

Sneakers and The Hedonistic Dimension of Sneakers On Instagram Accounts @jejouw

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out sneakers and the hedonistic dimension of sneakers on instagram accounts @jejouw. Thrifting activities that have been rampant lately have led to the emergence of thrifting communities in Indonesia. One popular thrifting community is the Urban Sneaker Society (USS) community. This community constructs a hedonistic dimension in the younger generation through thrifting sneakers. The method used in this study is textual analysis with a case study approach on @jejouw accounts. The theory used is the theory of symbol representation referring to the theory of Stuart Hall and Roland Barthes, where this theory reviews the representation of hedonistic symbols in the use of thrifting sneakers by @jejouw. The results of this study are to show that the ownership of unique, vintage and large numbers of sneakers is a hedonistic dimension owned by @jejouw account owners to construct their masculine identity. The conclusions this masculinity is represented by using sporty sneakers. The hedonistic dimension is shown by the many types and brands of sneakers owned by @jejouw, this is because it causes fun and satisfaction to @jejouw when wearing the sneakers he owns.

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Introduction

Along with the shift in fashion needs in the younger generation, the level of need to support appearance is increasing (Saravanan & Nithyaprakash, 2016). From year to year fashion trends change and develop, we can see this from the change in the *hype* of young people who continue to change every season. The existence of fashion *thrifting* is also part of the fashion trends that are popular with young people today (Fitria et al., 2022). We can see this from the emergence of *thrifting* communities that have recently become rampant in Indonesia. One of the sneaker communities in Indonesia is *the Urban Sneaker Society (USS)* which was founded by Jeffry Jouw or more often called Jejouw (Hutapea et al., 2018). *Urban Sneaker Society (USS)* is the largest sneaker community in Indonesia with more than 377 thousand members.

It is interesting to observe that the existence of *the Urban Sneaker Society (USS)* is very important for the younger generation of sneaker enthusiasts. Especially those who like to collect shoes that have high historical value such as *the Nike Air Jordan*. The shoe is popular not only because of the trend and *hype* among the *sneaker* community. But more than that, sneaker fans with *the Nike Air Jordan* brand even have the jargon "*Your sneaker or your live*" which means the value of sneakers for them is equivalent to the value of their lives (MP, 2019).

Shoes are important for the younger generation who are *aware* of fashion, especially in optimizing their appearance (Yeh, 2020). The function of shoes is not only as a foot protector in activities (Ahira, 2012). For *Nike lovers*, of course, what is important is the superiority of the *Air Jordan* compared to other types of shoes. This advantage is seen from the very light weight of the shoe so that it improves the performance of the user in activities (Putra & Rachmawati, 2021). Cushions designed with Air technology can cushion impacts that can minimize injuries in activities. And the leather chosen used certainly supports the durability of the shoe and looks optimal.

The interesting thing is that sneaker users are not only from athletes. However, many urban young people in Jakarta are hunting for *sneakers*, including Jejouw. Even Jejouw has been hunting for *sneakers* since a few years ago. It will be interesting to find out why *sneakers* are popular with Jejouw, who is known as the pioneer of *thrifting sneakers* in Indonesia. Of course, there is a certain meaning that he wants to show in wearing the *thrifting sneaker*?

When viewed from Jejouw's background as explained in MLDSpot, he is one of the young generation of Jakarta who became a young billionaire with *sneaker investment*. She has been interested in *sneakers* since 2011 (Jonathan, 2023). He collects *vintage sneakers* obtained from *thrifting* markets in several countries he visits. Until now, his hobby of hunting for *thrifting sneakers* is still ongoing. His passion for hunting for sneakers finally made him emerge as a pioneer of *vintage sneakers* in Indonesia (Imam, 2019). Until many big sneaker events that he held in Jakarta. Then *sneakers* continue to be raised by *influencers*, community leaders and the urban young generation in their daily activities (Alfarizi & Pakpahan, 2023).

The novelty of this research lies in its exploration of the intersection between fashion trends and community dynamics, specifically within the sneaker enthusiast culture in Indonesia. By focusing on the Urban Sneaker Society (USS) and its influence, the study highlights how a niche community can significantly impact broader fashion trends and consumer behaviors. This research also uncovers the economic potential of sneaker collecting, particularly in the context of thrifting and vintage markets, which is relatively unexplored in Indonesian fashion studies. Furthermore, the investigation into the motivations and influence of key figures like Jejouw offers new insights into how personal passion and entrepreneurship can drive and shape fashion movements.

The purpose of this study is to find out sneakers and the hedonistic dimension of sneakers on instagram accounts @jejouw. The benefits of this research are the strengthening of identity and community, as well as economic and investment opportunities. The presence of communities such as the Urban Sneaker Society (USS) allows sneaker enthusiasts to gather, share knowledge, and build networks, thereby strengthening their identity as part of a group with shared interests. Additionally, the high interest in sneakers, particularly vintage models like the Nike Air Jordan, creates economic opportunities for collectors and sellers, making sneakers a profitable form of

investment, and providing young entrepreneurs with the chance to start businesses in the fashion and lifestyle sectors.

Research Methods

The research method that will be used in this study is textual analysis. With a case study approach on the @jejouw Instagram account. This textual analysis was carried out by digging up data from photos uploaded in @jejouw Instagram account . Furthermore, summarize the information and data obtained to be processed and narrated.

In examining the use of this *sneaker* by the owner of the @jejouw Instagram account, here the theory of Stuart Hall and Roland Barthes (symbol representation) is used. The representation of the symbol that the author wants to dig up is a symbol that shows a hedonistic attitude or a person's tendency towards the tendency to be hedonistic in owning goods. Hedonism in the system refers to the effect of pleasure obtained by @jejouw when he manages to get *vintage sneakers* at a low price in the *thrifting market*. Regarding hedonism, it is stated that this is a teaching or view that pleasure or enjoyment is the purpose of human life and action (Hedonism - Wikipedia Indonesian, the free encyclopedia). The concept of hedonism theory is called by Weijers as a theory that identifies that anger is the only important element for a person to behave in daily life. (Weijers, 2012).

In his writing, Weijers explained in several parts, in the first part he focused on the theory of what a person should believe, specifically he discussed prudential hedonism, which is to talk about what is important to a person. Pleasure. What is important in this section is the belief that happiness is essential for a person to achieve their well-being. He mentioned that the desire to pursue happiness is not a mistake.

In chapter two, Weijers focuses on the practice of hedonism, especially on how the concept of happiness can inform certain behaviors and help a person to understand what to do. Furthermore, he associated happiness with the meaning of technological advancement. In this passage he mentions that people with certain beliefs will achieve true eating in life. He believes that the cause of happiness is an excuse to achieve a truly meaningful life for someone.

The practice of this hedonism is represented by @jejouw in his activity in collecting *sneakers* to achieve personal pleasure. With the representation of hedonism codes symbols, which are represented through the number of *sneakers*, brands, materials, and the price of *sneakers* worn by @jejouw in the photos on the *Instagram feed*, @jejouw can be explored. The process of using the hedon dimension practice on @jejouw account can be seen from the appearance of the *sneakers worn*. *Sneakers* are a neutral medium for the formation of meanings. The process of meaning production is a practice of meaning that is carried out by looking at the background, emotions, representations and habits that exist in the sneaker user object. To be able to consume and understand the meaning that exists in the sneaker, we need to explore to a certain extent how the meaning is formed or produced through symbols such as the model, material and color of the *sneaker*.

Referring to the idea of representation from (R. I. Hall et al., 2019), we can see that the *sneakers* worn by @jejouw are a cultural language that functions to represent the meaning of their masculine identity. They have a masculine identity that they want to convey through the *sneaker* they wear. Referring to the following statement by Hall:

"Members of the same culture must share concepts, images, and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world in roughly similar ways. They must share, broadly speaking, the same 'cultural codes'. In this sense, thinking and feeling are themselves 'system of representation'." (S. Hall, 1997)

We can understand that in order to get the same meaning in the representation of language or symbols, we need to refer to the concepts, ideas or background that underlie a person in presenting himself through the attributes and elements of the clothes he wears. Such as the choice of *sneakers*, the color of the sneakers they wear, and what brand of *sneakers* they use. *Sneakers* are used to reflect, strengthen or build @jejouw self-identity.

Results and Discussions

Sneakers are @jejouw's choice to support his appearance in daily activities. She always looks casual with *thrifting clothes and sneakers* that are rarely available at retail stores. The existence of *sneakers* for @jejouw is never separated from the functional aspect, the price aspect and the identity symbol aspect that he wants to convey. As a pioneer of *thrifting sneakers* in Indonesia, for him sneakers have become an important part of him. He has dozens of rare and expensive sneaker collections that he got from *thrifting hunting* in several countries.

If you look at the history, shoes were made with the aim of protecting the feet from too hot or too cold weather, from threats or animal bites or collisions with objects around them. Shoes have been known for thousands of years by homo sapiens in Eurasia (DeMello, 2009) But currently shoes have undergone a shift in function, including function in social status. This is certainly influenced by many factors, including the development of culture, technology and community needs. Changes in the function of shoes will certainly have an impact on the design or model of the shoes produced. This is because shoe production is made based on the needs of the community.

Like sneakers, for example, initially these shoes were known as sneakers in the United States. At that time, these shoes were devoted to sports. Along with the development of the times, these sneakers have a name that is adapted to their function in the field of sports. People call them *runner shoes* if they are made and used by running athletes. Until 1887 in England *sneakers* were introduced by Henry Nelson Mc Kinney, as shoes that had soles at the bottom of the shoe. (History of Sneakers, Trending Shoes That Are Favorites and Don't Die - Highlight.ID) From there, sneakers are widely known as *sporty shoes* which are then loved by the younger generation, not only from men but also from women who use them.

Masculine representation on the Sneaker used by @jejouw

Based on photo posts on Instagram, @rjejouw *sneakers* are one of the typical style representations that distinguish them from others. On his account, we can see his uploaded photos using *thrifting sneakers* to represent strong masculine values. The concept of masculine is constantly evolving and is never the same over time. Masculine values from each different culture and the development of the times also affect the concept of *stereotypes of masculine values in society* (Ardia, 2017). One of the masculine concepts in the context of the region in the modern era is related to public space activities. Culture builds the perspective that masculinity is shown by achievements, self-esteem, and recognition in the field of sports, for example. Attributes in sports activities such as shoes are a medium of masculinity representation on @jejouw account.

For him, *sneakers* have a useful value, one of which is as a representation of masculinity where its function is as an identity and identifier for him. In this case,

@*jejouw* represent it in the use of *sneakers* obtained from *thrifting activities*. The phenomenon of *thrifting* in the fashion world is a sign that currently masculinity belongs to all fashion classes regardless of social class and identity for certain groups only. @*jejouw* use jerseys at *events* or moments that have nothing to do with sports. She brought sneakers to street *fashion* and it was accepted by sneaker fans who understood the development of fashion. She wants to show *her fashionable appearance and masculinity* through the *sneakers* she wears. @*jejouw* sneaker models and brands are admired by many of their followers because their appearance looks masculine with *sporty look clothes*.

This is in line with what Kurnia mentioned, namely that one of the five characteristics of masculinity is what is called the masculinity of the new fighter. Included in these characteristics are military and sports. This is because the military sports fund is considered to have an imaginary value of adventure and male strength. (Kurnia, 2004)

Hedonis Dimension of Sneakers on the @*jejouw* account

Every item that a person uses must have practical usefulness value as well as emotional value. Similar to *sneakers* for @*jejour*, in addition to having useful value, it also functions to provide fun and happiness to @*jejouw*. This aspect of pleasure and happiness is referred to as the hedonistic dimension. The hedonistic dimension can be reflected in several aspects inherent in *the sneakers* owned by @*jejouw*, including the design or sneaker model.

There are several pleasures that can be obtained in buying and using sneaker for @*jejouw*. Pleasure and excitement are identified in several things, including exclusivity and freedom of self-expression. Exclusivity in buying *sneakers* can be seen from the fun @*jejouw* buying and collecting sneakers with certain brands in large quantities. @*jejouw* have several sneaker items of the same brand. Take pictures with several sneakers that have different designs, colors, and images. The exclusivity of sneakers in the photo is found in the elements of uniqueness and rarity of goods.

The satisfaction he gets from the story behind *vintage sneakers* also makes @*jejouw* hunt for sneakers abroad. This story includes the *history* of sneakers, as well as how he got *vintage sneakers*. The pleasure of finding unique items on *thrifting* provides an experience that is not found in all retail stores when buying *sneakers*. This then encouraged @*jejouw* to continue adding to *his sneaker* collection because of the feeling of happiness and satisfaction he got.

In his Instagram feed, @*jejouw* uploaded a lot of photos of himself wearing *sneakers* with various brands. This @*jejouw* post shows several important things about *fashion*, the first is about the uniqueness in expressing one's taste and interest in *fashion* and sports activities. The second is the strength of the hedonic dimension which can be seen from the satisfaction he gets from wearing *the sneaker*. This satisfaction is obtained from the feeling of pleasure wearing *the sneakers* she has.

Sneakers with the Nike brand are associated with good sneaker quality. This also shows prestige and increases the self-image and confidence of its users. In addition, the design and aesthetics of Nike products are also the main focus both for @*jejouw* and for their followers who enjoy the visual aesthetics of Nike sneakers worn by @*jejouw*. The photos that are upst @*jejouw* reflect an effort to show their unique personality and *fashion*, as well as an effort to continue to create and seek emotional satisfaction.

Conclusion

The use of sneakers by @jejouw is reviewed from the representation of symbols put forward by Hall and Roland Barthes, who found that the use of sneakers in @jejouw fashion has three functions, namely masculine representation and hedonistic dimensions. Masculine representation is the identity that emerges in the use of sneakers by the owner of the @jejouw race. This masculinity is represented by using sporty sneakers. The hedonistic dimension is shown by the many types and brands of sneakers owned by @jejouw, this is because it causes fun and satisfaction to @jejouw when wearing the sneakers he owns. The use sneakers on @jejouw are currently not only based on the functional aspect but also the need to strengthen identity. The basic function of shoes as foot protectors has shifted to the function of self-actualization where the value of self-masculinity that is built up is a necessity for @jejouw. While the social function is also very visible with the ownership of sneakers with well-known brands and high prices being an image built in the hedonistic dimension. This shows that the casual and sporty fashion @jejouw pretends the hedonistic dimension to construct his masculine identity.

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