

## DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHY STUDY ON CONVERSE SHOE ENTHUSIAST GROUPS ON SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this research is to obtain an overview of the communication and interaction patterns occurring within the Converse fan group, Converse Head Indonesia, using the critical-constructivism paradigm. This study employs a digital ethnography strategy with a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews and observations of the group's activities on their Facebook fan page. Through interviews with six informants selected purposively and using the snowball technique, it was found that social interactions among CHI members are grouped into nine dimensional categories based on interview questions. The results reveal that members join the network to socialize and gain access to the latest Converse products, including benefits, price information, and where to obtain them. From the interactions among CHI members, exclusivity, value standards, appearance standards, and ethics were also identified. Lastly, it was found that the interactions within the CHI group predominantly emphasize economic values.*

### KEYWORDS

*Communication Pattern, Interaction, Reality Construction, Social Media Network, Digital Ethnography.*



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## INTRODUCTION

Fandom or a fan community is a part of consumption culture that has a strong social nature because a fan generally does not favor something alone, but always together with other people. This point shows how fans are the most loyal consumers in a market, they always absorb any product thrown into the market by the industry just for fun. The discussion of fashion is not only about clothing and the addition of jewelry accessories such as bracelets and necklaces. Other functional items combined with unique and sophisticated design elements can become tools that showcase and boost the wearer's appearance (Hendariningrum, 2014). The existence of the internet then encourages the growth of online communities beyond geographical boundaries which shows one form of modern society, modern society in the digital era is an information society with the support of Information and Communication

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technology that continues to network and continues to grow (Kristiyono, 2017). Non-members can access information available to members, increasing the likelihood that they will gradually identify with and become members of the community. These communities can trigger a sense of community in individuals, even without direct interaction with other members. Communities of a brand for example tend to have deeper and closer relationships than those who do not. Initially people used the internet only to search for data and information, but one of the internet features, namely social media networks including twitter, instagram, facebook, is increasingly popular and provides benefits to its users, because in addition to being able to display audio-visual content that bridges non-face-to-face communication, it also directs user content in specific directions, such as spreading culture and becoming a lifestyle, education, art and also for business purposes such as transactions, marketing and advertising.

One of the fan groups formed and developed through social media networks is the Converse shoe fan group. Before forming a group in 2014 under the name CHI (Converse Head Indonesia), in 2013 this community was already formed under the name WLC (We Love Converse). The formation of the community was initiated by a person named Dani who lives in Surabaya. In addition to the formation of CHI in 2014, that year was also the year of the formation of CHI in the Surabaya region, with the tagline "Keep Cons Keep Dirty". For sneakers fans, there is a jargon that they popularize, which is "shoes should not be dirty, but sneakers can be dirty; therefore wear sneakers do not wear shoes". This is more or less the message to be conveyed with the tagline "Keep Cons, Keep Dirty". The purpose of this community was formed, in addition to networking between fellow Converse wearers or lovers, also to discuss matters concerning Converse trends such as types and designs, even designers. This community also has a high spirit of friendship. As evidenced by one of the interviewees we met, showing the spirit of sharing information about Converse with enthusiasm and friendliness. In their obsession with Converse shoes, the members of this community have a diversity in their interest in types of Converse shoes including the design or series. The informants said that the use of Converse shoes is adjusted to activities in their social environment, such as in certain rooms, namely the workplace, during sports activities, gathering with friends who in each activity always pay attention to the appearance of clothing combined with different types of shoes. Clothing has the delivery of messages and imagery for the affirmation of various social functions in social transformation (Barnard, 2017; Hinton, 2013). Fashion also has a function to show social status and standardization of norms through its use (Fionda & Moore, 2009).

Fan groups or fandoms are those who seek intimacy through their favorite objects, through actions embodied in objects (Hapsari, P., Manuring, S and Dewi, 2017). For example, the Converse shoe fan community will feel proud and benefit from being able to exchange information about new Converse shoe trends in their group, especially through social media networks. As the journal literature entitled "Sentiment Analysis of Virtual Brand Communities for Effective Tribal Marketing" written by Xema Pathak and Manisha Pathak-Shelat uses Qualitative and quantitative approaches in finding the content of the context of answers related to virtual brand communities. The qualitative method used in this study, which uses a search

for sentiment content spread across social media. That there are comments and writings from social media users in a community, can be categorized from the content of the content and the reasons why they join the virtual brand community. Then, from the quantitative aspect of categorizing the emotional sentiment content of these media users, by making details of statistical data analysis and statistical applications used. The findings of the study are that there is a sense of love for a particular product by looking at the sentiment and emotional nature of social media users, forming a mutual trust and unity between each member. So that the product has a greater image compared to other competing products.

Research on certain brand fan groups on social media networks has been conducted several times by previous researchers. One of them is a study entitled "Why People Use Online Social Media Brand Communities (A consumption value theory perspective)" written by Puneet Kaur, Amandaeep Dhir, Risto Rajala, and Yogesh Dwivedi in 2017. This research discusses the success and survival of online communities that depend on the presence and active participation of members and users. The focus of this research observation is to ensure the participation of active social media users and how to retain users to remain. The methodology used in this research is a survey with a quantitative approach and uses empirical investigation instruments. This study uses the framework of consumption value theory, to examine the relationship between different measures of epistemic value, emotional value, social value, continuation intention and activity level. The sample size was 577 users in an online social media brand community using structural equation modeling. The results showed that emotional and social values have a partial influence in predicting users' intention to continue using online social media brand communities, so that the goal of increasing social status and pleasure can encourage users' continuation intention. In addition, the results show that the construct of pleasure (e.g. hope, happiness, excitement) has been used to investigate the impact of emotional values. The results of this study have gaps that can be criticized in terms of the motivation behind these online community activities that have the potential to influence user intentions. This preliminary research can also be developed to make further research, by validating the findings by expanding the sampling of users who are more diverse in terms of age and cultural background.

Research related to shoe fan groups is entitled "The meaning of fashion: Lifestyle study on the Indonesia Sneakers Team Surabaya community". From this research, it is explained that a shoe in fashion is not only a function as footwear or foot protection but also explained that it is a social interaction. In addition to talking about an individual's penchant for shoes, in extracting information obtained from deepening other sources in the study, it was also explained that there were findings regarding the meaning of fashion being the value of increasing one's social status. This research method uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological perspective. Interesting findings in this research journal, although there is an element of hobby that underlies their desire to buy shoes, there is an element of showing the identity and identity of members to others (Sarhub, 2019).

In a study entitled "The Influence of C2C Communications in Online Brand Communities on Customer Purchase Behavior" measures how Online Brand Community (OBC) or online brand communities with a focus on understanding

customer-to-customer (C2C) communication, maintain Online Brand Community as a communication facility. This research tests the online C2C communication model in developing the desired online brand community (OBC) results. The theoretical framework used to measure OBC and C2C is Online C2C Communication Quality, Uncertainty Reduction, Customer Purchase Behavior and Valence of Information Exchanged. The method used in this research is quantitative with a sample that is mostly male, only two of the 212 samples are female. The data collection method uses the focus group discussion technique. The results show that online brand communities are an effective tool for influencing sales, regardless of whether these communities are on company-owned or self-owned websites. The analysis in this study shows there is an asymmetric effect where positive information shared by community members has a stronger moderating influence on purchasing behavior than negative information. In addition, this study found that online brand communities are an effective customer retention tool to retain experienced customers as well as novices (Adjei et al., 2010).

In a previous research journal entitled "I wear, therefore I am: investigating sneakerhead culture, social identity, and brand preference among men", there are many findings that help marketers in seeing an identity, uniqueness and reference to the community of shoe lovers. In the study, interviews were conducted with teenagers living in New York who were considered to have a passion for fashion. Interestingly in the findings, although economic conditions also affect a person in participating in a community, it is not a determining factor for individuals in buying shoes. The influence in the shoe community phenomenon is largely supported by the symbolic value of athleticism, sports, music and masculinity. By wearing the same shoes as a certain figure or group will create a communication that is felt by the user. It was also found in the study that shoe wearers feel present and contribute to the cultural changes that are happening. (Matthews et al., 2021)

Based on some preliminary research results that have been explained, generally fashion fan groups, especially shoe fans who mostly use the medium of communication through online media, are motivated by the desire to improve social status and have identity and social symbols related to certain brands in the eyes of others. But is it true that the fashion fan groups that have been studied in previous research are just the desire of their members to have a certain identity and social status by following the culture of the countries that are the center of fashion trends, or actually behind it there is an industry that will benefit more? The research that has been conducted generally uses a quantitative approach. Even if it uses a qualitative approach, the perspective used is phenomenology or more exploring individual experiences. To obtain novelty, this research will examine the group of Converse shoe fans with a qualitative approach using an ethnographic perspective to further explore the patterns and processes of communication in the group as well as the meanings behind the interaction and group communication carried out. Ethnographic studies require certain methods in communication media research to deeply analyze subjects in digital society (Kaun & Uldam, 2018).

Previous studies found generally did not discuss and did not explore in terms of cultural penetration or even external cultural imperialism towards members of fan groups in interacting on social media networks. Before the covid-19 pandemic,

previous studies on communication and social interaction in hobby-based community groups of members were usually carried out conventionally by conducting interviews and observations directly and face-to-face. However, during this pandemic, the novelty of this study is also characterized by in-depth interviews and observations conducted by researchers online, by interacting with the social media accounts of the community under study. The paradigm used is also different from the research that has been done. This research chooses a critical constructionism perspective, wanting to dig deeper than just the facts found.

Based on this background, the formulation of this research problem is to examine the Digital Ethnographic Study of the Converse Shoe Fan Group on Social Media Networks, with the aim of knowing the communication patterns and meanings constructed by members of the Converse shoe fan group in interacting on social media networks. For this reason, researchers conduct intensive fieldwork where researchers immerse themselves in the culture under study, because ethnography is not only an observation method, but a way of seeing. (Patton, 2014). Ethnography is also a qualitative methodology suitable for studying the beliefs, social interactions, and behaviors of groups of people. It involves participation and observation over a period of time, and interpretation of the data obtained (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses the critical-constructivism paradigm, which aims to explore communication patterns, the meanings behind the interaction of members of the Converse shoe fan group, Converse Head Indonesia (CHI) on social media networks, and analyze the values that are constructed and shared by members of the Converse shoe fan network when interacting (Heiner, 2006). With this paradigm, researchers try to explore and translate the meaning behind the actual interaction process in the Converse Head Indonesia group.

The method used is qualitative with data collection techniques conducting observations and interviews with members of the Converse shoe fan group, namely members of Converse Head Indonesia. In line with the researcher's interest in wanting to further examine the converse shoe fan network group on social media networks, by looking at communication patterns and the exchange and construction of meaning that occurs when these converse shoe fans interact, an ethnographic search strategy is used, especially on social media.

Conducting an ethnographic study of Converse Head Indonesia members during the Covid 19 pandemic, caused the researcher to choose a digital ethnographic study using internet technology. This is also a novel aspect of this research that distinguishes it from traditional ethnographic studies, which usually involve observations in the field. Internet technology allows researchers to observe various behaviors, activities, communication patterns and discussions of the Converse Head Indonesia group that appear on their Facebook fan page, for example, the content of talks or discussions about Converse shoe products that will be launched, price information and where it can be obtained; or ideas for making meetings or events. The core of ethnography lies in the presence of researchers in the field, both online and directly on the site. This means that the researcher will

record events in field notes, make observations, reflections, and interim reports while in the field (Kaur et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, the selection of informants for online interviews was carried out using purposive and snowball techniques, namely getting informant contacts from other informants, which ensured that informants wanted to be interviewed and were more open. The data obtained from observations and interviews were then analyzed using the dialectical process approach in constructing reality from Peter Perger and Thomas Luckmann, namely using the stages of externalization, objectivation and internalization (Berger Peter & Luckmann, 1966).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The research data obtained from interviews with six members of Converse Head Indonesia (CHI) have been categorized based on the dimensions derived from the research questions. By using the critical-constructivism paradigm, the interaction and social communication patterns in the Converse CHI shoe fan group will be analyzed. What meanings are constructed and who actually dominantly constructs symbols and meanings in these interactions, then the conceptual framework of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann's reality construction will be used with the dialectical process of externalization, objectivation and internalization.

### **Background of Joining Converse Head Indonesia (CHI)**

Of the six informants, five explained that the background of joining the CHI group was due to interest in Converse shoe products, which the informants have known for years. There are informants who say they joined CHI in order to get information about new Converse shoes, especially editions that did not enter Indonesia, how much they cost and where they can be obtained. Another informant said he joined CHI because he liked Converse and wanted to collect it, so he needed information from other members. Another informant considered that Converse shoe products were his style, so it was very suitable to support his appearance. And one informant who is the Chairperson of CHI stated that he wanted to have a forum for Converse shoe fans so that they could exchange information with each other. All informants have reasons for joining CHI to expand social networks and friendships, which ultimately provide mutual benefits. For informants, being able to have access and network with large collectors is very valuable. So for informants, apart from getting access and information about Converse products, the background of joining CHI is for social networking reasons and making new friends who have something in common.

From the research findings related to the background of informants joining the CHI group, it can be seen that basically the informants want to express themselves when interacting with their social environment, and strengthen this existence to the community with social attributes as CHI members. In this stage, society is formed as a human product (society is a human product). From the activity of expressing oneself to the community environment, it becomes an objective reality because there is a process of social interaction in the intersubjective world between CHI members and between members and other elements of society outside CHI,



which is then institutionalized in the role of CHI members and the value of the CHI group as a reality in society. At this stage society is seen as an objective reality (Society is an objective reality). Values and roles as members in CHI organizations that have been institutionalized in society and various other elements that have been objectified into the structure of the social world, are captured and reabsorbed by individuals as symptoms of reality outside of their consciousness, as well as internal symptoms for their consciousness. Through the internalization stage, humans become the result of society. (Man is a social product).

### **Group Exclusivity**

All informants generally recognize that the CHI group is a group that seems to have an exclusivity value that distinguishes it from other community members, because it has a special agreement that is only carried out by CHI members. What is considered the most different is that CHI members, as they call CHI members, have access and information to obtain rare or limited edition Converse products or even those that do not exist in Indonesia, through the CHI group. In addition, CHI only has 1 (one) Facebook account to interact, discuss, give and request Converse product information. In this Facebook account, members are prohibited from selling, including the code of ethics that must be obeyed by all members. Meanwhile, regional CHI members or organizations may have social media accounts, but on Instagram. To be able to sell, CHI management allows members to create a special fanpage account to sell products. The most important aspect of member identity is that they must wear original converse products, it is forbidden to use KW or non-original products. Members must also upload their photos on the Facebook fanpage when using original Converse products. And this is one of the ethics that members must obey. If you upload a photo using a product that is not original, it must be immediately deleted from the fanpage.

Regarding the meaning of exclusivity as a CHI member, basically the informants express themselves when interacting with their social environment, by showing this existence to the community, by showing exclusive values, which are specifically owned by CHI members, have special access to obtain rare products that do not even exist in Indonesia and have an identity as users of original Converse products.

The meaning of group exclusivity is also shown by the terms owned and only used by CHI members. For example, "Sneakers head" is a term for people who collect a lot of shoes. the term comes from America. Or there is the term "Legit Check, which is used to test the original item or not. And there is a tagline that is quite popular, namely "Keep Cons, Keep Dirty", meaning that even though Converse sneakers are dirty, they are still cool.

In the construction of reality, this stage is the externalization process. In the externalization stage of this individual, it is said that society is formed as a human product (society is a human product). From the activity of expressing themselves to the community environment, the values and specificity of the rights of CHI members become an objective reality because there is a process of social interaction in the intersubjective world between CHI members and other communities outside CHI, which is then accepted and institutionalized in society as a reality that exists

in society. At this stage society is seen as an objective reality. Values and exclusivity as members in the CHI organization that have been institutionalized in society, have been objectified into the structure of the social world, captured and reabsorbed by individuals as symptoms of reality outside of their consciousness, as well as internal symptoms for their consciousness. Through the internalization stage, humans become the product of society (Man is a social product).

### **CHI Members' appearance style**

One of the characteristics of CHI members' appearance that can be identified through observations and explanations of informants is that they have shared values or characteristics. Generally, members impress to appear current, exclusive, different from others. Even among fellow CHI members, they want to look different. There are members who hunt for rare products by shipping from abroad even though the price to be spent is more expensive, the important thing is to get exclusivity and prestige from products that are rare or not owned by others. There are also those who hunt for rare products from the 1980-1990 music series, for example the John Varvatos series in the rock'n roll style.

While other members describe, the general appearance of CHI members is young, casual, but fashionable. From the researcher's observation, one of the female informants does look up to date, with a pink hair color combined with a tinge of blonde and dark brown. The informant who painted her beautiful nails silver looks artistic. From the uploaded photos, the look is casual, yet unique when combining a modern kebaya with her Converse shoes. There are also photos that show a sporty style, and uniquely this informant wears converse of different colors and motifs between the left and right (Pink et al., 2015). But the appearance that for some people is considered strange, but it looks stylish when those who wear it appear confident. There are other characteristics that are quite prominent from the appearance of female CHI members, usually casual and tomboyish, certainly in accordance with the Converse style, sometimes equipped with hats as accessories.

Regarding the appearance style of CHI members, without realizing it, there are dominant characteristics expressed by members. Basically, the informants express themselves when interacting with their social environment, by showing this existence to the community, by showing the values and display styles that characterize CHI members. In the construction of reality this stage is an externalization process. At this stage of individual externalization, it is said that society is formed as a human product (society is a human product).

From the activity of expressing the dominant appearance style to the community environment, the values and appearance style of CHI members become an objective reality because there is a process of social interaction in the intersubjective world between CHI members and society, which is then accepted and institutionalized in society as a reality that exists in society. At this stage, society is seen as an objective reality.

The similarity of values and appearance styles as CHI members that have been institutionalized in society, have been objectified into the structure of the social world, and are captured and reabsorbed by individuals as symptoms of reality outside of their consciousness, as well as internal symptoms for their consciousness.



Through the internalization stage, humans become the product of society (Man is a social product).

### **Benefits of Joining CHI**

From the social interaction and communication carried out in the CHI group, informants generally express the same thing in terms of the benefits of joining CHI, namely, getting easy access to rare products. One informant shared how valuable and prestigious it is to be able to get Converse Wiz Khafila products, of which there are only two products in Indonesia. While other informants can also get information to hunt for rare products from CHI. Some of them got rare or rare products by chance, even though X one piece products are rare, even informants who are sellers did not manage to get them. Through CHI there are usually offers to join purchase orders (PO), limited edition products.

For CHI members, looking for rare products has become the same need. Without realizing it, they use symbols that are shared and interpreted together as a result of interaction. Without realizing that there are dominant characteristics expressed by members. Basically, informants express themselves when interacting with their social environment, by showing this existence to the community, by showing the values and display styles that characterize CHI members. In the construction of reality this stage is an externalization process. At this stage of individual externalization, it is said that society is formed as a human product (society is a human product).

From the activity of expressing the same needs and standards for products that are of high value because they are rare to the community environment, the values of CHI members become an objective reality because there is a process of social interaction in the intersubjective world between CHI members and society, which then the value of rare products becomes valuable, accepted and institutionalized in society as a reality that exists in society. At this stage, society is seen as an objective reality.

The common value of a rare product as a valuable and high-value collection, which has been institutionalized in society, has been objectified into the structure of the social world, and is captured and reabsorbed by the individual as a symptom of reality outside his consciousness, as well as an internal symptom for his consciousness. Through the stage of internalization, man becomes a product of society (Man is a social product).

### **Participation in CHI Group Activities**

CHI members' participation in group activities is one of the social interaction platforms that will form symbols and meanings agreed upon and shared by CHI members. However, as a research limitation, when the covid 19 pandemic has been going on for almost two years, group activities that previously ran regularly, since the pandemic began to be rarely carried out. Usually every month there is a gathering activity to discuss articles about Converse. Article sources include sneaker hypebeast, solecollector, sneakers freaker, among others, discussing new products, limited edition products and where to get products both information about stores and in marketplaces that have collections. Or there is an anniversary of CHI center

or regional group, where at the event a display of converse products is made, either for display alone or for sale.

In some regions before the pandemic, gatherings were held every week. The last big gathering that was made was the East Java Regional Anniversary Celebration, where every region came and sent representatives. Or there is a Converse store opening, usually many regions are invited. In addition, every Friday there is an activity to check whether the product is original or fake, which is called "legit check". The term "legit check" is a term owned by CHI members and understood by all CHI members. "Check legit" activities are also usually held when there is an exhibition.

According to the confession of the informant who is also the Chairperson of CHI National, this CHI group has been invited and invited to cooperate by the Converse International distributor, namely MAP to make a Community collection display. In the informant's point of view, this activity is seen as symbiosis-mutualistic, because it is beneficial for CHI, especially for MAP which can utilize a large enough market from CHI members, which currently throughout Indonesia there are 51,000 members.

From the social interaction and communication carried out within the CHI group, especially through the implementation of events, exhibitions or group anniversaries, togetherness is formed as CHI members, including having agreed and shared values. For example, members have habits and terms that are formed together. For example, the term "legit check" to test the originality of the product. One thing that can be underlined is that in every meeting or event, members generally carry out buying and selling activities of converse products. There has even been cooperation with the international Converse distributor, MAP.

Members unconsciously express themselves to the environment using symbols that are shared and interpreted together as a result of interaction. Without realizing it, there are dominant characteristics expressed by members. Basically, the informants express themselves when interacting with their social environment, by showing this existence to the community, in this case placing Converse products as products of economic value. In the construction of reality, this stage is an externalization process. At this stage of individual externalization, it is said that society is formed as a human product (society is a human product).

From the activity of expressing the same values and standards of Converse products that have economic value, to the community environment, the values of CHI members become an objective reality because there is a process of social interaction in the intersubjective world between CHI members and society, which then the value of Converse products that have value, is accepted and institutionalized in society as a reality that exists in society. At this stage, society is seen as an objective reality.

The common value of Converse products with economic value, which has been institutionalized in society, has been objectified into the structure of the social world, and is captured and reabsorbed by the individual as a symptom of reality outside his consciousness, as well as an internal symptom for his consciousness. Through the stage of internalization, man becomes a product of society (Man is a social product).

### **Emotional Connection Between CHI Members**

One of the traditions commonly applied in the CHI group when there are new members, it is common to do hazing or "pranked" in order to have emotional closeness with old members, so that new members quickly get to know old members. Another tradition is to accommodate members from out of town to stay overnight when visiting a city or if an event is held that has CHI members in that place. The closeness between CHI members is not just knowing each other, but there is a close emotional relationship like brothers. Usually members who are quickly recognized are members who often attend CHI events and like to gather with other CHI members. Moreover, CHI members in Jakarta still often hold meetings between CHI members.

In addition to using face-to-face communication patterns, for example CHI members routinely gather at Pasar Santa South Jakarta just to chat "ngalor-ngidul" and coffee, they also have communication groups on social media such as Facebook and Whatsapp. The meetings usually do not only talk about Converse. Another tradition is to hold a Steel Road event meeting, without sponsorship but to raise funds for one person IDR 100,000.

From the dialectical point of view of social construction, CHI members unconsciously express themselves to the environment using symbols that are shared and interpreted together as a result of interaction. In CHI groups where members already have an emotional connection, without realizing it, there are trust values that are embedded due to intense and close interaction. Basically, the informants express themselves when interacting with their social environment, by showing togetherness and closeness as fellow CHI group members to the community environment. In reality construction, this stage is an externalization process. At this stage of individual externalization, it is said that society is formed as a human product.

From the activity of expressing the value of togetherness and emotional closeness between CHI members to the community environment, the values of togetherness of CHI members become an objective reality because there is a process of social interaction in the intersubjective world between CHI members and society. This communication pattern then becomes a characteristic and communication pattern owned by CHI, accepted and institutionalized in society as a reality that exists in society. At this stage, society is seen as an objective reality.

The value of togetherness and emotional closeness, which has been institutionalized in society, has been objectified into the structure of the social world, and is captured and reabsorbed by the individual as a symptom of reality outside of his consciousness, as well as an internal symptom for his consciousness. Through the internalization stage, man becomes a product of society (Man is a social product).

### **Individual Product Knowledge**

By interacting regularly both through social media and face-to-face, as well as communicating intensely in the CHI group, especially sharing information about Converse products, CHI members are well socialized and can distinguish which Converse products are original and which are not. The six informants stated that they can identify which Converse products are original, among others, by looking at the shape and feeling the material, then also the smell of the material and glue is

not pungent, while non-original products have a pungent smell. In addition, getting information on Converse products through the latest releases provides knowledge so that it can be known that products with certain models only issue certain colors, outside the colors in the release means that it is not an original product. The products released are not only shoes but also hats and T-shirts.

The informant also emphasized that CHI members have standards in caring for their Converse shoe collection, so they know exactly which products are original and not. Usually there are members who like to make articles on how to distinguish between original and non-original Converse sneakers, and post them on the CHI fanpage account. Even informants usually buy non-original products to learn the difference with the original ones.

For CHI members, recognizing original Converse products is already the same need as CHI members in general. They unconsciously use symbols that are shared and interpreted together as a result of interaction. without realizing that there are mutually understood characteristics related to original Converse products, which are expressed by members to other members. Basically, informants express themselves when interacting with their social environment, by showing that the CHI organization has certain standards, which are expressed to the community. In reality construction this stage is the externalization process. At this stage of individual externalization, it is said that society is formed as a human product.

From the activity of expressing the original Converse product standards to the community environment, these standards become an objective reality because there is a process of social interaction in the intersubjective world between CHI members and society, which then the original product standards become ethics that CHI members must adhere to. This standard is accepted and institutionalized in society as a reality that exists in society. At this stage society is seen as an objective reality.

The common value of the original product as a valuable and high-value collection, which has been institutionalized in society, has been objectified into the structure of the social world, and is captured and reabsorbed by the individual as a symptom of reality outside his consciousness, as well as an internal symptom for his consciousness. Through the stage of internalization, man becomes a product of society (Man is a social product).

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### **Personal Value**

By becoming a member of CHI, informants generally state that there is a sense of pride, especially when wearing Converse shoes, there is a sense of pride or prestige, and informants emphasize that Converse really supports their stylish appearance and adds confidence, and suits all conditions. Even on the fanpage there are those who upload photos using wedding clothes, but wearing sneakers.

Without realizing it, they use social symbols that are adopted and interpreted together as a result of interaction. Without realizing it, there are mutually understood characteristics related to Converse products that are cool and original for all events, which are expressed by members to other members. Basically, the informants express themselves when interacting with their social environment, by showing that the CHI organization has proud social values with certain standards, which are expressed to the community. In the construction of reality, this stage is the externalization process. At this stage of individual externalization, it is said that society is formed as a human product.

From the activity of expressing Converse product standards that have social value and proud meaning to the community link, these standards become an objective reality because there is a process of social interaction in the intersubjective world between CHI members and society, which then the Converse product standards that are considered cool and proud are accepted and institutionalized in society as a reality that exists in society. At this stage, society is seen as an objective reality.

The common value of Converse products as a valuable and high-value collection, which has been institutionalized in society, has been objectified into the structure of the social world, and is captured and reabsorbed by the individual as a symptom of reality outside his consciousness, as well as an internal symptom for his consciousness. Through the stage of internalization, man becomes a product of society (Man is a social product).

For CHI members, Converse products have become a necessity and boast the same as CHI members in general. Without realizing it, they use symbols that are shared and interpreted together as a result of interaction. without realizing that there are mutually understood characteristics related to original Converse products, which are expressed by members to other members. Basically, informants express themselves when interacting with their social environment, by showing that the CHI organization has certain standards, which are expressed to the community. In reality construction this stage is the externalization process. At this stage of individual externalization, it is said that society is formed as a human product.

From the activity of expressing the original Converse product standards to the community environment, these standards become an objective reality because there is a process of social interaction in the intersubjective world between CHI members and society, which then the original product standards become ethics that CHI members must adhere to. This standard is accepted and institutionalized in society as a reality that exists in society. At this stage society is seen as an objective reality.

The common value of the original product as a valuable and high-value collection, which has been institutionalized in society, has been objectified into the structure of the social world, and is captured and reabsorbed by the individual as a symptom of reality outside his consciousness, as well as an internal symptom for his consciousness. Through the stage of internalization, man becomes a product of society (Man is a social product).

### **Economic Value**

From the data obtained, as previously described, that social interactions carried out by CHI group members over time, construct various social symbols and meanings, both realized and not by members. From various explanations and activities carried out by CHI members, the end leads to interactions motivated by economic values, which even tend to dominate the interaction patterns of CHI members. This does not only happen to members who have a profession as a seller or seller of Converse products.

According to an informant who is a collector of Converse products and works as a seller, he usually sells his personal collection at a selling price that exceeds the purchase price. For example, the informant bought a Converse product for IDR 500,000, - he had already worn it, but finally sold it and the buyer wanted to pay a price of IDR 800,000, - because he liked the collection. He also admitted that he once received a leaked Converse shoe product for export to Japan, meaning that without being taxed, he only paid IDR 300,000-IDR 400,000, even though in Japan the price was many times higher.

Meanwhile, another informant admitted that being a CHI member has the opportunity to invest, especially by selling collections that are rare and difficult to obtain. This informant previously had a collection of 16 pairs of products, but 13 collections were sold, because many were interested, and of course sold at a higher price than the purchase price. On the other hand, with his access and network, the informant was able to get the price of a product sold in the store for Rp 800,000, which could be bought at a price difference of Rp 300,000 - Rp 400,000 cheaper.

Generally, the informants interviewed have sold their Converse shoe products at a higher price. Some became sellers because they were bored with their Converse products. But there are those who started as a fad, a hobby but eventually became sellers, and even own a Converse store in Surabaya. The informants are of the opinion that if you join a community, such as Converse, you must be able to take advantage.

From the search and observations and interviews conducted with research informants who are members of the CHI group, it was found that there was a fairly intense communication pattern carried out which ultimately constructed more economic values, although initially it was recognized by the informant, that the results



of interactions in the CHI group over time, constructing values of togetherness, expanding networks, sisterhood raises pride, but ultimately more colored by economic and investment values.

Basically, informants express themselves when interacting with their social environment, by showing that as members of the CHI organization they have opportunities to invest, which are expressed to the community. In the construction of reality this stage is an externalization process. At this stage of individual externalization, it is said that society is formed as a human product.

From the activity of expressing product standards that have high investment value, especially rare Converse products, to the community link, these standards become an objective reality because there is a process of social interaction in the intersubjective world between CHI members and society, which then these standards are accepted and institutionalized in society as a reality that exists in society. At this stage society is seen as an objective reality.

Interests to make CHI membership provide access to economic value, especially rare Converse products as valuable and high-value collections, which have been institutionalized in society, have been objectified into the structure of the social world, and are captured and reabsorbed by individuals as symptoms of reality outside of their consciousness, as well as internal symptoms for their consciousness. Through the internalization stage, humans become the product of society. (Man is a social product).

For CHI members, it is increasingly recognized that there is a growing interest in investing, especially for rare Converse products, which are increasingly being hunted and sought access to get them and used as an investment for resale. CHI members not only construct social values as a result of daily interactions. without realizing that there is more interest behind social interactions, namely economic interests that are more attractive than other social values. Moreover, from interviews conducted with informants it was found that currently many CHI members are also sellers. Not only that, CHI in some of its activities is in contact and cooperates with the industry, namely with the international distributor MAP. Although informants say, cooperation in the form of symbiosis-mutualistic, but actually who constructs reality in the CHI organization, which ultimately shifts the values and meanings constructed from interactions more towards economic values.

## CONCLUSION

Fan communities or Fandoms are part of a culture of consumption that has a strong social nature because a fan generally does not favor something alone, but always together with other people. This point shows how fans are the most loyal consumers in a market, they always absorb any product thrown into the market by the industry just for fun. One of the fan groups formed and developed through social media networks is the Converse shoe fan group. Who formed a group in 2014 under the name CHI (Converse Head Indonesia). The purpose of this community was formed, in addition to networking between fellow Converse wearers or lovers, also discussing matters concerning Converse trends such as types and designs, even designers.

Based on some previous research results, generally fashion fan groups, especially shoe fans who mostly use the medium of communication through online media, are motivated by the desire to improve social status and have identity and social symbols related to certain brands in the eyes of others.

Conducting an ethnographic study of Converse Head Indonesia members during the Covid 19 pandemic, caused researchers to choose a digital ethnographic study using internet technology. This is also an aspect of the novelty of this research that distinguishes it from conventional ethnographic studies.

The questions to informants in the study were grouped in theme groups: Background of Joining Converse Head Indonesia (CHI), Group Exclusivity, Appearance Style of CHI Members, Benefits of Joining CHI, Participation in CHI Group Activities, Emotional Relationships Between CHI Members, Individual Knowledge Related to Products, Personal Value, and Economic Value. From these questions, the research results show that basically the informants want to express themselves when interacting with their social environment, and strengthen this existence to the community with social attributes as CHI members. Exclusivity in this stage of reality construction as an externalization process. At the externalization stage of this individual, it is said that society is formed as a human product (society is a human product). From the dialectical point of view of social construction, CHI members unconsciously express themselves to the environment using symbols that are shared and interpreted together as a result of interaction. Interests to make CHI membership provide access to economic value, especially rare Converse products as valuable and high-value collections, which have been institutionalized in society, have been objectified into the structure of the social world, and are captured and reabsorbed by individuals as symptoms of reality outside of their consciousness, as well as internal symptoms for their consciousness. Through the internalization stage, humans become the product of society. (Man is a social product).

In this study, the researcher feels that there are limitations considering that in conducting interviews with informants in the Facebook social media group, there is no closeness due to limited time in conducting research. The researcher suspects that there is a side of industrial perception that enters the Converse Head Indonesia Group's Facebook social media group and without realizing it, group members have influenced giving symbolic meanings in order to get profits (profitable) for the Converse shoe company. Of course, this is open to future research.

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