

FACEBOOK PROFILE PHOTOS AND INDONESIAN YOUTH CULTURE:
PERFORMING THE SELF IN THE DIGITAL AGE

BY

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THESIS

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Abstract

This project focuses on two topics of major relevance to social scientists (anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, etc.) and scholars from a range of disciplines: *social networking* and *personal identity*. Relying heavily on the theoretical framework of Erving Goffman, this exploratory study investigates cutting edge, rapidly changing modern phenomena in Indonesia: how youth use social media to develop and present their self-identities in social networking. Part 1 of the study examines self-presentation patterns found in visual images on Facebook. Part 2 of the study presents the results of in-depth interviews concentrating on these issues. Overall, there were no significant gender discrepancies found in the data collected for this study and while the majority of participants expressed that profile photos were an important component of their pages, none felt that their profile photos were the most important part of their profiles that communicate who they are. This study was a first step in exploring this topic of social networking sites and identity performance in Indonesia and strongly indicates a need for further research in this area.

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Introduction

In the West, we have come to understand social networking as somewhat of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it provides people with the ability to seamlessly communicate and facilitate relationships with individuals from virtually anywhere in the world. On the other hand, social networking sites have also led to harassment and new forms of micro-aggressions within the blurred boundaries of people's public and private lives on the internet. Moreover, the recent controversy surrounding the use of Facebook to influence political outcomes is further evidence of how a social networking site can be used for commercial and political manipulation of data. The culture surrounding social networking is a relatively new concept for social scientists to explore. While there are some commonalities throughout the world concerning this topic, there also exists a unique set of challenges, benefits, and implications that are culturally specific. Where Indonesia fits into all of this is of particular importance as Indonesia has ranked among the top users of Facebook in the world for many years and currently ranks third according to data published by the international statistics database, *Statista* (April 2018). The popularity of social networking sites in Indonesia suggests that these media platforms are serving an important purpose in the lives of Indonesians today.

According to sociologists Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin (2008) "Facebook users mainly engage in implicit identity performance and they prefer to 'show rather than tell' (Zhao et. al., 2008, p.166). Furthermore, researcher Siibak (2010) remarks that "Facebook photos seem an indispensable part of self-presentation and impression

management through which users communicate visually (Siibak, 2009: 405).” Based on their research observations, in this study I focused on analyzing the visual features of the performance of self through Facebook profile images as research with this focus could provide a contribution to the existing research on this growing subject.

One of the central aims of this project was to examine the historical, cultural, religious, and socio-economic factors which have shaped contemporary Indonesian youth culture. Furthermore, I wanted to explore how these factors might affect the visual features of this mode of performance. Topics like social networking and identity are extremely complex in and of themselves. Thus, establishing an historical, theoretical, and methodological framework from which to examine these themes requires the help of scholars from a range of disciplines.

The first section of this project is devoted to the review of literature pertaining to social networking sites and visual self-presentation more broadly. The second section will narrow the scope of literature to focus more closely on social media and identity performance in Indonesia. As there are very little scholarly sources available, this will also be done through the use of a variety of sources including newspaper articles and blog posts. The third section will examine previous studies that have investigated visual self-presentation on Facebook, specifically concerning profile images. Sections four and five present the two studies that were conducted. The fourth section is devoted to a general overview of different Facebook profile image ‘genres’ that I categorized through the virtual exploration of hundreds of public Indonesian profile images as they are displayed on Facebook friend lists obtained on my personal page as well as that of my Indonesian research assistant. The data gathered in this section is preliminary and the genres

discussed are by no means exhaustive. The categories and corresponding images serve as a way to discuss political, socio-cultural and religious factors that may influence how young adult Indonesians perform, represent or develop identity today.

Through personal interviews with 17 young adult Indonesian men and women, section five aims to situate the voices and experiences of Indonesian Facebook users from Java and Maluku province within current arguments being made concerning the influence of social networking sites like Facebook in navigating online and offline social relationships through visual self-presentation in the digital ecology.

PART I

Defining Social Networking

The increasing popularity and ubiquity of social networking sites (SNS) all over the world has attracted the interest of researchers across a range of disciplines. In the social sciences and humanities, the implications of this new technology are being investigated by scholars focusing on diverse populations ranging from Trinidadian high school students to Chinese factory workers. The ever-evolving nature of today's digital ecology has proven challenging for the academy to keep up with. However, the snapshots that researchers can provide into this new facet of the human experience are invaluable.

One of the most influential publications on social networking sites to date is Danah Boyd and Nicole Ellison's 2007 article **Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship**. Boyd and Ellison define social network sites as:

“web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system

Boyd and Ellison stress the use of “network” over the term “networking” in their description of this phenomenon as they argue that “networking” typically refers to relationship initiation between strangers while “network” refers to a process through which users articulate and make visible their pre-existing social networks (211). While Boyd and Ellison acknowledge that social network sites can be used for both purposes, they posit that the primary function of these sites is the latter. At the time of publication, this distinction was significant in that prior to social media, the internet was primarily used to connect strangers with common interests (Miller, 2016:17). However, as new and existing sites develop over time, the relationship between online and offline sociality may have become more difficult to define. Nonetheless, Boyd and Ellison situate the existing social network sites of that time within global frameworks, by introducing a broad range of scholarship on various SNS used throughout the world. However, Boyd and Ellison acknowledge the limitations of their overview in that all sources included in their publication were written in English.

As the study of this field progresses, the ways in which social networking and social media are defined has broadened in scope across various disciplines. Miller et. al. define social media as:

The canonization of the space between traditional broadcast and private dyadic communication, providing people with a scale of group size and degrees of privacy that we have termed scalable sociality (Miller et, al, 2016: 9).

While this definition is useful when applied to SNS like Facebook, Miller et. al. stress that this definition may be articulated in different ways within the newer social media platforms like WeChat, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Snapchat (10). The topic of sociality

is an important feature of this definition when social media is being examined through an anthropological lens. In the study of social media, Miller et. al. caution against the natural temptation to view this topic as one that evolves in distinct and orderly stages (10). Though the ways in which social media is defined and studied across disciplines is diverse and complex, a focus on social media also provides opportunities to bring communication and media studies together with social sciences in new and exciting ways (11).

Social Networking and the Self

The creation of visible profiles is a defining feature of SNSs and is the first step that an individual will take after joining a site. Individuals generate their profiles by answering a series of questions prompted through the site. These questions usually include age, location, interests, and an “about me” section where one can add any additional personal information they’d like. It should be noted that these are pre-existing templates which guide people to what designers consider to be the relevant dimensions of identity. Social networking sites also encourage users to upload a profile photo. For sites like Facebook, users have the ability to control the visibility of their profile and can limit who can see their content, for example, to “friends only” or “friends of friends”. The construction and maintenance of individuals’ user profiles on SNSs has contributed to the increasingly popular perception that online self-presentation may be more artificial and overly constructed than face-to-face interactions. However, it is important to first explore identity and self-presentation in greater depth before such claims can be substantiated.

Erving Goffman Social Theory

In his famous book, **The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life** (1959), Erving Goffman situates everyday social interaction within a dramaturgical framework, greatly expanding the ways in which we understand how we construct, perform, and present ourselves to others. When we enter the presence of others, it is as though we have stepped on to a stage, entering into a performance that we consciously and unconsciously employ in accordance to a given situation (15). Those around us, or the other performers, may be considered as the audience, observers, or co-participants (16). Our social roles are our primary means of conveying information to others. Goffman defines social roles as the “enactment of rights and duties attached to a given status” (16). In playing a part we are implicitly asking our audience to take our performance and the impression of ourselves conveyed in that performance seriously (17).

In order to express ourselves, we select specific roles, scenes, and scripts. Goffman refers to the regions, or points of reference in which our performances take place, as occurring on a front stage or back stage (107). The front stage is the place where the performance is given. Thus, the performance that an individual gives within this region can be seen as the effort to appear as though his or her activity and appearance in this region embodies and maintains certain standards (107). The back stage region can be thought of as the place where one can reliably expect that no members of the audience will intrude (113). In this region, Goffman explains that actions occur which are related to the performance but “inconsistent with the appearance fostered by the performance (134)”.

Often, we are performing multiple roles simultaneously and also serve as the audience to other people's performances. Even when we are in the so-called backstage we are still following certain protocols and scripts for we are constantly being assessed based on our performances. Our identities, our individual self-assessment is linked to how others have assessed us. Our reputations are constructed based on the information that we convey to others.

Goffman's ideas of identity performance generally present the spaces in which our identity performances occur as being quite tangible. An example would be how retail employees mediate their behavior towards customers in order to make a sale versus how they conduct themselves when in the breakroom. Goffman describes how the ways in which individuals announce their roles to a given audience are communicated through social information that can be explicitly given away or given off (2). When people make verbal or other explicit statements (e.g., clothing), we refer to this information as being explicitly given away. Body language encompasses information that is given off. These cues are just as important in delivering a social performance despite being seemingly less deliberate than information that is explicitly given away. What happens when our performances enter the digital stage?

Goffman in the Digital Era

Goffman's dramaturgical framework provides a useful basis from which we can situate the everyday social interactions that shape who we are. In researching identity performance in the digital age, Goffman's work is being deconstructed and reconstructed as new media continuously configures new forms of visibility and self-expression. Thus,

Goffman serves as the jumping off point for social scientists to explore how these computer-mediated spaces become extensions of and ruptures from face-to-face sociality.

Daniel Trottier further explores Goffman's social theory in his book, **Identity Problems in the Facebook Era** (2014). Trottier argues that "if all the world's a stage, then living online has profoundly changed the conditions of that stage (8)". In Trottier's view, on digital media the distinction between the front stage and back stage becomes less evident. Furthermore, the audience for whom you are performing also expands. As a consequence, the act of converging two formally distinct behavioral patterns reserved for different audiences may incite digital stigmatization of an individual if their behavior in one context clashes with another (15). Trottier explains that digital stigma refers to what can occur when sensitive personal details are made public through online platforms, resulting in a negative effect such as persistent discrimination or a compromised reputation (1). Trottier further notes that one's social categories such as age, gender, religion, or sexual orientation determine the impact of digital stigma and how an individual will cope with the situation (3). While social media can negatively impact how we construct and perform our identities, social networking sites can also function as a virtual space where we can exercise agency over our identities.

In the book, **The Psychodynamics of Social Networking: Connected-up Instantaneous Culture of the Self** (Balick, 2014), psychotherapist Aaron Balick provides an important theoretical framework through which to situate this topic. Balick views identity as agentic in that although our identities are influenced by the cultural, economic, political, and various other powers around us, our identities are also shaped by the choices we make in the midst of these influences (134). Though some aspects of

our identities such as race and ethnicity are more fixed, there are also many aspects of our identities that are more fluid. Social networking sites become an ideal space to experiment and play with different aspects of who we are as we can see how others respond to the identities we try out. Particularly for young people, online identity formation can be a way in which young people thoughtfully engage in the possibilities available to them (134). In the following passage, Balick articulates this idea within today's digital ecology as follows:

It is necessary to be mindful that, in important ways, the way in which individuals manage both the different aspects of their identities and their relationships across digital technologies is not so different from how we understand the nature of the self as being multiply expressed in a variety of different situations, calling upon the mechanism of the false self, or the persona, or indeed, any of a vast selection of self-states that can be activated at any given time (Balick, 2014: 132).

Balick's acknowledgement of the multiplicitous nature of our identities and the various environments where our presentation of our identities occur is a modern extension of sociologist Erving Goffman's influential contributions to social theory.

Yet another helpful theoretical framework through which to situate the subject of identity performance in the digital ecology is Judith Butler's theory of identity performativity presented in her book, **Gender Trouble** (1990). Butler's theory of performativity is the idea that identity and subjectivity is an ongoing process of *becoming*, rather than an ontological state of being, whereby becoming is a sequence of acts, that retroactively constitute identity (preface, 1999, 17-9). Robert Cover's 2012 publication, **Performing and undoing identity online: Social networking, identity theories, and the incompatibility of online profiles and friendship regimes** expands Butler's theoretical framework to the realms of social networking in order to demonstrate

that “online social networking behavior is just as much a performance as any other ‘real life’ act, and just as equally constitutes a sense of self and identity (179)”.

Cover identifies two main ways that performances of selfhood are articulated on social networking sites: (1a) modifying one’s own profile by deciding what information to include such as age, indicators of sexual orientation, gender, and relationship status. (1b) ongoing activities like uploading and captioning photos, status updates. The second way that we perform our identities online is through how we identify with various friends and networks through updating and making changes to our friends list (179).

The idea that everything can be personalized and made social is a central element of today’s digital ecology (Silverman, 2015: 7). As Facebook increased in popularity, so did the ideology that people should share as much of their lives as possible. Furthermore, true Facebook believers find that sharing information from the photos they post to the music they’re listening to is “better with other people watching (Silverman, 2015:8).” However, in the process of giving life to our virtual selves, the concept of authenticity becomes complexly and inextricably linked to our constructions of our identities online (Silverman, 2015:9).

Not only does social media rely on our willingness to share ourselves with the world, social media is heavily dependent on the acts of recognition from our friends, families, and acquaintances, the extent to which they ‘like’ and comment on the content that we share (Silverman, 2015:48). In the world of social media, we are bombarded with a constant stream of user-generated content. What motivates us to engage with the videos, photos, and posts that occupy our newsfeeds is the fact that someone we know was involved in or connected to this content in some way. As Silverman notes “the thing

itself is less interesting than the fact that we know someone involved, and if it is interesting or important, we can claim some tenuous connection to it (48).” Receiving recognition from our friends for what we post in a sense substantiates what we share.

Smartphones have armed us with the ability to document our everyday lives through photos and videos which we can instantly upload to various social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. We can apply filters and captions to our photographs enabling us to package them with layered signifiers of our identities. Through this process, the act of sharing itself becomes akin to personhood and is the central means from which we accumulate social capital (49). In this context, photos become a means of communicating our realities rather than a way to memorialize a specific moment in our lives (55). According to sociologists Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin (2008), “Facebook users mainly engage in implicit identity performance and they prefer to ‘show rather than tell’ (Zhao et. al., 2008, p.166). Therefore, as researcher Andra Siibak (2009) remarks, “Facebook photos seem an indispensable part of self-presentation and impression management through which users communicate visually (Siibak, 2009, p. 405)”. Thus, on social networking sites, photos and images are a more immediate way of presenting the self.

PART II

The History of the Internet in Indonesia

Initially, the internet was only available to a small number of people, usually the elite. In Jacob Silverman’s **Terms of Service: Social Media and the Price of Constant Connection**, Silverman notes that technology cannot be looked at outside of its relationship to politics, sociology, economics, and culture (xii, 2015). In Silverman’s

view, the faith of Silicon Valley's technology moguls in the concept of technological solutionism, posits that many of the difficult challenges of human behavior can be resolved when presented with a technological fix (5). Cyber-libertarians believe that digital communication favors oppressed parties, particularly those in authoritarian countries.

Indonesia is a country which provides an example of how the development of the internet and social networks facilitated the demise of the authoritarian Suharto regime in the late 90s. In 1967, Indonesia entered into a 31-year period of the authoritarian New Order Regime under the nation's second president, Suharto. When the internet was founded in the 90s, along with all other media forms in Indonesia, it was controlled by the state under Suharto's New Order regime. The first commercial Internet service provider, IndoNet, was established in Jakarta in 1994. According to social scientist Merlyna Lim, when the internet came to Indonesia, it was initially available to a small, elite segment of society (Lim, 273). Thus, when President Suharto was forced to step down in May 1998, scholars argued that it was impossible for the internet to have played a role in overthrowing the regime. Such opinions were based on the argument that less than 1 percent of the Indonesian population were internet users in 1998 (275). Furthermore, as internet users tended to be from an elite group of society, there was the assumption that they would be unlikely to have joined in anti-hegemonic actions.

By the mid 1990s the internet became more commercialized in Indonesia in the form of internet cafés or *warnet*. Prior to the emergence of commercial Internet service providers (ISPs), the only access to the internet was through research institutions and universities (276). With the emergence of ISPs, those Indonesians who were able to

afford the extremely expensive subscription fees were able to have internet in their homes and offices (276). The warnet was established as an alternative way for the public to access the Internet. Lim notes that what differentiates the warnet from the typical Internet café is that the warnet is connected to a historic cultural context in Indonesia (276).

Warnet is an abbreviation of “warung Internet”. A warung is a place to buy snacks or meals and is typically associated with people from the lower classes of Indonesian society. Warung are often connected to the front part of a house or may stand independently on the street. Typical warung are very simple in design and usually consist of one small room with a table. There are also warung with bigger rooms which allow for more tables and spaces for people to sit, eat, and socialize. Warung have a long tradition in Indonesia as places where people meet to chat, share and spread information.

The warnet also serves as a type of civic space in which people can access the Internet without manipulation or intervention by the corporate economy or the state (279). Furthermore, the warnet allows Internet users to extend existing social networks and relationships through cyber-space and within the physical space of the warnet itself. As previously noted, under the New Order regime, all press was heavily controlled and censored by the state. The Internet enabled Indonesians to access controversial information about president Suharto and the New Order administration that was banned in other forms of media at that time. One example is the distribution of a list which was made from a series of long emails that revealed how president Suharto used his charity foundations as a cover for his corrupt business network (281). This information was spread through emails to various Indonesian mailing lists. Several websites were also

created in order to disseminate political information. These sites urged people to print off the content published on their homepages and to distribute the information to non-Internet users (281). The rapid spread of this information through the Internet coupled with the traditional style of networking information led to the creation of resistance identities throughout Indonesian civil society (282). Lim's article provides insight into the earliest example of how foreign technology is adapted to traditional social networks in Indonesia.

The Internet in Indonesia today: Current Statistics

Since the late 1990s, the number of Internet users in Indonesia has expanded rapidly. According to annual reports on global digital statistics conducted by *We are Social and Hootsuite*, Indonesia is one of the fastest growing countries in relation to the number of Internet users in the world.¹ It is estimated that with a population of over 250 million, there were about 88.1 million active Internet users in 2016, with a 15 percent increase within 12 months. Internet use in Indonesia is comparable to what it is in China and India but much less than in the United States (Internet World Stats, 2018).

¹ <https://www.rappler.com/world/regions/asia-pacific/indonesia/bahasa/englishedition/159593-internet-social-media-statistics>

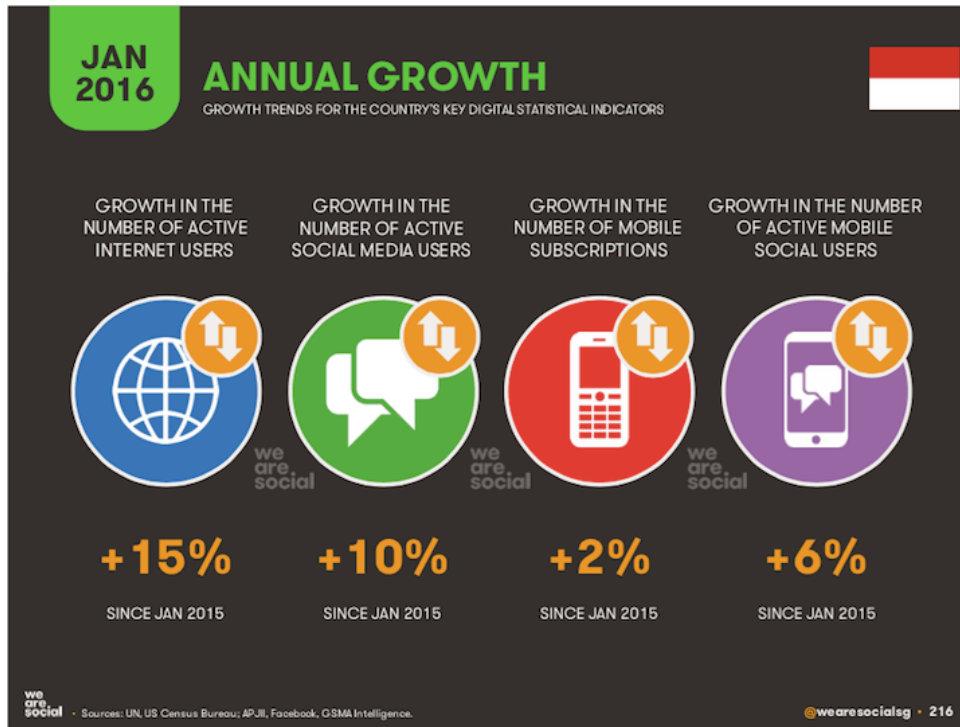


Fig. 1

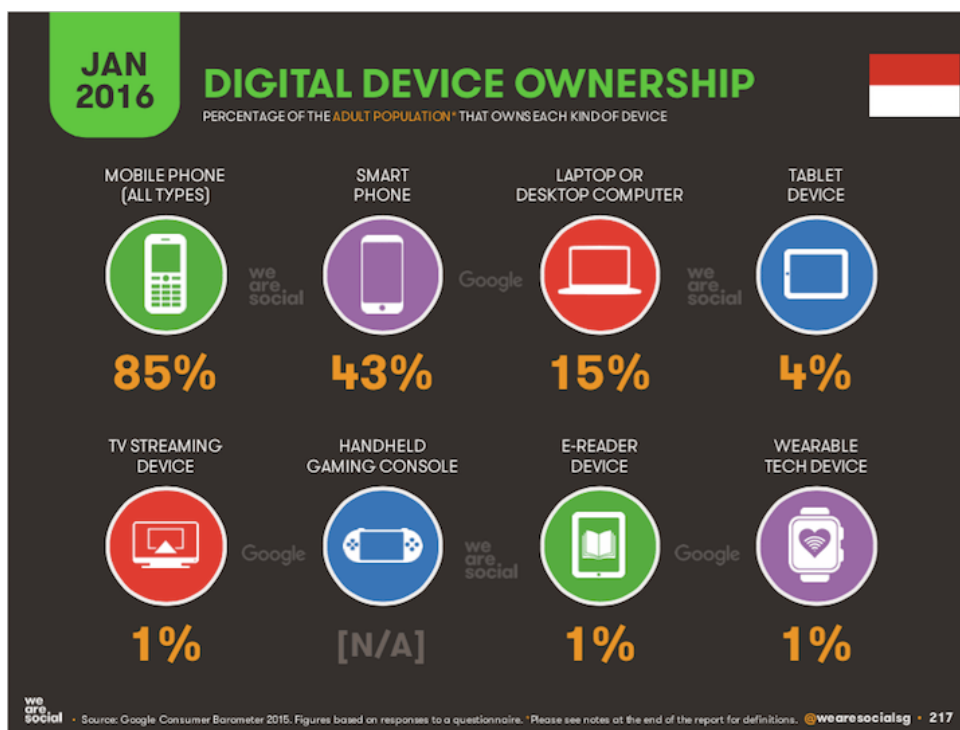


Fig. 2

The majority of Indonesians access the internet using mobile phones which make up about 70% of web page views versus 28% for laptops and desktops. With the rapid growth of Indonesia's internet infrastructure, Indonesia has consistently ranked among the top users of social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter in the world. According to data from JakPat, in Indonesia it was estimated that 9 out of 10 mobile internet users ages 16 to 35 used Facebook in 2016 with Instagram following second at nearly 70%.²

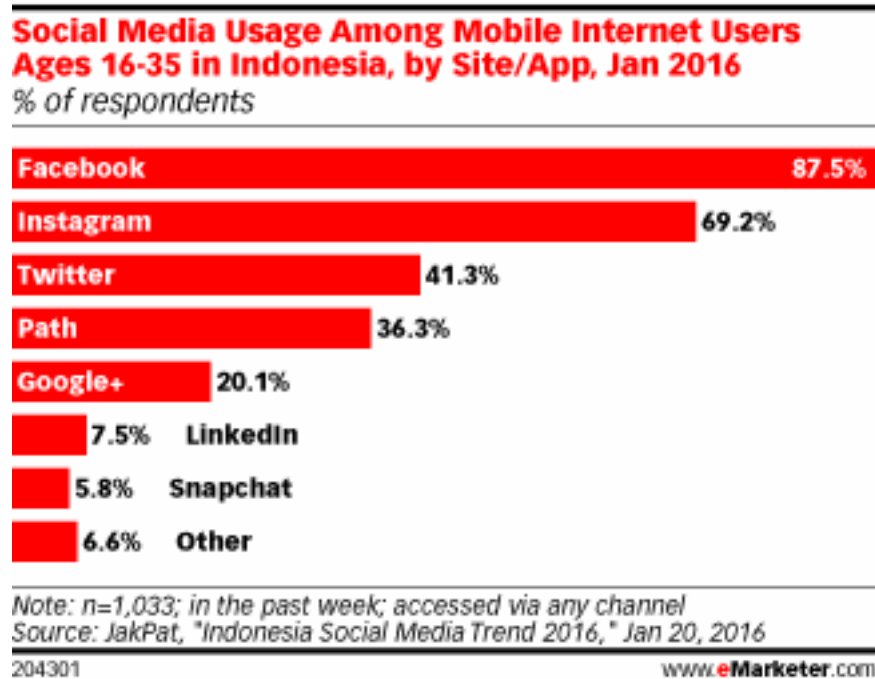


Fig. 3

² <https://www.emarketer.com/Article/Indonesia-Facebook-Remains-Most-Popular-Social-Site/1014126>

When different age groups were surveyed about their weekly social media usage, those in the 30-35 age group reported the highest use of Facebook at 94.2% while respondents from the 16-19 age group reported the lowest weekly Facebook use at 80.9%. However, the 16-19 age group reported the highest weekly use of Instagram at 73.6% while the 30-35 age group reported the lowest at 55.8%.

**Social Media Usage Among Mobile Internet Users
Ages 16-35 in Indonesia, by Age and Site/App,
Jan 2016**
% of respondents in each group

	16-19	20-25	26-29	30-35
Facebook	80.9%	86.1%	89.4%	94.2%
Instagram	73.6%	73.8%	63.8%	55.8%
Twitter	39.1%	41.5%	43.0%	39.6%
Google+	26.6%	20.1%	17.4%	20.8%
Path	26.4%	40.8%	33.8%	30.5%
Snapchat	11.8%	5.9%	3.9%	3.3%
Tumblr	5.5%	4.6%	1.5%	1.3%
Pinterest	4.6%	6.1%	4.4%	6.5%
LinkedIn	2.7%	7.1%	9.7%	9.1%
Periscope	1.8%	0.7%	1.0%	0.0%
Other	11.8%	6.6%	4.8%	5.2%

Note: n=1,033; in the past week; accessed via any channel
Source: JakPat, "Indonesia Social Media Trend 2016," Jan 20, 2016

204302

www.eMarketer.com **Fig. 4**

The popularity of social networking sites like Facebook in Indonesia suggests that social media is playing an important role in the lives of Indonesians today. In order to better understand how social media has functioned in Indonesia over the years, it is important to review current trends in Indonesian scholarship on the matter.

Indonesian Press Articles and Blog Posts on Social Media

The increasing popularity and prevalence of social media in Indonesia has facilitated discussions about the significance of social networking sites like Facebook in the lives of Indonesians today. These discussions are taking place through a variety of online platforms including news articles, blog posts, and academic papers written at both undergraduate and graduate levels. While many Indonesian news sites keep readers informed about the technical aspects of Facebook such as new features and site updates, there also exists a small but growing body of articles that focus on the social, cultural, and psychological impacts of Facebook use in Indonesia. Indonesian news articles referencing studies conducted in the United States and Europe regarding Facebook are among the most common items written about the psychological and behavioral impact of Facebook. Several recent examples include, an article published on the popular Indonesian news site kompas.com regarding the results of a study from Ohio State University linking depression in new mothers with their activity levels on Facebook and Instagram.

On kumparan.com, another article focused on a study from the University of Copenhagen which discussed the phenomenon of Facebook Envy and its connection to stress and depression amongst users. In short, Facebook Envy describes how users can become envious of the content their Facebook friends post such as uploading vacation photos or purchasing a new item. This envy may then result in increased levels of depression particularly for those who are heavy Facebook users. Although these news articles are not taken from Indonesian studies regarding social media and Facebook, the fact that the information from these studies is being translated and published on these

news sites suggests that Facebook may be impacting the lives of Indonesians in similar ways as elsewhere in the world.

News articles with a specific focus on the impacts of social media in Indonesia have also been published on some of Indonesian news sites. One of the earliest examples entitled “Facebook dan Twitter Rusak Bahasa” or “Facebook and Twitter Damages Language” (2010) explores the linguistic ramifications of social media use in Indonesia. The article begins with a quote from a linguistics professor at Petra Christian University, Dr. Esther Kuntjara, who explains that social media has damaged language because the virtual world uses informal spoken language mixed with images. Furthermore, according to Kuntjara, language chaos ensues because of Facebook users opting to use images to convey emotion rather than words. The article also notes that Indonesia has fallen behind in using new Indonesian vocabulary to discuss common terms in the technological sphere such as uploads, downloads, and websites opting to use the English words instead. While this article does make reference to the relationship between social networking sites and identity formation, the article anonymously quotes an American professor from Indiana University of Pennsylvania who explains that language damage and the ability to easily alter one’s identity in cyberspace has given birth to a more individualistic, asocial generation. While sections of this article appear disjointed and insufficiently cited, it does demonstrate that there exists a desire to better understand how social networking sites are impacting national identity through the alleged degradation of Indonesia’s national language in the digital sphere. Furthermore, this article touches on a possible correlation between how people communicate on social media and identity formation particularly among younger generations.

News articles are not the only way that Indonesians are writing about the impacts of social media. Two essays published on the blogging site connected to kompas.com discuss social media and Facebook in Indonesia through the form of personal narratives by Indonesian users. One of the earliest essays providing an individual's experiences using Facebook comes from the post entitled "Experience using Facebook" written by Facebook user Gigih P in October 2013. The essay largely focuses on the social ups and downs experienced on Facebook in both high school and college. According to this individual's account, Facebook is seen as a "cool" digital space in which to socialize with peers. The near constant stream of activity from status updates and chatting to photo uploads are seen as the factors that contribute most to the amount of time spent on Facebook. However, these Facebook activities also negatively influenced some of this user's social relationships with others resulting in termination of the friendship on Facebook i.e. unfriending. One of the precipitating events that sparked unfriending, according to this Facebook user's account, was due to jealousy caused by frequent chatting with a friend's boyfriend. Another event that prompted the ending of a friendship on Facebook was due to a "disturbing" status posted by another user. In general, this essay highlights the ways in which Indonesians have begun considering the social, behavioral, and psychological impacts of Facebook based on individual experience. Though one user's perceptions of Facebook cannot speak to that of all Indonesian Facebook users, such posts contribute to more textured understanding of Facebook use in Indonesia.

Another essay published on kompasiana.com entitled "Dampak Positif dan Negatif dari Media Sosial Facebook" or "Positive and Negative Impact of Facebook's

Social Media” (1/15/2017) outlines the various ways in which Facebook has positively and negatively impacted Indonesian society. This article begins with the acknowledgement of Facebook’s popularity amongst Indonesian users and also links part of the site’s appeal to the fact that Facebook is easy to use and can be linked with other social media outlets. This essay, based on one user’s experiences and opinions posted under the name Pusahma Bali, describes the positive impacts of Facebook such as enabling people to connect and maintain relationships with “distant relatives, old friends, and coworkers”. Furthermore, Facebook is seen as way to current information such as personal events as well as local or regional events either through the direct status of the user or in the form of links to other websites containing such information. Another benefit of Facebook according to this essay is the ability to share and gain knowledge with others through Facebook groups that share various interests. Lastly, another positive impact of Facebook is that the site enables people to promote and provide information regarding products they sell for free on their personal pages.

The first negative impact of Facebook discussed in this post is that Facebook can be a place to spread “hatred, slander, and provocation” particularly when Facebook users post content that falls in the realm of SARA the acronym for issues regarding ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations.³ Another negative impact of Facebook is that it can make users vulnerable to fraud and fake news. Lastly, according to the opinion expressed in this blog post Facebook can make people “lazy and less productive”. Bali also notes that Facebook may also be influencing users’ “psychological development” stating that “it is not impossible that a person’s character is formed from Facebook”

³ <https://en.tempo.co/read/news/2014/03/02/057558740/Ahok-People-Care-Less-about-SARA>

which according to Bali is due to the breadth of diversity and sheer volume of people one can interact with through Facebook.

PART III

Research on Facebook Profile Photos

The review of contemporary discourse on Facebook and social media in Indonesia through formal and informal channels provides an interesting component to the breadth of information that has informed this project. The scope of Indonesian sources gathered reflects the ease with which researchers can examine the multiple types of discussion environments available through the internet. This type of data collection, also known as Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA), uses a multimodality approach which communications researcher, Andre Brock, explains “reflects the internet’s simultaneity as infrastructure, service, platform, application, object, subject, action, and discourse (Brock, 2016:12).” In the context of contemporary Indonesian discourse on Facebook and identity formation, the American and European studies translated and written about on various news platforms indicates that there is an interest in Indonesia to better understand how social media interacts with one’s identity. There is no disputing Facebook’s popularity around the world. In Indonesia, this social networking site has been consistently growing in popularity since 2009⁴. Facebook is a multifaceted social media platform that is both “performative and functional” (Rapley, 2008:2). In examining the performative aspect of Facebook with regard to individual identity, the real challenge becomes finding what Facebook content to focus on within this far-reaching platform.

⁴ <https://www.techinasia.com/why-facebook-is-so-popular-in-indonesia>

According to sociologists, Zhao, Grasmuck & Martin (2008), “Facebook users mainly engage in implicit identity performance and they prefer to ‘show rather than tell’ (Zhao et. al., 2008, p.166). Furthermore, researcher Siibak (2010) remarks that “Facebook photos seem an indispensable part of self-presentation and impression management through which users communicate visually (Siibak, 2009, p. 405)”. In essence, photos are an immediate and perspicuous presentation of the self. Based on this work, I have narrowed down the scope of my research to analyzing the visual features of the performance of self through Facebook photographs. This can provide a positive contribution to the existing research on this growing subject. In the following section I will examine the current literature on Facebook images, paying particular attention to works that focus more specifically on profile photos and Indonesia.

In 2013, Facebook revealed that a total of 250 billion photos had been uploaded to the site, with users uploading roughly 350 million new photos each day⁵. Based on existing research, Facebook profiles are thought of as the online embodiment of our "real" selves (Boyd, 2004; Boyd and Heer, 2008; Farquhar, 2012). The visual elements of Facebook profiles play a vital role in making the digital embodiment of our selves fully realized (Boyd, 2004). A growing body of writing from scholarly sources, news articles, and blog posts have begun to explore the visual elements of identity construction on Facebook

The significance of profile images within the study of computer-mediated self-presentation on social networking sites has been explored in previous studies from the U.S and Europe. Communications’ researcher, Michele Strano’s 2008 study on self-

⁵ <https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/doi/pdf/10.1080/02185377.2018.1445535?needAccess=true>

presentation through Facebook profile images, describes the profile picture as the “primary identity marker for a user’s profile. Strano argues that the profile image acts as “the most pointed attempt of photographic self-presentation on the Facebook profile”. Strano’s study was conducted using an open-ended qualitative survey of how people decide what image to select for their profile picture. The study did not use content analysis to map the range of image types in Facebook profile photos choosing instead to focus on the survey results that would later be expanded upon in in-depth interviews. The subject pool consisted of age groups ranging from 18-31+. Strano notes that the study was largely exploratory and is formulated more as a starting point for future studies researching Facebook profile images as a means of impression management in online social networks.

Lee Farquhar’s article *Performing and interpreting identity through Facebook imagery* (2012) focuses on various visual elements of the Facebook profile pages of 346 participants. Farquhar identified and analyzed three major image-based areas on Facebook profile pages: bumper stickers, pieces of flair, and uploaded photos, and the individual profile image. Interestingly, Farquhar notes that the popularity of bumper stickers and flair “are fads that will likely pass” which is indeed true of Facebook pages in 2018. In Farquhar’s discussion of profile pictures, Farquhar found that Facebook users often selected the photo with a specific reaction in mind. Most importantly, Farquhar notes that because the profile picture is connected with each friend request and message sent on Facebook, it could “possibly be considered a first impression” (468). The significance of profile images as tools for visual impression management indicated in this

study have produced similar findings as those found in previous studies (Strano, 2008; Siibak, 2009).

Researchers have also explored how Facebook profile pictures may provide insight into people's personality traits such as openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Through a social psychological framework, Segalin et. al (2017) used both computer-based and human-based quantitative methodologies to explore: 1) whether profile pictures contain information about their owner's personality 2) which if any, profile picture features are indicative of their owner's personality (3). Through a random sampling of profile pictures, the research used computer-based analysis to examine four major categories of features: color, composition, textural properties, and faces (4). The study did not analyze profile photos which characterize the face of a subject such as head pose estimation, emotions, expression, and gaze (7). While the results of the study suggested a correlation between Facebook profile pictures and the owner's personality traits, Segalin et. al acknowledge that there is still much to be explored.

Because of the ubiquity of Facebook around the world, culture is yet another dimension to explore regarding how people interact with and present themselves online. Cultural differences in self-presentation may also influence the types of profile images that people use. Zhao and Jiang (2011) explored how people presented themselves in their profile photos in an individualist culture (U.S) and a collectivist culture (China). Collectivist societies are important to study in order to better understand how culture shapes self-presentation. Within collectivist cultures like China, people typically have interdependent self-construals meaning that they see themselves as being defined by the

relationships and environments they inhabit. Within individualist cultures like the U.S, people tend to have independent self-construals meaning that they see themselves as unique with attributes that are independent of the relationships and environments they exist in (1130). Through this framework, which one should employ with caution, Zhao and Jiang posited that Chinese SNS users would be more likely to use group photos in their profile images than Americans. Furthermore, they hypothesized that Chinese SNS users would be more likely to customize their profile photos using photo editing programs, photos of celebrities, photos of babies, animals, landscape, fine arts, or objects such as cars, computers, phones etc. The results of the quantitative content analysis of the study found that Chinese SNS users did tend to customize their profiles photos more than Americans. However, the study found that American SNS users tended to have more group photos than Chinese users thus contradicting their initial hypothesis. These results exemplify how complex and potentially unpredictable identifying culturally specific trends in social media self-presentation can be. In addition to culture, additional factors like age and gender can also influence the ways in which people present themselves through profile images (Strano, 2008; Siibak, 2009).

Why Indonesia?

Despite the immense popularity of Facebook in Indonesia, there is an overall very small body of research investigating the visual components of identity performance on Facebook within Indonesian culture. Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago, located off the coast of mainland Southeast Asia in the Pacific and Indian oceans. The capital city of Indonesia is Jakarta, located near the north Western coast of Java. Indonesia gained its independence on August 17th 1945 after a long and turbulent history under

Dutch rule. Indonesia has rich cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity articulated in the Indonesian national motto “Bhinneka tunggal ika” or “Unity in Diversity”. There are more than 300 different ethnic groups in Indonesia with the Javanese constituting the country’s largest ethnic group. Indonesia is the largest Muslim majority country in the world with nearly 90% of the population identifying as Muslim. Indonesia also officially recognizes Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Religion plays a critical role within Indonesia’s ideologies of citizenship. This is evident in the national philosophy of *Pancasila* (Five Principles) which are: (1) Belief in one Supreme God; (2) A just and civilized humanity; (3) The unity of Indonesia; (4) Democracy led by the wisdom of unanimity arising from deliberations among representatives of the people; and (5) Social justice for the whole people of Indonesia. In Indonesia religious identity plays a significant role in most people’s lives. It is often a requirement that you list your religion on all official documents and religious education is a compulsory subject in both public and private schools. In better understanding how different cultures interact with social networking sites like Facebook it is important to explore the key aspects of a country’s national identity. In Indonesia, religion, ethnicity and geographic location are important factors to consider in examining how people present their identities visually through Facebook profile images.

Indonesian literature focusing specifically on identity and Facebook profile images was very hard to find. A study conducted by a communications student from the University of North Sumatra entitled *Foto Profil Facebook dan Identitas Pribadi* (Facebook Profile Photos and Personal Identity) (Sinaga, 2017) was published in the

Indonesian communications journal Ilmu Komunikasi FLOW. It explored the relationship between Facebook profile photos and identity performance among teenagers from a high school in Medan, North Sumatra. Using quantitative methodologies, Sinaga analyzed the profile photos of 72 high school students choosing to focus on 6 factors for measuring identity: ethnicity, race, gender, national, regional, and organizational identity. Sinaga notes that the decision to include the above factors was based on communications scholar Larry Samovar's book *Communication Between Cultures* (2010). This study did not detail what features in profile pictures would be associated with racial, ethnic, or national identity. However, for gender identity, Sinaga posited that female students would have profile images that would encompass certain interests like fashion and movies, while male students' profile images would focus more on music and sports. Regional identity would likely be displayed through the display of regional specific icons like geographic features, traditional fabrics, or from ethnic language printed on t-shirts or stickers. The results of the study reported that there "there is a low but definite relationship between the influence of Facebook profile photos on personal identity in high school students at SMA Budi Murni I Medan." Admittedly, the content of this study was difficult to understand due to a lack of description given by the researcher concerning methodology, data analysis, and the overall results of the study. What this article does show, however, is an attempt to explore in an academic way the connections between identity and Facebook profile images in Indonesia.

PART IV

Current Study: Profile Photo Genres

Part one of the present study focused on analyzing Facebook Profile Photos of young Indonesians. Given the relative newness of studying how people interact with and perform their identities visually on Facebook, the approaches to investigating this subject vary from the quantitative to the qualitative. This subject spans disciplines such as psychology, communications, sociology, and anthropology. From the body of literature that has informed my research, I will identify key methodological and theoretical frameworks used for this study. Based on previous research on self-presentation through Facebook images (Miller & Sinanan, 2017; Miller et. al, 2016; Wu et. al, 2015; Zhao & Jiang, 2011) the logical first step in this project was to get a sense of the common visual features of profile photos used on Indonesian Facebook pages. In a sense, the goal here was to identify and archive ‘genres’ of profile images displayed on individual public pages. Given the diversity of the Indonesian population, profile images were analyzed from two regions in the archipelago, Java (primarily Sidoarjo/Surabaya, East Java) and Maluku province (primarily Ambon). The decision to focus on these two regions was based on several factors. Java was selected in part due to the researcher’s familiarity with the region as well as the fact that East Java has a significant Muslim population. Thus, the individual Facebook pages from this region are likely to be more representative of the religious majority of the Indonesian population. The second group of profile images analyzed for this project were from the Maluku province. This region was selected in order to broaden the scope of content analysis to Christian Indonesian Facebook users.

This aspect of the project served as a means of gathering preliminary data in order to provide greater insight into current trends in Facebook profile images in Indonesia.

This study followed a similar approach as Miller & Sinanan (2017) which was to simply look at hundreds of current Facebook profile images to identify larger patterns within this population. A total of 1410 profile photos were examined for this part of the study and categorized into genres; **856** from Ambon and **554** from Java. This list of Indonesian Facebook profile genres is by no means exhaustive. This portion of the project is a visual exploration of the types of images that young adult Indonesians have used as recent profile images (as of December 2017). The images used in the following section were all taken from the profile images seen on a friends list or if one were to search for a user's name on Facebook as pictured in Figure 5. Images representing each genre are presented and are accompanied by relevant information which will serve as a means to better situate the genres within an Indonesian context.



Fig. 5

Religious Text-based Images (Christian)

Translation



6a

And cheer up
because of the LORD;
then he will
give you
what your heart wants.
Submit your life
to God
and trust Him
and He will act

Religious text-based images (Muslim)

Translation



6b

there is no anxiety that is not prepared by Allah's peace
 There is not a low feeling that is not prepared by God's high place
 There is no sadness that is not prepared happiness by Allah
 There is no fatigue that is not prepared by God's goodness
 So, just take a few moments again...

6c. Religion is an important part of Indonesian identity as stated in the national philosophy of Pancasila in which Belief in one Supreme God appears as the first of the five principles listed. Furthermore, the state promotion of religious values is reflected in the mandatory teaching of religion in public and religious school systems (Hoon, 2013). It is also a requirement that you list your religion on official state documents such as identity cards. Religion becomes an important distinguishing feature for Indonesians' identities. Therefore, religious themed profile images have been found on individual Facebook pages from both regions. Both 6a and 6b are examples of text-based inspirational religious profile images written in Indonesian language. Text-based religious profile images may also be written in other languages such as English and Arabic (Fig. 6c) and may also come from specific biblical or qur'anic verses.

Religious images



7a



7b



7c

Another genre of religious profile photos was those that contained images such as religious symbols, places of worship as well as prayer.

Veiling

Islam has been practiced in Indonesia for centuries and the country has a population that is currently close to 90 percent Muslim. Today, the veil or hijab has emerged as one of the most striking symbols of gendered Muslim identity. In Indonesia, veiling has historically been an uncommon practice for Indonesian Muslim women. Prior to the 1970s, only small numbers of older devout Muslim women would wear a loose-fitting headscarf known as the *kerudung* or *kedung*. Several factors contributed to the rise in veiling during the Suharto administration. During Suharto's authoritarian New Order regime, the government secularized politics and Muslim activism, adopting a mixed regimen that combined severe controls on political Islam with guarded support for

Islamic spirituality. Furthermore, Indonesia's entry into the global capitalist economy sparked an increase in economic growth, urbanization and industrialization throughout Java (Hefner, 2000). These changes brought about a fear of moral decline. By the 1970s university students led the increase in Islamic activity in urban areas.

Advancements in mass-communication connected Muslim students to the rest of the Islamic world through print-media and television (Brenner, 1996). The hijab symbolized the construction of an alternative to Western conceptions of modernity and heightened religiosity (683).

The hijab or jilbab in Indonesian is the style of veil most widely worn by Muslim women in post-Suharto Indonesia. The jilbab is a large square piece of fabric that is folded and securely pinned under the chin to completely cover the hair, ears, and neck (Smith-Hefner, 2007). Among more religiously conservative women, black, brown, and pale solid colored jilbab are preferred. In urban cities like Yogyakarta veils were now made of expensive, colorful, patterned fabrics and worn in a variety of different styles. Among some wealthy young women, these new styles encourage veiling as a fashion trend. Thus, the behavioral patterns and accompanying clothing commonly associated with veiled women now serve as a means to differentiate between those who wear the veil as a fashion statement and those who wear the veil out of religious commitment (413).

Drawings



8b



8c

There are a variety of ways that Indonesian Muslim women display the veil as part of their identities in their Facebook profile photos. In drawings, a veiled woman is often portrayed in an anime style as seen in 8b; while other drawings are more reminiscent of the fashion sketches that one would see from clothing designers as seen in 8c.

Photographs

In photographs, Muslim women capture the great diversity of styles, fabrics, colors, and patterns that exist in Indonesia today. Unlike previous generations, some Muslim women have worn hijab all of their lives. Thus, there is an overall sense, particularly amongst the East Java profile photos, that wearing hijab is a natural and common part of these women's lives.



8d



8e



8f.



8g

Amongst the profile photos of veiled women, some women used pictures of themselves in which their faces are not visible in the image (8f, 8g). This particular style of pose was not seen with the same frequency in women who did not wear hijab.

Cadar (Face veil) an emerging trend?



9a



9b

Salafism has emerged as an international movement in which its adherents aim to practice the purist form of Islam as it was at the time of the Prophet Mohammad and the two generations after him (ICG, 2004). Salafis adhere to strict codes of dress and personal appearance for both men and women. For most Indonesian women in Salafi groups, the cadar is considered to be the ideal form of Muslim dress and distinguishes them from mainstream Muslim society (Nisa, 2011). In the Facebook profile images examined from both regions, images of face-veiled women were an overall rare occurrence. Face veiled women appeared as profile images in both drawings (9a) and photos (9b). It is worth noting that it is unclear whether the women pictured in the photos are the women from the profiles themselves or taken from the internet.

Weddings



10a



10b

Genres of domestic photography have existed well before the emergence of social media. However, in the context of Indonesia, Karen Strassler (2010) notes that the photographic documentation of family history (*dokumentasi*) through events such as wedding photos or the arrival of a baby was a practice that was primarily accessible to middle and upper-

class Indonesians throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Outside of the realms of social media, wedding photos have served as an important form of domestic ritual photography in Java. *Dokumentasi* photographs produce the generic, ideal Javanese wedding by “transmuting the indexical specificity of a particular event into iconic perfection (175).” One can see how this vision is articulated in a profile photo of a bride and groom from East Java (10a). In comparison with the wedding photo in 10a, profile photo 10b represents a different style of Indonesian wedding that follows more Western conventions in regard to dress (i.e. white wedding gown). This profile photo is from Ambon and is from a Christian wedding. This photo also appears to be less edited than 10a.

Relationship photos

Romantic (Animated)



11a



11b



11c



11d

There have been considerable changes in marriage patterns in Indonesia since the 1970s. Prior to the 1970s, Indonesians got married at much younger ages with most Javanese girls getting married by the age of 16 or 17 often through arranged marriage (Geertz, 1961). Increased urbanization, industrialization, modernization, and access to education have contributed longer intervals between puberty and marriage enabling Indonesians to engage in dating or *pacaran* (Smith-Hefner, 2005:451). These relationships are displayed in profile images both in the form of cartoons /drawings (11a, 11b) and photos (11d, 11e).

Family



12a



12b

Although there is no data concerning the average number of Facebook friends in Indonesia, observations made in this study as well as prior experience suggest that many Indonesians have far more Facebook friends than the average American who, according to a Pew research study, has around 338 friendsⁱ. Indonesian social networks often vary by ethnicity. However, many Indonesian ethnic groups have strong kinship groupings which are based upon patrilineal, matrilineal, or bilateral descent (Mangundjaya, 2010). Indonesia is considered a collectivist society meaning that people are integrated into cohesive and strong groups which are maintained throughout their lives.

In the Javanese ethnic group, nuclear family relationships consist mainly of primary relatives i.e. father, mother, and children. *Kerukunan* or the Javanese Concept of Harmony advocates for the avoidance of conflict in all types of social interaction and maintaining healthy relationships with others is considered quite important (Mangundiaya, 2010: 62). Traditionally, in Maluku, kinship groupings were primarily based on clan exogamy. Clans consist of several households which function as emotional and economic support systems. However, the influence of Christianity and Islam has contributed to decline in this practice. There are about ten persons in the average nuclear family which may include single aunts and uncles, grandparents, grandchildren, and foster children.

Friendship

Facebook profile photos with family members were displayed either in collage form (12a) or with the Facebook user posing with one member of their family (12b). While many of the profile images observed consisted of an individual photo, profile images

containing three or more friends (13a, 13b) was also a common occurrence in both regions.



13a



13b

Work related photos

Given that the majority of profile pages analyzed for this study are young adults, many individuals are recent college graduates and have recently entered the workforce. Therefore, another genre of profile photos is that which features the Facebook user at work (14a) or in uniform (14b). Indonesia has a rapidly growing economy and unemployment rates are decreasing for both men and women. According to statistics from World Bank, in 2015 the largest economic sector in Indonesia was the service sector at 44.89 percent followed by the agricultural sector at 32.88 percent and industry at 22.2 percent.



14a



14b

Graduation/formal events

Upon finishing primary school, 57% of Indonesians went on to continue their education with a 25 percent increase in the number of college-age Indonesians attending universities. However, less than 10 percent of the Indonesian population have a college-level education. Receiving a college degree is a pivotal and celebrated moment for most young adults. In Indonesia, a country that has only recently begun to see growth in the amount of college-educated people, the digital *dokumentasi* of such accomplishments are proudly displayed as profile photos as seen in a profile photo from a recent graduate in Java 15a .



15a

Smoking



16a



16b

Profile photographs containing smoking were noted particularly among the profile photographs of young men from Java. Those who have been to Java can attest to the prevalence of smoking amongst men of all age groups on the island. In an article by historian Eric Schewe, the historical evolution of smoking in Indonesia is discussed. In 2000, Indonesia had the highest smoking rates in the world. As of 2015, 76 percent of men reported that they were smokers. However, less than 4% of Indonesian women are smokers. In the late 1990s, economic liberalization under the Suharto regime opened the Indonesian cigarette industry to foreign investors (Hunt et. al., 2012). A unique facet of Indonesian smoking culture is the popularity of cigarettes that contain minced cloves

known as *kreteks*. The companies that produce these cigarettes have heavily invested in governmental lobbying. Thus, the cigarette industry has become an important part of the economy in Indonesia. Prior to these marketing and economic changes, smoking was primarily a habit connected with the working class. Various marketing strategies tying smoking to masculinity led to significant increases in smoking amongst men of all social classes in Indonesia.

PART V

Current Study: Interviews

The visual exploration of Facebook profile photo genres served as a window into broader socio-cultural, religious, national and local contexts in order to demonstrate, some of the factors that contribute to facets of Indonesian young adult identity today. As Indonesia is a collectivist society, it is important to explore how Indonesian Facebook users navigate the visual presentation of self through profile images amidst the various relationships that inhabit the digital world in which they exist, a world where the public and private converge. The following section will focus on Part 2 of the study, the in-depth interviews.

Research Methodology

Recruitment was done using snowball sampling by the researcher and an Indonesian research assistant in order to obtain participants from Java and Maluku. Recruitment was conducted via email, private Facebook messaging, or private WhatsApp messaging.

Those who expressed interest in participating in a face to face interview received the contact information for the researcher and /or assistant. Those individuals also received a brief email describing the research project as well as some basic information about the interview (length, basic description of questions types). All correspondence was done through private messaging until a meeting time and location of the subject's choosing (i.e. library, coffee shop, private home etc....) was agreed upon.

Screening

Screening took place via private email, private Facebook or WhatsApp messaging. The participants in this study were not required to provide any personal information via email or social media. A consent letter was given to participants prior to the scheduled interview so that they would have the opportunity to read more about the study and ask any questions they may have had. On the day of the interview, the participants signed the consent letters after going over any additional questions or concerns they might have had.

Subject Participation

Facebook			
No	Participant #	Origin	Profession
1	Participant #1 F 27	Ambon	English Teacher
2	Participant #2 M 22	Ambon	Student
3	Participant #3 F 24	Ambon	Student
4	Participant #4 M 21	Ambon	Student
5	Participant #5 M 25	Ambon	English Translator
6	Participant #6 F 26	Ambon	English Teacher
7	Participant #7 M 21	Makassar	Student / NGO
8	Participant #8 F 21	Yogyakarta	Student
9	Participant #9 M 26	Yogyakarta	NGO Worker

10	Participant # 10 F 18	Yogyakarta	Student
11	Participant # 11 F 24	Yogyakarta	Student
12	Participant # 12 M 22	Yogyakarta	Student
13	Participant # 13 M 25	Yogyakarta	Student
14	Participant # 14 M 25	Yogyakarta	Student
15	Participant #15 M 25	Yogyakarta	Student
16	Participant # 16 F 21	Ambon	Student
17	Participant # 17 M 22	Yogyakarta	Student

Data collection methods:

Interviews were conducted in a quiet location with adequate privacy in Salatiga, Central Java and Ambon, Maluku. Participants were from several cities in Indonesia including 7 from Ambon, the capital city of Maluku province, 9 from Yogyakarta, Central Java, and one from Makassar the capital of South Sulawesi. The majority of participants for this study were students (12 out of 17). Two participants were English teachers and 1 participant was an English translator. One participant was an NGO worker and another, an NGO worker and student. The youngest participant was 18 years old while the oldest participant was 27 with a mean age of 23. This age group was selected as they represent the majority of active Facebook users in Indonesia based on data gathered from a 2016 survey (see figure .04). Gender distribution was relatively balanced with 7 female participants and 10 male participants. Due to the locations of the researcher and research assistant the majority of participants in this study were Christian with only 4 of the 17 identifying as Muslim. With the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded using a secure recording application and were then uploaded to

a private and secure data storage program where they were later transcribed into English with the help of a research assistant.

Participants were asked a total of twenty questions in order to gain a better understanding of 1) how they managed their profile photos i.e. how often they changed their profile image, number of images in their profile album; 2) whether their offline relationships i.e. friends, family, boyfriend/girlfriend, co-workers influence the images they select for their Facebook profiles; and 3) what factors they felt would make an image good or bad to use as a profile photo. (See Appendix A for interview questions.)

Results and Discussion:

In regard to profile photo management, a total of 8 of participants (4 females, 4 male) reported that they changed their Facebook profile image 1-3 times a year. 4 participants (3 male, 1 female) reported that they changed their Facebook profile image once a month while 3 (2 male, 1 female) other participants reported changing their profile photo every 1-2 weeks. One participant reported that they hadn't changed their profile image since 2012 while another participant did not give a clear answer about how often they changed their profile photo. In general, there was no obvious correlation between gender and the frequency that subjects reported changing their Facebook profile images. Several participants reported changing their profile photo more frequently when they were younger (high school age).

When asked about what they considered to be an ideal number of images in a profile album, the majority of participants reported that a profile photo album should contain no more than 100 images. On average, with the exception of one person, all

other participants reported having less than 100 photos in their profile albums. Participants also reported that they had deleted some of the older photos from their profile albums. Most participants also reported reusing older photos in their album as their profile image. There were no significant differences amongst male and female participants. These questions helped to give a better sense of scale with regard to how Facebook profile images were being managed. The overall lack of frequency that participants reported changing their profile image suggests that users may feel a stronger sense of comfort or certainty with who they are as adults than when they were younger. As all of the participants interviewed reported that they first began using Facebook in high school, the fact that all participants' profile albums contained multiple images may suggest that, through their profile photos, they have chosen to provide multiple identity cues to other Facebook users. The number of images participants have in their profile albums may also reflect the ways in which these Facebook users have "tried on" different identities throughout their transitions from teenager to adulthood (Balick, 2014). However, the fact that multiple participants reported having deleted or "needing" to delete old profile images could also indicate that as they age, and their identities become more stable, there may be an increased desire to present a more consistent visual representation of themselves.

How one constructs their identity is a public process that involves the individual announcing their identity to others who must then endorse that identity in order for it to be established (Stone, 1981). However, it must also be acknowledged that there are many factors that influence how an individual presents their identities and manages them as they interact with different audiences (Goffman, 1959). Facebook is a social

networking site that enables users to present themselves in a variety of ways. Facebook is a virtual space where pre-existing offline relationships can become digitized. Thus, Facebook brings together the myriad of relationships that the Facebook user has such as family, friends, and colleagues. The ability to adjust privacy settings on their profile accounts serves a means for Facebook users to better control who has access to particular aspects of their identity. Facebook profile photos, particularly one's current photo, is the image that identifies them within the entire network (Watson et. al., 2006). Therefore the Facebook profile image one chooses to display is typically not restricted in the same ways that Facebook users may restrict access to other photo albums to only be visible to certain people. This can put Facebook users in a more challenging position when it comes to deciding what image they will select for their profile photo as it can be seen by anyone.

When participants were asked about what kinds of poses they frequently used for their profile photos, a majority of participants expressed that they prefer to select portrait photos, featuring the face and upper body, rather than full-body shots as their Facebook profile pictures. It is unclear whether this preference is related to modesty, insecurity, or other notions of expectations and norms related to social media. Participants were unanimous in agreeing that they should be in the photo, rather than say uploading an image of a celebrity as their profile photo. Several participants emphasized the importance of not "overacting" or appearing *lebay* (exaggerated) in the photo. This can generally be understood as a facial expression that deviates from a person's natural smile. Below are some examples of participants' responses to the question:

what are the poses that you don't use for a Facebook profile photo?

“I am not the kind of person who likes selfie pictures or “lebay [extra]” or too much overacting, like too girly or manly. I normally pose with an academic background, polite, and well-dressed. So, in my profile picture I will be very relaxed and charismatic. (Participant #5 M 25)”

“Overacting. Such as the picture of a young adult with tongue out, or in the style of a model even though you’re not a model” (Participant #7 M 21)

“Over-acting, like using a weird expression, I will not post it on Facebook. If it is for my own personal entertainment, that is okay, but not for public because it will be embarrassing.” (Participant #1 F 27)

Participants’ overall responses concerning what they considered to be ideal poses to use as their Facebook profile photos echoed the works of previous scholars concerning visual self-presentation on social media in which Facebook users are likely to upload images that they believe make them look attractive, social, funny, or thoughtful (Farquhar, 2012; Siibak, 2009; Strano, 2008; Zhao et al., 2008). However, participants’ preoccupation with not posting images they consider to be “overacting” or *lebay* (exaggerated) contradicts previous studies arguing that identity performances tend to be exaggerated in computer-mediated communication as there is overcompensation for the lack of visual or non-verbal cues as well as having possible unfamiliarity with the medium (Farquhar, 2009). It is, however, important to note that the participants in this study have been Facebook users for several years and may likely be more familiar with this medium than subjects of past studies. In addition, as all participants in this study were university students or working professionals, there may be more concern over who might view their Facebook profile images especially considering the increased likelihood that their employers or future employers, professors, and older family members may also be on Facebook.

The digital ecology that this study's Indonesian participants exist in is complex. Magundjaya (2010) postulates that as part of a collectivist society, Indonesians' concepts of self are formed through their relations to others with family traditionally playing a significant role in this process. When participants were asked if they were Facebook friends with their family members, all replied that they were, giving a variety of reasons as to why they were. Below are several responses that participants gave to the question:

Q: Are you friends with family members on Facebook? Why or why not?

- Yes. Because I have to be with them on FB since we don't live in one area. That is why we need to keep in touch on social media. For example, when I post a picture, they will like, and it is one of the way how we keep in touch. (Participant # 3 F 24)
- Yes. First, to increase the number of friends on FB. Second, because we can still keep in touch with family. And for the family who are separated from me, I can still see them if they are having a gathering or something. So I think it is good to be friends with them. (Participant #8 M 21)
- Yes. Big family. Since it is open for everyone, and I cannot forbid them, because we have a family [Facebook] group, so automatically I cannot forbid them from being friends with me. (Participant #5 M 25)
- Yes. So that they can know my activity since sometimes I am so busy and forget to inform them about my condition. But since I am friends with them, they can see me on Facebook and the pictures that I upload. (Participant # 16 F 21)

Based on the overall responses, changing migration patterns throughout the archipelago are the primary reason that participants became friends with family members on Facebook. These changes, largely brought on by Indonesia's rapidly developing economy have, in a sense, displaced the kinds of familial social networks present within the agricultural communities of the past (Miguel et. al., (2006). This is not to say that agricultural communities no longer exist in Indonesia, however particularly amongst

younger generations, there are greater opportunities for education and employment in urban centers. Perhaps in this context, Facebook becomes a means of cultivating and maintaining these social networks. This may suggest that, in Indonesia, being friends with family members on Facebook may be more related to changing migration patterns rather than the commonly invoked and potentially problematic collectivist versus individualist dichotomy.

Kinship is generally understood as being of great importance throughout Indonesia with seniority and elder status playing an important role within families and communities. Thus another important question that was asked of participants was whether or not being friends with family members influenced how they managed their profile photos on Facebook. The majority of participants responded that family didn't have a strong influence on how they managed their profile photos. These responses were generally rather short as can be seen in the first two responses below. For those who felt that family did have a strong influence, their answers tended to be lengthier as seen in responses 3 and 4. Below are several responses to the question: **Does being friends with family members influence how you manage your Facebook photos ?**

- No. This is me, so nothing influences my posts. (Participant #17 F 22)
- It does not affect my posts because my family does not care about my posts. I am responsible for what I post. (Participant #7 M 21)
- It tends to affect me on what will I upload. For me I can upload anything, but I have family on friend list, I should be aware. For me, wearing bikini in the profile picture is okay, but not for my family, because it looks impolite/inappropriate. Therefore, I prefer not to post that on Facebook. If the picture from other friends, I will set the privacy not to be seen by my family if there are some things inappropriate for my family. Sometimes also I will delete the tag from friends.(Participant #1 F 27)

- Yes, it does. Since the characteristic of the family is very disciplined, polite, I choose good pictures to be uploaded. One of my brothers once posted his picture with his girlfriend who were not introduced to the family yet, and when they know that the girlfriend has the bad attitude, my family was very angry with my brother, not one person, but most of the family. That is why we have to know the norm in using social media. (Participant # 5 M 25)

The high proportion of participants who responded that family did not affect how they managed their profile photos was somewhat surprising given the overall importance of kinship and age hierarchy within Indonesian society. However, perhaps these responses reflect the findings of previous studies of identity performance on Facebook that suggest that Facebook users tend to be “honest” and open on the site due to the likelihood of encountering, face-to-face, those belonging to what Zhao (2006) refers to as the user’s “anchored relationships” in the future (Farquhar, 2012). Perhaps for these participants, they do not have a significant part of their lives that they feel they must keep hidden from family members. However, as seen in response 3, the participant expressed awareness that certain aspects of her life such as wearing a bikini on the beach might be considered inappropriate or impolite by some of her family members. In the fourth response, the participant shares that his brother had received criticism for posting a picture of his girlfriend on Facebook before she was properly introduced to his family. In both cases, one might argue that the examples given in both responses may reflect clashes in traditional cultural or religious values thus leading to Facebook users having to consider more closely what part of their visual identities to display in their profile photos. However, this would have to be investigated further in future studies.

Likes versus Comments

When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that in general, matters are what they appear to be. (Goffman, 1959: 17)

Goffman's groundbreaking dramaturgical framework explaining the ways in which the self is performed in everyday contexts has been widely applied to the study of identity performance in the digital ecology. Facebook privacy settings enable users to manage their identities by designating which audience members can have access to their virtual performances. However, Facebook profile images are usually a feature of Facebook users' profiles that would not be concealed thus opening this visual identity peg up to many different audiences of the Facebook user's personal friends list. In general, Facebook users assess the effectiveness of their actions as well as how they will conduct future actions based on the cues or responses they get from others occurring in the form of 'likes' or comments (Cover, 2012). When Indonesian participants were asked which form of feedback was more important to them when it came to their profile photos, the majority of participants responded that 'likes' were more important than comments with regard to their Facebook profile photos. Participants expressed that they generally did not comment on or receive many comments on their Facebook photos to begin with. This suggests that photo 'likes' are the primary means of feedback that participants would receive on their profile photos. Below are some of the responses given when participants were asked why photo likes were important to them:

- Because if we see that many people like it, means they are looking at us, they care about what we post and we don't feel ignored. If after a couple of days there are no likes, just delete it. (Participant #4 M 21)

- Yes. Sometimes I put up profile pictures to see how many people will like it. It is important for your own satisfaction. For pictures except my profile picture, it is not that important. I just want to show that there is a story behind the picture. (Participant #6 F 26)
- Yes, it is really important. It is an honor if you get like from someone you want to like. (Participant #5 M 25)

The responses suggest that profile photo ‘likes’ are a way for Facebook users to quantify audience approval of their visual self-presentation. Furthermore, as Facebook profile photos occupy a “prominent position in shaping the user’s online identity (Wu et al., 2015)” it is logical to conclude that the number of likes a profile photo receives would be the most telling form of social capital in this context. However, it is also important to note that the Facebook user’s interactions with those in his or her anchored relationships offline can also influence how profile photos are managed. For some Indonesian Facebook users, wider social and religious issues can further influence visual self-presentation both positively and negatively in different ways.

Goffman states that “the inferences that an individual makes about a person in the world of social interaction can purposefully facilitate and hinder the inferential process” (Goffman, 1959, p.3). In the book, **Negotiating Women’s Veilings: Politics & Sexuality in Contemporary Indonesia**, (Candraningrum, 2013), one woman’s account of her veiling practices presented parallels with Goffman's ideas regarding the relationship between identity, perception, inference, and (intended/unintended) audience. The young woman was a student at an Islamic-labeled University. In order to attend this university, she had to wear hijab even though she did not wear one otherwise. This woman became the victim of cyber-assaults from her ultra-conservative male peers as a result of the photos she posted on social media of herself without hijab and in “sexy

apparel (56)”. Given that the hijab is most commonly associated with piety, morality, etc.... did this woman’s male peers have certain expectations of her based on her appearance within an institutional setting? This account highlights that, within contemporary Indonesia, there exists a wide variety of functions, situations, and audiences that women may consider when negotiating their veiling practices. Social scientist Sonja Van Wichelen (2010) notes that:

Representations of veiling practices for Indonesian women today constitute numerous elements of religious piety, politics, ideology, fashion, and personal growth, all negotiating identity and belief with existing and evolving paradigms of Islam, Islamism, secularism, capitalism, feminism, and nationalism (Van Wichelen, 2010).

Van Wichelen provides a useful insight into the complex frameworks through which Indonesian Muslim women navigate veiling in the digital ecology. In the case of the young woman's account published in Candraningrum's book, the degree to which women choose to display their offline veiling practices may receive greater scrutiny when displayed in photos posted to social media. One female muslim participant, when asked if she had ever deleted a profile photo of herself, replied:

- Yes. The pictures of me when I was still at Senior High School. I did not wear hijab when I was at SMA, and I did not have any good pose at that time. I deleted some also because it was an old photo. (Participant #10 F 18)

The responses below are from two other female Muslim participants who were asked about their opinions concerning appearing without hijab or modest clothing in Facebook profile photos

- When I was at the SMA, that was fine since I was still a teenager. After I start wearing hijab, I never posted photos without hijab anymore. For me, if someone has decided to wear hijab in her profile picture, I hope that they will use the photo with hijab for their next profile pictures. (Participant # 16 F 21)
- When I was at Senior High School, I was okay because I was like a teen or child. But when I wear hijab, I never posted the picture of me without hijab. According to me, for those who have decided to wear hijab in their pictures, they should

keep wearing hijab for their pictures. for those who still open their hijab sometimes, please just have a normal photo. (Participant #17 F 22)

The ways in which Indonesian Muslim women navigate veiling within the digital ecology where public and private merge is a topic that requires far more in-depth study.

However, out of all the interviews conducted for this study, veiling practices were the most gender-specific questions and responses included in this study.

In general, the interviews conducted for this study were used to gain a better understanding of how Indonesian young adults conceived of their visual presentations of identity in Facebook profile photos. Overall, there were no significant gender discrepancies found in the data collected for this study and while the majority of participants expressed that profile photos were an important component of their pages, none felt that their profile photos were the most important part of their profiles that communicate who they are. This highlights an important point about the complexity of computer-mediated identity performance today. For a social networking site like Facebook, identity is performed through text, videos, music, and images. How people interact with and perform their identities through these mediums cannot be fully captured by just looking at one aspect of the Facebook user's identity performance. In extremely diverse countries like Indonesia, it is also very difficult to make any definitive statements or draw conclusions about how and why people use social media. This study should therefore be viewed as an exploratory means of examining this topic within different cultural contexts.

Limitations

Time presented perhaps the biggest challenge to this study, as data had to be gathered over the course of a two-month period during the summer of 2017. In order to increase the overall data pool and diversity of participants interviewed for this study, an Indonesian research assistant was recruited in order to help with collecting and transcribing interviews, all of which were conducted in Indonesian. Unfortunately, language posed a challenge both for researcher and research assistant with regard to translating the interviews from Indonesian to English. Conducting follow-up interviews would have potentially provided greater elaboration and clarification of participants' responses to some of the questions asked. Additionally, the researcher did not collaborate with Indonesian scholars in relevant fields like communications and media studies or other social sciences whose input could have added to the overall scope of the project and perhaps informed the kinds of questions asked during the interview portion of this study.

The qualitative approach employed to study visual self-presentation through Facebook profile photos in Indonesia was helpful in that this research was conducted primarily for exploratory purposes. However, quantitative data regarding Facebook profile photo genres would have perhaps added a greater depth in understanding regional, gender, and religious differences in how young adult Indonesians interact with the various genres discussed in this study. Furthermore, time-specific regional, national, and international events related to, for example, politics or social causes could also spark increases in the prevalence of other genres like memes and photo filters used for profile images. This study relied on screenshots taken of profile photos as they appeared on

Facebook friend lists at one specific time and therefore may have limited the scope of Facebook profile image genres that this paper explored. The various trends that circulate on social media change and evolve rapidly. Certain Facebook profile photo trends from uploading an image of one's celebrity doppelganger or applying a specific photo filter to show support for a cause like marriage equality, may be culturally specific or may encompass wider international phenomena. Thus conducting a much longer investigation into Facebook profile photo genres could lead to a better understanding of how Indonesians engage with these trends. In the future, it will be necessary to conduct projects looking at a subject of this scale over a significantly longer period of time.

Additionally, due to time constraints and lack of financial resources, this study lacked a cross-cultural comparison that may have yielded fascinating insights into visual self-presentation in Facebook profile images among young adults from other countries with high numbers of Facebook users such as the United States and India. Though similar studies have been conducted by social scientists like Miller et.al. (2017), the data gathered for these projects could not be used as the basis for comparison of Facebook profile photo genres due to differences in when this data was collected as well as research methodology. As Daniel Miller and other social scientists who have conducted research in various countries as part of his larger *Why We Post* project have demonstrated, investigating the culture surrounding global social media use requires time, dedication, resources, and collaboration. As a future direction in the academy, it would be very useful to incorporate Indonesia into larger discourses and research projects on social media and culture.

Furthermore, issues regarding gender, race and ethnicity, religion, and sexual identity within Facebook profile images should be investigated in detail. These facets of identity can be highly controversial and complex in Indonesia. Research which examines Facebook profile images of Indonesians belonging to specific ethnic/racial groups, religions, genders, and LGBTQ communities may make for very interesting subjects of further study.

As is the case with sites like Facebook, the site is frequently updated to incorporate more and more features. For example, Facebook has enabled users to select a 'cover photo' which is an image or photograph that functions as a sort of backdrop to the users' profile. It is unclear whether or not incorporation of this feature may paint a more comprehensive picture of computer-mediated visual self-presentation on Facebook. Lastly, Facebook has recently expanded the categories under which users can 'like' a photo. These categories may be adding a further layer of communication between performer and audience in the realm of Facebook that might be worthy of exploration.

Conclusion

Understanding the ways in which people perform their identities within the ever-evolving digital ecology is rather complex, particularly when applied to social networking sites like Facebook which enable its users to express who they are through images, text, videos, and music. This study was a first step in exploring this topic in Indonesia, the fourth largest nation in the world and a country in which roughly half of the population are Facebook users with current projections suggesting further growth.

Appendix A - Interview Questions

- 1.) How often do you post images on FB (i.e change profile picture, background)?
- 2.) What poses do you frequently do?
- 3.) What are poses that you do not use?
- 4.) How do you feel about friends posting photos of you that you did not see first?
- 5.) Have you ever deleted a (profile) photo of yourself? If so, why?
- 6.) What kinds of photos would you delete?
- 7.) Do you use Photoshop apps?
 - If you, what app do you use the most?
 - what features of the app do you most frequently use? Why?
- 8.) Are photo likes important to you?
- 9.) Are comments important to you?
- 10.) Does who likes/comments on your photos more important than the number?
- 11.) Would you take an image down that does not receive a certain number of likes and/or comments?
- 12.) What do you consider to be a good amount of profile images?
- 13.) Do you ever reuse older profile images?
- 14.) What is your favorite profile picture and why?
- 15.) Are you friends with family members on Facebook? Why or why not?
- 16.) Does being friends with your family members influence your management of photos?
- 17.) what feature on Facebook do you feel tells the most about who you are?

18.) If in a relationship-do you or your bf/gf have any influence on your management of profile photos?

19.) If Muslim- how do you feel about profile photos where you are not wearing hijab/modest clothing?

20.) Have you ever received criticism or negative comments due to a photo you posted of yourself?

21.) What are the most important features of a good profile photo?

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