

Dramaturgy in the Identity and Image of Influencer Musdalifah Basri on the Tiktok Account @musdalifahbasrii

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to analyze the application of front stage and back stage concepts in the formation of Musdalifah Basri's identity and analyze how her image shapes interactions with her followers on TikTok. **Method:** Using descriptive qualitative methods, data were collected through non-participatory observation on @musdalifahbasrii and @emde.team accounts, documentation, and literature studies. To analyze these objects, not all videos are sampled, but are specifically selected based on three main criteria. **Results:** The results of the study show that Musdalifah strategically uses his main account as a front stage to present a consistent comedic persona through hyperbolic appearances, styles, and settings. Uniquely, the back stage is deliberately exposed through his team account (@emde.team) to show a simple and collaborative work process, in order to build an authentic image and closeness to the audience. This dual strategy has proven to be successful in creating very high audience interaction, although it tends to be one-way. **Novelty:** The dual strategy of exposing both front stage and back stage through separate accounts to construct an authentic image and closeness to the audience, while maintaining a highly interactive but predominantly one-way engagement, highlights a unique approach in TikTok identity formation.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become the main platform for everyone to build their identity and self-image in the digital era. Among various platforms, TikTok now plays a significant role in shaping social trends and the identity of its users through creative short video content [1]. Its popularity in Indonesia according to a report entitled "Countries with the largest TikTok audience as of July 2024", Indonesia is the country with the largest number of TikTok users in the world, reaching 157.6 million users [2].

Using the TikTok application, users can increase their creativity by producing videos that combine various and interesting aspects [3]. Social media provides opportunities for people to express themselves and create their digital identities in addition to providing entertainment. The term content creator or influencer refers to individuals who produce content and have a large following on social media. They interact and build relationships with their audiences through content that is inspiring, entertaining, and informative [4].

Self-image is a way for a person to shape and present himself to be perceived by others both through verbal and nonverbal communication, and also in interactions with social environments such as friends, family, and people around him [5]. Self-image is not only influenced by how a person wants to be seen, but also by the social expectations and norms that prevail in their environment. Platforms like TikTok allow individuals to create certain images that can be different from them in real life. Thus, self-image on social

media is the result of a combination of personal expression and responses from a dynamic digital environment.

The researcher was interested in Musdalifah Basri's content on TikTok because this content contained a parody of something viral and unique, but it was conveyed by making exaggerated facial expressions, striking facial makeup, using blushing red lipstick but her clothes adapting to the imitated content, making the video memorable and very entertaining. The expressive and authentic way of delivering creates attraction and emotional connection, as if inviting the audience to laugh together.



Figure 1. TikTok account @musdalifahbasrii.

Since @musdalifahbasrii TikTok account was created, Musdalifah Basri has 3.1 million followers and 132.9 million total likes, and has managed to build a strong identity and image as a comedian through a humorous approach, parody, and content relevant to daily life.



Figure 2. Musdalifah content with entertainment titles after opening.

This study took a video with the title "Entertainment After Opening" which was uploaded on March 12, 2025. This video is very popular with 648.8 thousand likes and 14 million views. In the video, Musdalifah parodied Atun content from Probolinggo which is quite well-known. The original content tells the story of several women in a row, and one of them is the girlfriend of a man whose eyes are closed. The man had to guess his girlfriend by touching the women's hands. Unfortunately, the man made the wrong choice. As a result, he is pushed along with the wrong woman by his original girlfriend. Eventually, the real boyfriend left with a feeling of resentment.

To understand how this image formation process occurs, this study uses the framework of Dramaturgy theory developed by Erving Goffman. This theory views social interaction like a theatrical performance, in which individuals play the role of actors. Goffman divided it into two main stages: the front stage (*Front Stage*), where

individuals present their ideal version of themselves and meet the audience's expectations [6].

Front Stage It consists of two main components, namely: *Settings*, physical background, such as place, décor, or other attributes that support the role. *Front Personal*, which is divided into two parts. First, *Appearance*, refers to any physical attributes worn or worn by an individual when performing in front of others. Such as clothing, accessories, uniforms, or other items. Second, *Style*, which serves to introduce the role that the individual will play on the front stage. Such as the way you speak, body language, and facial expressions. These two elements serve as tools to strengthen the role that is being played [7].

Different from the front stage that the audience can see, the back stage (*Back Stage*) is a hidden private area. This is where the actors can be themselves and let go of their stage roles. All preparations for the show, from rehearsals, discussions, to relaxation, are done in this place. In essence, the back stage is a "kitchen" where all the performances for the front stage are designed and prepared in secret [8].

In a study conducted by Retasari Dewi and Preciosa Alnashava Janitra [9] titled "Dramaturgy in Social Media: *Second Account* on Instagram as an Alter Ego", this study aims to analyze the use of multiple features *Account* on Instagram as a form of self-identity management and representation on social media. Adopting qualitative research methods through cyber ethnography and dramaturgical theory, the findings of this study reveal that students create a second account (*second account*) for various purposes, such as being a personal diary, a forum for negative comments towards celebrities, showcasing the other side of themselves, and for business purposes. This study explains that the second or third account often functions as "*Back Stage*", where the identities displayed do not always reflect their reality in the real world.

The research entitled "Two Faces of Celebgrams: Goffman's Dramaturgy Analysis in Instagram Account Management" [10], This study aims to describe the concept of front stage, middle stage, and back stage in the use of second accounts by celebrities on Instagram. By applying qualitative methods and Goffman's Dramaturgy theoretical approach, data was obtained through documentation, interviews, literature studies, and observations. The research findings revealed that the front stage refers to the main account that is open to the public, where celebrities interact with their followers and build a professional image. Meanwhile, the middle stage is a private account that better reflects the true side of the celebrity. The back stage is a closed space that cannot be accessed by a wide audience.

Previous research entitled "Dramaturgy Phenomenon and User Self-Image Construction *Second Account* Instagram among Fkip Untirta Students" [11]. This study focuses on the analysis of how students shape their self-image through the main and secondary accounts on Instagram. A qualitative approach was used in this study, with data collected through interviews with six students from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University. The results showed that informants

generally built their self-image on both accounts by considering the boundaries that were appropriate to the role they were playing.

Previous research with the title "Dramaturgy in Social Media: Second Accounts on Instagram as Self Disclosure" [12]. This study aims to analyze the second account as a backstage where individuals can form roles and present themselves without the limitations that exist on the main account. Using a descriptive qualitative research method, this study collected data through observation and interviews with students. The findings show that second accounts function as part of digital dramaturgy, allowing users to maintain privacy, express creativity, and strengthen online identities through self-disclosure.

Previous research entitled "Dramaturgy in the Identity and Image of Influencer Kadeer Bachdim on the Instagram Account D_Kadoor" [13]. This research aims to examine the identity and process of forming the image of Kadeer Bachdim through his personal Instagram account, D_Kadoor. This study was conducted with a qualitative approach, using the focus group discussion (FGD) method, documentation analysis, literature study, and observation. The results of the study show the identity and image that Kadeer Bachdim built on his Instagram which describes himself as a chatty mother, in contrast to his real life where Kadeer Bachdim is a genuine man and someone who is good at reciting.

Previous research on dramaturgy on social media has been done a lot. A number of studies tend to focus on the Instagram platform, specifically analyzing the phenomenon of second accounts as a representation of the back stage. Another study also examined the formation of influencer imagery on Instagram that featured personas that were different from real life. However, specific research on applying dramaturgy analysis to content dynamics on TikTok is still limited. Moreover, there has been no in-depth study of how a comedy influencer like Musdalifah Basri manages *the front stage* (his TikTok content) and *the back stage* (the creative process or life behind it) to build an identity and interaction with his audience on the platform.

Therefore, this research is relevant to fill this gap. By understanding how Musdalifah Basri built his image, we can gain deep insights into identity construction strategies in the era of TikTok dominance. This study aims to analyze the application of *front stage* and *back stage* concepts in the formation of Musdalifah Basri's identity and analyze how her image shapes interactions with her followers on TikTok. Specifically, this study will answer the following two questions:

1. How does Musdalifah Basri apply the concept of *front stage* and *back stage* in building her identity online?
2. How does the image built by Musdalifah Basri shape interactions with his followers on TikTok?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applies a qualitative method with a descriptive type of research. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is a comprehensive research strategy to

understand and explain an event in its natural context [14]. In this approach, the researcher seeks to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon of self-image formation by paying attention to situations and problems that are difficult to quantitatively measure.

The object of this research is content related to the formation of self-image carried out by *influencer* Musdalifah Basri. To analyze these objects, not all videos are sampled, but are specifically selected based on three main criteria: the video must have been viewed more than 10 million times, have relevant *backstage* content from the TikTok @emde.team account to understand the production process, and clearly represent the concept of *the front stage* through elements of background, appearance, and style. With the above conditions, the researcher chose a video entitled "Entertainment after opening" which has been viewed 13.8 million times, uploaded on March 12, 2025.

Data collection in this study was carried out through a combination of three complementary techniques. The main process is non-participatory observation, where researchers systematically observe content on TikTok @musdalifahbasrii and @emde.team accounts. To identify the application of the concept *Front Stage* and *Back Stage*. During this observation process, documentation techniques are applied simultaneously to collect and archive evidence, such as screenshots (*Screenshot*). All field data collected are then strengthened by literature studies, which is the process of collecting and analyzing theories and concepts from various relevant literature to build a solid research analysis framework [15].

The data analysis process in this study adopts an interactive model from Miles and Huberman which takes place systematically. The first stage is data reduction, where all raw data collected from observation and documentation is carefully screened. In this process, irrelevant data is set aside, while relevant data is grouped into several main categories, i.e. elements that represent the *front stage*, content that shows the side of the *back stage*. After the data is reduced, the next step is the presentation of the data, where the data that has been organized is presented in the form of a structured narrative text. The goal is to descriptively describe how Musdalifah Basri builds his image through the concept of dramaturgy. As the final stage of the analysis, conclusions are drawn, which are formulated based on the findings of the data that have been presented to answer in depth the formulation of the research problem.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, this study uses the source triangulation technique. Triangulation is defined as checking data through various sources to obtain a comprehensive understanding. Triangulation is also defined as the activity of checking data through various sources, techniques, and time, triangulation not only increases validity but also provides a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being researched [16].

Thus, the use of data triangulation is expected to increase the credibility and reliability of the findings of this study. In this study, triangulation was carried out by comparing and combining data from three sources: (1) *front stage* content in @musdalifahbasrii account, (2) *backstage* content in @emde.team account, and (3)

dramaturgical theory from literature studies. Thus, the interpretation of a phenomenon does not only come from one point of view, but is verified from various sources to improve its reliability.

This study uses dramaturgical theory that compares "*Front Stage*" and "*Back Stage*". According to Goffman's dramaturgy approach, humans seek to create roles that they expect to appear in a person when they interact. A human being is an actor who is playing a role. Scenes in a play are seen as a performance, a story told through symbols [17].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study analyzed video content from @musdalifahbasrii TikTok account that parodied content belonging to Atun, a creator from Probolinggo. In the original video, Atun stands in a row with three other women. His girlfriend had to guess which Atun was just by touching their hands. However, the boyfriend guessed wrong. As a result, Atun pushes the man away with an upset face. This video of Musdalifah Basri imitates the incident.

To understand how *influencer* Musdalifah Basri builds his image as a comedian through the framework of Erving Goffman's dramaturgy theory. The analysis focused on the *elements of the front stage* consisting of *the setting* (setting), and *the personal front* (appearance and style) and *the back stage* which included the preparation of the actors behind the scenes of the performance.

A. *Front stage* is an arena where an actor performs his performance to an audience. In this context, all video content uploaded on TikTok accounts @musdalifahbasrii is a *front stage* that is carefully designed to form a certain image and persona. The video analyzed specifically shows how Musdalifah used this stage to perform a parody of a trend often found on social media.

1. Settings



Figure 3. *Setting* the place on Musdalifah Basri's content.

The setting of the scene above is in a grassy open area of the housing complex, adjusted to match the *setting* in the original video where footage is seen in the upper left corner. This act of imitating the setting is crucial because it serves as the foundation of the stage that the audience instantly recognizes. So they can quickly understand the

context of the parody being shown. In the video above, a man with his eyes closed can be seen holding the hand of someone who parodies himself as a woman made according to the video being imitated.

2. *Front Personal*

The Personal Front is a key element in Goffman's dramaturgy that encompasses all the aspects inherent in an actor's self while performing, consisting of appearance and style.

a. Appearance



Figure 4. Display visualizations of their content.

This character as a whole is a comedic construction that is deliberately designed excessively for the *front stage*. This is achieved through a combination of excessive makeup, as seen from thick white powder, straight black eyebrows, and untidy red lipstick. The clothes were adjusted according to the video that was parodied, namely, in the form of a white t-shirt with a picture of a motorcycle with the words "JAKARTA Tempo Doeloe". This look is then enhanced with striking accessories such as black wigs, large gold round earrings, and necklaces, where all these elements work together to create a parody that is appropriate, funny, distinctive, and memorable for the audience.

b. Style



Figure 5. Musdalifah Basri with her facial expressions.

Musdalifah Basri displays exaggerated facial expressions to fit the parody character. In the original video, the annoyed expression shown by Atun tends to be ordinary. However, Musdalifah Basri when parodying it showed an exaggerated expression of

annoyance, with bulging eyes and swollen lips. This deliberately exaggerated facial expression shows elements of comedy and hyperbole, which are indeed characteristic of Musdalifah Basri's communication style on TikTok. This makes the parody even funnier and more eye-catching.

- B. *Backstage* includes the preparation of actors behind the scenes of the show. Below is a screenshot that illustrates the behind-the-scenes activities of the content on @Musdalifahbasrii account.



Figure 6. Backstage process on Musdalifah Basri's content.

In the first picture, Musdalifah put on her own makeup, then used a wig and white makeup, used red lipstick, and straight black eyebrows. Then the second picture shows one of the male team playing the role of a female friend in the scene being helped to tidy up her wig. Furthermore, the third image shows a team from Musdalifah recording content using one mobile phone. The fourth picture shows Musdalifah's interaction with his team of 5 people.

This research reveals that Musdalifah Basri clearly distinguishes between *front stage* and *back stage* in creating content. *Front-stage* content is uploaded through @musdalifahbasrii's TikTok account, while the behind-the-scenes process is shared through the @emde.team account. The success of their content lies in an independent, simple, and collaborative work ethic. This independence is evident when an actor puts on his own makeup to delve into his parody character, showing efficiency and strong role ownership. Simplicity is the pillar of their production, where the professional-looking recording process turns out to only rely on everyday devices such as mobile phone cameras. This proves that creativity is more important than advanced equipment. The warm spirit of collaboration emanated from the moment the team members helped each other wear props such as wigs and laugh together on the set. In essence, this "as is" approach to production is precisely their strength. Produce content that feels authentic, entertaining, and builds a close connection with its audience.



Figure 7. Audience interaction in the comment column.

The comment column on Musdalifah Basri's upload shows the high level of interaction among his followers. Two of the many comments that existed, attracted attention due to the high number of likes. The first comment reads, "which is exactly more, the expression is really good" and was liked by 69.1 thousand followers. The second comment, "Atun is already gemoy" even got 26.8 thousand likes. And the last one is "bajunya kobisaa samaa" with 14.6 thousand likes. His followers often leave appreciative comments and express emotional involvement with the content he creates. However, this interaction tends to be one-way and occurs more between the followers themselves, because there is no reply or feedback from Musdalifah Basri in the comment column. Nonetheless, this high *volume* of responses remains a strong reflection of the audience's enthusiasm and interest in each of his uploads.

Discussion

The results of the analysis show a clear separation between the *front stage* displayed on the main account of @musdalifahbasrii and the *back stage* revealed through his team account, @emde.team. This discussion will interpret these findings to answer two research questions: how the concept of dramaturgy is applied and how the image is constructed shapes interaction with the audience.

In analyzing the image of Musdalifah Basri as a *Influencers* TikTok, Erving Goffman's dramaturgy theory has become very relevant. Goffman views social interaction as a theatrical performance, in which individuals present themselves on the front stage and prepare on the back stage [18]. Musdalifah Basri, as a *Influencers*, actively managing the "impressions" he wants to convey to his followers through content selection, dress styles, and how they interact.

Front Stage (*Front Stage*) displayed by Musdalifah is every element, starting from *Settings* that mimics the original video, appearance (makeup, wigs, and costumes), to style (hyperbolic facial expressions) because each expression used in communication has the purpose of conveying a certain meaning [19]. Part of *Personal Front* which is deliberately designed to create a consistent and easily recognizable persona. These findings are in line with Goffman's theory, where actors use a variety of attributes to reinforce the role being played. In Musdalifah's case, his role was that of a parody. By consistently displaying this persona, he manages to build a strong and sticky image in the minds of the audience.

Backstage (*Back Stage*), which was uniquely revealed through the @emde.team account, shows a concept of Goffman's theory. According to Goffman [20], the back stage is a hidden private space. However, this study found that Musdalifah and his team deliberately made the backstage part of the performance. The disclosure of the production process that is simple (using mobile phone cameras), independent (actors make up their own makeup), and collaborative (mutual help between teams) is no coincidence. This is a strategy to build a second narrative: a narrative about quality. By showing *Back Stage* They are who they are, they invite the audience to see the other side behind the scenes, thus creating a deeper bond and trust.

Influencer not only create content for passive consumption, but also build community through two-way communication that engages followers in creative processes and social interactions [21]. The audience not only commented on the video, but also interacted with each other, creating a space to share appreciation and laughter. They interacted with the persona of Musdalifah displayed on the front stage.

The fact that Musdalifah rarely replies to comments directly can actually strengthen his dramatic stage. By not engaging in conversation, he maintains the boundary between the "actor" and the "audience", letting the charm of his character speak for itself. The high level of comments, even without a reply, is a testament to the show's success. This indicates that the audience accepts and enjoys the role he plays, and the interaction between them becomes part of the experience of watching Musdalifah's content.

Overall, this discussion shows that Musdalifah Basri took advantage of the dramaturgical stage. He uses the *front stage* to present entertaining comedy performances and an "open" backstage to build an authentic and relatable image. This combination ultimately not only builds a strong self-image, but also forms a model of interaction with a very loyal, albeit one-way, audience.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : This study concludes that TikTok influencer Musdalifah Basri uses dramaturgy theory to build his comedy image through the management of two stages. On the front stage (@musdalifahbasrii account), he displays a consistent parody persona through hyperbolic constructions of appearances, styles, and settings. Uniquely, the back stage (@emde.team account) is not hidden, but deliberately exposed to show a simple and collaborative teamwork process to build closeness with the audience. Disclosure of the production process that is simple (using mobile phone cameras), independent (actors do makeup), and collaborative (mutual help between teams). **Implication :** The combination of these two stages has proven to be successful in creating high interactions, even though they are one-way. At its core, Musdalifah's success lies in its ability to adapt Goffman's theory in the digital age, presenting entertaining performances in front, while building trust through a transparently managed backstage. **Limitation :** The study highlights that the interaction created remains one-way, which means that although audience engagement is high, it does not necessarily indicate dialogical or reciprocal communication. This limitation shows that while dramaturgy theory can explain image construction on TikTok, it may not fully capture the complexities of digital interactivity between influencers and their followers. **Future Research :** Future research should further examine how dramaturgy theory can be expanded to address the interactive and participatory nature of digital platforms, especially regarding how audiences might influence or negotiate the front and backstage performances of influencers. It would also be valuable to compare Musdalifah Basri's case with other influencers across different genres to see whether similar strategies of exposing backstage processes contribute to building trust and engagement in the same way.

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