

***THE IMAGING AS A SELF-EXISTENCE ON INSTAGRAM***  
*Dramaturgy Studies Imaging As A Self-Existence On Instagram Among Bandung  
City Students*

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study is entitled "The Imaging as a Self-Existence on Instagram" (A Dramaturgy Study Imaging as a Self-Existence on Instagram among Bandung City Students). The research data was collected from 15 people as core informants and 1 people as expert informant. The aim of the study was to investigate the development of self-existence, find the form of the front stage, back stage, and the meaning of self-existence among student at Instagram. Dramaturgy theory by Erving Goffman was conducted in this study. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. Stages as literature and field studies consist of in-depth interviews, observation, documentation, and triangulation used in this study. The result of the analysis shows that: Instagram social media used as a media for self-presentation for its users. The students used the social media to get impressions in accordance with what they want and get an award from others. Furthermore, the form of self-existence shown can be seen from the posts posted on Instagram including photos of daily activities with friends, upload a popular cafe, upload when shopping branded items, and vacation spots. While the backstage, most of them are shown contradictive situation. Analyzing situation at the social media by using other theories like integrated media communication and symbolic interactionism are suggested for further research.*

*Keyword: Dramaturgy, Self-Existence, Instagram, Qualitative Method, Media*

## **1.1 Research Background**

Social media *Instagram* is very popular nowadays, especially because users are getting bored with social networks that have existed before. *Instagram* has a feature *InstaStory* in which the features that users send photos, videos, boomerang and several other features that are temporary and will disappear after 24 hours of story mentioned share. *Instagram* also features feeds in the form of photos and video profile in the form of a grid and also features *Instagram Live* that shown the activity of the users in real time.

The presence of *Instagram* among young people makes a person's private space merge with public space. There is a cultural shift among young people, youngsters do not hesitate to upload all their personal activities to be conveyed to their friends or followers through social media accounts, one of which is *Instagram* in shaping their identity. On *Instagram* social media, young people always include their routine activities in the form of photos or videos. From the account people judge what they see on the photos or videos uploaded by others.

When the activity is a good creative activity and can produce a lot of work, the account will stimulate others creative enthusiasm. Also gain a positive self-existence towards their social environment. However, not all the youngsters do the same thing even the opposite one.

Self-Imagining derived from the “image” word, in general, imaging is the process to build a personal image or shape of anything to the public or another person. A youngster strives to create and show himself to others by share photos, video, or status also in social media. He or she want to express to others that this is him. Even someone could do some overreact to show the existence of themself more than their friends. or even performed out of the range or their limit of their lifestyle, because as we can see most of the student didn’t have any income yet.

On *Instagram*, people that we know in the real world can be different from what we see when we look at their social media accounts. The difference here depends on how someone fills their *Instagram* social media account. Consumptive can also be associated with behavior likes to buy things to get their self- existence.

After dealing with the observation, consumptive behavior carried out by students in general, such as shopping at the mall, wearing new and expensive/branded-clothes, eating at expensive restaurants, make up and so on. These things are usually done by female student when hanging out with friends, although it cannot be denied that some male students also have the same behavior. This behavior may not be actual student behavior or the behavior they have carried since childhood, this behavior may arise from various factors, for example influenced by friends, environment, girlfriends, relationships, and so on.

The consumptive behavior that is often shown by students or female students on *Instagram*, may not be true self-behavior in an individual's position when they are not with others, or in their own condition. The hedonistic behavior is probably just a lifestyle that is made based on the desire to get impressions or perceptions from other people about themselves in other words only as a form of imaging.

This needs to be researched properly so that in the future users will know how a social network was actually created and how it functions properly. This research is trying to dig deeper into the imagery as Imagining as a Form of Self- Existence on *Instagram* Among Bandung University Students using qualitative descriptive method and Dramaturgy theory approach. The focus of the study is that how young people, especially students and student tried to present the image of themselves on social media accounts *Instagram* (front stage) and how they are trying to fulfill the desire to decorate your social media accounts *Instagram* them so that they look like how they want to look (back stage), as well as the reason why young people do this on their *Instagram* social media (meaning). So, in this case the author put the title of the research as "**IMAGING AS A SELF-EXISTENCE IN INSTAGRAM**".

## **1.2 Research Focus and Research Questions**

### **1.2.1 Research Focus**

Based on the research background, the author's focus in conducting this research is: Imaging as a Self-Existence on *Instagram* Among Bandung University Students.

### 1.2.2 Research Questions

1. How is the front stage for Bandung students in presenting their existence on *Instagram* social media?
2. How is the back stage of Bandung students fulfilling their desire to present their existence on *Instagram* social media?
3. What is the meaning of self-existence on *Instagram* social media for Bandung students?

### 1.3 Research Purpose

1. To know how to form a front stage of the students in using social media *Instagram*
2. This is to find out what the back stage of students is in using *Instagram* social media.
3. To find out the meaning of self-existence on *Instagram* social media for students.

## 2. Theoretical Review

### 2.1 *Instagram*

*Instagram* is one of the application-based social media. Media social *Instagram* This is one of the forms of cyber media contained in the media. *Instagram* is derived from the word " instant " or " *insta* ", *Instagram* can display the photos in an instant in the zoom. While for the word "gram" is derived from the word "telegram", which means working telegram is to send information to others with ease. So, with *Instagram* that can upload photos and videos by using the network of the Internet, so the information that is delivered can be accepted with a rapid or instant.

*Instagram* is an app to share photos and take a picture or photo that apply digital filters to change the display effect photos, and share them to the various services of social media more, including *Instagram* it 's own. (Atmoko , 2012: 4)

Then *Instagram* is an application that can be downloaded through the app store or play store that are on smartphones. *Instagram* also can provide inspiration for users to boost creativity, because *Instagram* has a feature that can make the picture becomes more beautiful, more artistic and better through feature editing. Here are some of the features in *Instagram*

- 1) Home page: The home page is the main page that displays the latest photos from fellow *Instagram* users who have been followed before. Less is more 30 photograph the most loaded when users access the application.
- 2) Comments: As a social networking service, *Instagram* provides a comment feature. Photos and videos shared on *Instagram* can be commented on in the comment column. So, we get impressions from others about the photo or video that has us share (upload) as well otherwise we may provide comments to the photo or video to others.
- 3) Explore: Explore is a display of photographs of the popular most much like the users *Instagram*.
- 4) Profile: Profile users can find out in detail about the information of others, either that of the user or fellow users are more. Profiles-pages can be accessed via the icon

card name on the menu the main part of the right. This feature displays the number of photos that have been uploaded, the number of followers and following.

- 5) News Feed: a feature that displays a notification on the various activities were carried out by the user. News feeds have two types of tabs are "following" featuring activities latest on the user who has the user follow, then the tab "news" to show me the most about the activity of the users *Instagram* to provide comment or follow the notification that will appear on the tab.

Because users *Instagram* can interact with fellow users more, then there are some activities that can be done in *Instagram*, which as follows:

- 1) Following is a follower, of the users *Instagram* users one in order to follow or make friends with the other using *Instagram*.
- 2) Like, is an icon where users can like pictures or photos on *Instagram* belonged to someone else and vice versa, by way of pressing buttons like section under the caption adjacent to comment, or by double tap on a photo that want favored
- 3) Comments, is activity in giving his thoughts through words, users are free give a comment in any of the photos or video of any kind that advice, praise, even criticism.
- 4) Mentions, feature this is to add to the other, how to add sign arroba (@) and enter account *Instagram* of users of the
- 5) Live stream, the features of this function to perform broadcast live who do users *Instagram*, that follower or followers they can watch directly the activities that are being carried out by the user of the
- 6) Instastory, is one of the features that serve as containers for uploading something in everyday life, but posting it only last for 24 hours. This can be in the form of videos, boomerangs (moving photos), and photos. Because the feature Instastory, users become increasingly frequent uploading the content on *Instagram*.

### 2.3 Dramaturgy

The term Dramaturgy first time introduced by Erving Goffman, one a sociologist most influential in 20<sup>th</sup> century. The definition of the dramaturgy is described by Erving Goffman in his book which is called *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, was quoted by Deddy Mulyana in his book which is entitled *Methods Research Qualitative* (2018), Goffman explained that when people interact, they want to present a self- image that others will accept. He called the effort it as "management of impression" (impression management), the techniques that are used actors to foster the impressions particular in situations particular to achieve the objectives specified.

According to Goffman, all things are open about ourselves our own can be used to give out other people who we are. Most attribute, belonging to, or activities of humans are used for self-presentation of this, including the clothes that we wear, where we live, the house which we live, how we complete it, the way we walk and talk, the work that we do and how we spend the time to spare us. Goffman says that activity to affect other people that as performance (performance). As a show it was possible, we calculated to obtain the response of a specific, most other less we

calculate and more easily we did for the show it seemed natural, basically we still want to convince others to consider us as people who want to show.

In the perspective of dramaturgical, Goffman assumed that life is like a theater, interaction social which is similar to the show at the top of the stage, which displays the roles that played as the actor. Need to note that Goffman calls himself (human) with actors and people around is the audience (the audience) because he thinks in the life of this man is an actor who plays a character on top of the stage.

According to Goffman, life socially it can be divided into regions ahead (front stage) and the area behind (back stage). The front area refers to social events that allow the individual to style or display his formal role. They like play a role at the top stage theatrics in front of public audiences. While the region behind like a stage drama section rear (back stage) or room dressing where the player (actor) relaxes, prepare yourself, or practicing to play a role in the stage front. Goffman divides the two regions and can be explained as follows:

### **1. Front Stage**

Is space public that used a person or group of people to not give the impression to others through impression management (management of impression). (Mulyana , 2008: 57).

Stage as a place where the actor trying to show himself through the roles of particular were selected in run a process of interaction social with audiences. Goffman divides the stage front (front stage) is into two parts, namely a front private (personal front) and setting.

In front stage, setting and personalized front is very important because it is the beginning of what that will be shown, in the front stage of course all the people will give you the best in front of others, things have done to imaging themselves positively for him who became an actor, in terms of costume and verbal and non-verbal actions. What are displayed in the stage before or territory ahead is not necessarily equal to anything that is done in the stage behind (back stage), because every person definitely wanted behaviors are good for their response to lead forth from others, and perhaps vice versa if the shows were bad then other people will judge him in a bad way.

Without setting, the actors usually are not able to do the show. For example, a surgeon requires surgery room, a player soccer ball requires field. While the personal front consists of tools that brought the actors to the setting, for example, a doctor wearing a costume with stethoscope that is hanging on his neck, a professor is expected to bring books thick when teaching in class, and so on. The personal front also includes the actor 's verbal language and body language, for example speak politely, with intonation, body posture, facial expressions, clothes, appearance, and so on.

So, the front stage should be planned with properly what we want show to others because others who are thought. And this is very important to what that will be displayed at the front stage.

### **2. Back Stage**

The back stage is the area where an actor can show the real face. On this stage an actor shows the true personality to the surrounding community. (Mulyana , 2008: 58).

Back stage is a state where we were at the back of the stage. With the condition that there is no audience. Part rear is the self, i.e all activities are hidden to complement the success of the acting or the appearance of self that exist in front of the stage. So that we can act freely without considering the plot of the behavior of how that should we bring. On the stage behind these actors to be more discreet and eliminates the impression of the same when it is at the stage front.

The stage behind where someone uses daily language, dressed in accordance with the daily life and live life as normally that apart from activities that exist at the front stage. The stage behind synonymous with neighborhood families, and at the moment the actor does not use the attribute at the time at the front stage. They did the whole of the activity in natural way.

According to Erving Goffman, each individual makes the decision to present himself through impression management and continues the show to ensure that the image or image is formed. in dramaturgy theory as two essences, namely the concept of Front stage and Back stage. In the interaction of face-to-face, the concept is mutually connected to one each other but are in two areas difference.

In harmony with Dramaturgy / impression of yourself / presenting themselves in the behavior of the consumer who made the students, here one of the picture dramaturgies that occur in their life. Where students conduct consumer, which led to the change in the style of life, make as a performance stage front or in front of others in order to get an impression or view of others. Meanwhile, behind the stage is different with what are shown in front of the stage.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The method of research on basically a way of scientifically to get the data with the purpose and certain usefulness. The data obtained through the research that is of data empirical (observed) that have the criteria specified valid. In general, the data obtained from research can be used to understand, solve, and anticipate problems. (Sugiyono , 2017: 4).

The type of research that used the author in the study were titled " Imaging In Forms Existence of Self On *Instagram*" in the Student Fisip Unpas This is a method of research is qualitative. The method that is used in research this is the approach qualitative with methods of analysis descriptive and use the approach of the study dramaturgy.

According to Cresswell in the book Emzir are entitled Methodology Research Qualitative Analysis Data says that research Qualitative are methods to explore and understand the meaning that the number of individuals or a group of people considered to be derived from the problems of social and humanitarian. (2010: 2)

The method of research qualitative can be interpreted as a means or method that is used to obtain the depth data and data that contains a meaning. Meaning is actual data. Researchers used type of method of qualitative-descriptive, methods of descriptive had several objectives, there are:

1. Gather information about the actual in detail that describe symptoms that exist
2. Identify a problem or check the conditions and practices that apply
3. Make comparisons or evaluations
4. Determine what others do in facing of a problem that is common and learn from experience them to establish a plan and a decision on when that will come. (Rachmat , 2017: 68)

The method is emphasizing on observation and atmosphere are natural. Researchers plunge directly into the field to act as an observer, in other words that the researchers-simply create categories of actors, observing the symptoms are there, and record when doing observations. With a natural atmosphere, it means that the researcher makes observations in the field and does not try to manipulate the data. (Ardianto , 2011: 60).

It can be concluded that based on the nature of descriptive research, the data collected is in the form of words and not numbers. With so research this will contain excerpts of data derived from interviews, notes field, photograph, record, and others document. As the results of the study this, the researchers tried to describe the facts that exist about the life of students who behave hedonism just to show the image of themselves in the media of social *Instagram*.

## **Discussion**

### **4.1 Front Stage**

Based on the results of interviews pointed to some of the students and the student city of Bandung is still using the media of social *Instagram* as where it should be, as a media for communication among fellow users *Instagram* more. It's allows for the feature that is called direct message that can be used by users of *Instagram* to send a message to others. As times passed, a source of information can be derived from everywhere. Not only from the printed media or television, even the information can be obtained through the social media. One of them namely *Instagram*, from the *Instagram* we can know the information both that of the world of entertainment, news, and even about politics.

As times passed, the used of media social of the matter began to communicate and make everyone reachable. Now the media of social especially *Instagram* as a place for people to do present themselves or be called as existence of imagining in the cyberspace.

It also happened on the student and the student in the city of Bandung, the use of *Instagram* began to be a place for students to present themselves and imaging themselves. They want to shape and show the image to their friends through the content like photographs, videos thus share through the Instagram.

This was also reinforced by an academic informant, Mrs. Z, who is one of the lecturers at University in Bandung, stated that when someone shows their existence on social media, they are required to be up to date with things. In the other words the things that were becoming trending especially in the social media.

"People usually always up to date each case are again trending, for example, is now again trending on *Instagram* post *Dalgona*, everyone also post all about *Dalgona*. So, they were the type of person who do not want to be missed the trend"(online-interview, April 16, 2020)

Besides that, Mrs. Z as academic informant also add that when someone show the image of the consumptive behavior can be seen from the positive ways. As they having a job in the field of social media, so that they do the imaging that can be said as the demands of their job. They required to do imaging and showing the consumptive behavior in order to attract the attention of audiences in social media itself.

" According to me consumptive way is okay only when people able and make it to be a positive thing. Because in my opinion there a shape of imaging in social media which as advantage for themselves. Which called online-business or as an influencer who should behave consumptive to attract the attention of people. So, it depends on people used to be the consumptive and how people use that kind of behavior in positive or negative way in the ends ".

In this sense imaging were done by student of Bandung city, which is to behave consumptive and things included as hedonism. Because they portray something that doesn't even exist at themselves. They also willing to do things that really far from the reality for the sake of make the desired imaging. So, it's become a negative thing if someone perform the image with the consumptive behavior that differ with the reality." This was also confirmed by Ms. Z as an academic informant.

" I disagree when someone shows the consumptive behavior is only for imaging when his ability, it wasn't appropriate, it actually becomes a boomerang for themselves. Because we could be existing by become ourselves and without exaggerated. For instance, if we are in the "B-class" do not force to get in "A-class by harming ourselves or even others. If such certainly harm themselves and their surroundings, like their parents or their family. Especially to their own because they had to lie and self-lying make people cannot recognize who are them actually, because they always follow others, even if they want upgrade ourselves we must strive how to "somebody" in the social media, for example if we become influencers and make money from it, is okay".

So that based on the results of interviews with fifteen informants on front stage Imaging in Self Existence on *Instagram* done by the students. The front stage they perform on *Instagram* are the same. Presentation and the impression as if they are active student in media social by provide interesting contents that make the loos fashionable and up to date, create their identities and impressed that they always happy shown to friends in the social media. So that they can be seen as people who exist on *Instagram*.

By the interviews and observations of the whole informant found out that each informant wanted to considered as up to date people too be regarded as a person who exists by his friends through by the contents are diverse which is shared. The contents are about trending food, visiting to the place to hang out like trending cafe, and shopping branded outfit.



## 4.2 Back Stage

As delivered by Erving Goffman in his book *The Presentation Of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), which is quoted by Deddy Mulyana entitled *Methods Research Qualitative*, that back stage is a situation where we were at the back of the stage. With the condition that there is no audience. Back stage is the self, i.e., all activities hidden to complete the appearance of the self that exist in front of the stage. So that we can act freely without considering the plot that should we deliver.

In other words, back stage is when people use daily language, dressed in accordance with their daily life and live life as normally that apart from activities that exist at the front stage. The back stage identically with family life hood, and when the actor doesn't use any attribute at the same time. They did the whole activity naturally.

When a student chooses a role that then raises a representation behind his selection which is taken consciously, it must be certain reasons for them not to admit that they have made an image on *Instagram*. In other words that the behavior that shown on *Instagram* is different from the real life. After conducted some observations, it found that one of them the reason is a sense of pride and sense to cover up the real image of themselves. So that there was show in the front of the audience to build the image that they really expected. This reason was also reinforced academic informant.

Based on the interviews and observations, by using *Instagram* the user would like to highlight the image of themselves. Students as users of *Instagram* trying to establish the image of themselves to direct the opinions of the *Instagram* users that their real live are the same with what shown on *Instagram*. So, it can be said that there are relationship between *Instagram* users to form the image of themselves that is shown as the image they really wanted.

## 4.3 The Meaning of Self Existence

Virtually, self-existence becomes a specific pride in social media, *Instagram*. Existence associated with the frequency of a person connected or are in the virtual world. The existence relates to the duration (time that is used) in cyberspace. The more someone uploads content in cyberspace, it shows their existence in cyberspace or social media. But as someone who connected to the virtual, doesn't mean they able to show their existence social media. Because the existence is not an acknowledgment by themselves, but it is the acknowledgment by others. It means that *Instagram* can be a facilitation to show your existence in cyberspace, for example, such as sharing photos or personal documentation.

This was also reinforced by the informant, stated that existence is done to get recognition of their existence in the eyes of others, in the sense that the person doesn't want to be left behind by anything that was going on when this or things that were trending.

Self- image and appearance seem to be a necessity for all human beings who want to be considered modern, classy, and up to date. Imaging become very important in the effort legitimacy of existence, just looking for attention, environment social adaptation, and most importantly is getting

sympathy. By getting sympathy or at least someone's attention, they can convey the message and the desired intention.

The relation between *Instagram* and consumptive living style is very strong, so that the results of observations and interviews show that *Instagram* already become part of today's life style. *Instagram* already considered to be the identity of a behavioral patten of social. Thus, people use the *Instagram* to take advantage of it. They tend to use it as a place to show their existence.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the meaning of self-existence as said by the fifteen informants that they interpret the self-existence are done in order to known by others and show what that they have, their ability, so that the students highlight things through the *Instagram*.

## 5. Conclusions

*Instagram* as a stage for the users. All of them tries to show the best version of them. So do University student in Bandung city though photo and videos that shared. They try to keep their desired role at the front stage to get their desired imagining. When they came back to the social reality, the real character will be shown. The image of hedonistic person is only from the ordinary family. The student interprets self-existence as things that understood by others and shown what they have and their talent through social media. So its conclude that social media as media presentation by the users to create self-imaging in front of the followers.

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