

**HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND GENDER PERFORMATIVITY OF AN
ANDROGYNOUS MALE MODEL IN SURABAYA**

**Ephrilia Noor Fitriana^{1*}, Dwi N. C. Sri Kusumaningtyas²,
Silvy Chintia Adelia³**

^{1'2'3} Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: ephriliafitriana@unesa.ac.id

Abstract

This article aims to analyze the emergence of hegemonic masculinity shown by the androgynous model in Surabaya. This study applies gender performativity by Judith Butler to elaborate on how hegemonic masculinity is manifested. The result of this study reveals that the emergence of hegemonic masculinity is negotiated. Since the idea of androgyny is stigmatized and marginalized, the embodiment of the male androgynous model carries a new standard of masculinity and holds legitimation in society. Nevertheless, He still needed to perform the idea of heteronormativity, for example throughout his sexual orientation, personality and daily outfits. As a result, this narrative infers that in the practice of hegemonic masculinity, the male androgynous still needs to strive to earn legitimation by adopting the concept of gender performativity.

Keywords: *Hegemonic Masculinity, Gender Performativity, Androgyny, Androgynous Model.*

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INTRODUCTION

The existence of androgynous identity has earned an entrance to society, especially in fashion and entertainment industry. There are several androgynous celebrities in Indonesia, for instance, Darrell Ferhostan, Misyam Digail, Jovi Adhiguna, Kadeer Bachmid, etc. This infers that the image of androgynous has been legitimated and placed into a higher social status. Octaviani (2021) stated that fashion gave a mutual space for the androgynous to express themselves liberately without being trapped in a normativity construction which confined them (Octaviani, 2021: 192).

Men becoming models is a growing trend in the fashion industry. Male models are increasingly being featured in advertisements, magazines, and runway shows, reflecting a shift in cultural attitudes towards gender and beauty standards. This has created new opportunities for men in the modeling industry and has expanded the definition of beauty to include a wider range of body types, ages, and ethnicities.

The emergence of androgynous models, actors/actresses portrays a figure of freedom to bring out themselves regardless what gender they belong to. There is no dichotomy separating them to masculinity and femininity. Nevertheless, there is a frequent stereotype which says that androgyny is correlated with transgender. This idea comes out due to the lack of understanding towards the concept of androgyny, and it is often seen as gender deviance (Goenawan, 2007: 72). The androgynous men are usually considered effeminate since there is patriarchal enforcement constructed by society. This affects the androgynous men to actualize themselves throughout performativity (Wijayakusuma, 2020: 139).

Androgynous individuals, or those who blur the traditional gender boundaries of masculinity and femininity, can face a number of challenges in society due to rigid gender norms and expectations. Some of these challenges include:

- a. Stereotyping and prejudice: androgynous individuals may be perceived as non-conventional and may face discrimination, stigma, and negative attitudes from others.
- b. Difficulty in fitting into gender-segregated spaces: androgynous individuals may experience difficulty in finding social or physical spaces that are welcoming and inclusive, such as restrooms or single-sex institutions.
- c. Inaccurate gender identification: androgynous individuals may face difficulties in having their gender identity recognized and respected, as others may try to impose a gender binary on them.
- d. Pressure to conform to traditional gender norms: androgynous individuals may face pressure from others to conform to traditional gender norms and expectations, such as dressing or acting in a more gender-stereotyped manner.
- e. Lack of representation in media and society: androgynous individuals may experience a lack of representation and visibility in media and society, which can contribute to feelings of isolation and marginalization.

The previous studies mostly discuss how hegemonic masculinity has reconstructed new standards of masculinity. There were rarely found some studies focusing on how the androgynous are connected to hegemonic masculinity and how they struggle their lives throughout performativity. This study analyzes how hegemonic masculinity is negotiated and how gender performativity is used to adopt the concept of mainstream masculinity by male androgynous model. The researcher applies hegemonic masculinity perspective by Connell by using gender performativity theory. This study looks at how this male androgynous model implements gender performativity to earn legitimation.

METHOD

Hegemonic masculinity refers to the cultural ideals of what it means to be a "real human being." This includes appreciating traits such as physical strength, assertiveness, competitiveness, and emotional fortitude, and argues that these traits are natural and desirable in men. Hegemonic masculinity is often associated with patriarchy and reinforces traditional gender roles. One of its goals leads to the marginalization of femininity and other forms of masculinity that deviate from cultural ideals.

Connell (2005) basically brings out the common-sense knowledge of gender is not fixed. It practically changes and imposes to social construction (Connell, 2005: 6). It implies that gender is structurally constructed with the intention of performing certain

individual's identity. It intentionally comes from fabricated behavior which derives from individual's consciousness. It infers that the idea of gender performativity has no determination or stays permanent. A person can be either masculine or feminine or mixed in a certain time.

Hegemonic masculinity has some problems: Strengthening toxic gender roles and norms that limit both men and women, leads to violence, aggression and intimidation, as well as discrimination against those who do not fit the ideals, causes men to feel pressure to conform to unrealistic standards and can lead to negative mental health outcomes such as depression and low self-esteem, neglect of emotional expression and vulnerability, which leads to a lack of empathy and inability to form deep emotional connections with others, promote narrow and limited views of what it means to be a man, downplay individuality and creativity, and Support patriarchal systems and strengthen gender inequality and discrimination against women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people of different races and ethnicities.

According to Butler (1999), gender roles and identity which denote to femininity and masculinity are constructed and identified as a performativity. It associates with a fantasy that comes from individual's physical signification (Butler, 1999: 174). The notion of hegemonic masculinity which relates to masculinity is not only associated with femininity, a man can also be subordinated in a group of men. Connell argued that hegemonic masculinity always involves gender domination and subordination between men (Connell, 2005: 125). The notion of domination versus subordination, marginalization versus authorization, white men versus black men, heterosexual versus gay often occurs. It implies that there is a hierarchical contestation which separates men (Kurniawan, 2017: 68)

For androgynous models, the economic status is quite secured, still they tend to strive their existence by performing their gender identity or masculinity as it is normalized by society. This practice is called gender performativity. According to Butler, gender performativity refers to a series of social performances actualized gradually and repeated over time. The point is gender identity is not seen as a product, but a performance (Luvita, 2014: 3). Butler (1993) claims that gender performativity is an art of emulating the existing normativity, then it leads to naturalized effect (Butler, 1993: 129). Butler (1999) continued the statement that there was no exact gender, it was only a practice of emulating which then became a part of their life and it created their gender identity (Butler, 1999: 174).

This study applies gender performativity theory by Judith Butler to analyze how hegemonic masculinity is manifested. This contains a qualitative research focusing on one informant of a male androgynous model from Surabaya. He is a well-known androgynous model in East Java that has been committed to work with various international fashion agencies. The researcher conducted an in-depth interview on November the 2nd 2017. The obtained data will be analyzed by using descriptive analysis taken from the informant's answers responding to the questions proposed by the researcher.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the interview, the informant before had no intention to become androgynous model. Then, one of the model agents suggests him to become one. Furthermore, he was also encouraged due to personal reasons. The practice of gender performativity is elaborated in the table as follows.

No.		Ideal Masculinity	Androgyny Performed by The Informant
1.	Physical appearance	Tall, muscly, well-knit, short hair, sturdy	Tall, skinny, long straight hair
2.	Dress-up preference	Masculine	Masculine and feminine
3.	Sexual orientation	Hetero	Hetero
4.	Behaviors	Assertive, serious	Cheerful, humorous

Table 1 classifies several points by comparing the ideal masculinity and Androgyny performativity. Performativity is indicated through body shape, dress-up preference, sexual orientation, and behaviors. Compared to ideal masculinity, there are some binary oppositions denoting different representation of androgyny performativity. The ideal masculinity comprises, well-knit and muscly body, short hair. Meanwhile, androgyny performativity refers to skinny body, long straight hair. In terms of dressing-up, androgyny performativity combines both masculine and feminine style. It has significant difference regarding behaviors. Ideal masculinity shows assertiveness and seriousness. Otherwise, androgyny substitutes cheerfulness and humor. It reflects on how the informant hybridizes his gender performativity. He puts both masculine and feminine sides. In order to earn legitimation, he still needs to conform some of the conventional masculinities and put the new constructions of masculinity at the same time.

Another evidence is seen through the interview session conveyed by the informant. Below are the results of interview. The informant before had no intention to become androgynous model. Then, one of the model agents suggests him to become one. Furthermore, he was also encouraged due to personal reasons. The practice of hegemonic masculinity appears from the way the informant explained that he decided to join model agency as a revenge of getting underestimated as it is shown through the following statement.

“At first, I didn't want to be an Androgyny, but it was because they (model agency) asked me too. I became a model due to a personal revenge since I was being underestimated. Then I joined a model agency. After that there was a model agent suggested me to become androgynous model” (Informant, 2017).

Due to the subordination issues, he became a model as a result of actualizing himself. Actualizing himself refers to the process of realizing one's full potential and becoming the best version of oneself. It involves self-discovery, personal growth, and the pursuit of meaningful goals and aspirations.

“I feel comfortable. Eventually, I am quite capable of being a model and famous. More on those things. Not because it looks good on me dressing up like a woman. Because I am not effeminate. Only during a fashion show, I have to dress up feminine-like, but the way I walk is masculine.” (Informant, 2017). The statement means that the model has earned popularity as well as actualization. It is proven through the fact that he becomes famous. He often emphasized that he dislikes being seen feminine-like. Some of the reasons include stigma and social prejudice because society often associates femininity with weakness, submission and helplessness because it is considered feminine. In addition, regarding personal identity, this informant feels that femininity is not in line with personal identity and a sense of desire in him. This can be seen in his emphasis on "... Only during a fashion show, I have to dress up feminine-like, but the way I walk is masculine..." That he really wanted to appear masculine like a normal man. But at one time she had to appear like a feminine-like because of the demands of the job.

Another performativity is shown through the informant's statement regarding having a spouse as he put it at the end of sentence.

“Some people say I look cool. Some of them say that I look like a woman at a glance, or maybe they said that I’m a guy yet pretty. I have a girlfriend.” (Informant, 2017)

This is the part when he explained how people response to his androgynous look. Some people argued that he did not look like a real gentleman in regards to masculinity construction. It implies as if he could not achieve the standard of masculinity, and his last statement is an expression of resistance. Showing a straight sexual orientation is a recognition of normativity. The informant becomes resistant towards the stigma of being androgynous by performing his heteronormativity.

Another finding is also shown through the part when the informant explained about his personality, the way he dresses up during his day-off, how he keeps up with his societal environment, etc. The conversation is as follows,

“My personality is sociable, humorous, straightforward, likes jokes, nonfeminine-like. I’m easy to get along with. I’m a typical water-element. So, I can flow into everything. So easy going. My clothes are simple. T-shirts, skinny jeans, Docmart boots. Plain t-shirts, sweaters. Skinny jeans and Docmart for sure. So, you never see me wearing colorful clothes. Black and white and blue. Something like that. Very casual. I hate formal...” (Informant, 2017)

From the statement above, the gender performativity shown by the informant is by explaining his humorous, outgoing personality and simple yet semi-formal style with the boots. This can be interpreted that the informant wants to construct himself as an individual who has the concept of masculinity with a humorous personality which is different from the previous concept of masculinity by giving the impression of a humorous man where this has its own charm. In many ways, this type of masculinity is seen as a process of masculinity negotiation. It allows men to be confident and assertive, while also incorporating a more lighthearted and approachable demeanor.

Discussion

The integration between hegemonic masculinity and gender performativity

From those findings, it gives an illustration regarding the process of hegemonic masculinity and gender performativity are integrated. The use of gender performativity takes an important role to place someone to a higher societal hierarchy. It is not about putting all the standards of masculinity, yet, negotiating some of them. In reproducing patriarchal society, it is always followed by a circular system which goes around and forth. As it is elaborated through figure 1 below.

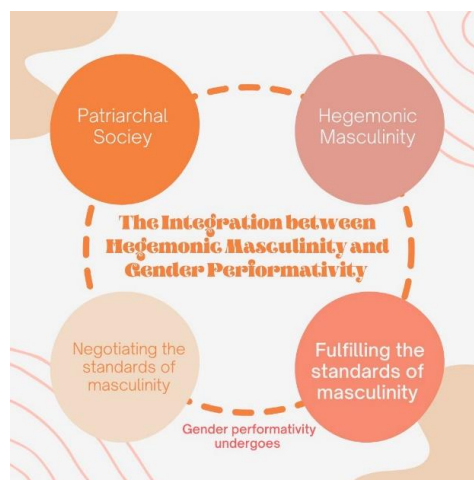


Figure 1. The Integration between Hegemonic Masculinity and Gender Performativity

As seen in Figure 1 illustrates how the processes of hegemonic masculinity and gender performativity integrate simultaneously. It starts with the spectrum of patriarchal society, which affects a circular system for reproducing the practice of patriarchy. Patriarchal culture produces hegemonic masculinity, which then becomes a standard of fulfillment, in this case, for men. This is when men start to strive to fulfill the standards of masculinity to earn a strategic social status. During the process of fulfilling the standards of masculinity, there is an entanglement of negotiation that integrates gender performativity. Eventually, it reconstructs the narration of a patriarchal society. There is always a process of negotiating to conform the standards of masculinity. They sometimes carry out some ideal standards, for example, being heterosexual is one of the actualizations.

Connell conceptualizes hegemonic masculinity which carries out the idea of shifting masculinities. Rather than showing normativity, the term "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell, 1987; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005) may be more helpful. It is characterized as methods that provide men control over both women and other forms of masculine sexuality that are subordinated, most notably homosexuality. In order to behave in a way that will be considered "manly," males must position themselves in reference to symbolic ideals rather than normative features. Although there are many different ways to be a guy, each is positioned in reference to the hegemonic ideal. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is persuasive and negotiable. In order to earn legitimation, conventional norms or conventional masculinity is undermined in advance, instead, dealing with a new narration of masculinity is hegemonic and plays passive-aggressive strategy. As long as masculinity is positioned higher than femininity. (Haverda, 2019: 6)

It infers that hegemonic masculinity has fluidity. Holding conventional masculinity is no longer desired. It depends on how society constructs the standards of masculinity. It is possible to reshape the new standards of masculinity by hybridizing or negotiating masculinity with femininity. The concept of hegemony enters through the softest way.

Masculinity undergoes throughout the informant's existence as being an androgynous model which makes him financially settled. In addition, androgynous models can challenge gender-based discrimination and promote equality and inclusivity in the fashion and beauty industries also leading to greater self-awareness and personal growth. This is the reason for the information to exist in the world of models, because it has previously been underestimated by people. It becomes a piece of the evidence which is in line with Connell's idea stating that hegemonic masculinity is always reconstructed communally. The subordinated ones will strive or do some actions to gain their social status (Wardani, 2019:13).

This infers that there is a passive-aggressive narration which refers to the fact that his actualization comes from his fame of becoming androgynous model, still he needs to perform his heteronormative orientation. The emergence of performativity interprets hegemonic masculinity which is taken from the construction of masculinity that is more idealized by society. By negotiating it through the characteristics of the informant who combines his femininity and masculinity, it is intended that he will be able to achieve the ideal of masculinity. Connell (2005) has formulated the concept of dominant masculinity as hegemonic masculinity. This gives opportunity for minorities (in quantity) with special power to put themselves into a normative place (Drianus, 2019: 23). In accordance with the perspective of gender performativity, it is obvious that in the implementation of hegemonic masculinity, there always comes the terms dominant and subordinate. The informant would like to place himself into a normative position throughout his legitimation as a famous androgynous model, yet he drags the concept of gendered performance in order to

fulfill normativity.

Due to his feminine look, the modeling agency advised him to become an androgynous model. If it is associated with the view of gender performativity, the informant has a feminine physical body, but not with his personality, his appearance as an androgynous model is required to show both masculine and feminine sides through clothes, gait, gestures and facial expressions. Butler (1990) states that gender is like a drag. For example, transvestites who show their femininity then society becomes the jury to test and validate their femininity (Butler, 1990: IX). As it is stated by Butler (1990), he illustrates that gender identity is produced and reproduced through actions, gestures, and desires where an individual has to conduct the practice and behavior in order to gain recognition (Butler, 1990: 136).

The emergence of Androgyne deconstructs the construction of heteronormativity and gender binary in the way that there is a permissive space for an individual to become either man or woman or even both. It resembles to Butler's claim which states that gender identity is performatively constituted. The existence of androgyne has got the space and performed as a non-stabilized gender-reality. Therefore, gender identity is constructively performed. (Chattopadhyay, 2020: 3)

There is a process of negotiation involving hetero-normativity and constructed-normativity. As the informant before would like to show his appearance as an Androgyne, yet he still puts the value of heteronormativity to get accepted and actualized in society. The idea of hegemonic masculinity is reproduced and negotiated throughout the emergence of Androgyne. Being popular is not enough, showing his hetero-norms matters. This is another option for the Androgynes to survive. The fact that the emergence of Androgyne violates gender norms is still true.

The narration shows that there is always a process of negotiation within hegemonic masculinity. This actually encompasses Connell's (2005) formulation on developing the definition of masculinity which derives a normative approach concerning man standards constructed by media and social norms. Masculinity is defined as an object which refers to natural traits, average behavior, defined norms, symbolic sign (Drianus, 2019: 39).

Gender comprises unnaturalized behavior. It is consciously performed or shown depends on how society, workspace, or environment asks you to. Sheerin and Linehan (2018) stated that gender is a process of manifestation as a consequence of performativity due to the influence of dominant gender conventions (Sheerin & Linehan, 2018: 561). The concept of hegemonic masculinity is complex and can be applied to the androgynous model in a variety of ways. On one hand, an androgynous appearance may challenge traditional norms of hegemonic masculinity by blurring the lines between gender categories and subverting traditional expectations of what it means to be a man or woman. This can be seen as a form of resistance to hegemonic masculinity.

On the other hand, the androgynous model can also be seen as perpetuating hegemonic masculinity by upholding the ideal of a certain body type, regardless of gender. This type of androgynous model often reinforces the idea that thin, toned bodies are the standard of beauty and can contribute to harmful beauty standards for both men and women. As a result, the application of hegemonic masculinity to the androgynous model is complex and can be seen as both challenging and reinforcing traditional gender norms and expectations. Connell (2000) refers to Butler's perspective towards how hegemonic masculinity is conceptualized, it shows dichotomy between dominant and marginalized. Gender performativity is also a manifestation of negotiating the existed masculinity and turns out into hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2000).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study is that hegemonic masculinity carries a vivid practice of gender performativity in order to earn legitimation. It was found through how hegemonic masculinity has been manifested by the androgynous male model. He adopts the heteronormativity standards and brings out the image of a man with a good sense of humor. The existence of androgynous models especially in fashion industry has been accepted well. This gives a significant position in societal hierarchy as well. Even though there is stigma towards the majority of people, the embodiment of androgynous models gives a gentle negotiation towards the standards of masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity refers to the dominant societal norms and expectations of what it means to be a "real man". It is characterized by traits such as toughness, physical prowess, emotional restraint, and competitiveness, and is often associated with power, control and domination. This idea of masculinity often excludes or marginalizes those who do not fit into these traditional gender norms and can have negative impacts on both men and women. In conclusion, hegemonic masculinity is a problematic concept that reinforces unequal power dynamics and reinforces harmful gender stereotypes.

Hegemonic masculinity and gender performativity are interconnected concepts in gender studies. Hegemonic masculinity refers to the dominant societal norms and expectations of what it means to be a "real man", while gender performativity refers to the repeated and constantly performed acts through which people express their gender identity. Gender performativity can lead to the reinforcement and perpetuation of hegemonic masculinity, as individuals strive to conform to societal expectations and perform the dominant ideas of masculinity. On the other hand, the practice of gender performativity can also challenge and subvert hegemonic masculinity by allowing individuals to experiment with and perform alternative expressions of gender. In conclusion, hegemonic masculinity and gender performativity are intertwined and mutually reinforcing, shaping the way people understand and express their gender identity.

The practice of hegemonic masculinity manifested by the androgynous male model is found through the way he performs his gender performativity which denotes to his personality, sexual orientation and the way he dresses up. This implies that there is a place for the androgynous in social hierarchy, yet it needs an effort to get them legitimated. By performing his masculinity in the other side, it gives an excuse for him to be viewed as a social-constructed man.

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