

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of Choosing the Subject

Woman is one of the marginalized groups in society. As one of the most disadvantaged groups of people, women are often faced with discrimination due to their gender resulting in gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is defined as the unequal treatment of an individual based on their gender identity (Page et al., 2022). The issue of gender discrimination, differences in status, and power between men and women persists to this day. It resulted in unequal treatment and limited participation in societal activities, leading to exclusion, limited resources, and affecting their decision-making and it has been an ongoing issue worldwide.

Furthermore, the gender identity refers to how an individual chooses to express the perceived social expectations of their gender (Page et al., 2022). Gender identity of someone is often presumed to be gender stereotypes. For instance, women are often characterized as communal such as kind, sensitive, and relationship-oriented, while men are characterized as agentic, dominant, ambitious, and goal-oriented. The stereotypes lead to gendered expectations of men and women. Gender expectations of men and women can lead to role segregation (Page et al., 2022). As stated above, it means women are represented in many

communal roles or positions such as teachers or a nurse but not represented in agentic positions such as military or engineering.

Many women still experience gender discrimination in various ways on how it is delivered. Gender discrimination can be delivered directly or discretely. Direct or overt discrimination is an unabated expression of prejudice toward a particular group such as the use of demeaning language that relates to someone's gender (Page et al., 2022). Meanwhile, discrete or covert discrimination is more subtle and difficult to identify because it typically involves jokes, avoidance, or other disrespectful treatment.

The deep-rooted patriarchal culture is one of many gender discrimination factors especially among women in a male-dominated field. Women who work in male-dominated fields often face unique challenges in the workplace, including "workplace backlash" and other forms of discrimination (Page et al., 2022). Women with higher levels of education and break into physically demanding male-dominated fields are represented as successful and hardworking. However, women should work harder than men to prove their capability to fit in. Women in male-dominated fields often experience a lack of support from their male colleagues. They may feel the need to adopt male behaviors to establish interpersonal relationships with them to address gender discrimination.

Moreover, within the patriarchal culture, the notable movement that countered it is called feminism. Feminism is a movement to gain

women's rights and liberation, rejecting all forms of marginalization and empowering women to develop further by fighting for the position of women in society. Bell Hooks (2000) defined feminism as a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression and as a liberation movement. The concept of feminism is connected to gender studies such as intersectionality study which focuses on women facing all forms of discrimination and oppression. This study shows the connection between gender issues and other social categories, such as race, age, social class, religion, and so on. Women face pressure from various directions and layered factors. Studies using this perspective are considered capable of mapping women's oppression.

Discrimination faced by women has different levels of strength that are determined by intersectional systems of society, such as race, ethnicity, social class, and others (Delavande & Zafar, 2013 as cited in Rosida & Rejeki, 2017). Social class is one of several factors that affect gender discrimination. The type of employment, education, money, and position a person possesses are factors that affect social class. Women from lower social levels frequently experience more prejudice than males from higher social strata. This implies that gender discrimination may be harsher for women who are struggling economically.

Moreover, the term intersectionality is often mentioned in topics about inequality. Intersectionality refers to multiple forms of discrimination such as racism, sexism, and classism that intersect or

combine in the experience of marginalized groups like women. The term and theory of “intersectionality” was initiated by Kimberle Crenshaw. According to a study by Utami (2021), the theory of intersectionality is the idea that when it comes to inequality, categories such as gender, race, and social class are best understood as overlapping and constitutive of one another, rather than being isolated and distinct.

Topics such as gender discrimination could be examined with the intersectionality concept because inequality can come from any direction, therefore, any unequal treatment can be in a form more than a race, gender, or class. There is limited research about how ethnicity or race impacts someone’s identity. However, the impact of gender on identity development has received much attention in psychological research (Chae, 2001). Understanding the complex relationships of gender, ethnicity, class, and other identities is essential to understanding identity formation.

As mentioned above, gender discrimination could affect the character’s identity development of an individual. It is recognized that day-to-day discrimination has a significant impact on women’s work experience and professional identity development (Yang, 2016). The identity growth of those who experienced gender discrimination is significantly shaped by intersectionality. It is also clear that gender stereotypes, sexism, and gender discrimination have an important impact on the career, identity formation, and development of women (Yang,

2016). Chae (2001) stated that female identity development revolves around who she can be with others, therefore, addressing the complex problems posed by gender discrimination in an increasingly varied and dynamic environment requires a thorough understanding of how intersectionality affects a character's identity development.

Identity development offers a lens through which we can examine how people create their sense of self within this complex web of social identities. A thorough knowledge of intersectionality and personality development connected to recognizing the influence of intersecting social identities, such as gender, race, or socioeconomic status, can significantly impact the development of one's identity.

In this undergraduate thesis, the researcher chooses a limited TV series entitled *The Queen's Gambit* (2020) which was produced in America as the subject of the study. *The Queen's Gambit* (2020) is a Netflix limited series with seven episodes based on a novel written by Walter Tevis and adapted to a series by Scott Frank, William Horberg, and Allan Scott. *The Queen's Gambit* (2020) represents the cost of the female genius of a young girl named Elizabeth Harmon who looks to chess as very much an escape and a way of life.

Beth Harmon's life journey as a woman in "*The Queen's Gambit*" showcases how she overcomes multifaceted challenges, ultimately shaping her personality through her mastery of chess. As a female chess player, Beth defies gender discrimination by asserting herself as a

brilliant and determined player. Her journey starts in an orphanage where she learns chess from the janitor, Mr. Shaibel who is getting cynical at first by throwing covert discrimination comments towards the main character. The series shows Beth's capacity to overcome social and personal hurdles, providing an empowering story of a young woman's ambition in a male-dominated field.

The researcher recognizes the intersection of gender discrimination factors in the main character connected with Beth's life as a woman pursuing her career and passion in a male-dominated world and how it affects Beth's personality development. The researcher considers it important to discuss and analyze this topic by using *The Queen's Gambit* (2020) as the object of the study with the urgency of illuminating the struggles faced by women in traditionally male-dominated fields by analyzing Beth's intersectionality of gender discrimination and the personality development stages that Beth experienced as a woman.

However, there has been no previous study that examined the intersectionality of gender discrimination experienced by the main female characters in the limited series *The Queen's Gambit*. This study aims to complement the gap from the previous studies that did not explore the gender discrimination of female characters from the perspective of intersectional feminism by considering the personality development dimensions of the main character's identity. Therefore, the present study intends to assist future researchers in understanding the intersectionality

of gender discrimination and its influence on individual personality development as depicted in *The Queen's Gambit*.

## **B. Problem Formulation**

In this undergraduate thesis, the researcher focuses on discussing some essential problems which are:

1. What are the intersectionality of gender discrimination experienced by Beth Harmon in *The Queen's Gambit*?
2. What are the identity development stages experienced by Beth Harmon in response to the gender discrimination in *The Queen's Gambit*?

## **C. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this undergraduate thesis are:

1. To analyze the intersectionality of gender discrimination experienced by Beth Harmon in *The Queen's Gambit*.
2. To analyze the identity development stages experienced by Beth Harmon in response to the gender discrimination in *The Queen's Gambit*.

## **D. Scope of the Study**

In this study, the researchers will analyze the intersectional discrimination of gender that is experienced by the main character of *The*

*Queen's Gambit* and how it affects Beth Harmon's personality development—the analysis in the discussion of the main character's discrimination through feminism approach using intersectionality theory by Kimberle Williams Crenshaw. The second theory is the psychosocial approach using Erik Erikson's stages of development theory.

#### **E. Review of the Related Studies**

In this review of related studies, the researcher tries to look for other studies that are relevant to the thesis topics about gender, discrimination, intersectionality, and how they affect the personality development of women inside the series of *The Queen's Gambit* to support the study. However, there are still differences in the related studies. This undergraduate thesis is a new work from the researcher with the sources of the related studies being thesis and journals.

The first article is from Nadya Malika Putri entitled "*The Main Female's Ambition in The Queen's Gambit by Scott Frank*". This thesis was approved by Universitas Diponegoro Semarang in 2022. The author of the thesis uses Maslow's hierarchy needs and psychoanalysis theory with qualitative methods to analyze the ambition of Beth Harmon. According to the author, the result of the analysis highlights two key findings. Firstly, the ambitious Beth Harmon faces conflict and challenges in chess competitions and is willing to do anything to win. Putri (2022) states that Beth's personality, who is always neglected by

the people she loves, becomes an orphan, lives with a lack of money, and does not like the feeling of being defeated, is the background of her ambition to become a grandmaster. Secondly, the research identifies how her ambition positively affects her character development. The differences of the first article with this undergraduate thesis are the differences between theory and topics. The similarity is how both research focuses on the main's character as a female in a male-dominated world. Furthermore, the result of the article helps the writing process of this thesis to examine the data of Beth Harmon's character development coming from her ambition.

The second article is from Aretha Gea Ardiansyah entitled "*Discrimination against Women in Sports in the Film Serial The Queen's Gambit*" This article was approved by Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta in 2021. The author uses qualitative methods with a semiotic analysis by Ferdinand De Saussure to obtain the data that indicates forms of discrimination towards Beth Harmon in the chess world. The analysis results show that *The Queen's Gambit* displays many forms of discrimination towards Beth as a professional chess player such as subordination, stereotypes, marginalization, double burden, and violence. Ardiansyah (2021) stated that Beth lived in a sexist environment, yet she broke the gender norms prevailing in the 1950s until the 1960s. The difference between the second article with this undergraduate thesis is the different use of theory. However, the similarity is the research purposes

to examine any form of discrimination experienced by Beth Harmon. It supported the topics of the undergraduate thesis as additional data scenes from the series.

The third article is from Mohammad Event Agustian entitled "*The Representation of Women in Chess World in Netflix's Serials The Queen's Gambit*". This article was approved by Universitas Bengkulu in 2021. The article's author uses a descriptive qualitative approach method and Pierce's semiotic theory to collect images and visual pieces of *The Queen's Gambit* that indicate women's representation in chess. The analysis results show three representations of women in the world of chess. Agustian (2021) stated that women in the chess world are often underestimated, discriminated against, and not considered to have skills equal to men. This article uses a different theory as the undergraduate thesis, however, the article proves some of the discriminatory acts towards Beth Harmon and supports the topics that are researched in this graduate thesis.

The fourth article is from Ida Rosida, and Lestari Rejeki entitled "*Woman in Patriarchal Culture: Gender Discrimination and Intersectionality Portrayed in Bob Darling by Carolyn Cooke*". This article was approved by Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in 2017. The author uses a descriptive qualitative approach, the concept of gender discrimination by Mansour Fakih, and the intersectionality concept by Kimberle Crenshaw to obtain and connect

discrimination between gender and social class. The results of this article show the effect of gender discrimination, including stereotyping, subordination, and violence experienced by the main character. The intersections of gender and social class make the patriarchal culture in women's lives more bound to them. Rosida and Rejeki (2017) proves that social class such as wealth, education, and occupation has a part in gender discrimination and it is not only about the gender itself. The difference between this article and the undergraduate thesis is the mental evidence. However, this article uses a similar theory as the undergraduate thesis on the intersectionality concept by Kimberle Crenshaw that would support the undergraduate thesis data on the key factors of gender discrimination in social class.

The fifth article is from Wilma Afrilia Rizky entitled "*Oppression Towards Main Female Characters in Rao's Girls Burn Brighter*". This thesis was approved by Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in 2023. The author uses a sociological approach to analyze women's oppression experienced by the main female characters in a novel entitled *Girls Burn Brighter*. The author applies Iris Young's theory of oppression to identify the forms of oppression and Kimberle Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality to identify the factors of oppression experienced by the main female characters. Rizky (2023) stated that the oppression experienced by female characters is influenced by the intersection of factors such as gender, social class, political power,

and cultural representation. The difference between this undergraduate thesis and the fifth article is the mental evidence. However, one of the theories matches the intersectionality theory applied to this undergraduate thesis. The similarity of the theory could help the researchers to collect the data of intersectionality of gender discrimination in Beth Harmon's character.

The sixth article is from Glorya Enjelita Lovely Kanine entitled "*An Analysis of Intersectional Discrimination against Male Rape Victims by A Female Perpetrator in the Korean Miniseries Witch at Court*". This thesis was approved by Universitas Katolik Soegijapranata in 2023. The author uses intersectionality theory by Kimberle Crenshaw and Turchik and Edwards's theory to analyze male victims of rape by female perpetrators who are discriminated against due to hegemonic masculinity and false beliefs about male rape. Kanine (2023) stated that intersectional discrimination refers to a situation where various characteristics that embody self-identities such as gender, sexual orientation, and class interact with each other. The male character experienced intersectional discrimination because of his sexual identity and the false belief that men can not be raped (Kanine, 2023). The difference between this undergraduate thesis and the seventh article is the topic circled male characters and false beliefs about a male character's sexual identity. However, the intersectionality theory applied and the results supported the undergraduate thesis data based on gender discrimination.

The seventh article is from Indah Purwaningsih entitled “*Psychosocial Development of the Main Character in Iwan Setyawan’s 9 Summers 10 Autumns*”. This thesis was approved by Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in 2020. The author uses a psychosocial approach to the main character’s life article to show the psychosocial condition of the main character using Erikson's theory to examine six of eight stages of personality development. Purwaningsih (2020) stated that the influence comes from family support and positive cultural aspects as the factors that lead to the main character's personality development. The difference between this thesis and the seventh article is in the main character’s gender that is being examined and there is no discrimination act based on gender involved in the eighth article as the main research purposes. However, both research applies Erik Erikson’s theory to analyze the conflict as the pin-point of the main character develops their personality.

The eighth article is from Mahendra Dani Ananda entitled “*Adolescence Crisis of Charlie in Chbosky’s The Perks of Being a Wallflower*”. This thesis was approved by Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in 2022. The author aims to discuss the adolescence crisis of the main character using Erikson’s personality development theory. The analysis reveals that Charlie successfully balances the adolescence crisis. Ananda (2022) stated that Charlie reevaluates his childhood crisis and balances his adolescence crisis in

which he can develop an ego strength called fidelity. The difference between this thesis and the seventh article is the article focuses on resolving the character's adolescent crises caused by his childhood crises with no discriminatory act involved. However, the analysis process of how the main character resolved his childhood crisis in the adolescent stage could support the thesis analysis on the identity vs. role confusion stage.

The last article is from Dessy Christin entitled "*The Adolescents' Search of Identity in 'Lady Bird' Movie as the Representation of Erikson's Theory of Identity Versus Identity Confusion*". This thesis was approved by Universitas Darma Persada in 2018. The author uses Erikson's theory of personality development, intrinsic and extrinsic approaches through characterization using qualitative methods to analyze the female main character Lady Bird's adolescent phase in searching for her identity. The author Christin (2018) stated that the female main character faced many conflicts such as a need for peer group recognition, and went through social and behavioral problems, going through pubescence, and experimenting with her role and personality as a teenager. The similarity between this thesis and the ninth article is that Erikson's theory is used to examine a female main character's personality development while the difference is spotted in how the researcher applies intrinsic and extrinsic elements and material evidence used.

All nine articles in the review have topics similar to this thesis which are intersectionality, gender discrimination, and personality development. The differences between each article above give various information regarding intersectionality, gender discrimination, and character development that will support the writing process of this undergraduate thesis.

## **F. Method of Research**

The researcher employs a certain approach to data collecting, data analysis, and data interpretation through three aspects including data sources, methods, and techniques for collecting and analyzing data. According to Yin (2016) in his book *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, The term "collecting" describes gathering or assembling materials (documents, objects, and archive records) relevant to the chosen study topic.

### **1. Data and Source of Data**

Data are the recorded elements resulting from some experience, observation, experiment, or other similar situations (Yin, 2016). The researcher collects the primary data in the form of a limited TV series entitled "*The Queen's Gambit*" (2020) directed by Scott Frank which was published on the streaming platform 'Netflix'. The series was adapted from the novel *The Queen's Gambit* by Walter Tevis. *The Queen's*

*Gambit* represents the life of a prodigy girl in the middle of a male-dominated sport. In addition to supporting primary data from the film, the researcher also has collected other data from related studies that the researcher found from online sources such as the script of the series.

## **2. Methods and Technique of Collecting Data**

Data collection was carried out by the researcher who watched in total seven episodes of *The Queen's Gambit* (2020) series several times. Yin (2023) stated that one of the potential data collection methods is observing. The researcher observes, gathers, and takes notes of the scenes related to the topic discussed in each episode. Yin (2023) stated that to decide what to observe, the relevant categories are the characteristics of individual people, interactions between or among people, the "actions" taking place, and the physical surroundings.

Besides observing, Yin (2023) stated that the researcher will have taken such notes in reviewing the literature as part of the preparation for designing a qualitative study. The researcher collects the relevant data from the observations by capturing the scenes, subtitles, and minutes of the scenes related to the intersectionality of gender discrimination and the main character's personality development.

### **3. Methods and Techniques of Analyzing the Data**

The researcher uses a qualitative method in this study to apply feminism and a psychosocial approach. The method is used to analyze and investigate the forms of intersectionality discrimination and analyze the impacts on the main character's personality development. From the data that are collected and organized, the researcher analyzes the data using the chosen method by observations; textual or visual analysis of the series "*The Queen's Gambit*" (2020).

In conducting the data observations, the researcher draws a connection between the data that have been collected. Yin (2023) stated that the analytical process will lead directly to the ability to draw the needed findings. In this study, the main concern is knowing the forms of intersectional discrimination and the impacts on Beth Harmon's character in *The Queen's Gambit* with intersectionality theory by Kimberle Crenshaw and Erik Erikson's personality development theory.

### **G. Presentation**

This undergraduate thesis research consists of four chapters. Chapter one is an introduction, consisting of the background of choosing the subject, problem formulation, the scope of the study, the objective of the study, review of related studies, methods of research, and presentation. Chapter two consists of a theoretical approach and theoretical framework. Chapter three consists of the analysis and the discussion of this research and contains an explanation of discrimination

using a feminism approach with intersectionality theory and personality development using a psychosocial approach with stages of development theory. Finally, chapter four is the results of the research conclusion.