



# **Culture and Nested Performance: Online Self Fragmentation Amongst Indonesian Youth**

## Riqqah Haniyaha

<sup>a</sup>KU Leuven, Naamsestraat 22, 3000, Belgium

#### ABSTRACT

Social media has changed the way we interact with each other. There are benefits of having social media, but there are also consequences too. One of the consequences is context collapse, where multiple audiences and context are combined into one big audience. Culture played a huge role in determining the types of performances that the Indonesian youths portray online. Firstly, on the platform level where they perform the front stage on Instagram and backstage on Twitter. Second, on the account level, they created multiple accounts on different accounts to further limit the audience and to present their real self. Finally, they used features to further limit the view of the audience by using a platform-specific filter. It can be concluded that this phenomenon is best termed as a 'nested performance'. The different layers depicted different usages and thus different online 'self' presentations.

Keywords: Social media, self-presentation, context collapse, culture, identity.

## 1. Introduction

Social media has changed the landscape of different societies to be rapidly interconnected, digitalized, fast-paced and globalized. In line with the concept of context collapse, this research formulates social media based on Carr and Hayes' (2015, p. 50) definition where it is the internet based-channels that allows users to carefully present themselves and interact, synchronously or asynchronously, with different audiences derived from the user-generated contents. This research will examine and understand how Indonesians fragment their 'self' and their cultural rationale behind their actions to minimize context collapse. Thus, it is bringing a new non-western perspective in context collapse discourse through answering these two interrelated research questions:

- 1. How do Indonesians navigate or project their different personas in different accounts?
- 2. Why do Indonesians feel the need to create a second or many social media accounts?

Indonesians experienced higher levels of exposure to social media in the Southeast Asia region and the world. The Digital 2021: Global Overview Report gave an interesting juxtaposition of social media use in Indonesia with the world. Firstly, it was reported that the average daily time

spent on using social media was above the world's average of 2 hours & 25 minutes. Indonesians between the age of 16-64 spent 3 hours & 14 minutes on social media and they were the second-highest in the Southeast Asia region after the Philippines (Kemp, 2021). Second, Indonesians had the highest average number of social media ownership in the Southeast Asia region and the top 3 in the world with 10.5 accounts per user while the world average was 8.4 accounts (Kemp, 2021). The extent to which Indonesians were exposed on social media increases the possibility and impact of context collapse which makes Indonesia an interesting society to be studied further.

Decades later, from a macro view, based on the Digital 2021: Global Overview Report, Indonesia became one of the countries where users spend their time on the internet above the world average. On a micro level, there are different purposes pf using the internet. A survey was conducted by the Association of Indonesian Internet Network Providers or Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jaringan Internet Indonesia (APJII) for the period 2019-2020 to understand the internet penetration rate in Indonesia, internet use among Indonesians and the age parameter and frequency of internet use. Based on the survey, the main three reasons of internet usage were for social media, communication and entertainment. which respectively had percentages of 51.5%, 29.3% and 21.7% (APJII, 2020, pp. 72–74). Furthermore, based on Lim's observation of urban

<sup>\*</sup> Corresponding author.

Indonesian youth, they were online and connected to social media through the small, personalised screen of their smartphone (Lim, 2018, p. 156). This observation can be confirmed in APJII's report whereby 95.4% of the survey participants connected to the internet everyday through their smartphones (APJII, 2020, p. 59). Thus, this is why Indonesia has the best context to study the effects of the internet and, specifically, social media due to its deep penetration and rapid adoption of the technology by the younger generation.

## 2. Literature Review

## 2.1. Impression management

The works of literature on social media and on context collapse are ever-expanding. The idea of context collapse derived from Goffman's impression management theory. When in public spaces, individuals tend to perform or present themselves in a way that is appropriate to the values of society which in turn, limits their behaviour (Goffman, 1959, p. 23). Goffman referred to the previous action as performance and it is divided into the frontstage and the backstage. The front stage is the space where performance is given. In other words, it is the place where observers exist and they monitor an individual's behaviour and judge whether the behaviour is following certain standards, norms and values (Goffman, 1959, pp. 66-67). On the other hand, the backstage or the back region is the space where the performance contradicts the frontstage. In other words, it is the place where nobody can enter and where an individual can loosen their performance (Goffman, 1959, pp. 69-70). Furthermore, what is interesting to observe in impression management, according to Goffman, is the transition between the backstage and the frontstage in which an individual takes a character for the performance (1959, p. 74). This research's idea of social media aligns with Goffman's observation in which there are many regions where it can function as a front stage at first, then it can function as a backstage (Goffman, 1959, p. 77). In a face-toface interaction, managing performance and context can be easier as the audience can be seen and they are segmented accordingly. However, social media blurs the audience as they are grouped into one single mass audience. They can be anyone ranging from the closest friends and family until complete strangers which then creates the idea of context collapse.

## 2.2. Contestation in context collapse

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, social media changes the way people interact with different people as they are grouped into one single mass audience. Wesch's 2009 article titled 'YouTube and you: Experiences of self-awareness in the context of the collapse of the recording webcam' first introduced context collapse to the domains of the Internet and social media by examining YouTubers and vlogging. Wesch maintained that in face-to-face communication individuals can assess the context of the

situation and carefully craft the appropriate way to present themselves, however, through a webcam everybody who is connected to the internet is the audience (Wesch, 2009, p. 22). In other words, it was not a lack of context but, it was 'context collapse' which can be defined as when 'an infinite number of contexts collapsing upon one another into that single moment of recording' (Wesch, 2009, p. 23). Similarly, Marwick and boyd had the same argument in their 2011 paper titled "I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience'. They argued that technology obscures space and place and the idea that audiences were distinct from each other. They expanded the concept of context collapse in relation to technology where the technology collapses different audiences into one thus complicates an individual's impression management and identity presentation (Marwick & boyd, 2011, p. 114,123). Then to elaborate their argument, instead of looking at YouTube vloggers, they examined Twitter and Twitter users by posting questions through series of tweets. They saw Twitter as a dynamic microblogging site that permits interactive identity presentation to the audience and self-presentation exists in the tweets rather than in the static profiles (Marwick & boyd, 2011, p. 116). In other words, self-presentation and identity were modified constantly through tweets in a relatively rapid pace. Additionally, Marwick and boyd introduced the different methods that people use to negotiate context collapse. They found that to negotiate context collapse, Twitter users apply several strategies such as concealing information, targeting tweets to different audiences and portraying both the authentic self and an interesting personality (Marwick & boyd, 2011, p. 122). Another fundamental idea on context collapse is the social media affordances. According to boyd, affordances can be understood as the characteristics or properties of an environment which can encourage certain types of practices (2014, p. 10). In a networked social media environment, boyd had identified four central affordances (2014, p. 11):

- persistence: the durability of online expressions and content:
- visibility: the potential audience who can bear witness;
- spreadability: the ease with which content can be shared;
- searchability: the ability to find content.

The affordance that this research focus on is the visibility affordance. As the name suggests, social media increases the potential visibility of a post as people can share it with a broad audience and other people's posts from various regions can be easily seen as well. As boyd argued that, 'In networked publics, interactions are often public by default, private through effort' (boyd, 2014, pp. 11–12).

#### 2.3. Context collapse and culture

The works of literature presented previously recognised the existence of context collapse on social media in a Western context. There was some research that looked at context collapse in a non-Western setting. Elizabeth Costa article titled 'Affordances-in-practice: ethnographic critique of social media logic and context collapse' (2018) presented a more nuanced idea of context collapse. Costa did a long-term ethnographic research from 2013 to 2014 to understand the social media practices in Mardin, a town located in the Kurdish regions of Turkey (Costa, 2018, p. 3643). She strongly argued that there were no instances of context collapse since it was very normal for people in Mardin to have multiple Facebook accounts catered for different groups of people and often under fake names and pseudonyms (Costa, 2018, p. 3642). Costa further argued that Mardinites used the platform actively and creatively in a way that had not been envisaged by social media scholars and designers, such as by changing the privacy settings as well as creating and crafting different online spaces (Costa, 2018, p. 3644,3649). Mardinites carefully separated and mould different spaces catered for the different expectations of the general public which were the family, best friends and neighbours, while on the other, to fit other different social spheres (Costa, 2018, p. 3642). In addition, it was observed that the Mardinites changed the privacy settings, opened multiple Facebook accounts. created numerous anonymous and fake profiles, formed different groups, unfriended people, blocked undesired users and used private chats as the natural way of using Facebook (Costa, 2018, p. 3647).

Similarly, in Alsaggaf's paper titled 'Saudi women's identities on Facebook: Context collapse, judgement, and the imagined audience', the Saudi women also creatively alter the social media space to suit the local values and norms. Alsaggaf conducted research amongst 10 Saudi women that used Facebook for over 10 months. She observed their online Facebook activity in their domestic setting and conducted two interviews for each participant at the beginning and at the end of the research (Alsaggaf, 2019, p. 4). She found that participants adjust their behaviour and usage online to fit with the cultural norms and gender roles on Facebook. Some of their practices include using their real names for easier identification for the other users. Simultaneously, they were using pseudonyms – i.e., nicknames, random names, initial letters - to make distinctions for each Facebook profiles (Alsaggaf, 2019, p. 5). She also found that participants tend to imagine the audience' reactions towards their post based on personal and actual experiences or their own expectations. For example, one of her participants had to do a long reflection if she added male contacts to her list as the social norms and regulations in a gender-segregated society would increase the chances of being judged negatively by others (Alsaggaf, 2019, p. 8). Both pieces of research had given more variation in the discussion on context collapse by analysing it from non-Western cultures. However, they were focusing only on one platform, which was Facebook and had not considered the possibility of owning a profile on another platform. Moreover, they had lightly discussed the influence of culture on the participant's usage.

The previous works of literature were the backbone of the discourse on context collapse. Firstly, Wesch (2009). Marwick and boyd (2011) created the research pillar and introduced the topic of context collapse on online space. Then Davis and Jurgenson (2014) as well as Brandtzaeg and Lüders (2018) expanded the research in acknowledging the user's agency to navigate the architectural affordances. However, there has not been any research on the effect of culture in managing impression and self-presentation in the online space. As mentioned previously, technological advancement is rapid but it is not equal for all countries which can affect on how people use those technology. Social media is an ever-expanding entity and always in a state of flux and it has integrated into people's lives. Since it has been part of people's dialy life, culture has a huge role in influencing the individual's choices online and specifically on social media. The existing literature on this topic has mainly been done in Western contexts, whether or not it is applicable in other non-Western cultures is still unknown. For example, Marwick and boyd's research was conducted on their followers, which can be assumed were from western countries or at least replied in English. Costa (2018) and Alsaggaf's (2019) studies showed the role of culture in how individuals negotiate the social media affordances to fit the cultural expectations, norms and values in Mardin and Saudi Arabia. Costa's argument in her studies summarises the complicated role of culture in social media:

'[...] the affordances of visibility, persistence, and searchability are specific to a given social and cultural context. Social media technologies are not neutral and do contribute to shaping social interactions and communications, but users actively appropriate and adapt digital technologies to better reflect their own goals and lives' (Costa, 2018, p. 3649).

Therefore, culture of a society needs to be considered as a factor that affect the way individuals present themselves online.

## 2.4. Polymedia and platform swinging

Another aspect that is missing from the context collapse research is to account for the possibility of users using different social media platforms simultaneously. It would be best to acknowledge the existence of 'polymedia' to understand the bigger social media architecture and 'platform swinging' to understand current tactics used by users. Rather than treating different new media as a separate entity with different qualities, polymedia suggests new media as part of the environment of affordances (Madianou & Miller, 2013, p. 170). Thus, polymedia accentuates the ways in which individuals exploit the affordance to manage

their relationships and emotions (Madianou, 2014, p. 667; Madianou & Miller, 2013, p. 172).

Assigning different meanings to different social media platforms in an integrated ecosystem was the overarching argument from Boczkowski et al. (2018). They found that teenagers assign different purposes for different social media platforms. From their interview and survey between Argentinian youth, WhatsApp was considered as a multifaceted communication space that stores different types of content with multiple information flows; Facebook was the platform to showcase the tidy, polished and socially acceptable version of the self. Similar to Facebook, Instagram also a space for the polished self but with more stylised and carefully-picked visual portraits. Twitter was the informative platform and Snapchat was dedicated for spontaneous and playful social interaction (Boczkowski et al., 2018). But to manage different platforms while still maintaining their presence on each platform brings the idea of 'platform swinging.' Platform-swinging is defined as the act of using multiple social media platforms by swinging among different platforms and maintaining the individuals' presence without abandoning older platforms (Tandoc et al., 2019, p. 21,23). Thus, other than exploiting one social media platform's affordance, the polymedia environment and the act of social media swinging could further examine an individual's experiences with context collapse.

## 2.5. Culture, context and collapse

It can be observed that the main issue in context collapse discourse or in general the social media discourse in itself, is that the literature and research are lagging while technology is rapidly expanding. As Bernie Hogan and Anabel Quan-Haase argue that new tools, features, policies and applications are being developed and updated at a rapid pace (2010, p. 309). They also assert that there are multiple layers of problems that researchers experienced while exploring and understanding social media. Firstly, on a practical level, social media are rapidly transforming while research and publications tend to be slow. Second, on an applied level, it can be challenging to teach social media theory and methods as best practices and understanding become obsolete quickly. Finally, on a theoretical level, with policies, features and usages are constantly being updated, then generalisable claims should also be constantly updated (Hogan & Quan-Haase, 2010, p. 309). Those issues are reflected in the literary works and concepts on context collapse.

In the context collapse works of literature, however, expansions do exist but rarely developed by taking into account the role of a specific culture. There is a need to expand the research beyond the social media environment towards external factors, for example, culture. As illustrated by Costa's research, culture influenced the way Mardinites used social media and re-define the available affordances to suit their society. Additionally, Alsaggaf's research on Facebook use amongst Saudi women showed how the

gender-divided norms and values modify how the social media was used. However, what those works of literature lack are the possibility that an individual can appropriate more than one platform to further minimise the impact of culture and context collapse on their social media usage. In advancing the role of culture on context collapse, it would be best to take Indonesia as the case study. As mentioned previously, Indonesians spent a large number of hours on the internet and almost half of the time is dedicated to social media use and it was reported that on average, a user has 10.5 accounts while the world average was only 8.4 accounts.

In sum, there seems to be a lack of works of literature surrounding context collapse in the Asian region. Previous theories and publications in a western context would help in understanding context collapse, however, it may not fully be able to grasp the experiences and insights from an eastern society and in this case, the Indonesian society. In addition, most works on context collapse are focused on one social media platform only and have not explored the use of multiple social media platforms and accounts in context collapse. Users tend to switch between accounts and between platforms and context collapse would be greatly relevant to this phenomenon.

#### 3. Methodology

## 3.1. Research design and method

Instead, this research approached the phenomenon through qualitative methods where it strives to understand, describe and analyse culture and behaviour based on the point of view of the group that is being studied (Bryman, 1998, p. 46). Specifically, this research was constructed following the 'grounded theory' approach as a methodology. The overarching aim was to develop a theory grounded on the empirical data to fill the gap in research which lack of sufficient theoretical foundation (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019, p. 83). Furthermore, the grounded theory approach is also useful to verify or corroborate a concept with a population or concept under the study (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019, p. 83). Thus, this research was an inductive one that had a purpose to uncover, understand and examine the concept of context collapse in the Indonesian context and develop a new theory that can be applied in Indonesian and perhaps to a greater non-western context.

In addition, to gain the empirical data, a semi-structured interview was conducted between the months of February and March. A semi-structured interview is conducted based on an interview guide or outline of the research topic, but the interviewe's comments and insights that mainly guide the interview (Jamshed, 2014, p. 87; Stuckey, 2013, p. 87).

## 3.2. Data collection

The criteria that the participant must fulfil to be able to be interviewed was that they must be Indonesians

born between 1992 to 2002. The reason being is that those cohorts are considered as the first social media natives (Brandtzaeg & Lüders, 2018). The participant's range also diverse where there were undergraduate students, university graduates looking for work and the employed.

Through social media announcement and word of mouth, there was a total of 19 participants – 10 female participants & nine male participants. The average age of the participants was 25 years old, with the youngest participant was born in 2001 and the eldest was born in 1993. The majority of the participants were concentrated on the urban and suburban areas in Indonesia. To protect the participants' identity, I labelled the participants using pseudonyms that are unrelated to their real name. Furthermore, since the participants were Indonesians, they were more comfortable conveying their experiences in Indonesian but with a bit of English as well. Then the interviews were transcribed in Indonesian then translated to English.

#### 3.3. Analysis procedure

In the grounded theory approach, coding is defined as 'a process of conceptual abstraction by assigning general concepts (codes) to singular incidences in the data' (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019, p. 86). There are three steps in the coding process for a grounded theory approach which are open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Firstly, open coding is the first step of data analysis which centralises of conceptualising and categorising a phenomenon through an intensive analysis on the data where the researcher can grasp the central idea and develop a code to describe it (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019, p. 86). In this research, the data emerged through an iterative process and to start the main core ideas were:

- 1. Each participant defined social media differently, but the overarching theme is to socialise and connect with others.
- 2. The participants use various social media Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Line, TikTok and LinkedIn. But the four of them stated that they are very active on IG and they have more than one accounts as compared with other platforms. Thus, as we progressed further on the interview, they mostly discussed their IG use.
- 3. They argued that the use of different platforms depends on the branding and the purpose. However, from the interview, each of them used different platforms differently and more often as passive user.
- 4. Three out of four participants protect their IG accounts and they put more layers such as the 'close friends' feature on Instagram.
- 5. When posting to a larger audience (usually on their first account) they put more effort and consideration to the picture, the caption and aesthetics. Moreover, they present a different version of themselves in different accounts.
- a. Their first account often depicted as the 'neat and perfect' version of themselves.
- b. Their other accounts often depicted as the 'chaotic and the real' version of themselves.

- 6. Three out of four participants used the 'Close Friends' feature because they stated that not everyone needs to know their updates. and they felt that not everyone needs to know. Also, they also considered the audience's perspective whether they are comfortable or not with the content.
- 7. Interestingly, many participants reported that their family members have only access to their first account. Their more personal accounts mostly consist of their close and trusted friends whom they have met in real life.

After the open coding process, the interview process then continued and followed by axial and selective coding processes. Axial coding is useful to understand the relationship between different concepts and categories that were developed in the open coding process (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019, p. 87). To finish, in the selective coding process, the participants' quotes and codes were developed and elaborated which will be useful to answer the proposed research question and resulted in a grounded theory (Bryman, 1998, p. 48; Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019, p. 89).

MIRO was used to code the data and visualised the different connection of the data. Through an iterative exercise, it was identified that there were three ways in which Indonesian youth fragment themselves to negotiate context collapse which are: platform filtering, account filtering and features filtering. In addition, pressures from the family, religious obligation and work colleagues were the main rationales behind adopting such tactic

#### 4. Results

Through the coding process in a grounded theory approach, there are three ways in which the participants project their persona on social media by fragmenting parts of their 'self' in three ways. Firstly, they created a new account on a different social media platform in which can be termed as 'platform filtering.' Secondly, the participants also used the available features offered by the platform to manage their performance or in other words – this can be termed as 'features filtering.' Thirdly, they created another account in the same social media platform or 'account filtering.' The analysis will mainly focus on Instagram and Twitter as those were the platforms that the participants used more often and tend to had more 'swinging' activity between the two

#### 4.1. Platform filtering (and setting the Stage)

The first space that the participants occupied was the space between the different platforms. The participants were asked 'what social media do you use?' and all of them not only listed one but an abundance of social media platforms. The platforms that they mentioned were Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Line, YouTube, LinkedIn and so forth. They had some doubts on what can be considered as a social media, despite that they had succeeded in listing the social media platforms that they frequently use. The main reason for owning and being in different platforms was because each platform served

different purposes and functions. Anton said, 'Yeah I think because each of them has different functions so I create many accounts.' Samantha also had the same idea where she said, 'I think different social platforms serve different purposes to me. Instagram is for different kinda space, Twitter is a different space, that's like the only 2 social media platform that I use, I think.' But Farah's comment best described their rationale:

I don't know, different social media platforms have, like, different focuses I feel. Like, for Instagram they focus on pictures and bit-sized captions. Twitter is wordier, Facebook is even wordier and like multi-use, I guess. So yeah, different social media have different specializations so I think that's why I created a lot of different social media accounts.

She further explained the meaning of Facebook's 'multi-use' because 'the features reflected both Instagram and twitter's features'. On one hand, individuals can post short messages without any photos, they can post pictures with or without captions. On the other hand, individuals can create pages, join groups and can sell and buy various things from the marketplace – these functionalities are largely still unavailable to Twitter and Instagram.

So, based on Anton, Samantha and Farah's comments it can be inferred that different social media platform has different specializations or specific goals. Even though the participants listed and mentioned the platforms that they have, it did not reflect the platform that they use daily. Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp and to an extent LinkedIn and Facebook were the most mentioned platforms during the interview. To narrow down the discussion, this research will focus more mostly on Instagram and Twitter as they were the most commonly discussed social media during the interview.

The participant presented a certain branding or a positive image of themselves to their followers on Instagram. There were various images that the participants portrayed on their Instagram account. For example, Ansel portrayed a positive image of himself to his followers. He stated that '[...] on Instagram, I will post mostly quotes or cool pictures or a pic of myself that shows cool vibes, so people have a positive judgment about me, like they'll perceive me as a fun guy.' Ansel's statement suggested that there was a lot of editing and factors that needed to be considered before posting an update on the platform. Those practices were confirmed by Dian's experiences posting a picture on Instagram meant that she would have to choose a picture with the best lighting, consider the right filter and GIF, as well as the best caption to go along with it. She contrasted her experience when using Twitter where she did not have any consideration; and she would post anything she felt like posting at any moment.

In contrast, Twitter was mentioned as the platform where participants can be themselves and have the 'freedom' to post anything. Participants that used the platform, agreed that Twitter is the place to rant, the place to let every emotion loose, the place to do things that they

cannot do on Instagram or as Nia said 'Twitter is [...] literally my diary.' Just like a diary, Twitter has become the place for comfort and participants can express their emotions, activities, random thoughts. Syifa was the best example to represent twitter as a diary where she stated that:

I feel that I become myself because I don't filter anything. If I want to tweet whether I'm happy, stressed, sad, anything, I just pour it. The same with how I tweet it, I don't think about the grammar and I don't care whether people will understand it or not.

The different platforms – Instagram and Twitter – can be seen as two different stages in a performance. To reiterate, a performance, as defined by Goffman, is 'all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants' (Goffman, 1959, p. 8). In this case, Instagram was their front stage where participants maintained a certain level of appearance and standard. The term 'personal branding' on Instagram was mentioned by several participants. Personal branding is seen as what Socrates once said 'the way to gain a good reputation is to endeavour to be what you desire to appear' (Breen, 2015, p. 389). Through the visibility affordances, social media is becoming the easiest method to create a striking personal identity, to establish a reputation and to be visible or in other words 'explicit self-packaging' (Breen, 2015, p. 390; Lair et al., 2005, p. 308). Meanwhile, Twitter was their backstage where the participants behave naturally and out of character to some people or to no one. By imposing different purposes for each platform, the way individuals perform their 'self' online would be different as well. By talking with the participants, several of them felt that there was a stark contrast between their Twitter 'self' and Instagram 'self'. Jessica, strongly believed that 'there's a certain level or degree of showing their real personality on every platform.'

To understand the rationale behind opening an account on a different platform and to assign a specific purpose for the platform, I asked, 'Why do you need to open an account on another platform?' They answered that the audience played a part in determining the different purpose of each platform. For instance, the family had a large influence in determining the platform dynamic and thus participants felt the need to fragment themselves on different platforms to avoid negative feedback. Syifa and Dian chose the family as the main reason to open another account on a different platform. Dian felt more alert when posting on Instagram because of the existence of her siblings and her other family members. There was a sense of fear or anxiety that she might disturb the cohesiveness of the family:

If it's on Instagram because I already have my siblings [follow my account on the app], I feel a little more alert when I post. [...] To put it roughly, 'what will people think [about me] later?' Even though I didn't really think about it, but I'm still trying to post my best picture. If not for that then it's about 'is this post safe on social media?' Like the photo of me that when I don't wear a hijab, should I post it on social media? There are also family

considerations. There are also many of my family on IG, then they will comment 'why do you post that on IG' like that?

Similarly, with Dian's case, the family also had a big influence on her performance on Instagram. Through one of her family member's sarcasms and the fear of being gossiped by the family, Syifa also began to change her behaviour, her clothing, her image, her self-presentation, her pictures to be more appropriate to the Indonesian values:

so, during one summer, I wore hot pants, it was a very short one and I posted that Instagram because that was one of the best days of my life. Then one of my aunts sarcastically commented like 'Wah! You're becoming a bule (a foreigner) now' and from there I decided to not post something as simple as that like in terms of how I dress must ally with the eastern values, at least things that can be accepted by my extended family without being gossiped. Other than posting about happiness only, I need to think about my appearance physically and my personality. I need to think about the caption, I couldn't use foul words or be over-enthusiastic, just try to be flat on Instagram. So, from there I filter what I post, which body part should I include like if I go with my friends to a pub, I can't really post about it, so it needs to be really careful.

In summary, the platform filter was the first layer of self-fragmentation on social media. Instagram acted as the frontstage while twitter was the backstage. The family had a huge role in affecting the participant's decision of opening an account on a different platform as well as the participant's behaviour and self-presentation on social media.

## 4.2. Account filtering (and curating the actors)

The second space of interaction and filter happened within the platform. Social media platforms have evolved to the point where individuals can swing to different accounts on the same platform without having to log in and log out multiple times. The account filter became the next layer of fragmenting the self to a specific audience. The most wellknown terms for this phenomenon are the 'Rinsta' and the 'Finsta.' 'Risnta' or 'Real Instagram' account is mainly used as the primary account where individuals portray their perfect life through vacation pictures, job accomplishments pictures and so forth (Kang & Wei, 2020). On the other hand, 'Finsta' or 'Fake Instagram' account is the secondary account where individuals show their imperfections, struggles (Kang & Wei, 2020). In this research, the terms Finsta and Rinsta were too restricted as the participants reported that they made more than one account not only on Instagram but also on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Instead of focusing on all platforms, this research will only focus on Twitter and Instagram similar to the previous section.

Based on the participants' comments there are different levels of the self that is being shown based on the account type and audience. They are using terms such as

'personal account', 'private account' and 'second account' which connotes the different meaning assigned by the participants based on their needs. Ansel and Putra used the term 'personal account' to different their accounts. For example, Putra said that 'I have 2, the first one is for personal the other one is for business [...] I rarely use the second one, it's more to stalk people.' Similarly, Ansel also used the term to differentiate his work and personal account. He said that 'to be honest, on Instagram I have 2 accounts, the first one is a personal account and the second one is for work.' Another term is 'private account' which was the term used by Bagas and Reza. Bagas said that 'on my private account, I can do whatever I want basically.' Meanwhile for Reza, 'private account is for me to let go of the things that have been in the back of my mind, it's for ranting basically.' Lastly, there were also participants that used the term 'second account'. For example, Dian stated that '[...] second account is like my catalogue; what I want to find, just look for it on the second account.' Jessica also used 'second account' as 'my second account is tailored to my interests and stuff.' Meanwhile, for Anton, he used 'second account' in relation to his work where he said that 'So if I don't have a certain influencer's contact, I DM them using that second account.' It can be observed that there are multiple terms that the participants used and assigned meanings that aligned with the participant's usage.

To present a much clearer difference on those three terms, I would use Reza's experiences. Reza explained that he had three accounts on Instagram and three accounts on Twitter. He differentiated the accounts by using terms such as 'personal account', 'second account' and 'private account' and each had its own purpose. First, 'personal account' was the space where he shared his daily life and followed his real-life friends whom he personally knows. In other words, it can be seen as a space for socializing, networking and presenting his personal branding. Second, the 'second account' was meant for entertainment purposes. Since he liked K-pop, he created another account to post anything about and related to Korea, specifically about Kpop. In that account, he can be friends with people that he has not met in real life because he felt a sense of community and that he felt that the people that befriended him shared the same fear of being judged by and misunderstood by laypeople. He shared that:

I think the majority of people think similarly like me like we want to share this with people that really understand about it. So not everyone can accept it and I'm afraid that if I share that, not everyone will be happy about it. So, it's better for me to make a second account where my friends and I truly understand that topic so at least, I'm at ease in sharing that content.

Lastly, he also created a 'private account' where according to Reza, he can share anything that he wants to be 'free'. He said that 'Honestly, for that other private account, I am a bit frontal in the sense that I use a lot of curse words which is different from my real-life account.' Based on Reza's experiences, he fragmented his 'self' on different accounts to suit the audience of each account. In addition,

Reza mentioned that in his 'second account' and 'private account' he did not show any of his personal data and pictures on his profiles. In other words, by being anonymous, he was comfortable sharing his hobby with the people that he had not met in real life and his feelings privately on social media.

Similarly, Faby also created a number of accounts on the same platform to fragment themselves. Unlike Reza who expanded his network on the second account, Faby shrinks her network on the second account where she said that 'for my second account, it's more for close people, people that I am really close to.' The purpose of the second account too was different from Reza, in which Faby shared her imperfections or the 'behind the stage' moments of what she posted on her first account. She explained her accounts usage through a simple activity such as cooking. She said that the highlight and the result of the cooking will be posted on her first Instagram account. But, for the journey of making the dish such as the screaming, the struggle will be posted on her second Instagram account. Thus, it can be seen that the perfect side of her life was posted on her first account while the imperfection was hidden from her followers and only a selected few can only see that side of her. In other words, 'finstas' are displaying how 'setting the stage' for a stage, in this case, the 'rinsta' is fundamentally social (Dewar et al., 2019, p. 5).

There were two prominent reasons to explain the account fragmenting behaviour. First, it was related to their religious obligation and personal branding. Nia created a second account on her Instagram for her to be able to express herself comfortably without wearing a hijab. She said that:

I didn't purposely open [the account] with the intention to exclude my family members. So, I created it for the hijab thing and it's only for my school friends in the university. I don't feel like comfortable enough, especially with guys. It's a personal branding you know! They should not know this side of me.

The underlying motivation for opening an account on the same platform is trust. Trust in interpersonal relationships can be referred to as 'the belief that one's partner will act in loving and caring ways whatever the future holds' (Rempel et al., 1985, p. 109). However, it can be much harder to trust on social media because of the four affordances that boyd had mentioned that amplify wariness amongst the people and affect the way people only select several people that they can rely on, on their second or (potentially) account. For Reza, he presented different images on his different accounts. He created a cool persona in the real-life account and maintains a good personality towards the people that he knows in real life on that real-life account. On the other hand, in the second account, he began to let loose. He said that 'I am tackier and a bit crazier' in the second account. On the private account, he follows no one and is followed by a small number of people that he trusts and he thinks they will understand his feelings without being judged. This is the account, the space where he can express any feelings that he had without any constraints.

Faby observed that people on her main account pay attention very well to her. She said, 'the biggest difference

is when you are moving from your first to third account, the more private it is the less judgment it will be.' Thus, she restricts the view of strangers in her first account and entrusted that the post can minimise misunderstanding and gossips where she said:

So rather than restrict myself for exploring other real-life things, I better restrict their view about me. So, the contents that I upload, like they will know that my personality is not what they see on real life, so the people that know me in real life are my closest, for example, my family. On the second account, they are the people that deserve to know what I've been doing, what I've been exploring. But on my first account, the things that I want to post go through a lot of filters. So, I want to present myself as a person that is very stable.

In sum, the accounts filter is the next layer for individuals to fragment their 'self' based on the audience of each account. The participants actively chose and curated the audience that was permitted to see the imperfect version of themselves. Anonymity, trust and religious obligation had affected the participant's rationale of adopting such tactics to limit the audience's view of themselves on social media.

## 4.3. Features filtering (and limiting the view)

Lastly, the participants also mention the use of different features offered by the social media platform with the purpose of further limiting the view of the audience. The participants mostly mentioned the features on Instagram such as 'Hide', 'Close Friends', 'Block', 'Restrict' and so forth. On Twitter, however, they were not able to recall if special features exist as well on Twitter other than the usual 'Mute' and 'Block'. The post becomes the third space in which the participants fragment themselves more and usually used to show a more intimate and private matter to a certain group of people.

The commonly mentioned features on Instagram were 'close friends' and 'hide.' Those features are applicable only to Instagram Story – a post where it will disappear after 24 hours. The 'close friends list' feature let individuals select the people that can be included in the people's story. Meanwhile, 'Hide' can be used to hide a story from certain people and prevent the same person from seeing the story update in the future (Instagram, 2021). In a sense, participants used those features to share more intimate and private matters with a certain group of people.

First, the 'close friends list' was used to post private matters. Bagas complained about how the people or his Instagram followers kept asking about his private life and he only used the 'close friends list' features specifically for certain people that are close to him. He said that:

If I want privacy, I use the 'close friend' feature. Usually, there are people that are like 'Bagas are you married or not?' I don't want people to know my life, like it's my privacy you know! You don't have to know. You only need to know about my work and that's enough. I actually want to tell the people of my work and who I really am, not about my life or privacy.

Similar to Bagas, Putri also used the 'close friends

list' feature where she shared her goofy side and her weird jokes strictly to approximately 30 people. The reason behind it was due to trust and safety, where she said that:

I just don't feel like comfortable sharing it to like everyone. Not everyone needs to know where I am. Not everyone needs to know what I do and the things I buy, what I like. So, I guess in a way, if you know you can sort of, well not 100%, but trust your followers, you feel like you know them. I think it's easier for you to share like more personal things.

Another feature that the participants used was 'hide' on Instagram and it was very relevant to the participants who were working. Putra, Daffa and Rini are working and they both use the 'hide' feature to exclude their bosses and colleagues from seeing their Instagram story updates. Their main fear was that their activities, interests and updates become gossip materials at work. Putra highlighted his observations on the differences between his older and younger colleagues. He said that:

Some of my colleagues are like this, so there are different range of people, from very young ones to the older ones and their nosiness level is different. Those who are young just don't care, but the older ones are really nosey to the point that it's very annoying. It disturbs me. [The younger ones are] not nosey, but they will talk about you behind your backs, but as long as we don't do anything weird, then it's gonna be okay.

Rini further stresses her argument that she does not feel safe if her work colleagues know about her where 'My work friends already know who I am but we don't really know their perspective about us, whether they're contradicting with us or whether they can spill the tea whenever, wherever to whoever.' Daffa, specifically excluded his bosses at work from seeing his Instagram story since 'they are commenting too much on my stuff' and he predicted that when his bosses see his story, it can be a source of gossip-based on what his friend had been going through after posting an update without excluding their bosses.

In summary, the last method that participants used to fragment themselves is by utilising different social media features, specifically on Instagram. They used 'hide' and 'close friends' option to limit the audience's view about themselves. This method is more prominently used by participants that are working.

#### 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the visibility affordance makes context collapse happen where it is a phenomenon where multiple audiences merged into one on social media which makes self-presentation complicated. Other than focusing on the architecture or the individual's agency alone, there should be a focus on the impact of culture in context collapse. Indonesia is a very collectivistic society and has a low uncertainty avoidance level which suggest that the people have different experiences than the previous works of literature on context collapse had suggested. There are three ways in which they fragment themselves which were: platform-filter, account-filter and features-filter. To

experience a context collapse in a positive manner can be seen as a privilege while it was a constant modification and fragmentation of the self and re-adjusting the platform and the account usages to suit the Indonesian community standard. The family was the most mentioned factor that had affected the participants into fragmenting themselves to different platforms, accounts and post. The trustworthiness of their followers was also being questioned due to the fear of being gossiped about.

The participants kept fragmenting themselves from the biggest architectural level, i.e., the different platforms, then they created different accounts on the same platform and used the available features to limit context collapse. Previous research on context collapse suggested that social media has power over individuals and individuals just accept the given architecture. However, it had been emphasized by Suler that cyberspace gave the opportunity for individuals to focus on who they are by giving them the chance to express and explore various facets of their identity that they may not be able to do in their offline world (2002, p. 456). It is the combination of the social media architecture and the exercising of the agency that has influenced the way people present themselves online. The participants made several layers to 'box' or 'compartmentalising' their online identities, which Suler (2002, p. 456) argued, can be an efficient way to manage multiple identities. However, the overarching argument for this research is that culture has an impact on self-presentation in the online space. Goffman stated in his book:

when the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so, in fact, than does his behaviour as a whole. (Goffman, 1959, p. 23)

To further understand the rationale behind selfpresentation online, it would be much better to consider the societal values and this research takes into account the context of the culture of the Indonesian society on context collapse. The participants kept fragmenting themselves due to family, religion and peer pressure. In other words, participants adjust their behaviour and perform their front self on their main account, specifically on Instagram, based on the community's values. Based on Hofstede's cultural dimension, Indonesia has a very low score on the 'Individualism' index (14 out of 100) meaning the country is categorised as a collectivist society (Hofstede Insights, 2021). In a collectivist country, individuals are expected to conform to the values, norms and ideals of the society and the group in which they belong and it can be clearly in Family and its role in relationships (Hofstede Insights, 2021). In addition, there is an idea about 'interdependent construal of the self' in a collectivistic society like in Indonesia. The interdependent construal of the self is defined as the view that the self is connected and less differentiated by the relationship with the others. Moreover, to become a part of different interpersonal relationships,

individuals would find various ways to fit in and to fulfil the obligation from others (Rose Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 227). Syifa's experience was a great example of adjusting one's behaviour to fulfil the family's obligation on social media. She had to choose which body parts that she can show on Instagram and she had to flatten her tone when writing captions.

Another striking theme was the participants' anxiety in making a post and who to trust when showing it. To be seen as appropriate on their social media accounts and to prevent any backlash or gossip from the people on their main account, participants presented the most perfect version of themselves where they curate their pictures and words. Rather than performing the 'idealised self' on their main account or platform, they showed their 'ought self'. The 'ought self' represents what an individual should or ought to possess based on someone else' duty, obligations or responsibilities (Higgins, 1987, p. 321). It is more appropriate to the Indonesian context as participants fear the possible consequences if they do not conform with the family's values and norms and the thought that their other followers think negatively and would create a backlash. As Carver et al. asserted that the motivation to perform the 'ought self' is based on punishment to avoid instances of self-disapproval or disapproval from others (Carver et al., 1999, p. 783). As a country with a low preference for avoiding uncertainty, Indonesians tend to focus on preserving harmony and reduce confrontation (Hofstede Insights, 2021). Thus, it makes sense that they present a very positive image of themselves on their main account or platform to receive minimum backlash and preserve harmony for themselves and for the other.

Other than curating the content, they were also gatekeeping the people on their other accounts. Gatekeeping the audience is also related to another aspect of the interdependent self-construal where individuals that have a high level of the interdependent self-construal tend to know more and have more information about the other people (Giacomin & Jordan, 2017, p. 5). It can be interpreted that the Indonesian audience tends to be more 'kepo' or nosy. Kepo' is a commonly used Indonesian slang derived from a Hokkien word which indicate a situation where a person has a high level of (often unwarranted) interest in someone else's business or life. The closest English word that could best describe this is 'nosey' as this word carries a negative connotation. The participants' concern on 'kepo' were more prominent amongst those who are working and tend to use the 'features filters' to limit the audience's view. They were also concerned about the level of trustworthiness of their followers. To prevent further mishaps or unwanted consequences, they curated their audience on the account level and further used the features ('Close Friends' and 'Hide'). This phenomenon is consistent with van Hoorn's research whereby there is an association that people that is in a collectivistic society have a narrower radius of trust as

contrasted with those in an individualistic society (2015, p. 275).

However, this research is far from perfect as there are several methodological limitations of this research. Firstly, in terms of data collection procedure, I disseminated my participants' recruitment through my personal social media accounts which suggests that there was a degree of bias, despite the announcement was being re-shared or retweeted. Secondly, due to time differences and the distance between the participants and myself, an online interview was the best option. However, there were instances where the internet connection was not very good which affected the sound quality and the transcribing process as well. Third, in the translation process from English to Indonesian, some may be lost in translation and in context as some words were very specific in the Indonesian context and there were Indonesian slangs used. Finally, the participants in this research were limited to only one cohort and one culture, in the future, it is suggested to do cross-cultural research and expand the age group to get data from digital natives and digital immigrants.

Nevertheless, there are several implications of this study in relation to the current context collapse research Nowadays, social media platforms are being increasingly adopted by many individuals and it increases the chances of context collapse. However, the existing studies on context collapse have mostly been done in Western cultures and it may not reflect the experiences of those who are living in Eastern cultures. This research, gained empirical data based on the Indonesian society and concluded that culture has a role in the ways individuals present themselves online. As a collectivist society, there are familiar values and norms that Indonesians must conform in order to prevent any backlash. This is important, as there was limited study that examined context collapse in a non-Western society. Second, the polymedia environment and the swinging practices of the participants indicated a 'nested performance'. In the larger polymedia environment, the participants used different platforms for different purposes. Then within those platforms, individuals perform a slightly different performance by using different accounts and they further narrow down their performance by utilising different features of social media. Social media, for Indonesians, largely reflect their real life as individuals take into account the familial, collectivistic values and norms and fragment themselves in various ways to avoid societal backlash. Thus, culture has a role that drives individuals to present a 'nested performance.'

## Acknowledgements

I would like to give my gratitude to Lars de Wildt, who was previously my supervisor, alongside my family and my friends. I would also like to thank IFC committees for the amazing opportunity.

#### References

- Alsaggaf, R. M. (2019). Saudi women's identities on Facebook: Context collapse, judgement, and the imagined audience. *Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries*, 85(2), e12070. https://doi.org/10.1002/isd2.12070
- APJII. (2020). Laporan Survei Internet APJII 2019 2020. In *Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia* (Vol. 2020). https://apjii.or.id/survei
- Boczkowski, P. J., Matassi, M., & Mitchelstein, E. (2018). How young users deal with multiple platforms: The role of meaning-making in social media repertoires. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 23(5), 245–259. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmy012
- boyd, danah. (2014). *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. Yale University Press.
- Brandtzaeg, P. B., & Lüders, M. (2018). Time Collapse in Social Media: Extending the Context Collapse. *Social Media and Society*, 4(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118763349
- Breen, P. (2015). Personal Branding Through Social Media. In *Realizing* the Power of Social Media in the 21st Century (pp. 2763–3656). https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-9593-1.les4
- Bryman, A. (1998). Quantity and Quality in Social Research. In *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203410028
- Carr, C. T., & Hayes, R. A. (2015). Social Media: Defining, Developing, and Divining. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 23(1), 46–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870.2015.972282
- Carver, C. S., Lawrence, J. W., & Scheier, M. F. (1999). Self-discrepancies and affect: Incorporating the role of feared selves. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25(7), 783–792. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167299025007002
- Costa, E. (2018). Affordances-in-practice: An ethnographic critique of social media logic and context collapse. *New Media & Society*, 20(10), 3641–3656. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818756290
- Dewar, S., Islam, S., Resor, E., & Salehi, N. (2019). Finsta: Creating "fake" spaces for authentic performance. *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems Proceedings*. https://doi.org/10.1145/3290607.3313033
- Giacomin, M., & Jordan, C. (2017). Interdependent and Independent Self-Construal. In *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences* (pp. 1–7). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8\_1136-1
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Anchor Books. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4279016
- Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-Discrepancy: A Theory Relating Self and Affect. Psychological Review, 94(3), 319–340. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.94.3.319
- Hofstede Insights. (2021). Country Comparison Hofstede Insights Indonesia. https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/indonesia/
- Hogan, B., & Quan-Haase, A. (2010). Persistence and Change in Social Media. Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society, 30(5), 309–315. https://doi.org/10.1177/0270467610380012
- Instagram. (2021). Stories | Instagram Help Center. https://help.instagram.com/1660923094227526/?helpref=hc fnav

- &bc[0]=Instagram Help&bc[1]=Instagram Features
- Jamshed, S. (2014). Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation. *Journal of Basic and Clinical Pharmacy*, 5(4), 87. https://doi.org/10.4103/0976-0105.141942
- Kang, J., & Wei, L. (2020). Let me be at my funniest: Instagram users' motivations for using Finsta (a.k.a., fake Instagram). *The Social Science Journal*, 57(1), 58–71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soscij.2018.12.005
- Kemp, S. (2021, January 27). Digital 2021: Global Overview Report DataReportal – Global Digital Insights. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-global-overview-report
- Lair, D. J., Sullivan, K., & Cheney, G. (2005). Marketization and the recasting of the professional self: The Rhetoric and Ethics of Personal Branding. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 18(3), 307–343. https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318904270744
- Lim, M. (2018). DIS/CONNECTION: THE CO-EVOLUTION OF SOCIOCULTURAL AND MATERIAL INFRASTRUCTURES OF THE INTERNET IN INDONESIA. *Indonesia*, 105, 155–172. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5728/indonesia.105.0155?seq=1
- Madianou, M. (2014). Smartphones as polymedia. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 19(3), 667–680. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12069
- Madianou, M., & Miller, D. (2013). Polymedia: Towards a new theory of digital media in interpersonal communication. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 16(2), 169–187. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877912452486
- Marwick, A. E., & boyd, danah. (2011). I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience. *New Media and Society*, 13(1), 114–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444810365313
- Rempel, J. K., Holmes, J. G., & Zanna, M. P. (1985). Trust in Close Relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49(1), 95–112. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.49.1.95
- Rose Markus, H., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Psychological Review Culture and the Self." Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation (Vol. 98, Issue 2).
- Stuckey, H. (2013). Three types of interviews: Qualitative research methods in social health. *Journal of Social Health and Diabetes*, 01(02), 056–059. https://doi.org/10.4103/2321-0656.115294
- Suler, J. (2002). Identity Management in Cyberspace. Article in Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1020392231924
- Tandoc, E. C., Lou, C., & Min, V. L. H. (2019). Platform-swinging in a poly-social-media context: How and why users navigate multiple social media platforms. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 24(1), 21–35. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmy022
- van Hoorn, A. (2015). Individualist–Collectivist Culture and Trust Radius: A Multilevel Approach. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 46(2), 269–276. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022114551053
- Vollstedt, M., & Rezat, S. (2019). An Introduction to Grounded Theory with a Special Focus on Axial Coding and the Coding Paradigm. In G. Kaiser & N. Presmeg (Eds.), Compendium for Early Career Researchers in Mathematics Education (pp. 81–100). Springer

 $International\ Publishing.\ https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-15636-7\_4$ 

Wesch, M. (2009). YouTube and you: Experiences of self-aware-ness in

the context of the collapse of the recording webcam. *Explorations in Media Ecology*, 8(2), 19–34.