



Self-Presentation and Social Interaction: A Case Study of the Buddhist Community in Makassar City

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Abstract. This study aims to identify the behavior patterns in managing the presentation of self-image of monks through a dramaturgical approach, including: the management of front stage and back stage impressions of monks within the Buddhist community in Makassar. A qualitative research method using a phenomenological perspective is employed to explore the personal experiences of research subjects in symbolic interaction and dramaturgical approaches. Participant observation and in-depth interviews are used as primary instruments for data collection. The research findings reveal that the presentation of self-image by monks, viewed through a dramaturgical lens, appears on the theatrical stage as "actors." The front stage, as the public or social domain, involves a gentle voice intonation, the use of inner and outer robes, a shaved head, limited interaction, a friendly demeanor, maintaining eye contact and physical touch, and upholding dignity. The back stage shows a different presentation compared to the front stage. The self-image presentation on the back stage features gentle voice intonation, the use of inner robes, a shaved head, no limitations on interaction, no attention to eye contact, and no restrictions on physical touch. The use of attributes in communication, as part of the effort to interpret the surrounding environment, individual behavior, and interpersonal communication, can strengthen relationships.

Keywords: Communication, Self-Presentation, Dramaturgi, Monk

1 Introduction

Self-presentation in social life is often analogized to a theatrical stage—a stage play where individuals present themselves in the social world. Dramaturgy is a fundamental approach that explores how individuals perform in the social world. According to Goffman's perspective in his book *The Presentation of Everyday Life*, dramaturgy is a basic approach to understanding how individuals appear in the social sphere. Goffman focuses on face-to-face interactions or co-presence. An individual can present any "performance" to others, but the impressions that others form based on this performance can vary. An individual may be very confident about the performance being presented to them, but they may also take the opposite stance [Santoso, 2012: 47].

This explanation likens the dramaturgical approach perspective likens social interaction to a "theater stage," where social interactions resemble a drama performance, showcasing roles. In playing these roles, individuals use verbal language, nonverbal behavior, and specific attributes. Goffman further explains that the "theater stage" is divided into the "front stage," which refers to social events where individuals perform

their roles, and the "back stage," which refers to the place and events that allow individuals to prepare their roles for the front stage. The front stage is further divided into two parts: the personal front, which includes individual attributes like appearance and manner, and the setting, which refers to the physical environment necessary for the actor's performance. The setting encompasses the physical situation that must be present when the actor performs [Suneki and Haryono, 2012].

The social world to a stage play, where individuals become actors playing roles in social relationships, adhering to the rules of the roles they embody. Self-presentation in everyday life is akin to a performance, much like those often carried out by Arianto. The study of dramaturgy involves the participation of other individuals. Goffman is interested in this significant reality, using the term "dramaturgy" to understand that in social interactions, individuals are constrained by what they can say and do, depending on the individual and the context. Like actors on a stage, they perform specific role settings and for an audience.

A religion typically has a central figure who serves as a role model in practicing the teachings of the faith, known as a religious leader. A religious leader is someone who, despite not being formally appointed as a leader, attains a position of influence due to their exceptional qualities, impacting the psychological state and behavior of a group or community [Kartini Kartono, 2016]. Religious leaders play a role in conveying religious teachings and guiding their followers to achieve the goals of their faith. In addition to this role, they must also be capable of addressing the social issues faced by their community.

In early 1976, there were more than five Indonesian monks living a monastic life in Indonesia in accordance with the Pali Tipitaka scriptures. The Buddhist religious perspective based on the Pali Tipitaka, commonly referred to as Theravada (the Teachings of the Elders), follows the Vinaya (monastic rules) as outlined in the Pali Tipitaka. Monks are organized into an assembly called the Sangha, which must consist of at least five monks. The functions of the monastic life include the ordination of new monks, resolving cases of Vinaya violations, and fulfilling other monk-related duties, all of which must be conducted within the Sangha forum. The Sangha provides opportunities for study (*pariyatti*), practice (*patipatti*), and realization (*pativedha Dhamma*) for those who are capable of living as monks. In addition to its role for the monks, the Sangha also serves as a guardian of faith (*saddha*), a maintainer of morality (*sila*), an object of devotion (*caga*), and a nurturer of wisdom (*panna*) for the Buddhist community.

A monk exhibits behavioral characteristics that stem from their monastic life. In addition to cultivating mindfulness to free themselves from greed, hatred, and delusion, monks also devote much of their time to sharing the Dhamma with people from all walks of life. Protective behavior is a key trait of monks, reflecting their heightened awareness in Buddhism and bringing about significant positive change for their followers. Monks provide a sense of security and embody wisdom through the purity of their protective nature. They serve as a fertile ground for the cultivation of virtue for the community, as monks possess high morality in adherence to the precepts (*sila*) and monastic rules (*vinaya*) [Kurnasih, 2017].

In social life, every individual strives to present the best image of themselves through their communication activities. Face-to-face communication, whether verbal or non-verbal, is employed to construct one's self in the form of self-expression and self-actualization. This process of self-revelation or self-image projection is known as self-presentation, where individuals demonstrate their identity to be accepted within their social groups and broader social life.

The dramaturgical approach is closely linked to Cooley's concept of the looking glass self, which consists of three components: First: we develop how we appear to others as individuals. Second: we imagine how others judge our appearance. Third: we develop feelings about ourselves, such as shame or pride, as a result of how we perceive others' judgments. A role is a socially defined expectation that an individual plays. The focus is on the "self," situated socially and symbolically, developing to regulate social interactions that are symbolic and specific. Better known as "impression management," it refers to the techniques used by actors to cultivate specific impressions in situations and achieve certain goals. [Suneki dan Haryono, 2012]. Goffman assumes that when individuals interact, they want to present a self-image that will be accepted by others. This is what is referred to as "impression management," which is a technique used by actors to cultivate specific impressions in certain situations to achieve particular goals. [Rinawati, 2006: 149].

The symbolic interaction approach seeks to understand human behavior from the perspective of objects. This symbolic interaction suggests that human behavior should be viewed as a process that allows for the shaping and regulation of behavior, taking into account the expectations of other individuals who are partners in the interaction. The uniqueness and dynamics of symbols in the process of social interaction require humans to be more critical, sensitive, and creative in interpreting the symbols that arise in social interactions. The correct interpretation of symbols also determines the direction of human development and its environment. Conversely, a mistaken interpretation of symbols can lead to disaster for human life and its surroundings. [Haliemah dan Kertamukti, 2017].

Approach This dramaturgy emphasizes the post-conception of the portrayal of "self" in everyday life, as explained below: The "dramaturgical approach" emphasized that people's daily self-presentation resembled stage acting. In other words, self-presentation is the gift of self that individuals tend to perform intentionally and wish to be perceived by others. The perception by others that one should be controlled was referred to as self-presentation. [Leart and Kowalski, 1990].

Self-presentation in the depiction of the "self" of a monk within the context of symbolic social interaction as a "theater stage" to create an optimal image for his social world. Goffman's assumption that when individuals interact, they present a self-image that is accepted by others. This is what is referred to as "impression management." The impact on social life interprets the meaning of the existence of behavior. It is not cultural heritage, socialization, or institutional arrangements, nor the manifestation of psychological and biological potential, but rather the problematic achievement of human interaction, filled with change, novelty, and confusion, and socially remains dynamic, an arbiter, and a concoction of human interactions. [Jennifer, 2014].

The explanation indicates that the concepts of role and "self" (from symbolic interaction theory) manifest in interactions with other individuals and oneself, which differ from the self of other individuals, referred to as "identity." An individual's behavior in a form of interaction is influenced by role expectations and their own identity, as well as the behavior of the parties interacting with them.

The dramaturgical approach has been studied through various research concepts, such as the one conducted by Rini titled "Dramaturgy of Polygamy," which uses a qualitative approach to uncover the verbal and non-verbal communication behavior of husbands who practice polygamy. The management of impressions on the front stage and also the backstage is carried out by a polygamous husband to create an impression of loyalty, affection for his wives, or other positive impressions in front of his wives through both verbal and non-verbal means. [Rini, 2006].

The communication behavior of monks is displayed through the use of monk attributes to create an impression in their social environment. Another study was conducted by Zubair [2013], focusing on the study of the Ethnic Chinese Identity in Bangka in Business Relations with the Malay Ethnic of Bangka. This research employed a subjective approach with an interpretive perspective. The results of the research found that the presentation of self-shows an order of interaction that arises to meet the need for maintaining self-integrity. Humans are symbol manipulators, demonstrating what is communicated between individuals when interacting in everyday situations. According to the observations of researchers, the Chinese ethnic group in Bangka is considered skilled in using symbols to communicate with other ethnic groups. [Zubair, 2013].

2 Methodology

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach method. A method that emphasizes understanding social issues based on realistic, complex, and holistic conditions in a natural setting. The phenomenological research perspective is used for descriptive and introspective data analysis methods regarding the depth of all forms of direct experiential consciousness. In addition to the methods, the symbolic interaction perspective and the dramaturgical approach both combine with one another. This perspective is used to explore the monk's self-interpretation on the front stage and the back stage.

The technique for selecting informants in this study uses purposive sampling. Where the author has established certain considerations or criteria that must be met in this research. The selection of informants is based on predetermined criteria, namely Monks from the Theravada Buddhist Community in Makassar. The data for this research uses both primary and secondary data, where primary data includes in-depth interviews, observations, and literature studies. Meanwhile, secondary data will be gathered by reading various books, previous research findings, websites, and lecture materials that are related to the issues being studied. Then the data was analyzed based on the data collection techniques of the Miles and Huberman model, which include data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification.

The phenomenological research perspective is used as a method for descriptive and introspective data analysis, exploring the depth of all forms of consciousness and direct experience. Phenomenology is one of the qualitative research methods. This type of

research seeks to reveal, study, and understand a phenomenon along with its distinctive and unique context as experienced by an individual, down to the level of the individual's "beliefs." Thus, in studying and understanding it, the analysis must be based on the viewpoint, paradigm, and direct beliefs of the monk as the subject who experiences it firsthand.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 The Front Stage of a Monk

The monk's self-presentation appears as an "actor" striving to combine personal characteristics and develop behaviors that support his role. Actors in the performance of 'theater' in social life must prepare the elements of their "self" performance through verbal and nonverbal behaviors. The use of these "self" performance elements aims to achieve the goal of enhancing the impression on those they interact with. The dramaturgical approach explains that social interactions are understood in the same way as a theater performance on stage. The monk's self-presentation on the front stage is a realm of the public and social. Involvement in managing impressions and gaining control over expressions, positive images, and self-presentation through the use of complementary attributes, such as inner robes, outer robes, and bald or very short hair, serves to present an ideal image of their group.

The management of impressions in a monk's self-presentation on stage emphasizes personality aspects by wearing both inner and outer robes, along with a shaved head, conveying the best impression to maintain the perception of someone who sees the dangers of the world. The effort to maintain his appearance, form, model, and symbols of a monk's clothing serves as a symbol of the impression of a monk's attire, indicating his identity as someone who perceives the dangers of the world. The next aspect of personality that is shown through the front stage of the rule regarding hair is the guideline from the Buddha to the monks, which states that they must have short hair. It is also stipulated that every month, specifically on the full moon, the monks are required to shave their heads once a month. If those rules are not followed, it indicates that a monk has violated the precepts of the Buddha.

His involvement in a social interaction on a front stage to explore the role of an actor in a "social theater stage" hopes that this role will allow him to present himself positively to others. Striving to "manipulate" the audience and perform reflexively in the context of impression management. Management of impressions in the creation of social activities in the form of lecture movements, through behavioral displays within a context of social interaction as part of the lecture activities. The display of self-behavior that is self-determined is active, reflective, and creative, making it sometimes difficult to predict for others.

The management of impressions in a monk's self-presentation on stage also reflects aspects of style or manner to emphasize personality by limiting interactions, being gentle, friendly, maintaining eye contact and touch, especially with the opposite sex, and upholding the dignity of a monk. A monk strives to convey the impression of adhering to "*winayah*" or rules that differ from ordinary people, and in becoming a monk, one must practice self-restraint.

Impression management in the monks' self-presentation on the front stage emphasizes aspects of personality by wearing inner and outer robes and having a shaved head, conveying the best impression to maintain the image of someone who perceives the dangers of the world. The effort to maintain their appearance, the form, model, and symbolism of the monks' attire serve as symbols of the impression created by a monk's clothing, signifying themselves as individuals who recognize the dangers of the world. (According to the interview results 20 May 2024) stated that:

"The true attribute is this robe. It is called a robe because a Bhikkhu or monk only has this, and what does this brown color signify? It means that this is the robe of someone who sees the dangers of the world."

The next aspect of personality displayed on the front stage is the rule regarding hair, which was established by the Buddha for monks, requiring them to keep their hair short. It is also prescribed that on every *uposatha* day, which falls on the full moon, monks must shave their heads once a month. Failure to follow this rule indicates that a monk has violated the Buddha's teachings. (According to the interview results 20 March 2024) stated that:

"So indeed, the Buddha established a rule that Bhikkhus must have short hair. That is why on every uposatha day, which falls on the full moon, we must shave our heads once a month. If it goes beyond that, it means we have already broken the rule. It is recommended that Bhikkhus shave once a month."

Involvement in a social interaction in a front stage to explore the role of an actor in a "social theater stage" hoping that this role makes him appear positively to other individuals. Trying to "manipulate" the audience and perform reflexively in the context of impression management. Impression management in the creation of social activities in the form of lecture movements, through the display of behavior in a context of social interaction as part of lecture activities. The display of self-determined behavior is active, reflective, and creative for other individuals, sometimes difficult to predict.

Impression management in the presentation of the Monk's self in front stage life to also be seen in the aspect of style or manner in order to emphasize aspects of personality by limiting interaction, being gentle, friendly, keeping the view and touch especially the opposite sex, and maintaining the authority of a Monk, trying to convey the impression of maintaining "winayah" or rules that are different from ordinary people and become monks so a Monk needs to limit himself. (According to the interview results 25 March 2024) stated that:

"As a monk, we limit how we interact with the people. Because we are already different "winayah", the rules are different. So, to maintain our Buddhism, a Bhikkhu actually limits. Because a Bhikkhu has a different way of behaving, a different way of acting. If this communication is not restricted, then there will not be a difference between the Monk and the people. If a Bhikkhu allows himself to interact continuously, then greed will easily develop, hatred will also develop, ignorance will also develop. Why does it develop? Because a Bhikkhu eventually comes to know what a householder does, the problems of a householder. This will eventually become food for thought, will become a monk's defilement."

The front stage self-presentation of a monk is part of a performance that regularly serves to showcase their appearance to define the situation for anyone observing the performance. The monk's front stage self-presentation combines various displays: a gentle tone of voice, the use of an inner robe, the use of an outer robe, a shaved head, limited interactions, a friendly demeanor,

maintaining eye contact and physical touch, and upholding an aura of authority. In a formal presentation, it serves as a greeting of one's identity in the context of social interaction among individuals and society.

Self-presentation is a role displayed in interactions and differs from other individuals, aimed at building social expectations and reinforcing community identity. The consideration is that when one has an identity, both personally and communally, it facilitates self-identification within their community. Self-presentation on stage leads to the self being neglected, then merging or being overshadowed by social identity.

The monk's self-presentation on stage showcases himself in front of the public to achieve the desired self-image. Self-presentation in a design of activity for delivering teachings (dhamma) comprehensively combines verbal and non-verbal dhamma through real actions in all aspects of the lives of dhamma practitioners, so that dhamma can make a significant contribution to society, especially to the community.

Self-presentation on this stage can change through a process of behavior management. This is done to present oneself outside the community or public space. (back stage). Goffman suggests that impression management is an individual's need to present themselves as someone who can be accepted by others.

The self as performer is not merely a social product, but also has a motivational foundation. Individuals shape their self-image while hoping to be accepted as people who are liked by others. The management of impressions is used in the context of obtaining feedback on performances and seeking responses. The impression

Management perspective explains that individuals manipulate and try to control impressions, shaping their behavior according to the situation. Such behavior is designed by actors to establish the desired self-presentation that is accepted by others. [Efrat Tseeion, 1992].

Table 1.

Self-presentation in front of stage of a monk	Management of impressions	The meaning of self-presentation
A gentle tone of voice.	Creating the impression of a Buddhist religious leader and presenting a positive image as an example for the followers.	Being in the community as a religious leader and a role model for the congregation.
The use of a deep robe	Creating the impression of a religious leader and adhering to the rules as a monk.	Being in the community as a religious leader and carrying out the teachings of the Buddha.
The use of outer robes.	Creating the impression of a religious leader and adhering to the rules as a monk.	Living in the community as a religious leader and implementing the teachings of the Buddha.
Bald haircut	Creating the impression of a religious leader and the demands of the Buddha's teachings	Being in the community as a religious leader and carrying out the teachings of the Buddha.
Limiting interactions.	Maintaining the image of a religious leader to avoid problems arising from excessive interaction.	Being in the community as a religious leader and maintaining oneself as a monk.
Being friendly	Creating an impression of a religious leader and serving as a role model for the community.	Being a leader in the community as a religious figure and creating a positive impression as a religious leader.
Maintaining eye contact and physical touch.	Creating the impression of a religious leader and maintaining the sanctity of a monk	Living in the community as a religious leader and the practice of self-discipline as a Monk.
Maintaining dignity.	Creating the impression of a religious leader and the form of self-discipline of a monk.	Living in the community as a religious leader and the practice of self-discipline as a Monk.

Source: Primary Data (interview results, 2024)

3.2 The Back Stage of a Monk

Self-presentation while being backstage, when the monk feels comfortable with himself and is in an environment with the monk and '*Kapia*' or the temple staff who are considered familiar and close, just like when in the temple environment or in the "*Kuti*," which is commonly referred to as the living area of the monk within the temple. The backstage is a situation where an individual is behind the scenes with no audience present, allowing that individual to behave freely without considering their attitude or role in the next performance.

The monk appears simple yet without complete attributes, presenting himself as an individual monk wearing only the inner robe. The stage presentation features symbolic attributes representing the monk's identity, wearing only the inner robe.

The presentation of the monk's self on the backstage is an individual's effort to seek social acceptance from others as they are, which is why they adapt to the routines that have been established as another social role. The creation of a self-image as an

individual who has a responsibility for rules or as a holder of authority. By steadfastly adhering to the rules established by the Buddha to maintain and uphold the status of monkhood.

In the context of backstage, the individual Monk uses impression management techniques that no longer resemble those on the front stage; the backstage position, which serves as the Monk's personal space, no longer conveys the same impression as when on the front stage. The appearance used while on the backstage includes a soft voice intonation, the use of a long robe, a bald haircut, not limiting interaction, not maintaining eye contact, and not restricting physical touch.

The individual Monk still appears simply but without the full attributes worn, when appearing as an individual a Monk with attributes only uses an inner robe. Backstage self-presentation appears with symbolic attributes in the form of a Monk's self-identity wearing only an inner robe. (According to the interview results 30 March 2024) stated that:

“Well, but we are in our own room, so we use a robe but an inner robe. So, we take off the outer robe. Here I'm currently in the room so I'm only wearing a scarf, it's not originally like this”

Another interview was also conducted with Monk Anumodana to find out the daily life of the monk through the backstage. (According to the interview results 17 May 2024) stated that:

“When I'm alone, I don't talk much because yes, who wants to talk to most of the time, at least I read books like that, study if not then contemplate the teachings like that. Other activities such as morning and evening jenting meditation or commonly called prayers”

The management of a monk's self-image through the form of self-presentation in the backstage is an expression of oneself shown in another form to make others appreciate their impression or a suitable impression for a specific plan in a particular context. This process is known as self-presentation, which relates to an individual's efforts to control their image, designed for the individual themselves to adapt in social interactions.

Like a stage actor, a social actor plays a role, assumes a character, and performs through simple attributes just like an individual when engaging in interactions with their community. The monk's self-presentation through representing himself as a manipulation or not as his true self. A deliberate impression is formed intentionally and consciously to achieve a predetermined goal. In managing this impression, the monk presents a different persona when on the backstage.

Table 2. The Back Stage of a Monk

Self-presentation in back stage of a monk	Management of impressions	The meaning of self-presentation
A gentle tone of voice.	Creating an impression of oneself as a Buddhist religious leader.	This is about defending the figure of a religious leader.
The use of a robe in	Creating a self-image and adhering to the rules as a Monk.	Here as a religious leader, following the teachings of the Buddha.
Bald haircut	Creating a self-image and adhering to the rules as a Monk.	Here as a religious leader, following the teachings of the Buddha.
Not limiting interactions.	Not creating a self-impression.	Being alone no longer limits interaction.
Not keeping one's gaze.	Not maintaining a self-image.	Being alone no longer limits the view, as it is just oneself.
Not limiting physical touch.	Not creating a self-impression.	Being alone no longer limits physical touch.

Source: Primary Data (interview results, 2024)

The considered perspective of dramaturgy is a comprehensive concept that involves embodying roles in a way that can yield benefits as desired. The context of this monk's behavior aims to achieve social interaction goals. Dramaturges understand that in human interactions there is a "consensus" of behavior that is agreed upon, which can lead to the ultimate goal of the social interaction in question. Playing the role of an actor on every stage is one of the tools that can refer to the achievement of that agreement.

Monks in undergoing the process of life both individually, in groups and in society rely on the principle of the values of the Buddha's teachings. In social interactions, they prioritize the 227 rules that must be carried out since the beginning when taking vows to carry out the responsibilities of Buddhism. A monk tries to maintain his monastic title with efforts to serve the people carried out to this day. People have witnessed these values in the Theravada community and have great appreciation and trust in the Monk.

Looking at the findings that have been described in the research results section, there are findings that the front stage presentation is different when in the back stage of the Monk. This is because the appearance when on the front stage, the Monk has many rules that must be carried out and the responsibility of being a religious leader so that it makes the personal impression of a Monk must be protected and creates an inconsistent pattern when in the backstage area. Another thing that causes inconsistency is that when in the backstage area, the rules that the Monk carries out are reduced because the position is no longer in the front area to maintain the impression of self and when in the backstage area, the presence of the Monk is only alone so that the impression management is reduced.

The interesting thing in the research findings is that the type of appearance displayed on both stages shows more dominance in the type of non-verbal appearance. This is because the rules that must be carried out by a monk dominate in the non-verbal appearance section, besides that the type of non-verbal appearance also has a big influence on the character and self-image presented by a monk as a Buddhist leader. This is what then accentuates the non-verbal appearance of the Monk in the context of

the front stage and back stage dominating each region.

4 Conclusion

Self-presentation through impression management in the self-presentation of a monk in front-stage life emphasizes personality aspects by maintaining a gentle tone of voice, using inner robes, wearing outer robes, having a shaved head, limiting interactions, being friendly, maintaining eye contact and physical touch, and upholding dignity, all while conveying the best image to sustain a good impression from others. The context is impression management behavior for backstage, where self-presentation is carried out by displaying oneself as one is, with a demeanor that includes maintaining a gentle tone of voice, wearing a long robe, having a bald-haircut, not limiting interactions, not maintaining eye contact, and not restricting physical touch. The use of the Dramaturgical approach has been beneficial in exploring social interactions in the communication process through the presentation of the monk's self-image to the community as an effort to foster a positive impression of religious figures both within the Buddhist community and in the broader society. This has been employed to adjust the front stage or to cultivate a better image in front of others. It is hoped that the self-presentation of individuals in the monk community within Buddhist society leaves a positive impression to achieve communication goals. For this, the role of individuals (back stage and front stage) that is appropriate and suited to the individual's social situation is necessary. There is no contradiction with something real in a social interaction environment and context, so it aligns with the reality present in social life.

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