

Semiotic Analysis of Self-Identity Representation on TikTok @dokterdetektif Account

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: December 2023 Accepted: January 2024 Published: January 2024	TikTok has evolved into a digital communication platform that enables individuals to construct and represent their identities through audiovisual content. One of the TikTok accounts attracting public attention is @dokterdetektif, which is recognized for its critical and educational content related to health issues and medical aesthetics. This study aims to analyze the representation of self-identity portrayed in the TikTok content of @dokterdetektif. The research employed a qualitative approach using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis method. Data were collected through observation and documentation of videos uploaded to the @dokterdetektif TikTok account. The analysis was conducted through the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth to interpret visual, verbal, and symbolic signs representing self-identity. The findings reveal that the @dokterdetektif account represents a self-identity characterized as critical, educational, courageous, and independent in delivering information to the public. This representation is constructed through assertive verbal language, visual expressions, persuasive communication styles, and symbols of professionalism displayed in the content. Furthermore, the constructed identity reflects an effort toward personal branding as a digital public figure with authority in health and social issues. This study demonstrates that TikTok functions not only as an entertainment platform but also as a space for identity construction and self-image formation in the digital communication era.
Keywords: Representation, Self-Identity, TikTok, Semiotics, Social Media	

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology and social media has brought major changes in people's communication patterns, especially among the younger generation. Social media is no longer only used as a means of interaction and entertainment, but also as a space for individuals to build, display, and represent their identity to the public. One of the social media platforms that is experiencing rapid development is TikTok. The platform allows users to creatively create audiovisual content through short videos that can reach a wide audience in a short time. Through its various features, TikTok has become an effective medium in shaping self-image, personal branding, and user digital identity representation.

TikTok is currently not only used by the general public, but also by public figures, professionals, and content creators to convey information, education, and opinions on certain issues. The content presented on TikTok contains various signs and symbols that represent the way individuals perceive themselves, as well as how

individuals want to be perceived by the audience. In the context of digital communication, self-identity is not formed naturally, but is constructed through language, visuals, communication styles, expressions, and certain symbols displayed in social media.

The representation of self-identity on social media is one of the important phenomena in communication studies because digital media provides space for individuals to build a certain image according to their desired communication goals. Hall (1997) explained that representation is the process of producing meaning through language, signs, and symbols used in communication. Self-identity displayed through social media is basically the result of social construction formed through the process of representation. Therefore, each piece of published content has a certain meaning that can be understood through the analysis of the signs and symbols used.

One of the TikTok accounts that has attracted public attention is the @dokterdetektif account. The account is known as a content creator who actively discusses health issues, the world of beauty, and medical practices that are considered controversial. Through a firm, critical, and bold communication style, the @dokterdetektif account managed to build public attention and garner a wide response from the public. The content presented not only serves as entertainment, but also as a medium of education and social criticism of the health and aesthetic practices that are developing in society.

In each content, the @dokterdetektif account displays various verbal and visual elements that show a certain representation of self-identity. The use of professional clothes, straightforward language, facial expressions, speech intonation, and the way of conveying information are signs that build their image in front of the audience. The identities displayed tend to represent professional, critical, educational, and independent figures in expressing opinions related to health issues. This shows that TikTok social media is a strategic space for building personal branding and social authority in the era of digital communication.

Previous research on the representation of self-identity on social media has discussed the construction of the self-image of celebrities, influencers, and social media users in general. However, research that specifically examines the self-identity representation of health education content creators on the TikTok platform is still relatively limited. In addition, most previous research focused more on aspects of personal branding and digital communication without analyzing the meaning of signs and symbols that form self-identity in social media content. Therefore, this study is novel by focusing on the analysis of the self-representation of TikTok account @dokterdetektif through the semiotic approach of Roland Barthes.

Roland Barthes' semiotics is used in this study because it is able to analyze the meaning of signs in more depth through the concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth. Barthes explained that signs not only have a literal meaning, but also contain certain cultural and ideological meanings that shape the way people understand social reality. Through a semiotic approach, this study seeks to reveal how the identity of the @dokterdetektif account is represented through visual

symbols, verbal language, communication styles, and audiovisual elements in TikTok content.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the representation of self-identity in TikTok content on the @dokterdetektif account using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. This research is expected to contribute to the development of the study of digital communication, social media, and self-identity representation, especially in understanding how individuals build their self-image and meaning through the TikTok platform in the digital media era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

TikTok Social Media as a Digital Communication Media

The development of social media has changed people's communication patterns from conventional communication to digital-based communication that is interactive, fast, and open. Social media allows individuals to produce, disseminate, and receive information widely without the limitations of space and time. One of the fastest-growing social media platforms is TikTok. TikTok is a short video-based application that allows users to create creative content by utilizing audio, visual, text, and digital effects features.

TikTok not only functions as an entertainment medium but also as a medium for communication, education, promotion, and self-identity formation. Through the uploaded content, users can display their self-image, lifestyle, opinions, and certain values to the audience. According to Nasrullah (2017), social media is a medium on the internet that allows users to represent themselves and interact through virtual spaces. In this context, TikTok is a digital space that allows individuals to build their existence and social identity through audiovisual content.

The increasingly massive use of TikTok has made this platform a space for the production of meanings and symbols in digital communication. The content displayed is not only understood as entertainment, but also contains certain messages, signs, and representations that shape the audience's perception of the identity of the content creator.

Self-Identity Representation

Representation is the process of producing meaning through the use of language, symbols, and signs in communication. Stuart Hall (1997) explains that representation is the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged in culture through the system of signs. In social media, self-identity representation occurs when individuals display a certain image that they want to show to the public through published content.

Self-identity is understood as the way an individual views himself or herself, as well as how the individual wants to be recognized by others. In the context of digital media, self-identity is not fixed, but can be constructed and formed through symbolic communication displayed in social media. Digital identity is built through the use of

language, visuals, dress styles, expressions, and communication patterns that are consistently displayed in content.

According to Goffman (1959), individuals in social life carry out the process of *self-presentation* to build a certain impression in front of others. This concept is relevant to the use of social media, where individuals try to manage their appearance in order to gain attention, recognition, and social legitimacy from the audience. On the TikTok platform, the representation of self-identity can be seen through the way creators convey messages, build character, and use certain symbols that strengthen their self-image.

On the TikTok @dokterdetektif account, the representation of self-identity is built through educational content and social criticism related to health issues and medical aesthetics. The identities displayed not only represent the figure of digital creators but also show efforts to form a professional image and social authority in the digital space.

Personal Branding in Social Media

Social media is an important means of building *personal branding* or individual self-image in the digital public space. Personal branding is the process of forming a public perception of individuals through certain characteristics, abilities, values, and identities that are displayed consistently. Montoya and Vandehey (2008) explain that personal branding is an individual's effort to build a strong identity that is easily recognizable by the public.

In social media, personal branding is carried out through content, communication styles, self-visualization, and interaction with the audience. TikTok, as an audiovisual medium, provides a wide space for creators to build certain characters and identities through short videos that attract public attention. Consistent content will shape the audience's perception of the creator's image and identity.

The @dokterdetektif account shows a form of personal branding as a critical, educational, and brave figure in revealing health issues that are considered controversial. The use of firm language, the delivery of information based on professional opinions, and visual displays that support professionalism are part of the strategy of self-identity representation in social media.

Roland Barthes Semiotic Analysis

Semiotics is a science that studies signs and meanings in the communication process. Roland Barthes developed the theory of semiotics by emphasizing that signs not only have a literal meaning, but also contain the cultural and ideological meanings hidden behind the sign. Barthes divided the meaning of signs into three levels, namely denotation, connotation, and myth.

The meaning of denotation is the literal meaning or the meaning that appears directly on a sign. Connotative meanings are additional meanings that arise based on

people's social and cultural experiences. Meanwhile, myth is a broader system of meaning and is related to certain ideologies or perspectives that develop in society.

In the context of TikTok's social media, Barthes' semiotics is used to understand how visual, verbal, and symbolic signs in content shape a representation of a creator's self-identity. Language, clothing, facial expressions, voice intonation, video background, and message delivery style can be understood as signs that have a certain meaning in building self-image.

Through the semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes, this study seeks to uncover the meaning of self-identity representation on TikTok @dokterdetektif accounts through the analysis of signs that appear in the uploaded video content. This approach is used to understand how self-identity is constructed and represented to audiences in the digital communication space.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on understanding the meaning, signs, and representations of self-identity displayed in TikTok social media content. The semiotics method is used to analyze the visual, verbal, and symbolic signs that appear in the content of the TikTok account @dokterdetektif so that the meaning of the representation of self-identity built by the content creator can be understood.

The research paradigm used is the constructivist paradigm. This paradigm views social reality as formed through the process of constructing meaning produced through language, symbols, and communication. In the context of this study, the self-identity of TikTok account @dokterdetektif is understood as the result of social construction formed through audiovisual content published on social media.

The object of research in this study is video content on the TikTok @dokterdetektif account that contains elements of self-identity representation. The researcher selected several uploaded videos related to health issues, education, social criticism, and medical aesthetic practices as the unit of research analysis. Content selection was carried out using *purposive sampling* techniques by considering videos that have a high intensity of interaction and contain visual and verbal cues that are relevant to the focus of the research.

Data collection techniques are carried out through observation and documentation. Observation was carried out by directly observing the video content on the TikTok @dokterdetektif account, including the use of language, visual expressions, communication styles, symbols, and other audiovisual elements that appear in the video. Meanwhile, documentation was carried out by collecting screenshots, video narrative transcripts, audience comments, and other supporting data relevant to the research.

The data analysis technique in this study uses Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis model, which consists of three stages, namely denotation, connotation, and myth. The denotation stage is used to identify the literal meaning of the signs that

appear in the video content. The connotation stage is carried out to understand additional meanings related to social and cultural values. Meanwhile, the myth stage is used to analyze the ideology or social message hidden behind the representation of self-identity in TikTok content @dokterdetektif.

To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses a data triangulation technique by comparing various visual, verbal, and communication contexts contained in video content. In addition, the researcher also conducts repeated observations of the research object so that the interpretation of the meaning produced is more in-depth and in accordance with the context of the representation of self-identity displayed in the TikTok account @dokterdetektif.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Based on the results of observation and semiotic analysis of some content on the TikTok @dokterdetektif account, it was found that the account represents one's identity as a critical, educational, professional, and courageous figure in conveying information to the public. Self-identity representation is built through the use of verbal, visual, and certain symbols that are consistently displayed in video content. The analysis is carried out through three stages of Roland Barthes' semiotics, namely denotation, connotation, and myth.

Critical Identity Representation in TikTok Content

One of the dominant identities displayed in the @dokterdetektif account is the identity of a critical figure in health issues and medical aesthetic practices that are developing in society. This representation can be seen through a firm communication style, the use of straightforward language, and the delivery of argumentative opinions.

Denotatively, video content features creators speaking directly in front of the camera with a firm intonation and a serious expression when discussing a specific issue. The use of words such as "facts", "dangers", "not in accordance with procedures", and "the public must know" indicates a form of communication that is both informative and critical.

Connotatively, these signs represent courage and an independent attitude in conveying criticism to the public. The communication style used builds the impression that the @dokterdetektif account has a position as a party that seeks to uncover the reality behind health and beauty issues that are considered misleading to the public.

At the myth stage, the representation forms the view that professional figures on social media have a role in social control in conveying information to the public. The figure of a doctor is not only understood as a medical professional but also as a public figure who has a moral responsibility in providing education to digital audiences.

Professional Identity Representation

The results show that the @dokterdetektif account also represents professional identity through visual symbols related to the medical world. The representation of professionalism can be seen from the use of formal clothing, health attributes, and medical terms used in the delivery of content.

Denotatively, the videos analyzed show the creator wearing neat clothes, speaking in scientific language, and showing discussions related to health procedures and medical aesthetics. In addition, the use of a backdrop that resembles a professional environment also strengthens the image.

Connotatively, these symbols build the audience's perception that creators have competence and authority in discussing health issues. Professionalism is not only displayed through visual appearance, but also through a systematic and convincing way of conveying information.

At the level of myths, there is a social construct that a person who has a professional background is considered more credible and trusted in providing information on social media. Professional identity in the @dokterdetektif account is part of the formation of social legitimacy in the digital space.

Educational Identity Representation

In addition to a critical and professional identity, the @dokterdetektif account also represents itself as an educational creator. This can be seen from the purpose of the content that not only conveys criticism, but also provides explanations and information to the public about health issues.

Denotatively, the video content displays explanations of medical procedures, the use of health terms, and clarification of information that is considered wrong in society. Creators use easy-to-understand language to make information widely acceptable to audiences.

Connotatively, this communication style shows an effort to build an image as a source of educational information and care for public health literacy. The content created is not only oriented to entertainment, but also to increase public understanding of health issues.

At the mythical stage, this representation forms the view that social media can be used as a means of public education, not just as a medium of entertainment. TikTok is understood as a digital communication space that is able to produce knowledge and influence the way people understand an issue.

Bold and Independent Identity Representation

The study also found that the @dokterdetektif account represents one's identity as a brave and independent figure in expressing opinions. This representation can be seen from the courage of creators in discussing controversial issues and criticizing certain parties openly on social media.

Denotatively, creators often use a firm tone, serious expression, and direct argument on the issue being discussed. The content also shows courage in revealing information that is of public concern.

Connotatively, these signs form the meaning of courage and firmness in defending opinions in the digital public space. Creators are positioned as figures who are not afraid to express criticism, even though it has the potential to cause debate on social media.

At the mythical level, there is a construction that social media provides a space for individuals to build symbolic power through digital opinions and influence. The figure of a content creator is understood as a figure who is able to shape public opinion through persuasive and viral digital communication.

The Meaning of Self-Identity Representation on @dokterdetektif Accounts

Based on the overall results of semiotic analysis, the representation of self-identity on TikTok account @dokterdetektif is built through a combination of verbal, visual, and symbolic signs that are consistently displayed in video content. The self-identity represented includes critical, professional, educational, courageous, and independent figures.

The representation is not only aimed at building self-image on social media, but also becomes a form of personal branding as a digital public figure who has authority in health and social issues. Through TikTok content, the @dokterdetektif account builds the meaning that social media can be used as a space for education, social criticism, and the formation of digital identities in the modern communication era.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the TikTok account @dokterdetektif represents self-identity through various verbal, visual, and symbolic signs that form an image of a critical, professional, educational, courageous, and independent figure. The representation of identity is built through communication styles, the use of language, visual expressions, and symbols of professionalism that are consistently displayed in video content. From the perspective of digital communication, self-identity on social media is not something natural, but the result of social construction formed through the process of representation and symbolic communication.

According to Stuart Hall (1997), representation is a process of producing meaning through the use of signs and symbols in culture. In the context of this study, @dokterdetektif accounts use various audiovisual elements as signs that form a certain identity in front of the audience. Firm verbal language, the use of medical terms, a professional appearance, and an argumentative delivery style are symbols that build the creator's self-image as a figure who has knowledge and authority in health issues.

Critical Identity Representation in Digital Communication

The findings of the study show that critical identity is the most dominant representation in TikTok content @dokterdetektif. Critical attitudes are displayed through the submission of opinions on health issues, medical aesthetic practices, and social phenomena that are considered detrimental to society. The communication style used tends to be direct, firm, and argumentative so as to create an impression of courage in conveying criticism in the digital public space.

From the perspective of Roland Barthes' semiotics, verbal signs such as the use of the words "fact", "danger", and "society should know" have a connotative meaning that shows an attitude of concern and courage in conveying information to the public. At the mythical level, these representations form the view that social media can be a space of social control that allows individuals to openly supervise and criticize social phenomena.

These findings are in line with previous research on digital communication, which explains that social media provides space for content creators to build an identity as agents of social criticism and to shape public opinion. TikTok is not only used as an entertainment medium, but also as a means of delivering education and criticism of issues that are developing in society.

Professionalism as a Form of Social Legitimacy

The results showed that the @dokterdetektif account builds professional identity through the use of medical symbols and knowledge-based communication styles. Visual appearances such as formal attire, the use of scientific terms, and the systematic delivery of information are part of the strategy of professional identity representation on social media.

According to Goffman (1959), individuals engage in *self-presentation* to build a certain impression in front of the audience. In the context of social media, self-presentation is carried out through visual management and communication displayed in digital content. @dokterdetektif accounts consistently build a professional image in order to gain legitimacy and trust from the audience.

Semiotically, the symbol of professionalism is not only interpreted as a mere visual appearance but also as a form of symbolic power that creates social authority in digital media. Audiences tend to think that creators who have a professional background are more credible in conveying information, especially on health issues. Thus, the representation of professional identity is an important strategy in building personal branding on social media.

TikTok as a Personal Branding Space

This research shows that TikTok functions as a space for the formation of *personal branding* for digital content creators. Through consistently uploaded content, the @dokterdetektif account builds an identity as an educational, critical, and independent public figure. Personal branding is formed through a combination

of verbal, visual, and symbolic communication that creates a distinctive character in each piece of content.

Montoya and Vandehey (2008) explain that *personal branding* is the process of forming a public perception of individual identity through certain characteristics and values that are displayed consistently. In this study, the @dokterdetektif account succeeded in building an image that is easily recognizable by the audience through a firm communication style and discussion of controversial health issues.

TikTok, as an audiovisual medium, provides a wide space for individuals to build digital identities quickly and massively. TikTok's algorithm, which allows the viral spread of content, also supports the process of forming a creator's self-image in the digital public space. Thus, self-identity on social media is not only formed through direct social interaction, but also through the production of digital content that continues to be consumed by the audience.

Educational Representation in Social Media

Apart from being an entertainment space, this study shows that TikTok also functions as a public education medium. The @dokterdetektif account uses its content to provide information and clarification related to health issues that are developing in the community. This shows that social media has a role in shaping public information literacy through digital communication.

In Barthes' semiotic analysis, the educational content conveyed forms the myth that social media can be an alternative source of knowledge for society. Content creators are positioned as figures who have the ability to produce and disseminate information quickly to a wide audience. This phenomenon shows a shift in the function of social media from just an entertainment medium to a medium of education and the formation of public opinion.

However, educational representation in social media is also related to the symbolic power that content creators have. The information conveyed has the potential to affect the way the audience understands an issue. Therefore, the professional identity and credibility of the creator are important factors in building public trust in the information conveyed.

The Meaning of Self-Identity Representation on @dokterdetektif Accounts

Based on the overall results of the research, the representation of self-identity on TikTok account @dokterdetektif shows that social media is a strategic space in building self-image and meaning in the era of digital communication. Self-identity is represented through verbal, visual, and symbolic cues that shape the audience's perception of the content creator's character.

Through Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, this study found that self-identity on the @dokterdetektif account not only has a literal meaning as a health content creator but also contains connotative and mythical meanings regarding professionalism, courage, education, and social authority in digital media. The

representation shows how social media is an arena for identity construction as well as a space for the formation of symbolic power in a digital society.

Thus, this study confirms that TikTok not only functions as an entertainment medium but also as a medium for identity representation, personal branding, and the production of social meaning in modern digital communication.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the TikTok account @dokterdetektif represents self-identity through various verbal, visual, and symbolic signs that are displayed consistently in video content. Based on Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, the representation of self-identity on the account is built through the meaning of denotations, connotations, and myths that form an image as a critical, professional, educational, courageous, and independent figure in conveying information to the public.

The representation of critical identity is seen through a firm, argumentative, and bold communication style in discussing health issues and controversial medical aesthetic practices. Meanwhile, professional identity is built through the use of medical symbols, scientific language, and visual appearances that indicate competence in the field of health. In addition, the @dokterdetektif account also represents itself as an educational creator who uses social media as a means of delivering information and health literacy to the public.

This study found that TikTok not only functions as an entertainment medium but also as a space for self-identity construction and the formation of *personal branding* in the era of digital communication. Self-identity displayed in social media is the result of the construction of meaning formed through symbolic communication and certain representation strategies to build an image in front of the audience.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of the study of digital communication, especially regarding the representation of self-identity in social media through the semiotic approach of Roland Barthes. Practically, this study shows that social media content creators have an important role in shaping public perception through signs, symbols, and messages conveyed in digital content.

This research still has limitations because it only focuses on one TikTok account and uses analysis of specific content as the object of research. Therefore, further research is expected to develop a study on the representation of self-identity on other social media platforms with a broader approach and research object in order to gain a deeper understanding of the construction of digital identity in the new media era.

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