SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION THEORY OF REALITY:
A CASE STUDY OF ANTI ANOREXIA CAMPAIGN POSTER

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ABSTRACT

Although Constructivism Theory of reality is categorized as a Subjective Theory, in terms of the construction process, it also had an objective feel. This could be observed in the three forms of realities that became the entry concept, namely: Objective Reality, Symbolic Reality, and Subjective Reality. The aim of this study was to analyze and understand a cultural tendency today's society through the lens of a philosophical. The philosophical theory of culture which had been regarded as something far beyond the reach became clear glasses in a tendency to see and understand the socio-cultural community. This research told about the dangerous of socio-culture community that could affect someone's life. In this case was people who suffer anorexia and bulimia. This phenomenon could be avoided by doing campaign and some advertisement about the danger of this disease. The research method was assessing visual data in the form of a social campaign poster, study or library research, strengthened with the supporting theoretical basis study. In this research, the data obtained from photo documentation, literature study through books and scientific studies regarding social issues related to the theme. This research finds out that society, in general, is associated with the philosophical and socio-cultural studies. It is expected to occur a parallel relationship between disciplines (social, cultural, philosophical) and practices that occur in people's daily behavior.

Keywords: constructivism, social construction, philosophy, anorexia and bulimia, advertisements

INTRODUCTION

The theory of Social Construction of Reality is first introduced by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1990) in their book *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* or a version that has been translated into Indonesian *Social Interpretations of Reality*. This book then gets a tremendous response, especially from social scientists who in earlier times have much affected by the positivistic concept. A constructivist view of Berger and Luckmann believe substantively that the reality is the result of individual construction collectively in certain social communities.

Peter L. Berger is a sociologist from New School for Social Research, New York while Thomas Luckmann is a sociologist from the University of Frankfurt. Both have a scientific background in sociology and in general the phenomenology concept influences their thoughts. Therefore, many have concluded that the idea initiated by Berger and Luckmann in The Social Construction of Reality is a derivative of phenomenological perspective developed by Kant and then Hegel, Weber, Husserl, and Schutz. So it can also be said that the thinking of phenomenology influences the theory of The Social Construction of Reality coined by Berger and Luckmann by Albert Schutz, subjective meanings by Weber, dialectic by Marx, as well as symbolic interaction by George Herbert Mead. By looking at the characteristics and substances of the thought of this theory, it can be said that this theory has the constructivist paradigm which tends to be subjective.

Social Construction of Reality is defined as a social process through action and interaction in which the individual (or group of individuals) creates continuously a reality that is owned and experienced together subjectively. (Charles R. Ngangi, 2011). In the view of philosophy, constructivism has emerged since the discovery of the idea of the invisible realities in the human body, such as the soul, mind, and moral which is coined by Socrates and Plato. Aristotle then makes it more concrete by introducing the term information, individual, substance, material, essence, and so on. Aristotle also later coined that the key of knowledge is the facts. Aristotle phrase *cogito ergo sum* which means *I think therefore I am*, becomes the basis for the development of ideas of constructivism until today. (Richard, 2007).

Vico (2005) in *De Antiquissima Italorum Sapientea*, explains that only God can understand the universe because only He knows how to make it and from what He makes while humans can only know something that has been constructed. There are three kinds of constructivism, namely: 1) Radical Constructivism, this thought only recognizes what is shaped by our thoughts. The form itself is considered not necessarily a representation of the real world. The radical constructivism rules out the relationship between knowledge and reality as a criterion of truth. Knowledge, according to them is not the reflection of objective reality but is formed by the experience. Knowledge is always a result of the construction of individual creativity which is not transferable to another individual who is more passive. Therefore, the construction should be done independently. 2) Hypothesis Realism, Knowledge is the hypothesis of a structure that is closer to reality and aimed to the essential knowledge. 3) Ordinary Constructivism, this view takes all the consequences of constructivism and understands knowledge as a picture or representation of reality. Then, the individual's knowledge is seen as a picture formed from the objective reality in themselves.

There is a similarity from those three kinds of constructivism. The similarity is constructivism seen as an individual cognitive work to interpret the existing reality world due to social relations between individuals or the surrounding environment.

The tendency of mass culture in the modern era to be factual studied through theoretical studies. Where people now tended to adhere strongly to the truth, which is the result of the construction of the community as a whole. An example is the case study in this research when humans became so obedient to the social construction of beauty or about the ideal body. This study was conducted to analyze and understand a cultural tendency today's society through the lens of a philosophical. The philosophical theory of culture which has been regarded as something far beyond the reach becomes clear glasses in a tendency to see and understand the socio-cultural community.

METHODS

The object of this research is a social campaign poster, which shows a female model showing her backside, intact and bare. The research method is assessing visual data in the form of a social campaign poster, study or library research, strengthened with the supporting theoretical basis study. In this research, the data obtained from photo documentation, literature study through books and scientific studies regarding social issues related to the theme.

The data is collected in various formats such as text, hyperlinks, and images. Data is the searching result and interaction of the author with the data source. Sugiyono (2007) divides data into two, namely: (1) Primary data, is data that the author obtained directly from the source data. Data collection techniques that produce primary data are the interview, observation, and questionnaires. The data in this research, one of them is obtained from interviews with popular culture observer and also a lecturer in cultural philosophy. While the observations are made by analyzing various documents,

files, and interpret a variety of resources. Information was collected in the form of the questionnaire with questions that are relevant and compiled by researchers with associated lecturers. (2) Secondary data is not obtained directly from the data source, but still can be justified scientifically. Secondary data is obtained mainly from document or records and book. In this case, the authors only use the data source in the form of secondary data. Data analysis is done by organizing, sorting into units that can be managed, synthesize, search and find the patterns. Finding what is important and can be learned, and then decides what can be conveyed to the audience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are the most common eating disorder syndrome. (Smith, 2014). People with anorexia have a real fear of weight gain and a distorted view of their body size and shape. As a result, they cannot maintain a normal weight. Many teens with anorexia restrict their food intake by dieting, fasting, or excessive exercise. They hardly eat at all and become obsessed with the desire to further reduce the amount of their food. People with anorexia will start by eating a lot of food and then trying to get rid of calories by forcing themselves to vomit, use laxatives, excessive exercise, or some combination of these.

Bulimia is similar to anorexia. People who suffer bulimia will be partied with food (overeating) and then tries to compensate in an extreme way, such as forced vomiting or excessive exercise, to prevent weight gain. Over time, these measures can be harmful - both physically and emotionally. They also can cause compulsive behaviors or people who are hard to stop. (Hall, 2014). People with bulimia often eat large amounts at once (often junk food), and this is usually done quietly (in secret). Sometimes they eat foods that are not cooked or perhaps still frozen or taking food out of the trash. They usually feel powerless to stop eating and can only be stopped once they are too full. Most people with bulimia then purge by vomiting, but can also use laxatives or excessive exercise.

Even though anorexia and bulimia are very similar, but there are significant differences. People with anorexia are usually fragile and skinny, but those with bulimia usually have normal weight or even overweight. The desire of the female models to have a skinny body further encourages the increasing tendency of people with anorexia. Even a US media reported there was a 19-year-old female model who let herself starve and eventually die, just because she thinks that her weight is not ideal anymore. The preceding is then taken up by the famous fashion magazine - Vogue - which recently banned the too thin and too young model. This is a major step towards goodness. The purpose of Vogue initiation is expected that no model is too thin, there is no longer a girl aspiring to be skinny models, there is no longer an eating disorder.

People become so obedient to the social construction of beauty and about the ideal body. The philosophical theory of culture, which has been regarded as something far beyond the reach, becomes evident glasses in a tendency to see and understand the socio-cultural community. Various campaigns in the form of counseling, seminars, as well as design work then carried out in respond to such a frightening phenomenon. The example is like work of advertising. The desire to have an ideal body shape, beautiful face, beautiful hair, and smooth-skinned is inseparable from the role of advertising, which then became a media construction for society. The ideal body is slim and even tends to be thin, beautiful face is pointy with thin cheeks and sharp nose, beautiful hair is black and thick straight hair, smooth skin is white and glowing skin. These messages almost every day approach our private spaces through various media. Society then finally approves and agrees to the construction of such a body. Mostly it is all directed at women as a potential target market.

The example of campaign poster below is an interesting thing to be studied through the lens of philosophy, with the related theory approach. The theoretical approach to analyze it is the Social Construction Theory of Reality.

Figure Anti Anorexia Campaign Poster
(Source: Google Image)

The Figure is an example of advertising works that quite disturbing. A depiction of the female figure (nude) is not at all pleasant to look at. The delivery of provocative message about a phenomenon occurs in the model world. When the beautiful image as if is directly proportional to skinny and slender body. Women mainly experience this phenomenon. Through various media, the manufacturers of a product or the service provider provoke women to be able to have a body that is considered ideal.

Figure in that advertising is a model who wants to maintain her ideal body weight so hard even continuously strive to reduce her body weight, so in the end suffering a syndrome called Anorexia (eating disorders syndrome), and the model died from her illness. An interesting fact is in the last days of her life, and she is actively involved in the campaign against anorexia.

CONCLUSIONS

Social construction theory of reality is rooted in the thinking of social scientists in the field of sociology (Weber, 2009). But the thoughts about the role of knowledge and experiences that shape reality produces important perspectives in social science. Although this theory then becomes less relevant because ignoring the mass media that has the increasingly substantive role. But as an idea that is rooted in the phenomenology tradition, Berger and Luckmann (1990) have contributed significant ideas to construct the socio-cultural context theories of the sociology of knowledge that can also be referred to by the fields of design science that continue to move dynamically.

The link of this theory with case study examples is that there is a reality that constructed on the issue of the human body (the ideal, beautiful, lovely) which then, in turn, gave birth to deal in society. In this case, humans are ignored as a dynamic and constantly changing subject, while the social construction of reality is seen as part of a phenomenon of society at a particular time. Humans will be the object of social construction changes. They will always follow and be forced to follow such

changes. Humans are forced to make efforts to adjust to the prevailing social construction, for example, trying to appear attractive in many ways. Through this study, the authors hope gained an understanding of the relationship between the philosophical theory with the reality that occurs in social life society. Whereas the cultural tendency or behavior that occurs in the community can be dissected and understood through the study of the realm of philosophy. In the end, it can be found a benefit that is understanding and additional scientific insights for writers in particular. And for society, in general, is associated with the philosophical and socio-cultural studies, it is expected to occur parallel relationship between disciplines (social, cultural, philosophical) with practices that occur in people's daily behavior.

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