**THE REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE WORKERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA OF INSTAGRAM**

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**Abstract.** This research aims at investigating the self-representation, and examining the identity of Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY) female lecturers in social media of Instagram. This research employs a qualitative method by conducting in-depth interviews with five informants namely, female lecturers who are members of the UNY Center for Woman Studies in 2019. The theories utilized in this research are James Marcia's identity theory, Stuart Hall's representation theory, and Erving Goffman's dramaturgy theory. The conclusion of this research is that the self-representation of the UNY female lecturers who are members of the UNY Center for Woman Studies depicts women who are active in presenting themselves as working women and housewives. Another conclusion is that the informants have undertaken an exploration when posting their public and domestic activities on Instagram and there was a strong commitment when uploading public and domestic activities on Instagram, with a sense of confidence, based on their own initiatives.

Keywords: Self-Representation, Identity, Female Workers, Social Media, and Instagram

1. **Introduction**

Media become a means that offers a space of freedom to express for its users and allows each individual to build a narrative of their life by bringing their own characteristics. For example, women, that is often subordinated in a patriarchal context, attempts to show their existence through social media. The term patriarchy is understood as a social system that places men as the main power holders, while women are positioned as domestic workers who are associated with the kitchen and home affairs.

The narrative about patriarchy which has already been institutionalized in Indonesia is tried to be balanced by the presence of female workers through the stories they share on social media. The existence of working women is proof that women also have the same opportunities as men do. Interestingly, some female workers frame their lives in the media by presenting a busy career woman without neglecting their daily life as a mother and wife

The presence of the media becomes a battle arena for women to build themselves through the representation of images and captions on social media. Talking about social media, there are many different types of social media and each has its own characteristics. Instagram for example, has become one of the most popular media used by women workers as it offers several interesting features such as *instastory* (Instagram story), photo editing and a page for writing captions. Caption is used to help explain the uploaded image. Moreover, the narration of the caption is created by users (women workers) with several considerations.

Unfortunately, the involvement of women in the public sphere or non-domestic work often leads to a controversy since women's roles are always placed in the domestic sphere [1]. This is in line with the results of Miloch's (2005) which shows that women workers experience a dilemma due to the encouragement given by senior female workers such as "be ready to choose between work and family, while at the same time, woman must prove themselves - able to be media workers - again and again "and" ready to do complex and hard work, so do not expect much for a social life or for children if you want to advance in this work " [1].

Referring to the previos research above, it cannot be denied that many working women nowadays are trying to establish their self-identity in order to get an acknowledgment that women workers can also accomplish domestic and public work, for example caring for children and completing all duties in the office. Therefore, there are many things that women workers consider when uploading content on social media of Instagram. For example, what will be conveyed, what are the reasons for choosing the photos to be posted, what is the motivation to upload the photo, and how to produce good-looking or interesting content using editing features. The narration which is created is enhanced with the addition of captions and hashtags adjusted to the uploaded photo.

Based on the dramaturgy theory introduced by Goffman, the social life of individuals is divided into "front regions" and "back regions". These two regions describe the role of each individual, both as a housewife and as a working mother. In the front area, women workers identify themselves as individuals who are independent, creative, and have activities outside domestic affairs. For example, 1) upload photos of working in the office; 2) attend meetings; 3) speak in the seminar; 4) work on reports in front of the computer; and 5) perform other non-domestic activities. While the back region, woman narrate herself on Instagram both in the post and *instastory* pertaining to their role as a mother, such as 1) preparing children's food; 2) telling stories about how to accompany their children to school; 3) showering the children; and 4) wearing clothes for their children.

How women workers represent themselves on social media of Instagram attracts the attention of researchers to thoroughly explore the discourse battle in the media between women as subordinate groups who try to fight against patriarchy. The resistance is represented by presenting a discourse on the work of women workers in the domestic and public spheres. Identity is built to convince the audience that being women workers should not be burdened with public activities but also be responsible for domestic affairs. What women workers represent on social media is the result of the ideal female image construction. However, identity is composed of identity status that is focused on four status that originate from the relationship between exploration and commitment [2]. This identity status will later indicate which individuals have a commitment. Similarly, the status of the women workers’ identity that plays a role in the domestic and public areas is presented through their uploads on social media of Instagram. Sometimes the commitment of women workers is high within the domestic space and low in the public sphere and vice versa.

The phenomenon of women workers also occurs in UNY. As one of the state universities in the Yogyakarta region, UNY has 424 female lecturers and 605 male lecturers (Statistics of Higher Education Books, 2017). Based on this number, the representation of women in UNY is quite high. This is also enhanced by the existence of the Center for Women Studies at UNY which promotes studies on gender. Center for Women Studies at UNY which was established in early 1991 has a vision as an institution that seeks to make social changes, especially in gender equality by conducting research and community service. Based on data gathered from UNY Center for Women Studies virtual community (Whatsapp Group), there are 57 members who are lecturers from different faculties in UNY.

Based on the explanation above, this research aims at investigating the self-representation of UNY female lecturers who are members of UNY Center for Woman Studies on social media of Instagram and examining the identity of UNY female lecturers who are members of UNY Center for Woman Studies on social media of Instagram.

1. **Research Methods**

This research utilizes qualitative research method. Qualitative research is research that involves analysis and interpretation of data to know how the self-representation of women workers on social media of Instagram [3]. The main issues in the research are described in advance to facilitate the process of exploring phenomena related to the representation of women workers on Instagram accounts, the identity that workers try to form in representing themselves on Instagram, and the motivation of women workers to represent themselves on Instagram. The respondents in this research include female lecturers who are member of UNY's Center for Woman Studies. The research was carried out at UNY from February to June 2020. Referring to the focus of the research, the technique of data collection chosen in this research was an interview. The interview was used by researchers to explore thorough information via direct interaction with research respondents. It is hoped that the information obtained will be complete and directly gathered from the respondents under study. The interview technique employed in this research is a semi-structured interview which is included in the in-depth interview category so that the implementation is more flexible. The procedure for conducting interviews consist of several stages [4]: 1) determining general research questions; (2) formulating research sub-questions; (3) asking topics and questions that might be carried out; (4) performing cross-reference; (5) narrowing the interview structure or format to be more structurally specific, including the standard questions for each session; and (6) performing cross-reference. To test the validity of the data, researchers used a triangulation technique. Triangulation is a data validity checking technique that utilizes other sources of data [3]. In this research, researchers utilize sources triangulation, namely compare and recheck the degree of trust in information or data that has been obtained through interviews between respondents. While the data analysis of this study was carried out by employing the model namely the data reduction, the data presentation, and the conclusions drawing and data verification [6].

1. **Results and Discussions**

**Self-representation of UNY female lecturers who are members of the UNY Center for Woman Studies on Instagram**

The self-representation of social media users, especially Instagram, is indeed very diverse, including the self-representation of women who have roles as workers and housewives. Therefore, how they represent themselves on social media of Instagram is interesting since stereotypes addressed to women are always associated with domestic activities such as cooking, caring for children, and managing everything that relates to family needs. Although, self-representation doesn't always deal with stereotypes, more than that, it is the true meaning of the external image [7].

Based on the research findings, the self-representation depicted by UNY female lecturers who are members of the UNY Center for Woman Studies on Instagram is in line with their image when they interact with family or friends in the real life. They state that there is no difference between self-representation on Instagram and that of in the real life. In social media landscape, they represent themselves as working mothers who are able to share time with their families. In addition, their posts are intended to gain recognition from others for what they have done and show their existence or perform self-promotion so that they can work and expand their networking. They perceive that this self-existence is still within the reasonable degree. The same is true when they upload photos or videos pertaining to their role as housewives. Beside the need for recognition, they also want to show that they are women who are capable of performing the roles of mothers and wives satisfactorily. This is because the two concepts have been mingled into their lives.

The process of joining the two concepts within each individual is influenced by how the social construction surrounds them [8]. This can be revealed from the findings in the field that informants do not specifically adhere to certain communities because they perceive that having broad relationship with people or group of people is interesting. This for sure impacts their freedom to discover and learn new things that have never been experienced before. In addition, they are also free to play both roles when interacting with anyone on Instagram, both as female workers or housewives.

According to Goffman’s theory of dramaturgy, a person’s social life is divided into two regions, namely the front and back region [9]. The front region deals with social events that show the formal role of the individual. While the back region is the region that supports the front region. Based on the research data, the front and back regions of the informants are not divided based on their roles, instead their front region depicts the balance of their roles as women workers and housewives. They assume that their main purpose of posting on Instagram is to show the public their front region as a woman who can share time between family and work. According to Goffman, this front region is still divided into two parts, namely the personal front and the setting. Personal front includes verbal and non-verbal languages used by the informants when posting or interacting through the comments column. For example, when an informant uploads a photo of her baby on Instagram, they provide a caption using very soft and touching words.

Another part is the setting which refers to the supporting equipment brought by the users to the setting or storyline on Instagram. For instance, when an informant uploads a photo of their family, the photo setting is in a car that depicts they have time for refreshing. Another example is when the informant uploads a photo of her activity at work, the background they select to support the setting is a large office building.

Whereas the back region of the informants depicts their role as a housewife who has full time for family.

**The self-identity of the UNY female lecturers who are members of the UNY Center for Woman Studies on Instagram**

Based on the answers given by the informants regarding their identity exploration of Instagram, most of the informants stated that they performed an autodidactic learning and searching for information from google. This indicates that they undertake an exploration process in gaining knowledge and understanding of Instagram.

Pertaining to the knowledge of informants on domestic and public activities in their real life, most of the informants understands the role of women in the public and domestic sphere, with some notes that there is a certain stigma between women in the public and domestic sphere. Selecting either public or domestic sphere, or both at once, is a matter of choice. The most important thing is that they are responsible for their choices. Also, the informants said that they were capable of playing both roles at once within their realm, but some did not practice it in the real life. The knowledge of informants about activities in the public and the domestic sphere can be perceived as good and they can choose activities that are appropriate to their roles and responsibilities, even though some do not practice them in the real world.

Most of the informants claimed that a domestic and public activity shared on Instagram doesn't matter as long as it doesn't not violate the law; cause conflict; humiliate ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations; and endanger. Even, for that reason, some informants prefer to keep their privacy to prevent negative things from happening. The informants' understanding on Instagram posting show that they know the ins and outs of the consequences of their posting choices on Instagram.

When the informants were looking for information about domestic and public activities that were appropriate to be posted on Instagram, several informants stated that they sought for information by browsing the internet, discussing with their husbands, and talking with other people. In addition, some informants explained that emotional maturity, education level and social experience impact their information seeking. Besides, some informants only filtered, selected and used the existing images to be posted on Instagram.

The informants share information about domestic and their work activities on Instagram for documenting, providing information to followers, sharing experience, and giving motivation. The majority of the informants stated that they were absolutely confident when posting their activities on Instagram, some of them considered whether the shared information was appropriate or not and some others were hesitant to post.

On the other hand, for identity commitment, the informant's feelings when posting to Instagram is convinced and confident. Some said that sometimes they were confident and sometimes they were not. Moreover, some informants are less confident in posting on Instagram. When posting real activities on Instagram, most informant considers its effects and consequences. They do so as they don't desire what they have posted on Instagram will provide a negative impact on themselves and the readers. In this case, the effects and consequences become the considerations for the informants when making Instagram posts.

Informants employ certain ways in determining the public and domestic activities to be posted on Instagram namely, posting memorable moments for example the birth of a child, the child's graduation, and etc. The examples of posted public activities include performing a site visit of student's field work, mentoring student's creativity program and joining conferences outside Java. Also, some informants stated that they carefully sorted and selected the types of information to be posted. In addition, some informants claimed that their Instagram posts sourced from their own hearts and minds.

In terms of identifying the posts of the admired people who are active in the public and domestic sphere, some informants stated that they did not do so. However, to widen their insight and to make consideration, some took the positive sides of what had been posted by the admired figure. Moreover, some informants stated that they sometimes took into account their admired figures while some others did not at all.

Most of the informants answered that they were not always inspired by the people they admired when they posted their own public and domestic activities. The majority of the informants also explained that their posts were based on their personal initiative and were not influenced by other people, even from the people they admired.

Discussions:

Exploration

Referring to the informants' statements, the informants have undertaken an exploration process when they post both domestic and public activities on Instagram. Exploration is alternatives and consists of cognitive or behavioral habits [10]. Exploration refers to individuals who view purely and carries out experiment with alternatives and beliefs [11]. Waterman argues that exploration (crisis) deals with a period of struggle or active questioning to get a decision about goals, values and beliefs [12]. This exploration is one of the aspects of identity beside commitment.

The informants conduct exploration by seeking, discussing with peer or friends, making considerations whether something is appropriate to be posted or not, indicating exploration activities or searching and finding alternatives so that the uploaded content meets the informants' desire and social expectations within the framework of her role as a woman who work in the public.

Exploration is part of identity, so when someone has performed an exploration, they tend to form their identity. In other words, a person who carries out a lot of exploration and ultimately establishes something (commitment) can form their identity.

Commitment

Viewed from the answers of the informants about their feelings when posting their public and domestic activities, some were confident while some others are less confident. In addition, when posting their activities, they considered the effects and consequences of their posts. Moreover, they posted their activities based on their own initiatives and were not too influenced by other people. This demonstrates that the informants have a firm commitment based on the explorations they have carried out.

Marcia argues that commitment refers to the choice of various alternatives within the different domains [11]. In order to show a genuine commitment, the choice must be firm or fixed. Commitment according to Waterman, includes making a fixed choice about the identity element and encouraging activities that lead to the realization of that choice [12]. Commitment can be explained by the presence or absence.

Identity is a self-structure, an internal thing, a dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs and a constructed individual history [13]. Marcia perceives identity as a process by which individuals exist in the social world. The essence of Erikson's idea of identity formation is that ideally individuals make a commitment after a period of exploration [12]. Commitment is the end point of the exploration process [2].

In this context, the commitment of the informants who show the steadfastness of heart encourages them to reflect on the consequences of their posts. In addition, the posts of their public and domestic activities which are based on their own initiatives show a commitment.

1. **Conclusions**

The conclusion of this research is that the self-representation of the UNY female lecturers who are members of the UNY Center for Woman Studies depicts women who are active in presenting themselves as working women and housewives. The two roles have been mingled, so they have no problems in performing those roles. In line with these findings, the front regions displayed by the informants on their Instagram accounts are women who have the ability to play the role of working women and housewives. This can be viewed from the selection of settings used to support the personal front of each informant. Meanwhile, the back region displayed by the informants is the role of a housewife who has full time for family.

Another conclusion is that the informants have undertaken an exploration when posting their public and domestic activities on Instagram and there was a strong commitment when uploading public and domestic activities on Instagram, with a sense of confidence, based on their own initiatives. If exploration and commitment are experienced by the informants, their identity will exist or will be formed. In terms of identity exploration, for example, informants understand that there is a stigmatizing image of the women's role both in the domestic and public sphere. Being a working woman who is also responsible for domestic affairs is a matter of life choice, therefore informants can sort and choose a role based on their needs. In deciding to use Instagram, the informants are quite knowledgeable about the appropriate information to be posted on the Instagram page, as long as it does not violate the valid state regulations; humiliate ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group relations; and cause conflicts.

Viewed from the perspective of identity commitment, some informants explained that they also considered the positive and negative impacts of the contents uploaded on Instagram. Domestic activities that are often posted on their personal Instagram include stories about their children such as births, graduations and so on. Meanwhile, in the context of the public sphere, informants posted stories about student's assistance, office activities and etc. The decision to upload information on Instagram is not always influenced by others or the figures they admire, but on the basis of their personal initiatives. The commitment of the informants can also be viewed from a sense of steadfastness heart and a reflection of the possible consequences for posting contents on Instagram.

Beside commitment, the identity aspects also include an exploration. In this case, the informants also make an exploration by searching, discussing and considering the appropriateness of the posted content and looking for alternative content to be posted. These were carried out to meet the social expectations of informants on how they depicted the narrative of working women and women in the domestic sphere through the post contents they selected for their personal Instagram pages.

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