

“I’m a Man, I’m a Nurse”: Breaking Strong Gender Stereotype towards Evocative Personal Narrative”

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Abstract. Gender stereotypes are indicated as basic understandings why the femininity and masculinity take a crucial portion towards Indonesian higher educational majors and occupational choices. The formation of gender-based occupation stereotypes is that there is an assumption that to be successful in doing certain profession, one must have feminine or masculine qualities, depending on the type of job. In different case, the participant tries to break out those assumption by choosing profession. This study aims to reveal how personal narrative led someone to break general gender-based occupation stereotypes in Indonesia. The research method is qualitative. The participant was one male nurse through semi-structured interview. The result shows that specific plot of story life giving huge influence towards someone’s professional choices.

Keywords: Higher Education, Profession, Gender Stereotype, Evocative Personal Narrative

INTRODUCTION

Antony’s story

Antony has already been a male nurse during 13 years now. He was born on 39 years ago. Once October in 2002, two decades ago, he was so happy since he will celebrate his birthday. Everything has already imagined by him. The date just over the third of October, when a horrible news came over his ears. His father got a motorcycle crush-accident after take his sister to go to the school. It broke his heart into pieces. He went to the crush place and found that his father no more making moves and passed away. He cried a lot and then struggling towards hard and sadness life. Since, he is the first child in the family, who in Indonesian culture has significance roles towards other family members. Full of question marks in his head, why the father passed away? What was happening in the accident site? This incident gave him braveness to choose the carrier in medical sector in order to get answers toward all his own questions. Not having much financial supports to be a doctor, then he decided to be a nurse. Even though, he remembered that his father always wanted him to be police (as the gender stereotype works in the society). At first, his intention is just to find out what really

happen to his father at that time. Why his father passed away in this crush seeing from medical point of views.

By having this personal experience, he decided to take 'Nursing' major in one of private university in East Java, Indonesia. In general, Indonesian believed that being a nurse is always identic with female. The one who being a nurse is a female. Antony, in this case, took a chance to face up different challenges, social situation and cultural condition. Being part of this surrounding was not truly easy for him, since he was identified with the female competence stereotypes towards this major. The situation made him more understood how to be a good nurse then with truly struggling condition.

In the fifth semester of his college, he did nurse apprentice and he chose the hospital were taking care his father's dead body. In this hospital, he worked so hard on finding the last person/doctor who taking care his father. Luckily, the doctor still worked there. He told his father's story and made the doctor remembered about the incident. Findings all documents about his dead causes. He found that, at that time there some minutes that worthless wasted because nobody wanted to help his father since they were waiting for the police procedures on accident. Much bleeding made his father passed away. By having this personal experience, he promised that he will help any people who need him anytime and anywhere more than himself. Though away the fear and do the best for every single patient to save their life.

Now, 13 years already, he is becoming a nurse. He chooses working in a remote area. Help more people who needed him sometimes without money payment. Some people will pay with rice, coconuts, vegetables, corns, and other agricultural products. More special, he gets a genuine called as 'Pak Mantri'-society register towards male nurse. Many people love him. He said no matter what, he will always help people who need him. In 2011, he married a female nurse and shared happy life with two daughters.

Coming up to the other special experience in his career is during this pandemic of Covid-19. Indonesia having high number of Covid-19 patients since 2020 up to now. Before pandemic, he worked in the office half day. But now, he should be ready 24 hours a day on emergency callings. Then, he told *"Lucky, I am since I am male, so I should have more shift in a day. Sometime, I should go to remote village to do tracing of Covid-19 patients and do funeral to Covid-19 patients who died at midnight"*. It is difficult for female nurse on getting night shift of working, since they have a family who should be taking care. Most of Indonesians are married and having a nuclear family, consists of husband, wife and child(ren).

The other unique experiences toward his occupation, sometimes he will be also an ambulance driver when the official driver cannot go to the hospital. In this pandemic era, the situation needs many medical practitioners. Many cases of Covid-19 make the medical practitioners are working very hard on handling the patients, including the drivers are also

being very important job description. They should be stand by for the hospital calling during 24 hours. Sometime no driver left. Since Antony is male, understood more skilful to drive bigger car. He adjusts this occupation as a nurse, at once, as an ambulance driver.

Occupation-Based Gender

There was always strong stereotype towards someone's occupation, including in Indonesian context. The mindset of general people that nurses are usually women is strongly defined in Indonesia. In addition, gender equality towards woman is sounding louder than for men. It is proven by some current researches and femininity activists towards women equality in gender equality development. The author already tries to found a current researches in gender fields and the first pages are full with the research in women field. The phenomena understood that some articles and researches towards gender are focusing on how female get more disadvantages than male. But if we take a look deeper, it also many assumptions that male also in disadvantages condition. For instance, when the parents' having much ideas on attitude of gender discrimination. The prefer male to go to higher education, parents will give more pressure for male children (son) to be more successful and work harder than female for the family.

Gender

There are many understandings and definitions towards gender that have been existed. Muehlenhard & Peterson (2011) stated that gender's definition is divided into some classifications, namely gender as (1) a sex differentiator (related to biological functions) namely male and female (2) a social group or category, (3) a quality and characteristics derived from social origins, (4) a stereotype or expectation that society expects of men or women, and (5) the performance of the expected role or doing gender. Related to those understandings, can be summarised that the definition of gender covers the biological functions, social category, social origins, society expectations and the performances.

Moreover, Hyde (2007) defined gender as the characteristics of man (male) or woman (female). Known as a part of biological point of view understandings. Finally, gender can be defined as the performance of the expected roles on doing gender. In this understanding, gender represented a person's performance. Masculine/ feminine gender performances show strongly towards this understanding. The definition used in this research is the category of gender definition as a person's behaviour related to masculine and feminine. The basis for choosing this definition is that the researcher wants to know the association of a person's psychological characteristics with certain jobs, not the association of sex with work, such as the definition of gender as male and female.

Gender Stereotype

Gender stereotypes are used as basic understanding why the femininity and masculinity take a big part towards educational majors and occupational choices in Indonesia. Cusack (2013) defined a gender stereotype in general, related to characteristics or attributes preconceptions as a part of possession owned by, or performance roles shown by, male and female (in this case we take a look on education and occupation. Gender stereotypes are understood as individual practices (male or female) as a part of membership in the social group of males or females. Heredia (2007) made clearer that even before entering university, high school students already have a gender-stereotyped perception of bachelors and careers that should be pursued by the students (male or female). Next, both Nicolao (2014) and Ramaci et al. (2017) found that men are having high interests in more realistic professions such as business or science, while women are interested in social and artistic choices like nursing and teaching.

Gender Identity

The concept of gender identity is understood has unsimilar to gender stereotypes. The meaningful selfness is a part of motives on gender-related behaviour. Ashmore, Del Boca, and Wohlers (1986) stated that a person with a more masculine identity should act more masculine, it will lead to behaviours motivation on more masculine for instance in manner behaviours are more dominant, autonomous, and competitive. Gender identity is different from gender attitudes that are the views of others or situations commonly associated with one's gender such as men thinking in terms of justice and women thinking in terms of care (Gilligan, 1982). Even though, gender roles, gender stereotypes and gender attitudes give big influence on gender identity, they are not similar or identified as gender identity (Spence and Sawin 1985).

METHOD

This study used qualitative approach which focuses on Narrative Inquiry towards Indonesian male nurse who is selected by using purposive sampling. An Inquiry mode through Narrative Inquiry related to Amon (2017) about framework of women career narratives. In this inquiry process, the researcher did a semi structured interview in sequences questions, related to the background process, the challenges that she encountered and the life strategy that she focused on facing many factors towards the dilemma of being nurse. Moreover, Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle (2010) stated that in Narrative Inquiry the way how to analyse and interpret the data will involves researcher reviews the data multiple times to select and organize the information for retelling the individual's story and establishing a chronology of events and ideas. Data analysis includes

search themes within each story or across participants and examination of strategies and voices used by participants to tell their stories. here, reviewing data many times and selecting information will be the essentials steps of analysing the data in order to establish and portray the correct chronology story from participant individually. In these circumstances the evocative storytelling will be clearly delivered by the researcher.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Indonesian Gender Stereotype towards Masculinity

Indonesian has portrayed the gender stereotype in specific way towards femininity and masculinity. The gender stereotype is having much influence of patriarchy cultural background. This patriarchy set a segregation on gender stereotype which clearly define in two different stereotypes, femininity on female and masculinity on male. In this point of view the researcher focuses on masculinity gender stereotypes point of view in Indonesia. Religion and educational system that exist in the society led this society having particular portrays on the meaning of male and female. Through this institution, society see masculinity and femininity in such special ways and being a cultural model, which can create very specific gender stereotypes which being familiar to be copied in every single aspect in many life sectors. As mentioned above, Indonesian has a particular characteristic towards masculinity and femininity in a various definition and temporal, it sometimes depending on the archipelago regions and local wisdom (communities) shifting. The researcher took the two understanding of masculinity in some regions in Indonesia as a clear portray, from Javanese and Buginese. Moertono (2009) stated Javanese, the things that man should have honour towards some qualities of work, wife/wives, weapon, status, transportation parts and aggressive character. Similarly, Oetomo (2000) stated that men always acting as heads of families, operating in the public sphere, and not being responsible for the upbringing of children or the sharing of household work. Moreover, Idrus (2004) stated that some traditional Buginese norms of masculinity in Makassar, a man is should be brave-*warani*, means family protector; clever-*macca*, family role model; wealthy-*sugi'*, family treatment; and religious-*panrita*, family guider.

Based on those understandings, it can be clearly summarized that masculinity in Indonesia force a man to be very strong individual who can protect other members of family in a small scale and society in a bigger scale.

Indonesian Gender Stereotype towards Occupation

Gender-based job stereotypes are forming for two reasons: (1) the number of men and women who do the work (Eagly & Steffen, 1984); and (2) personality or qualities deemed necessary to perform the job (Cejka & Eagly, 1999). The first cause of the formation of gender-based job stereotypes is that there is an assumption that to be successful in doing a

job, one must have feminine qualities or masculine qualities. Feminine and masculine qualities are a collection of various behaviours and competences classified by society based on observations in the social environment.

Based on the results of community observations, someone with a female gender identity is more involved in work which concerning the sector in people's welfare fields. While doing the job, the job performer shows certain characteristics such as: affectionate, caring, nurturing, friendly, unselfish, and expressive. The unity characteristics is called as communal characteristics and has strong relation to femininity. In this case, people identified that feminine qualities are needed to do jobs concerning the sector in people's welfare fields and threaten of other human beings as a part of social interaction in the society. Meanwhile, the community observations said people with male gender identity are involved more in work related to physical activities which involve competition. In occupation point of view, the job performer shows certain characteristics such as self-confidence, assertiveness, control, independence, ambition, dominance, and competitiveness. This unity characteristics is called as agentic characteristics and has strong relations to masculinity (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). In this case, society assume that masculine qualities are needed to do jobs related to competition and physical power.

In Indonesia the strong stereotype towards gender occupation is already existed. Some people always seen the successful occupation always by the gender of workers. Nurse, here, is seen in the portray of female nurse. It can be seen in some textbooks in everyday curricula. The textbook cover is taken from the document of Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture. In this book cover nurse is identified in female character. In other cases, one of the chapters in textbooks about the "Profession" taken from English books in courses platform in Indonesia. It also defined the nurses as female cartoons and characters.

The Chaos

Cejka & Eagly (1999) clearly stated that a person is considered to have feminine or masculine qualities in him to be successful in doing a job. Masculine qualities are agentic characteristics. Some points of agentic characteristics are self-confidence, assertiveness, control, independent, ambitious, dominant, competitive. While feminine qualities are communal characteristics, some points are concerning the sector in people's welfare fields and threaten of other human beings as a part of social interaction in the society, such as giving affection, caring, nurturing, friendly, unselfish and expressive. This characteristics is understood as communal characteristics.

When someone does a job that has masculine stereotypes, people who have masculine qualities in themselves will be considered more successful in doing the job. Because masculine qualities are qualities that are associated with the male sex, society assumes that men are more suitable

for doing the job. On the other hand, people who do not have qualities that match the stereotype of the work they do are considered to have smaller opportunities to be successful in doing the job.

Another impact of gender stereotype is that there are differences in job preferences which end in job segregation between men and women. Gender expression is often associated with behavioural expectations of men and women in traditional gender theory. Based on the stereotypes formed by society, Heilman (2012) women should show feminine gender expression and should do feminine work. On the other hand, men based on prescriptive stereotypes should show masculine qualities and should do masculine work.

In this case, Antony is a male. In society perspective, nurse should be a woman who can patiently taking care the patients. Male tends to difficult to be patient towards other people. But then Antony said *"there is no differences towards this human being characteristic, I can be as patient as women"*. He also explained that his motive towards this occupation is to be someone who more dedicated towards society, taking care himself and his family in the right way. *"I decided to be a nurse since I can help many people, I can taking care my family health and I can implement the nursing knowledge towards myself, so I will be a fully-healthy human being"*. Based on his explanation, the other roles of masculinity have been seen through his statement, he is also a good father towards his family. Another gender stereotype portrays also seen when he told having unique experience, sometimes he will be also an ambulance driver when the real driver cannot go to the hospital. Since he is male, understood more skillful to drive bigger car. He cannot bargain the situation and should have a huge responsibility related to gender stereotype-be a male and skillful driver.

The Life Strategy towards Barriers

Being a male nurse always facing up more challenges, towards gender stereotype. The most different is that male nurse identified having more time than female. Preparing himself on night shifting is always no choice. The stereotype understood that man has no particular responsibility towards taking care the house and taking care the children. *"Every day, I should prepare more time for social activity (medical sector) rather than for my family or even myself"*. Another barrier is that female nurse identified more diligent than male one. *"I always push myself to learn and open towards new medical knowledge and cases, so that I will never left behind towards my male friends"*.

At first his self-motivation and self-experience bring him into an official male-nurse. The roles of occupation, his belief towards this role, and his implementation towards himself, his family and society build his own gender identity. In building his gender identity, the plot of his life when his father passed away and left many questions for him towards the medical reasons why his father passed away in this crush accident is the key event

of his decision-making background. He believed that by involving himself as a medical worker, he will find all the questions which still step up in his mind in his whole life. This gender identity that led him into the braveness on breaking up the gender stereotype that exist in his cultural background. Including the point of choosing higher education major and also occupation that he believed as a part of his own interest. The specific life story built very strong motivation towards someone's career choice.

CONCLUSION

In the society, the existence of gender stereotype-based occupation related to masculinity and femininity is undeniable. Positive and negative impacts toward the gender stereotype are always there, depends on the individual. In special case, like Antony, it brings much more benefits towards his life and his surroundings. Avoid gender discrimination should be equal both male and female. Every single occupation will be led into the goal of choosing this job, not about the gender stereotype based. Taking wider perspective towards this phenomenon, education will take a big part on building up the society perspectives towards gender stereotype that have already existed. Teacher understandings towards multicultural education on the relation with gender issues are the basis competences that should accommodate. Government should be better on providing a suitable curriculum and textbooks in school which are involving open gender understandings across male and female, not based on the gender stereotypes.

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