Visual effects of the first ladies’ Kebaya clothing on the image of Indonesian women's appearances

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Abstract. The image of Indonesian women on international level is partly influenced by the appearance of the First Lady. The role and position of the First Lady is the representation of Indonesian women, because basically the First Lady, as the wife who accompanies the President (head of state), has a strong background of cultural grip, high intellectuality and good personality in her daily lifestyle, including in wearing clothes, and as an ambassador of culture and design. Fashion style of the First Lady always draws praise and criticism from the public. The purpose of this study is to reveal the visualization effects of Indonesian First Ladies’ kebaya clothing style in various state occasions on the image of Indonesian women’s appearances. This study is a qualitative research of visual data that emphasizes the discussion of Kebaya Clothing using semiological study (connotation and denotation meaning) that bring out self-image. The results showed that the style the First Ladies’ Kebaya clothing in every presidency period of their husbands had characteristics both in the style of clothing or hairstyle, indicating self-image. The conclusion of this study reveals that the First Ladies’ Kebaya Clothing (National Clothing) is interpreted as having implied messages because clothing can be observed visually. Implication was done on the construction of learning patterns of clothing, national fashion design and Nusantara ethnic clothing design.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country that has many cultural artifacts, which visually become national identity. Identity of a nation is an important power that supports the establishment of national characteristics because, in addition to strengthening the existence, it will also provide lifting power or building power for the enforcement of security and the increase of prosperity. Characteristics are the identity that determines national direction. A nation will have an acclaimed civilization only if it can produce system of values, code of conduct and practices that are superior and are based on cultural values embraced by its people. National identity and characteristics can only be fostered through the education of good examples. The emergence of an identity crisis influenced by the progress of technology and information has been eroding local cultures, for example the declining taste of use of Kebaya clothing as National Dress.

An important role that greatly affects the dynamics of the use of National Clothing is the role of the First Lady as a figure that has great care in cultural values and national identity, and who can be made an inspiration for Indonesian women to increase their pride in Kebaya as National Clothing. The First Lady can also become a figure who is an example in wearing clothes and has high prestige and dignity. In the First Lady, there is an idealized image of Indonesian women since the presence of the
First Lady is like a mother for the country. However the multicultural culture in Kebaya Clothing (as a result of various cultural background of Indonesian First Ladies) created various designs in Kebaya clothing worn by the First Ladies. The structure of kebaya clothing of the Frist Ladies always experienced changes in their various design elements [1]. These changes gradually blur the clarity and certainty regarding visual identity of National Clothing of Indonesian Women.

2. Research Method

The diversity in public lives is highly associated with signs and marking in many things [2]. The way these signs provide information is used to provide identity guidance. One of these main identities is national identity, in this case, it is the First Ladies’ Kebaya clothing as national cultural identity of Indonesian women. This method revealed that the relationship between the clothing type worn and the resulting meaning can be described by the following formula:

| Sr (signifier) | Sd (signified) |
|----------------|----------------|
| Marker         | Marked Meaning |
| Physical Form  |                |
| Garment        |                |

3. Discussion

The design of national clothing of Indonesian women should apply the diversity of Indonesia [3], which has numerous varieties in the forms of fashion artifacts [4]. The application of Indonesian cultural diversity on National clothing reflects the wisdom and respect for the diversity of Indonesian culture and its position as the clothing that reflects the personality of Indonesian women.

These conditions are summarized in the regulation of Kepres RI (Decree of the President of the Republic of Indonesia) No. 18 of 1972 dated March 7, 1972 on the National Clothing and UU (legislation) No.9 of 2010 about protocols. Kebaya clothing is a type of civilian clothing, whose position accompanies the appearance of the President as her husband on state occasions and official events. The existence of National (Indonesian) clothing originated from a workshop in 1978 in Jakarta, involving 28 (twenty eight) provinces in the country (all the provinces at that time), and the result is that long Kebaya clothing was established as consisting of a dress covering upper body and a pleated (wiru) long cloth covering the lower body. National (Indonesian) clothing model is kebaya clothing model worn by the First Lady of the Republic of Indonesia, Raden Ayu Siti Hartinah (Mrs. Tien Soeharto) in each official event both national and international.
4. Conclusions
Kebaya clothing of the First Ladies is a sign of national identity that can be observed based on: First, Image clothing, which is two-dimensional, is the image of garment structure comprising: (a) kebaya model blouse, (b) Indonesian traditional fabric in the form of long cloth or sarong [5]. The materials of these two parts can have the basic material of either modern fabric or Indonesian traditional fabric [6][7]. (c) sewing technique that becomes the characteristic in both kebaya and sarong cloth is a traditional sewing technique, but in its development now, especially in kebaya, stitching sewing technique is generally used, (d) fashion complements in the form of selendang, slippers, handbag and fan, in addition to the bun-shaped hairstyle [8]. Then, Written clothing, which is verbal, is kebaya clothing which can give the impression of being verbally beautiful, worthy, elegant, lovely, graceful, gentle, motherly, polite, neat, clean and pretty. And Real clothing, which is 3-dimensional, is the real form of kebaya clothing.

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