PHOTO : IDENTITY AND COMMODITY
ON SOCIAL MEDIA INSTAGRAM

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Abstract

Many social media sites including instagram allow users to create a profile, upload, and share personal information, photos, music, videos, and other multimedia with their friends or followers' networks. Photos have the ability to bring the image, so the photo becomes a favorite visual medium that is often used as a way of speaking and communicating among fellow netizens in social media instagram. Instagramer enjoyed such opportunity to make themselves visible to, and heard by, diverse audiences. This study is foccused on how people present their identity through their selected photograph in social media instagram. Drawing from the datas, this research has shown that each individual enter the mediated phase of self-representation. Through the visual image of a photograph, the subject of the photo has their own mind to describe what kind of identity they want. Beside that, the creation of this identity is influenced by the pattern of social relations and interaction of the audience of the photographs. In other words, identity is something formed by society. So that "popular identity" is preferred by the community, a role model to create the identity of the photo owner in social media. Not only for the identity, Selebgram use their identity to get more follower. The number of followers make the best-selling instagram account owner is paid to promote various products, such as cosmetics, fashion, hijab, and gadget.

Keywords : *Photo, Identity, Dramaturgy, Commodification*

Background

The development of information and communication technology has changed the way individuals interact with other individuals. The internet becomes a new digital space that creates a cultural space. It is inevitable that the existence of the internet gives many conveniences to its users. Various access to information and entertainment from around the world can be searched via the internet. It penetrates the dimensions of user life, time, and space, accessible to anyone, anytime, anywhere. There was a cultural shift, from a traditional media culture that turned into a digital media culture.

Openness of the digital media culture era, especially in cyberspace, can make anyone who plays in it have the freedom to create identity without limit. Social media which is a place to socialize among the digital community of the virtual world, bringing anyone who enters it should display its identity to other netizens. Like people in real-life, someone who presents himself into the social media environment, should identify himself as "who", and build his world like "what", to be able to network with other netizens. However, due to its virtual nature, the people in social media can not make face to face interaction. So to be able to keep interacting with each other, they often use symbols that are visual in order to be able to represent messages and meaning.

One of the influential social media in Indonesia today is Instagram that beat the popularity of facebook. In January 2016, 'We Are Social' in his survey mentions Facebook is in second position with 15% active users, while Instagram is in 8th position with 10% active users. But at the end of 2016, in the Indonesian survey, The Device, Network & Application and Awareness Survey conducted by the Indonesian Telematics Society (MASTEL) and the Indonesian Internet Service Provider Association (APJII) mentioned that Instagram was used by 82.6 percent of respondents. Meanwhile, Facebook in the second position of 66.5 percent. This survey was conducted on 20 October to 20 November 2016. Questionnaires were given to 1,020 respondents spread across various regions in Indonesia. On average, Instagram users post 150 photos in a month, with more than 80 million photos and videos distributed globally every day, generating 3.5 billion likes per day - according to Instagram personal data shared to media audiences (Https://beritagar.id).

People use instagram to reveal their Self-presentation or often called impression management. It is an act of self-representation performed by each individual to achieve an expected self-image. This self-presentation can be done by individuals or can be done by individual groups / teams / organizations (Boyer, et al, 2006: 4).

Photo which is posted in social media instagram becomes a favorite visual medium that is often used as a way of speaking and communicating among fellow netizens. The use of photo medium as a creative process to represent messages and meaning, ultimately has an important position to present the identity of a netizen in social media. This study is foccused on how people present their identity through their selected photograph in social media instagram and how can this identity to be used as commodity in the contemporary of Indonesia.

Methods

This research is using qualitative approach. The design of this research is case study, by using digital ethnography to gain the data. A balanced combination of physical and digital ethnography not only gives researcher a larger and more exciting array of method to tell social stories, but also enable them to demarginalize the voice of respondence in these accounts.

Results and Discussion

A. Unlimited Identity

Photos have the ability to bring the image, so the photo becomes a favorite visual medium that is often used as a way to communicate among fellow netizens in social media. Photo has a crucial position to present the netizen's identity. Identity by Clap covers everything that a person can legally and reliably claim about himself - his or her status, name, personality, and past (Berger, 2010: 125). Social Identity Theory (SIT) according to Tajfel & Turner (Gudykunst, 2002: 225) aims that the individual has a concept in himself in socializing and identifying himself. Through photos, they can describe themselves like what, and build their world visually according to what they want. Photos are visual media that are openly accessible and used by anyone, and even for any purpose. As a consequence, social media is often used as an arena of producing mediated reality through the visual image of a photograph.

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Instagram, a social media that has a special content to store and share photos virtually, becomes a "stage" for anyone inside to express themselves through the visual reality created by a photo. In the dramaturgy concept, there are two types of stage, front stage and back stage (Ritzer and Goodman, 2008: 617). In his work entitled The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Erving Goffman (1956) states that individuals, called actors, present themselves verbally or non-verbally to others who interact with it. Self-presentation refers to the desire to show a person's desired image to both the private and public audiences. Goffman assumes that when individuals interact, they want to present a certain understanding of self that will be accepted by others. The photos posted on Instagram become front stage of the account owner's self. His friends or followers in Instagram who see and interact is the audience.

According to Goffman, the purpose of people doing dramaturgy is audience acceptance of manipulation. When the actor successfully performs his role, he will more easily bring the audience to achieve the purpose of the show performed. With a variety of selected photographs, the account owner seeks to retain the role he plays in the stage and displays himself as best he can in front of his audience in order to get a good impression or image.

Self image and identity in cyberspace is a duality that can not be separated from the life of digital society. Just as we often find people who perpetuate self-image with a variety of styles, aesthetics, and even in different locations, as a manifestation of one's self expression in social media. However, the self-portraits featured on social media instagram, not solely to perpetuate the image themselves. What is displayed in the self-image is a visual representation of the owner of the social media account. Thus, the self-portraits displayed carry the "identity" of the photo owner who becomes the medium of social relationships to network with other netizens.

Speaking of self-image and identity, in its development from time to time, self-image is inseparable from a person's life history. A self-image is a manifestation of a person's visualization into images. When a person presents himself in a photograph, it is often interpreted by society as a tangible proof of one's existence. So no wonder, if the people are competing to perpetuate a picture of himself at a certain moment, as if the evidence of the truth of his presence at a moment, event, and events experienced. Similarly, when we see how many photos of people who perpetuate a picture of themselves in an iconic place in a country, city, and popular places to prove himself had once explored the place. Or when we see people taking pictures of themselves in an important event moment, to perpetuate a picture of themselves in an event that does not want to miss. This leads us to a stigma, that "something trustworthy actually happens if there is a photograph"

B. Instagram, The Society of The Spectacle

The subject of the photo will have its own mind to describe what kind of identity it wants, through the visual image of a photo.This becomes interesting when viewed from a sociological point of view in cultural and media studies. As each self-image is displayed on social media, it is no longer an individual property, but a part of social reality, which can be witnessed by millions of pairs of digital people's eyes in it. This certainly reminds us of a spectacle show, which is a performer in action on stage attracts the attention of the audience,

then there is a group of spectators who witnessed the appearance and have the right to respond both good and bad.

During the show, the free expressionist displays what he wants on stage. However, despite the freedom of his expression, he expects the applause the audience gives as a form of appreciation for what he displays. That way, the viewer will definitely do the best possible to present the best performance. Such is the picture of self-image practice and identity representation in social media instagram, when viewed from the perspective of "The Society Of The Spectacle" by Guy Debord. A self-image viewer plays as a "performer" and netizens who watched the photo as a "spectator". Both have social relations mediated by image. The image referred to in this case is the "identity representation" displayed on self-portraits in social media, where the image becomes a commodity that has a "value" to display. The medium of this image is tended to use the public spectacle at this time to represent something.

In this phenomenon, it represents its identity. The social relationships between actors (spectators) in the spectator society mediated by this self-image, create an ongoing cycle of identity reproduction simultaneously. What the performers perform on the social media stage instagram, will present a response from the spectator who watched the photos. This response is "like" and "comment". Then, with these responses, the self-image performers can judge whether the pictures they display are good enough in front of the audience. If he feels that the displayed image is good enough, as it sees a benchmark of the many responsive feedbacks, the perfomer will attempt to present a better self-image, or even maintain the quality of the photographs to be loved by the spectator who witnessed it. This will form a representation of the identity of the performers who display through photos of him next.

Looking at this phenomenon, we can see that self-image does not merely serve as a means of reproducing identity that only leads to classical narcissistic behavior. Self-loving behavior is just an expression that is displayed through a self-image. But when the photo is spread on social media and belongs to all netizens in it, there are tendons that can create "social interaction" between people in cyberspace that is able to form self image from the photo viewer tesebut.

C. Instagram, Commodity and Commodification

According to blackwell reference online, Commodities are things that are useful, or that satisfy human needs. Commodities can literally be interpreted as a product or service of economic value by market. While commodification is a union between two words derived from commodities and modifications, meaning the change of function or form of a good or service, from non-economic value into something of fantastic value.

Speaking of popular identity, we can see from the tendency of what is displayed by the subject of self images in social media instagram represented by some informants in this study. Each of them has the same opportunity to display different identity characters one and another. This shows that however identity is represented through self-image, it is a manifestation of the "aesthetic taste" of the subject of the image that it wishes. Thus, the representation of identity that is presented through this self-image, they take it by trying to present the self-image as attractive as possible to the audience-the cyberspace community. Because the photos that feature an interesting self-image, bring the "existence" of the owner

of the social media account, which will determine the number of people who want to follow social media account activity to always watch the photos that will be displayed next.

It is this existence that ultimately invites much or no interaction that exists between the owner of the photo and the other netizens, who are facilitated in the form of response "like" or "comment". Interestingly, the large number of positive responses, triggering self-image owners to show more and better identity. They seemed motivated to compete to display photos of themselves more interesting than ever, to attract the sympathy of anyone who saw it. So no wonder, if many social media users who make various attempts to hunt for pseudo-pleasures get a virtual like empathy and positive comments. The tactics are done as well as listing the hashtags, uploading photos during primetime hours, writing catchy captions, or taking advantage of popular moments. More over, they are willing to embarrass or harm themselves, to the point of risking their lives just to get a photo With a perfect picture, which invites a lot of positive responses and to get a lot of follower. In social media instagram, known term "selebgram" (selebrity instagram) to call someone who has a fantastic number of followers. The number of followers make the best-selling instagram account owner is paid to promote various products, such as cosmetics, fashion, and hijab products.

According to Mosco, Commodification is the process of transforming something of value into a marketable product that can be sold, and communication is a social process of exchange, whose product is a sign or embodiment of social relations (Mosco, 2009: 67). There are two general dimensions that indicate a significant relationship between commodification and communication (Mosco, 2009: 130). First, technology and communication processes contribute to the general process of commodification in the economy as a whole. Second, the process of commodification in the working system of society as a whole to penetrate institutions and communication processes, so that increases and contradictions that occur in the process of commodification related to society will affect communication as a social practice.

In the context of this program, there are two types of relevant commodification, namely commodification of content and commodification of audiences. Content commodification refers to the process of commodification that occurs in the communication process where there is transformation of communication messages (data, meanings, thoughts, ideas) into products of value selling. The process of commodification in communication occurs through the process of transforming the original simple message into something full of meaning and appeal to the audience. Communication is a very big commodity because it is not only to get 'surplus value', but also contains symbols and images (Mosco, 2009).

Due to the messages that are full of meaning and contain symbols and images, celebrities in cyberspace are also called influencers, is people who give influence to the crowd, whose work is admired and his actions followed. Thanks to having many followers and subscribers, they are paid for by brands to promote products. In relation to content commodification, the workings of these influencers differ from conventional media. The influencers have the freedom to create original content that matches the objectives that a brand wants to achieve. The image of perfection is displayed in social media through photos and captions that are arranged in such a way, even 'enhanced' through various sophisticated editing features.

Regarding the commodification of audiences, they are not only treated as recipients of messages, but also part of tools for capital accumulation (Mosco, 2009: 136). Audience is formed as a commodity. In the internet world, the number of followers / subscribers has an important role as a benchmark of the magnitude of the impact or massive spread of a message. The more followers the more brands will pay for advertising and the greater the pay. No wonder if netizens compete to get followers, either by improving the quality and quantity of content, even through controversy, sensation, or buy-sell followers. The largest target market that the brand can easily reach via the internet is Generation Z. The Z genes represent the post-millennial generation, which is currently under 20 years old (born after 1996) and during its life has never been unfamiliar with the internet. They are a confident, independent, and high-powered generation. The high activity in the online world makes them more exposed to the reality created by celebrities

Conclusion

The self-image in social media instagram is particular, in which all the realities displayed are still images that are separate from the real-world reality. If the photographs ultimately bring the existence of the owner of the photo and can raise the self-image he possesses, it is merely a false pleasure that can be felt virtually

What is shown in social media, is the construction of mediated reality through visual imagery. So in the end we also realize, the representation of identity that is displayed through a photo of themselves in social media is a false reality that is celebrated. Uploading a photo of yourself seems to be an obligation done anywhere, anytime, and by anyone. So unwittingly, social media such as Instagram apps have the power to produce value, ideology, and culture, which ultimately "indoctrinates" the community groups to follow it.

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