexual orientation. Even though showing the feminine side doesn't always have to make the man change his sexual orientation. Liking things that are perceived as something feminine can also be included as a form of self-expression.

The rejection of the feminine side of men is one of the results of social construction in a social structure. Agreements are not written but have clear social sanctions when they are not carried out. This makes some men feel burdened and have difficulty expressing themselves. Male self-identity seems to be something that must be dominant and absolute. Not infrequently this makes it difficult for men to blend into the social life they have. Although not always disturbing, the compulsion to cover or hide the feminine side is a form of lack of freedom in expressing oneself.

Having a feminine side as part of a man's self-identity doesn't always mean

he doesn't have a masculine side at all. Both men and women can have a feminine side and a masculine side with a dominant or high level. Block suggests that an individual can have an equally high score on two characteristics (i.e. masculine and feminine), individuals who experience this are called androgynous (Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993).

Further explanation, family upholds the notion that men must be masculine. Their family environment grew up teaching him that men should not show a weak side. So, if you show a preference for things that are stereotyped as feminine, that's considered weak. According to his experience, the "weak" side can only be owned by women. Women must be hanging out with more girlfriends than boyfriends and doing indoor activities more often than outdoor activities. Men must be doing outdoor activities for playing football rather than staying indoors reading books. Men must wear a certain type of fashion or clothing that is dark and fit in, do not use something colorful and loose. And men may not be using an umbrella for rain, just buy jackets and coats, and may not paint their nails. Most importantly, women may not smoke a cigarette.

According to Anindya (2018), gender stereotypes influence how men and women behave and how well they perform in certain activities. Individuals face stereotype threat when they realize that they are subjected to gender-based judgements by society.

However, the biggest challenge lies in the blurring or unification of one identity with another, such as gender into sexuality (Davis, 1992). Stereotypes

about gender are inevitably associated with being heterosexual. Gender is something that is closely related to sexuality. A man must be like a man, which cannot be separated from masculine traits, and so do women. The differences, no matter how small, will be a problem, especially if the environment in which a person lives and lives is in an environment that adheres to the values of a religion or culture (Butler, 1990).

Self-identity is not a set of characteristics, but a set of reflexive notions about one's biography. Self-identity is an explanation of one's life, actions, and influences that are formed from the environment that can explain a person. Others can explain their identity without difficulty. Identity "explains" a person's past and also through identity, we can anticipate a person's future actions.

The Self and Gender Identity

Over time, the informants realized that the thoughts of parents and peer groups at that time arose because they were formed by being exposed to various ideologies of gender categorization in order to be accepted in the social system. Differences are considered as a deviation. Informants continue to develop characters that are considered to be able to make them survive in this social interaction. In social interaction, informants generally have good relations with the surrounding environment and in managing emotions. The more interactions the informants had, it showed that there were more and more people outside of where they lived who had various identities, and what he finally had until now was that it was not wrong to be a gentler and more charming man.

The informant shows an understanding that they were indeed different from society in general, and did not make that a disadvantage but an advantage. And that difference begins to be accepted starting from parents and people in the surrounding environment.

Furthermore, when a man who is crossed the character, such as a man who is feminine, the assumption that the man is gay finally appears. Gender, cannot be separated from the stereotype of sexual orientation. Identity will be seen when someone interacts in society. Based on the interview from the subject, the men described themselves as ordinary male whose just like everybody else. Them, doing feminine things or having feminine sides does not change how they describes themselves as male. This means that nothing significant has changed and made his self-concept change.

Cultural demands and stigma from the surrounding environment to have a significant impact on the behavior of young people presents themselves. Standards established by society cause disparities, so it is not uncommon to grow feelings of discomfort towards the body and self-identity for those who cannot meet these standards. Understanding of gender often differentiates the placement of female and male characters. Women are considered feminine and men are considered masculine which is manifested in psychological characteristics, such as the assumption that men must be strong, assertive, brave, and so on. Meanwhile, women are considered compassionate, gentle, obedient and others. Apart from these psychological characteristics, it is also identified through appearance or way of

dressings, between men and women the difference in the type of clothing looks significant.

Basically, individuals have the freedom to decide which gender identity they want to display. However, in reality the gender identity to be displayed is still limited by the construction of society. This research found two patterns of gender identity displayed by young people, including: 1.) Young people who represent gender are closely related to the construction of society. Basically, this pattern is formed from the results of the construction itself. The situation is that young people are brought up and educated with the wrong construction of gender understanding; 2.) Young people who represent gender are separated from the constructions of general society. This pattern occurs because the knowledge and understanding of gender is much better. Facts on the ground show that this pattern occurs because of information and understanding of gender that has been obtained early on.

Community standards that are influenced by local culture have the opportunity to experience a shift for certain groups that are exposed to information. Today, society is living in an era of an information onslaught, and the convenience of technology provides various options for people to access it, especially for young people.

According to Devito (2008), 'your self-concept is your image of who you are'. This self-concept reveals how we understand ourselves the way we feel, as well as our strengths and weaknesses, along with the abilities and limitations that only we ourselves know. Epstein (1973) states that the self-concept

describes everything about "the good me" and "the bad me" to find out more about who we are. Mead (in Griffin, 2012) claims that self-concept is formed due to interactions with other people. Perceptions of self can be changed and shaped because self-concepts are believed to continue to develop. So, identity is also obtained through interaction. This dynamic self-concept can move according to existing situations and changes.

Each informant is believed to have his own knowledge and understanding of gender identity. This identity can change at any time and in any environment. This is in accordance with what Giddens stated in identity theory. Two informants who are in the second pattern make adjustments to the new environment. These two people came from outside the area where they lived when this research was carried out, where according to them the majority of the people there were still unfamiliar with gender equality. So that their existence is a concern for the surrounding community. Both of them felt a shift in presenting their gender identity and adjusting to the new environment. However, both of them still try to display their gender expression in certain ways, for example when they interact with their closest circle of friends. In fact, social media is considered not enough to help them express their gender. It is not uncommon for them to be criticized when displaying this on social media, for example when displaying a photo showing a style of dress that is not the same as the majority of the local community. The closest circle of friends can strengthen their gender identity, this circle usually has the same

gender expression as them. While outside the circle, they are still trying to get recognition from the majority. As stated by Giddens that individuals will eventually seek solutions to identity problems, one of which is found in their position in the group or circle that recognizes them. But when they are outside the circle, their identity weakens again.

Anindya (2021) found that some youths have a very important role to play in using social media to raise awareness of gender understanding among their peers rather than targeting other audiences for this purpose.

Other informants are in the first pattern. These two informants felt that they accepted the general standard of society regarding the meaning of gender which was marked by the differences in male and female characters. They feel there is no problem with this and also try to be able to accept other young people who have different gender expressions.

The informants in this study consisted of four people or two pairs. One pair of identified informants is in the first pattern, two other people are in the second pattern. Both of these patterns have implications for the way they present their identity in society. The first pattern shows the tendency of young people to present themselves according to the construction of that society. Furthermore, the second pattern shows a tendency to show oneself that is not the same as the construction of society. Thus, they often look different from the majority of young people who are formed by the construction of society.

Giddens mentions reflexivity as one of the characteristics of modernity.

Where reflexivity is a fundamental feature of Giddens' structuration theory, it also takes on a special meaning in modernity when "social practices are consistently scrutinized and corrected in the light of incoming information about these practices, so as to constitutively shape their character. Everything is open to reflection in the modern world, and includes the process of reflection itself.

If the self is something that is not inherited but created, then what exactly is a self? Giddens said that in post-traditional rules, self-identity becomes a reflexive project, an endeavor that we work on continuously and then reflect on. We create, maintain, and refine our biographical descriptions (stories of who we are, and how we came to be where we are). Narratives about a person's identity may continue to undergo revision. If someone often tells different biographical narratives then he will be hated or rejected by those around him.

Rules in society, according to Giddens, may only exist in our minds, there are no written rules, and often there are no formal sanctions that cover them. For example, in terms of gender issues in society, a man who uses eyeliner and applies lipstick to his lips while walking in a shopping center is not charged by law, but he will receive other, stronger sanctions, namely being ridiculed and humiliated by the environment. It is different for women, women tend to settle with conditions, other than men who face harsh treatment from society.

The question is why should we obey or care about the prevailing structure? Giddens's argument, among others, is that humans have a 'faith' (faith) that they adhere to in everyday life. It is because of

this belief that some people are surprised when others do not act as is generally the case. When associated with self-concept, self-concept is all the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and beliefs that individuals know about themselves and influence individuals in dealing with other people (Stuart & Sundeen, 1998). According to DeVito (2008), "a self-concept is your image of who you are; your subjective description of whom you think you are" (DeVito, 2008). Self-concept is how we describe ourselves to ourselves. Giddens says that in traditional post-regulation, self-identity becomes a reflexive project - an endeavor that we work on over and over again and then reflect on. We create, maintain, and refine our biographical descriptions (stories of who we are, and how we came to be where we are).

According to Giddens himself, he explained that self-identity is not a set of characteristics, but a set of reflexive notions about one's biography. Self-identity is an explanation of one's life, actions, and influences that are formed from the environment that can explain a person. Others can explain their identity without difficulty. Identity "explains" a person's past and also through identity, we can anticipate a person's future actions.

CONCLUSION

This research seeks to portray the condition of young people who are attached to society's constructs about interpreting gender. It shows through the way young people present themselves in everyday life. Gender and body are not only talk about men or women but show in performance and controlled by society,

exclusion for other kind of tittle. Narratives about a person's identity may continue to undergo revision. It's just that if someone often tells different biographical narratives then he will be hated or rejected by those around him. Most importantly, an acute feeling of shame about his past is often associated with this phenomenon. Through this research it was found that showing the masculine and feminine side did not change the self-identity of the subjects. As Giddens' statement that self-identity is not a set of characteristics, but a set of reflexive notions about one's biography.

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