

8-1-2022

Diversity of Gay Identity and Gender Expression on Social Media

Nadissa Fadhila
Universitas Indonesia

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/jkmi>



Part of the [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#), [International and Intercultural Communication Commons](#), and the [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fadhila, Nadissa (2022) "Diversity of Gay Identity and Gender Expression on Social Media," *Jurnal Komunikasi Indonesia*: Vol. 11: No. 2, Article 7.

DOI: 10.7454/jkmi.v11i2.1033

Available at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/jkmi/vol11/iss2/7>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at UI Scholars Hub. It has been accepted for inclusion in Jurnal Komunikasi Indonesia by an authorized editor of UI Scholars Hub.

Diversity of Gay Identity and Gender Expression on Social Media

(Study of Semiotics Instagram Account Designer Magistus Miftah)

Nadissa Fadhila

Abstrak/Abstract

The purpose of this research is to provide perspective on being a gay in Indonesia and his point of view on how he tries to express his diverse identities through social media Instagram. Also, how he tries to be unattached from the negative profiling and imagery of being a gay that exists in society in Indonesia. The focus of this research is the practice of posting and uploading content on Instagram from Magistus Miftah, an Indonesian fashion designer. This research is qualitative research with descriptive design and social semiotics analysis. This research concludes that the gender expression that Magistus Miftah does through his social media works as several things. The most standout is that he shows his identity in a maximum way. From semiotics analysis, the researcher found a process of identity negotiation. Also, as he expresses himself on Instagram, Magistus Miftah strengthens his identity. The practice of posting also became a way to fight the gay stereotype and negative image in Indonesia.

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk memberikan pandangan dari sudut pandang seorang gay di Indonesia dalam mengekspresikan identitasnya yang beragam melalui sosial media instagram. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk melihat adanya penunjukkan keragaman identitas yang dilakukan seorang gay melalui media sosial Instagram untuk melepaskan diri dari gambaran yang seringkali negatif dan salah yang telah terbentuk di masyarakat. Fokus penelitian adalah praktik mengunggah di sosial media Instagram yang dilakukan oleh desainer di Indonesia bernama Magistus Miftah. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan desain deskriptif dan metode analisis semiotika sosial. Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa ekspresi gender yang dilakukan oleh Magistus Miftah di sosial media instagramnya digunakan untuk beberapa hal. Hal yang paling menonjol terlihat adalah Magistus Miftah melalui unggahannya menunjukkan identitasnya secara total. Dari analisis semiotika, ditemukan proses negosiasi identitas yang dilakukan Magistus Miftah Selain itu dengan mengkespresikan dirinya di instagram, Magistus Miftah memperkuat identitasnya. Praktik mengunggah juga menjadi bentuk perlawanan stereotip gay yang ada di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci/Keywords

Identities, Gender, Gender Expression, Gay Stereotype, Social Media

Identitas, Gender, Ekpresi Gender, Stereotip Gay, Sosial Media

*Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik
Universitas Indonesia
nadissaf@gmail.com*

Introduction

The life of a gay person in Indonesia is not easy. In Indonesia, same-sex relationships (homosexuals) who are part of the LGBTQ group (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) are taboo and considered crimes. Indonesian society still has a general view influenced by religion and culture regarding sexuality as something that is certain and cannot be changed from birth. In everyday life, a gay person is treated differently. From everyday conversations to depictions in the media, gay people are treated differently than heterosexual people.

This ostracizing process causes individuals, groups and communities of gay sexual orientation to be considered unimportant, worthless,

powerless and most fundamentally not regarded as human beings. This exclusion starts from the closest family, friends, education and works environment level to the state level. The 2016-2017 SMRC National Survey on national public views on LGBT shows that 53.3 percent of survey respondents who are familiar with the term LGBT stated that they would reject someone as a member of their family if the person was found to be part of an LGBT group (SMRC, 2017).

In 2016 according to Wijaya (2020), the LGBTQ issue underwent a dramatic transformation. Statements that demean the LGBTQ community are increasing and becoming more varied. Examples include declaring gayness a contagious disease and equating gay identity with child sexual abuse. Hate speech is also mostly directed at gay and other individuals who are part of the LGBTQ group. Between 2016 and 2018, there was a very high rate of anti-LGBT hate speech appearing in Indonesian online media (Listiorini, 2019).

Exclusion and hatred of gay people exist and give rise to many negative things such as negative stigma, stereotypes, discrimination in all social fields, hate speech and the most extreme form of crime based on hate. Gay stereotypes in Indonesia in general are that gay people must have a graceful nature, effeminate style, flirty, thirst for sex, like rah-rah and anti-religion. In 2016 there was a photo of a piece of newspaper coverage that went viral on social media containing a list of the characteristics of a homosexual. The list's contents: take selfies in a *alay* style, likes to stare at men, repeatedly stares at the targeted man, likes to pay attention to appearance and fashion, smell good, wear one earring in his ear, and admire men (Wargadiredja, 2019).

The hegemony of heterosexual culture pressures gay to act like men who are considered normal. The concept of masculinity possessed by heterosexuals is imposed on gay (Yep, Lovaas, & Elia, 2003). So that things done by men outside of the concept of masculinity will be considered automatically as a sign that the man is gay.

One other negative treatment received by gay is discrimination. Discrimination can be in the form of minimal or no space for actualization, representation and expression of themselves. Being able to communicate one's true identity is a human need. However, expressing one's identity as a gay person in Indonesia is difficult.

This treatment causes many gay people in Indonesia to decide not to express their identity openly. The fear and shame mentioned above are the main reasons they do not immediately admit their sexual orientation. Research conducted by Adriani, Anggai, and Pradoponingrum (2017) along with Pranata (2015) conclude that gay in Indonesia have concerns about the reaction their environment will give if they reveal their gay identity.

In Indonesia, when a person expresses himself as gay, he will get negative feedback and com-

ments that hurt to threaten the safety of his life is common. Cases that can be used as examples are the cases of Zulfikar Fahd (Upton, 2020) and Dhytia Surya (tempo, 2020) as gay and lesbian. Many media reported them because they sought asylum in other countries. After all, they felt unsafe living in Indonesia.

Incidents like the one above prevent society from seeing gay as human beings with the same complex and diverse identity as heterosexually oriented individuals. Indonesian people easily use the LGBTQ category to refer to all people with different gender identities and sexual orientations (Wijaya, 2020). A gay person is not seen as an individual who has different experiences from one another. People with different sexual orientations are put into the same category box, namely someone with a different sexual orientation with a negative image attached. This makes people heed the diversity of gay identities.

Despite being in a condition that is considered unfavourable, some Indonesian gay dare to express their identity. However, generally these gay do not explicitly identify themselves as gay. They use symbols represented by pictures, photos and text to show their gay identity. Unable to clearly or verbally acknowledge gay identity, they choose these symbols to represent their identity.

In today's technological era, social media has become one of the main options for gay people to communicate their opinions and identity. Instagram is the choice for many gay individuals because it is a social media where users can display images, text and videos at the same time. The free nature of social media allows gay people to express, experiment, explore and challenge the concept of heterosexual domination of gender and sexuality.

Based on the explanation above, this study will discuss the practice of expressing gay identity by Magistus Miftah, a homosexually oriented in Indonesia who expresses himself visually. The characteristics of Instagram are considered suitable by Magistus Miftah as a place to express his identity. Uploads on his Instagram page display various photos and captions that reflect his personality and identity. The photos often have different themes and aesthetic styles compared to the rules and norms of the heterosexual culture in Indonesia.

The reasons that have been described previously make the content of the Instagram account of a gay person in Indonesia such as the figure of Magistus Miftah is interesting as the object of research. The meaning and message to be conveyed behind the contents of a gay person's Instagram in Indonesia. What symbols are used by a gay person to show the diversity of his identity? This research will interpret the meaning behind Magistus Miftah's Instagram uploads.

Literature Review

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is a combination of a person's sense of eroticism with an emotional connection concerning the gender and gender of the partner they want (Hall, 2019). The three components that make up sexual orientation are biological, psychological and social-cultural factors. Sexual orientation is a multidimensional phenomenon involving three dimensions of sexuality, namely sexual attraction, sexual behaviour and sexual orientation identity (Hall, 2019).

The identity of sexual orientation has a social-cultural aspect because it provides meaning for group affiliation and the formation of subcultures (Hall, 2019). So it can be said that sexual orientation identity is also the result of social construction. A person is often socialized that he has had a sexual orientation since birth. Still, that person can choose a different identity that is more in line with his sexual experience throughout his life journey. There is a great deal of diversity in the expression of sexual orientation.

At this time, the general public's most widely recognized diversity of sexual orientations is LGBTQ. LGBTQ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer. LGBTQ is often seen as a group that struggles with sexuality and gender identity issues. This group includes various races, ethnicities, ages, education, economic classes and religions. Hall (2019) provides a brief definition that can illustrate members of the LGBTQ group; 1. Lesbian: Women who are sexually and emotionally attracted to other women. 2. Gay: A person, male or female, who is sexually and emotionally attracted to the same sex. 3. Bisexual: Men or women who feel sexual and emotional attraction to both sexes. 4. Transgender: Someone whose biological sex at birth does not match their gender identity. 5. Queer: Someone who believes in a broad spectrum of gender identities.

A person's feelings of attraction can be to the opposite sex (heterosexual), same-sex (homosexual) or attracted to both sexes (bisexual). Gay and lesbian are sexual orientations that explain this attraction. Homosexuality is a matter of tendency, and there is no definite rule so that no one is fully homosexual or heterosexual (Agusta, 2014). This shows that the gay group consists of various identities.

In this study the research subject is a gay person who lives and socializes with the environment and society. Hence, the identity that will be used as a reference is an identity seen from a sociological perspective. According to Stryker (2000) there are many views on identity in sociology, and various social aspects influence the formation of a person's identity. Marcia (1993) says family background, people considered important, expectations of the social environment such as family, school, peer groups, and exposure to other identities and adult figures can be a strong foundation for one's identity.

Personal identity is considered seeing oneself as different from others. Personal identity, he

said: Personal identity is a set of attributes, beliefs, desires, or principles of action that a person perceives to distinguish them socially and (a) a person feels proud of his identity; (b) a person does not feel proud, but the person makes his identity the orientation of life so that he cannot function without his identity, or (c) a person feels he cannot change his identity even if he wants to.

In social life, there is a process called depersonalization, namely the shift from the perception of oneself (personal) as something unique to the perception of oneself as a member of a social category (Hogg, 1995). The choice of which role identity to display is influenced by accessibility and compatibility with the individual's social environment (Oakes, 1987). Depersonalization does not mean the loss of personal identity but a shift in focus from personal to group identity. Thoits and Virshup (1997) conclude this process with the phrase "from about me to about us". For identity theory, personal identity is at the lowest level of self-categorization (Brewer, 1991; Hogg and Abrams, 1988).

McCall and Simmons (1978) define role identity as the character and role that a person uses to become an occupant of a certain social position. Salience hierarchy and prominence hierarchy are the hierarchy in role identity that McCall and Simmons (1978) called. If the salience hierarchy is an identity often shown when applied in various situations, the prominence hierarchy is a person's values.

Gender Identity and Expression

Judith Butler (1990) states that there must be a distinction between sex and gender. For Butler, gender is something that is biologically acquired, while gender is something that is acquired from society socially. Gender is a condition when individuals born biologically as male and female get social characteristics by using the attributes of masculinity and femininity, which are often supported and reinforced by the values in which the individual lives.

Gayle Rubin defines gender as a social construction (Nugroho, 2008). Gender is a social construction of grouping the roles of women and men, and culture also participates in forming these role groupings. Gender is not something that is born from birth but something that is shaped by the understanding that exists in society. Caplan explained (1987), the difference in behavior between women and men is not only about biological aspects but also about cultural and social processes.

Gender identity is a state that reflects feelings in a person related to the existence of oneself as a woman, a man and something else or between the two, which is based on attitudes and behaviour. Gender identity is the result of attitudes and behaviour. All everyday behaviours such as body language, speaking style, how to dress, and others will form an identity along with the char-

acteristics of masculinity and femininity (Currah, Paisley and Minter, 2000). Gender identity is closely related to the culture in which a person develops socially. Because gender identity is within and determines personality, it is not visible to the naked eye or to others (Currah, Paisley and Minter, 2000).

Gender expression is defined as outward behaviour and characteristics associated with masculine and feminine traits that result from social construction (Mahalik, Cournoyer, DeFranc, Cherry, & Napolitano, 1998). Gender expression can be described as a gradation of the line in which masculinity and femininity lie at each end. However, what is considered masculine and feminine is a social construction, and many people in their daily life do not follow gender stereotypes in their appearance and attitude. Gender expression refers to how a person communicates their gender in a cultural context, such as name, behaviour, hairstyle, gay dress, way of talking and more).

Socially gender expression relates to sexual orientation and accepted ideas of sexuality. Accepted sexuality depends on what is considered the standard regarding gender in society (Wong, McCreary, Carpenter, Engle, & Korchynsky, 1999). This idea says that a man's sexuality will be immediately perceived as gay without knowing with certainty his sexual orientation because it does not express masculine traits. The gay group is not homogeneous but consists of various variations of gender expression.

Gay Stereotypes

When there is a minority group in social life, there is a big tendency for this group to get unfair treatment and be dominated by the majority group. The emergence of stereotypes, stigma and prejudice is related to this.

According to Serbanescu in George Fedor (2014), stereotypes is a result from a person's social categorization cognitive process, which simplifies and systematises stimuli to facilitate cognitive and behavioural adaptation of the person in new communication situations. Stereotypes are psychological representations of the characteristics of people who belong to a particular group.

This representation includes three characteristics: 1) A belief that is owned and shared by one group about the group. 2) It is an energy saver because it reduces people's judgment efforts. 3) have meaning, helping people to give meaning to situations (McGarty, Yzerbyte, and Spears, 2002). Stereotypes are constructs that reflect values that create these stereotypes (Fedor, 2014). Prejudice is a generalization about a group. Prejudice relates to what is considered right and wrong, right or clean, or moral and immoral (Samovar, 2010).

Characteristics of stereotypes (Watson, deBortali-Treggerthan and Frank, 1984; 1. Behaviour

categorizes and evaluates stereotyped groups. 2. Focuses on easily recognizable characteristics of a group as reasons for its position in society. 3. Evaluation of the group tends to be negative 4. Stereotypes often force things that are different from being certain things.

Judging from the historical development, the suppressed group has the greatest tendency to get stereotyped. Stereotypes are often seen as something that is considered certain by society because it is considered general, which results in ignoring differences. Gay sexual orientation in Indonesian culture still gets stereotypes and prejudiced as something wrong. Stereotypes and prejudices are broadly in the form of the assumption that people close to glamorous lives and violate the law are figured outside normal norms and experience criminal acts.

Representation

According to Hall (2003) through the representation of meaning will be produced and exchanged between community members. It can be concluded that representation is a way to produce meaning. The meaning of something can be different between groups of people, and this is due to cultural differences that have their ways and rules in interpreting something. One group of people who have different cultural backgrounds are more likely not to be able to understand the meanings produced by other groups (Hall, 2003). Meaning is the result of the construction process. Meaning is constructed through a system of representations and codes. This code allows members of the community who are in a cultural group to understand and use the same name. This meaning has gone through a social convention process. By giving meaning to others, we mean that we give existence to that person and acknowledge their existence. By doing this process meaning that we give and determine the person's identity.

Instagram Social Media

Social media comes from the word social, which refers to the human need to connect with other humans (Safko, 2012). The word media refers to the technology humans use to communicate with other humans expressed in words, photos, videos, television, mobile phones, e-mails and others. Thus, social media is a medium used to connect with the help of internet technology.

The progress of new media due to rapid technological developments can provide more space for someone to be creative and creative in displaying their identity. Photos to represent identity are increasingly becoming popular in people's lives, and the photo-sharing feature has become a phenomenon in the world of social media. Three things that dominate social media are smartphones, photos and videos, with visual content moving on a mobile basis and being in special media as a place to share photos and videos (Chaerani, 2014).

This research uses the critical constructivism paradigm. This paradigm combines ideas about how a person thinks when interacting with his social environment (constructivist) and at the same time being exposed to the power structure that exists in society, with the consequences of individual choices (critical).

The research method that will be used is a multimodality strategy. Multimodal describes strategies using multiple sources to discuss specific events, for example, pictures, writings, videos, music, speech, and other media. Multimodality studies discuss multimodal phenomena, namely semiotic sources, semiotic modes (visual and textual), and their interactions in multimodal discourse (O'Halloran and Smith, 2010). In this study, the source of semiotics is the overall appearance of Magistus Miftah's photo on his Instagram page, which presents a semiotic mode with the intention of certain desired meanings.

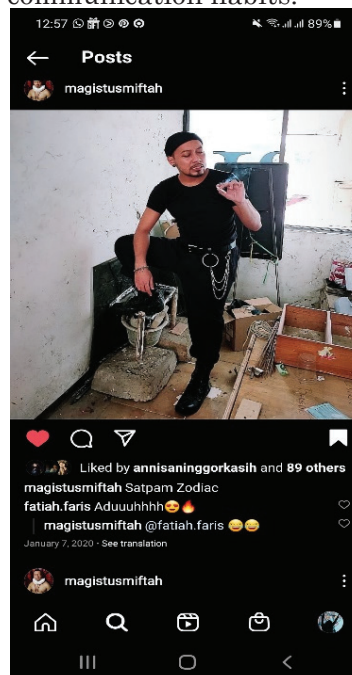
He is a costume and fashion designer, dancer and tarot reader. Coming from a family with diverse cultures, namely Arabic-African-Betawi and Chinese, he is accustomed to and open to various cultures. This man, born on December 31, 1990 grew up in a family environment and worked in the education field.

Magistus Miftah began to have an interest in the world of fashion and design from a young age, so he received a formal education in fashion. The fashion themes that most moved her heart were edgy, tailored and gothic. From here, he began to explore and accept projects designing and producing costumes. Magistus Miftah's interest in eccentric costumes is also growing more he goes into fashion. He shared that Halloween was an important day for him. The main thing that makes him love the world of design and costumes

Magistus Miftah is part of the LGBTQ community, and he openly recognizes himself as gay when interacting with other people in the real public sphere. Magistus Miftah, who has never been afraid to express himself from a young age, often uses make-up and looks against what is considered normal, which is still considered taboo when worn by men. At that time, social media networks became popular, so Magistus Miftah could find men in Indonesia who liked make-up and looked different from the general public through the internet.

Upload January 2020: Not Confined to One Gender Expression

Compared to other photos on his Instagram page, the photo uploaded earlier this year is one of the photos with the appearance of clothes, poses and backgrounds that can be considered normal for the general public. It is interesting to analyze because Magistus Miftah, known on his Instagram page as an expressive and full of "drama" figure, chooses to upload photos outside of his visual communication habits.



Picture 1. Magistus Miftah poses alone (Magistus Miftah, 2020)

Based on the description of the metafunction in the photo above, Magistus Miftah is an individual who is not fixated on one identity and how to express it. He believes that a person's identity can vary, and masculine and feminine for him are only one way to express himself, not things that determine his overall identity.

March 2020 Post: Fighting Stereotypes of Father-Son Relationships

The photo in the upload is addressed to the birthday of Magistus Miftah's father. He congratulated, prayed and thanked him for having a father who could accept him as he is. According to Magistus Miftah, he uploaded a photo with his father on a special day. In this photo, Magistus Miftah invites his father to participate in the world of costumes and expressiveness in fashion.



Picture 2. Magistus Miftah posing with his father (Magistus Miftah, 2020)

The choice of this upload has an important reason; namely, Magistus Miftah shows his relationship with his father, which is personal. The upload shows the dynamics of the relationship that Magistus Miftah has, whose identity and personality are considered by many to be abnormal, with his father, who accepts his son's existence. In this post, readers will also get information about Magistus Miftah's views on stereo-

types and rules that support a man, especially in this post, a boy in Indonesia.

May 2020 Post: Acceptance of His Diverse Identity



Figure 3. Close up view of Magistus Miftah (Magistus Miftah, 2020)

This upload was chosen because Magistus Miftah tries to communicate his opinion about his identity to the readers. For him, identity, which many others consider as strange and out of the ordinary of society, is part of the natural world. According to him, just because something is outside the general standard doesn't mean it's fake or wrong. It can be concluded that there is Magistus Miftah's desire for the public to accept himself as he is.

November 2020 Upload: Costumes as Important Communication in Expression

The semiotic source was uploaded on November 2nd to coincide with the Day of the Dead, a day to celebrate life and death that originated in Mexico. Magistus Miftah tends to post something on his Instagram every day to appreciate moments that have meaning to him. Costumes with affixed symbols and the properties he uses are his way of expressing his identity and opinion on this important moment.



Figure 4. Magistus Miftah wearing a costume for the celebration of the Day of the Dead (Magistus Miftah, 2020)

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that Magistus Miftah is a person who sees that there is a deeper meaning in everything that happens in life. Like death which, according to him, is not just a moment but part of life's process. He is a person who views life optimistically, not judging death as an end but a sign of a new beginning. His choice of costume inspiration as the non-judgmental Saint of Death can also be used as an indication of what his hopes are for others. He hopes people do not discriminate against others based on sexual orientation, race, gender, gender, social status and other factors.

Uploaded December 2020: Values Considered Important

This semiotic source is an upload made on December 31, 2020. This upload is part of a series of photos that are used to mark the end of the year as well as a celebration of the new year. Magistus Miftah's upload is in the form of a photo with his nuclear family in black and white nuances and formal attire and located in a photo studio. As is the case with other photos, he emphasizes aesthetics and cohesion in his photos.



Figure 5. Magistus Miftah posing with the nuclear family (Magistus Miftah, 2020)

This photo was chosen because it shows the significance of family existence and family relationships for Magistus Miftah. This post is even more important because he chose a photo with his family as one of two photos to close the year and start the new year. As the profile explains, Magistus Miftah enjoys celebrating things by visualizing them in a visible form. This shows that Magistus Miftah attaches great importance to his relationship with his family.

Discussion

Things Contained in Miftah's Magistus Identity

For Magistus Miftah, showing his identity to the public sphere is an important thing. His identity is something he is proud of. He loves himself and he is not afraid to express it. Magistus Miftah believes that identity is what distinguishes one individual from another. Becoming an individual who holds fast to his identity for Magistus Miftah is his way of life. As Fearon (1999) explains, personal identity is a set of attributes, beliefs, desires, or principles of action that a person perceives to distinguish them socially and can feel proud of his identity.

Many things affect a person's identity, as Marcia (1993) explained, including family background, social environment, peers and exposure to other people's identities. His pleasure in revealing his identity made it easier for others to see the figure and thoughts of Magistus Miftah. He comes from a family with many ethnic and racial mixes, but the most dominant is the Arab race. This gave Magistus Miftah a great exposure to the teachings of Islam. Her mother is a high school teacher, and her older sister has excellent academic achievements. It can be said that his family has an interest in the world of knowledge.

At one point in his life, when he was young, Magistus Miftah found an interest in the art world that would lead him to what he loves, namely the world of fashion and costumes. Magistus Miftah feels he can channel his ideas and passions with fashion and costumes. The longer he explores this world, the more he becomes interested in the meaning and representation of symbols.

Although he likes all kinds of fashion, several styles he thinks fit his identity, namely, at first it was gothic and edgy, then began to vary into Latin-romantic. The costumes he likes to wear also vary from Greek to renaissance themes. Whatever the theme of the costumes she wears, one thing that is always some symbols have more meaning than clothes. So attracted to this symbol, he made it the subject of research for his college graduation requirements entitled "Interpretation and Misconception of Occult Symbols in Fashion".



Figure 6. Some of Magistus Miftah's uploads are about himself and the practice of Islamic teachings. (Magistus Miftah 2016-2020)

One thing that also has a big contribution to the formation of the identity of Magistus Miftah is the belief system, philosophy and wisdom of life. He studied from studying the history and practice of Islam in other religions, even the practice of other beliefs such as occult and witchcraft. Interestingly, learning all this did not make Magistus Miftah give up his belief in Islam. Instead, it strengthened his feelings for the existence of God. He continues to practice Islamic religion, such as praying, fasting and celebrating Eid. His Instagram uploads show that Magistus Miftah always uploads photos with his family every Eid al-Fitr with a different photo concept every year. This shows his appreciation for the holiday.

These aspects of life that are part of his identity appear in each of his Instagram uploads. This is what McCall and Simmons (1978) call the salience hierarchy, an identity often shown in various situations. Based on his Instagram page, he does not distinguish how he expresses his identity when he is in public or private. There is no indication of any intention to hide his identity, but what he does is respect his surroundings by simplifying his appearance. For example, if he performs Friday prayers, he will wear a simple robe, but to still show his identity, he will use a skullcap with a unique accent or attach a brooch.

According to McCall, Simmons and Stryker (Stets and Burke, 2014), individuals from their personal identities shift to ranked role identities because they operate in the context of complex social structures. In identity theory, many views that personal identity will eventually succumb to the pressure to be part of a wider social category. (Brewer, 1991; Hogg and Abrams, 1988 and Hogg, 1955). The existence of Magistus Miftah proves that not all individuals are willing to eliminate or put their identity at the lowest level to comply with public standards.

In his daily life, Magistus Miftah undergoes a negotiation process regarding his identity. There is an identity tug of war carried out by Magistus Miftah so as not to lose the characteristics of his identity and at the same time be able to socialize in the public sphere by not maximizing the expression of his identity. Munoz (1999) describes this process as a hybrid self, namely the process of a person negotiating with history, economy, sex, and gender systems while simultaneously experiencing violence due to racism, sexism and heteronormativity (Munoz, 1999). There will always be a tug-of-war within Magustus Miftah in managing his identity. However, as can be concluded from his Instagram uploads, in the end Magistus Miftah will always put his identity first before public standards.

Magistus Miftah's Diversity of Gender Identity and Gender Expression

In one of his uploads, when Magistus Miftah held a question and answer session, he was asked about his gender identity. Magistus Miftah replied;

By the way, I'm a cis male with a gender-fluid expression. Don't understand? Google it! This topic is called SOGIESC. Very fun to learn! It's like learning Greek mythology, and it's fun. (Magistus Miftah 2022)

Currah, Paisley and Minter (2000) explained gender identity as a condition that reflects feelings in a person regarding the existence of oneself as a woman, a man and something else or between the two, which is based on attitudes and behaviour. Cis man is a term used for individuals who feel their gender identity is in accordance with the male sex they were born with. Gender fluid refers to changes throughout a person's life journey in expressing their gender and identity (Kats-Wise, 2020). The so-called gender fluid expression means that in daily life, the expression of identity is not fixed on one behaviour or appearance associated with masculine or feminine traits. Gender expression is how a person communicates gender through appearance, behaviour, and how someone thinks about something.

When Magistus Miftah describes himself as a cis man with gender fluid expression, he says that he is a man who expresses his identity in a spectrum between masculine and feminine. Magistus Miftah, in expressing his identity, does not refer to a quality associated with a certain gender. He does not believe in the standards that have been constructed by society regarding what one gender can or cannot wear and do. In Indonesia, it can be said that the social community still adheres to conservative standards. Individuals will be accepted when he expresses according to the quality of the sex that is considered correct. A man wearing a skirt will be considered strange and not in accordance with society. This is the thing that Magistus Miftah refuses.

Her Instagram posts show that she will wear whatever she thinks fits what she wants to express and communicate. One day he would wear bold make-up, another day, he would wear a full suit. Sometimes he mixes the style of dressing in a suit with a skirt accompanied by complete accessories from earrings to necklaces. Whatever he thinks can help to express his identity, Magistus Miftah will do it.

Visualization of Gender Expression as a Way to Fight Negative Views of Gay and Strengthen Existence

As explained at the beginning of the study life as a gay in Indonesia faces many obstacles. Stereotypes, exclusion, injustice in social and professional life to verbal and physical violence are things they accept. Of course, those who dare to fight against it will have consequences from society. To continue the life of many gay people in Indonesia who choose to hide their identity.

Magistus Miftah openly admits that he is gay. But he does it not by saying it every time he socializes or announcing it every time he is on social

media. It is interesting to observe that after the analysis process of Magistus Miftah's Instagram page, it was found that he never verbally used the specific word gay. He allows visualising his gender expression to convey his gender identity and sexual orientation choices. This also made Magistus Miftah choose Instagram as his identity communication tool. He can communicate through symbols, which, as already explained, is what he likes.

It is known from the semiotic analysis that Magistus Miftah has a close relationship with his parents. It can be concluded that this close relationship is a consideration why he does not verbally say he is gay. In Indonesia, the judgment of a gay person will be strengthened when there is a verbal confession as evidence. Verbal confession is the strongest evidence of labelling a gay person in Indonesia. It can be assumed from Magistus Miftah's openness in expressing his gender that his family knows he is gay. However, out of respect and considering his family's social position, he chose not to use the word gay when expressing himself on social media, which is considered a much wider public sphere than Magistus Miftah's daily social circle.

Visualization of identity is used to tell others without always mentioning the word gay. However, he does not want his visualization to be trapped in Indonesian society's stereotype of a gay person. Stereotypes are formed because of a simplifying process that leads to generalizations about a particular group (Serbanescu in George Fedor, 2014). Some stereotypes that are believed to be like all gay will have a graceful nature, do things that women often do, have a flirty style, don't believe in religion and don't have good relationships with family.

The effect of stereotypes is that society easily fits all gay, sexually-oriented people into the same box. Society does not see members of the gay community as individuals who have their own identities and characteristics, and all are considered the same. This process eliminates the existence and recognition of the individual.

Based on the semiotic analysis of Magistus Miftah's Instagram uploads, his identity and values do not match the gay stereotype in Indonesia. Magistus Miftah is a gay sexually-oriented individual who practices Islamic teachings because he believes in God, has a good relationship with his family, and does not always behave femininely.

With its features and characteristics, Instagram social media perpetuates Magistus Miftah's efforts to express himself without colliding with societal standards and stereotypes. When uploading often, Magistus Miftah intentionally provides extreme photos or videos. The extreme referred to here is maximizing what you want to highlight, such as "weird" make-up, bold poses, unusual clothes or costumes. This can be seen as a form of resistance to stereotypes by emphasizing

ing the diversity of their identities

Yep, Lovaas, and Elia (2003) say a strong heterosexual culture produces another form of soul murder. Shengold (1989) describes soul murder as a dramatic term for a process intentionally carried out to erase or separate a person's identity from their identity. The true identity of a gay person will be rejected and even forced to change by society. The visualization of gender expression performed by Magistus Miftah on his Instagram page is not only his way of communicating his identity but also his way of strengthening his identity and existence during social life. This has to do with representation. By uploading on Instagram, the identity of Magistus Miftah contained in the upload will be interpreted by other people. This interpretation by others gives legitimacy to the existence of Magistus Miftah.

Conclusion

Based on the semiotic analysis, the researcher concludes that the gender expression performed by Magistus Miftah on his Instagram social media is used for several things. The thing that stands out the most is Magistus Miftah through his upload showing his identity. Gender expression is something he often displays on his Instagram page. The identity of Magistus Miftah is considered diverse because it results from the meeting of values accepted in Indonesia such as Islam and family values with not values accepted by the general public, such as gay sexual orientation and fluid gender expression.

From dismantling semiotics through analysis, it was found that Magistus Miftah carried out the

identity negotiation process. By thinking about the position of the family close to him, at certain times, such as when going to a place of worship or gathering with extended family, he will lower his level of gender expression. He tries to strike a balance between his identity and public expectations. This effort does not mean he completely loses his identity. He will still display things that can be associated with his identity but more 'subtly' than if he were in a public space that accepted himself as among his friends.

In addition, by expressing himself on Instagram, Magistus Miftah strengthens his identity. When readers see and interpret his Instagram uploads, Magistus Miftah feels an acknowledgment of his existence, and this acknowledgment of existence affects his confidence in his identity.

From his postings that dare to disobey the usual standards shaped by heterosexual culture and accepted norms in Indonesia, it can be said that this is a form of resistance by Magistus Miftah. He fights against the gay stereotypes that society believes in. He shows that every gay individual has his own identity, unlike society thinks that all gay people have the same identity and characteristics. This resistance is carried out by Magistus Miftah using attributes and symbols. Things that are visible and contained in his uploads, such as clothes, costumes, overall appearance, poses, colour choices, aesthetic choices, framing, and word choices are his way of communicating his identity and opinion of the world, especially regarding other people's views of himself that are considered abnormal. He prefers to use visualization instead of words.

Reference

- Adriani, Shintia, Anggai, Arifa I, & Pradoponingrum, Retno A. 2017. Pengungkapan Diri Gay Kepada Keluarga. *Psikosains: Jurnal Penelitian dan Pemikiran Psikologi*
- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, New York.
- Caplan, Patricia. 1987. *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality*. Routledge, New York.
- Currah, Paisley dan Minter, 2000. *Transgender equality: A handbook for activists and policymakers*.
- Fedor, George. 2014. Stereotypes and Prejudice in the Perception of the "Other". *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 149
- Hall, Stuart. 2003. *The Work of Representation: Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage Publication
- Hall, William. 2019. Sexual Orientation. *Encyclopedia of Social Work*.
- Hennink, M.; Hutter, I.; Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative Research Methods*. SAGE Publications.
- Hogg, M. A., Terry, D. J., & White, K. M. (1995). A tale of two theories: A critical comparison of identity theory with social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*.
- Listiorni, Dina. 2019. Diskursus Ujaran Kebencian Pemerintah pada Kasus LGBT di Media
- Daring. Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Vol 16.
- Mahalik, J. R., Cournoyer, R. J., DeFranc, W., Cherry, M., & Napolitano, J. M. 1998. Men's gender role conflict and use of psychological defenses. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*.
- Marcia J.E. 1993. *The Ego Identity Status Approach to Ego Identity*. In: Ego Identity. Springer, New York, NY.
- McCall, G. J., & Simmons, J. L. 1978. *Identities and interactions*. New York: Free Press.
- McGarty, C., Yzerbyt, V., Spears, R. 2002. Social, cultural and cognitive factors in stereotype formation. Stereotype as Explanations. The formation of meaningful beliefs about social groups. *Cambridge: Cambridge University Press*, 1-15.
- Nugroho, Riant. 2008. *Gender dan Strategi: Pengarus-Utamaannya di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar
- New Jersey: Wiley.
- Oakes, P. 1987. The salience of social categories. In J. C. Turner, M. A. Hogg, P. J. Oakes, S. D. Reicher, & M. S. Wetherell, M. S. (Eds.), *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- O'Halloran, Kay L.; Smith, Bradley A (ed). 2010. *Multimodal Studies: Exploring Issues and Domains*. Taylor & Francis.
- Pranata, T.D. 2015. Perilaku Dan Realitas Sosial Kehidupan Gay Di Kota Samarinda, *eJournal Sosiatri-Sosiologi* 2015, 3 (3): 135-150. ejournal.sos.fisip-unmul.ac.id
- Safko, Lon. 2010. *The Social media Bible: Tactics, Tools & Strategies for Business Success*.

- Stryker, Sheldon. 1987. "Identity Theory: Developments and Extensions." In *Self and Identity: Psychosocial Perspectives*, ed. Krysia Yardley and Terry Honess. Chichester: Wiley.
- Watson, David L, [Tregathan](#), Gail DeBortali & [Frank](#), Joyce. 1984. *Social Psychology: Science and Application*. Scott Foresman: Michigan
- Wijaya, Hendri Yulius. 2020. *Intimate Assemblages : The Politics of Queer Identities and Sexualities in Indonesia*.
- Wong, F. Y., McCreary, D. R., Carpenter, K. M., Engle, A., & Korchynsky, R. 1999. Gender-related factors influencing perceptions of homosexuality. *Journal of Homosexuality*.
- Yep, Gust, Karen Lovaas, & John, Elia, 2003. Introduction: Queering Communication: Starting the Conversation. *Journal of Homosexuality*
- Margaret, Agusta. 2014. <https://magdalene.co/story/never-nor-and-nowhere-in-between-raising-a-gay-child-in-a-heterosexual-paradigm>
- Saiful Muljani Resarch and Consulting. 2018. <https://saifulmuljani.com/mayoritas-publik-menilai-lgbt-punya-hak-hidup-di-indonesia/>
- Wargadireja, Arzia Tivany. https://www.vice.com/id_id/article/mbzxkp/membedah-ciri-ciri-ngawur-buat-mendeteksi-lelaki-gay-yang-kembali-viral-di-medsos
- Tempo. 2020. <https://www.tempo.co/abc/6088/susah-hidup-sebagai-lgbt-di-indonesia-wni-yang-minta-perlindungan-di-australia>
- Walton, Kate. 2020. <https://www.vice.com/id/article/qvx3np/perjuangan-lelaki-gay-asal-indonesia-mencari-suaka-di-kanada>