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## **Delineating Subjective Experiences in the Mardika Market: Self-Management of Beggars Identities in Moluccas, Indonesia**

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**Abstract.** *Mardika* market is a strategic location for people engaging in begging activity in Moluccas, Indonesia. A beggar is a person who earns an income in public in various ways and hopes to expect mercy from others, and engages in activities by taking advantage of to make other people feel sorry for them. The research aims to explore the self management of people carrying out begging activities. This study uses a subjective interpretive method through a phenomenological approach based on the theory of symbolic interaction. The results demonstrate that beggars verbally self-management impressions. Nonverbally, beggars with dirty clothes, sad faces, and slow gestures remove their hands using bowls as a sign of asking. Their self-management front appearance takes advantage of physical backwardness, pretending to be disabled, and living a poor and wandering life so that they deserve pity. This differs from a figure who has a robust physical condition, carries out everyday activities, wears proper clothes, displays a cheerful face, and has good social relations with family and society in the self-management behind appearance.

**Keywords.** Beggars, Self-Management, Front, Behind, Impressions Appearance, Subjective Experiences

### **Introduction**

The phenomenon of people with beggars is a problem in almost every city, especially in a metropolis. Every year, the city experiences population growth, which results in an imbalance of space and job opportunities. Some people do not have skills and high education, so many people lose the chance to live an everyday or decent life (MacLeod, 2011; Junxi & Shenjing, 2021). This is one reason many people choose to become beggars to survive, especially in a metropolis.

Beggars are people who are given money by begging other people. This work is routine to survive (Mansour, 2017). People with a beggar are social welfare problems, homeless people, street children, neglected children, and beggars. As the Minister of Social Affairs Regulation No. 08 of 2012 concerning Guidelines for Data Collection and Data Processing of Persons with Social Welfare Problems and Potential Sources of Social Welfare, beggars are people who earn

income by begging in public in various ways and reasons to expect mercy from others (Peraturan Menteri Sosial Republik Indonesia, 2012). Different perspectives create a different understanding of people with beggars related to socio-economic, religion, values, beliefs, and socio-cultural. According to Fuseini & Daniel (2018), the poverty of parents affects the number of child beggars in the country.

Begging or panhandling is not a new issue. According to Thamrin & Ritonga (2018), the issue of urban beggars has never been entirely solved by either the government or civil society. Broun (2010) states that begging or panhandling is one of the antisocial patterns of behaviour found in almost every country, especially in developing one.

Begging is a phenomenon that widely differs from one context to another. It is commonly practiced to survive (Muñoz, 2018). Beggars in urban areas in Indonesia can generally be found in large cities like Moluccas. Kamruzzaman & Hakim (2015) concur that beggars may be found in public places, such as along transport routes, city parks and markets. The scene that the city offers is filled with beggars panhandling for money in heavily congested areas like supermarkets, markets, shops, mosques, and traffic light corners (Shara, 2019).

According to Rahman (2021), begging is carried out by praying verbally, writing, or using gestures. This category includes selling performance through singing, playing the violin, guitar, angklung, flute, and playing along with the shops and houses (McIntosh & Erskine, 2000), which are usually done in the metropolis. The act to the people with beggars is a social problem (Rahman, 2021). They are considered deviating from the prevailing values and norms. They are healthy people in perfect body condition (Mansour, 2017; Rahman, 2021).

One social factor that encourages people to become beggars is the flow of urbanization from villages to cities, without involving the community in social welfare efforts (Muñoz & Potter, 2014). Environmental factors such as beggar families educate their children to become beggars, lack of understanding of religion (Moon, 2017), and weak faith are also less resilient in facing life's trials from a religious perspective. According to Pawestri & Euis (2021) research, the emergence of beggars is caused by internal and external factors. Internal factors include laziness, being uncooperative, mentally unstable, physically and mentally handicapped, and not having the independence of life to not depend on others. Meanwhile, external factors that cause this begging phenomenon are economic, geographical, social, educational, psychological, cultural, environmental, and religious factors (Mansour, 2017; Rahman, 2021). Low education and lack of job skills support (McIntosh & Erskine, 2000) begging activities from an educational point of view. Family problems that cause children to be neglected are psychological factors that cause someone to become a beggar (Ruggiu, 2016).

Each appearance can change depending on the context. It happens in our lives, whoever we are, and we constantly interact in symbols (Dolgin & Kemnitzer, 1977; Sulaeman<sup>a</sup> et al., 2021), under any circumstances. According to Mead (2008), if everything is seen as an interaction, participants will involve symbols, both verbal and nonverbal. These symbols derive meaning from the beggars (Dolgin & Kemnitzer, 1977; Charon, 1989). These symbols will play a role in influencing a person's behavior is communicating (Rahman, 2021). These concepts initiate beggars social behavior, in which the concept of "role-taking" is fundamental. Before a "self" acts, he imagines himself in someone else's shoes and tries to understand what that party expects (Musgrove, 1997; Mead, 2008).

In the symbolic interaction approach, Goffman (1959) is often regarded as Mead's (2008) "self-interpreter" by emphasizing the symbolic nature of human interaction, the exchange of meaning between people through symbols. Mead (2008) using the concept of the self, which influenced Goffman (1959) theory. This theory divides the conditions as the self-management front appearance, self-management behind appearance, and self-management

impressions. The self-management behind appearance is the self, all hidden activities to complement acting or appearing on the front. The self-management impression is they present themselves in accordance with the conditions experienced.

Beggars can express their attitude in life through the act of begging with consideration. They create social values, form their role as actors on the front appearance when dealing with others (Shalin, 2021), and act more naturally behind appearance when not begging, in front of family and social communities, or when preparing to become beggars. They present themselves by adjusting their settings, appearance, and manner. Everything is done to self-management the impression that he is worthy of being called a beggar. He creates or presents himself so that the prospective others will fall for him and are happy to give alms to him.

How do beggars when they play their role as beggars in society, and how do carry out their role as a community in their daily lives? This phenomenon can be studied through self-management and a symbolic interaction approach (Nilson, 1979) that can explain the phenomenon of beggars interacting through verbal and nonverbal language through certain symbols by revealing a beggar's actual life outside his begging activities. This condition is an important reason to conduct this research.

### **Methods**

The study used is phenomenological of the self-management of beggars identities in Moluccas, Indonesia through delineating subjective experiences in the Mardika market. Based on the selection of research methodology on the research questions, assumptions, and values that the researcher brings to this study (Ridwan et al, 2020; Malawat et al, 2021; Maggalatung et al, 2021). In these methodological considerations, begins with the explication of the research approach, the selected phenomenological study research design, the research participants, and the method to generate data, and data analysis that is salient to study. With follow discussion of the process in which obtained access to the location research, gained approval from the Indigenous community, role as a researcher, data generation methods, and data analysis process of the research.

The self-management of beggars identities in Moluccas, Indonesia is an experience of a series of events experienced through various stages using the approach of the phenomenology, a study that seeks to reveal reality based on awareness experience.

It is this awareness and experience of the people with beggars that does self-management front appearance, behind appearance, and impression management of social reality that is different from those that did not do. This interpretation is related to the object of study on the self-management of beggar's identities. This study uses a qualitative study design (Ridwan et al, 2020; Malawat et al, 2021; Maggalatung et al, 2021) from a subjective interpretive perspective to explore more deeply the self-management of beggars. The selected qualitative interpretive paradigm.

Research subjects are parties who are used as research informants. The research subjects will be subject to the conclusion as this research was conducted on 25 beggars at the Mardika Market in Moluccas. The researcher uses the snowball sampling technique, which is unable to provide complete data by looking for other people who can be used as subjects (Ridwan et al, 2020; Malawat et al, 2021; Maggalatung et al, 2021).

The selection of informants based on the people with beggars has the ability and willingness to convey the beggars the Mardika market subjective experiences, they were willing to accept the presence of the researcher. Data collection techniques used were literature study, observation, and in-depth interview participants (Ridwan et al, 2020; Malawat et al, 2021; Maggalatung et al, 2021).

In this study, the researcher acted like a beggar and accompanied the beggar in carrying out his activities. The researchers conducted remote observations with the intention that researchers (Ridwan et al, 2020; Malawat et al, 2021; Maggalatung et al, 2021) are not known to beggars to observe their behavior without being disturbed by researchers. Statements were made by systematically observing and recording the symptoms investigated on the condition of the beggars (behavior in begging), time of activity, place of residence, and the interaction of the beggars with their relatives.

The most important aspect of collecting data from informants (Ridwan et al, 2020; Malawat et al, 2021; Maggalatung et al, 2021) is to explain the self-management of the beggar's life experience. In research on beggars, in-depth interviews are the preferred data collection technique. Researchers try to eliminate the formal impression by adjusting to the situation of the beggars; for example, the researcher uses worn and worn clothes. In addition to using participant observation, the researchers also conducted in-depth interviews; the researchers directly observed where they worked, where they lived, and their behavior with others and with fellow beggars in their place of work.

Reflection of the interviewer during the interview process was added in the analysis denoting any specific issues that were worth mentioning for analysis (Ridwan et al, 2020; Malawat et al, 2021; Maggalatung et al, 2021). Data analysis is one of the most fundamental stages of qualitative research as it involves a complex and dynamic process of reasoning, interpreting, and theorizing also characterized by an intuitive and reflective approach in making sense of the data self-management front appearance, behind appearance, and impression management of the people with beggars of Mardika market in Moluccas, Indonesia.

### **The Self-Management Front Appearance as an Identity of Beggars**

Self-management is critical to improvements in the people with beggars identities. Self-management support is the provision of education and support to increase beggars' skills and confidence in managing their self-appearance (Malarvizhi et al., 2016). Self-management is commonly described as the individual's ability to self-manage, physical, and psychosocial consequences and lifestyle changes inherent. Self-management encompasses the ability to monitor (Mirjat et al., 2016) beggar's identities condition and to affect the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional responses necessary to maintain a satisfactory quality of life.

In the self-management research of beggars on the front appearance at the Mardika market Moluccas, actors were classified into two types, namely groups and individuals. First, there were groups of beggars who have a complex used as a place for deliberation and rest. These groups of beggars have different partners while praying, so it is difficult to recognize at first glance. When on the appearance in front of the group, beggars play their role by cooperating. On the appearance front, the group performed their actions by begging using tools such as bowls, torn and dirty clothes. Beggars collaboratively show that they deserve to be pitied and singing while using musical instruments that are played together.

The self-management behind appearance, they gathered with their group while resting in Mardika market. The beggars looked happy and laughed together, ordering food with their tastes, not starving like what they displayed on the front appearance. In reality, a two-way interaction in which a person asks for money using various strategies to others who decide to ignore or grant him/her money (Qiao et al., 2017). The self-management behind appearance is also called a private appearance, which others should not know. The role of beggars differs from those they display when begging. In this place of rest, beggars prepare all the supporting attributes, roles, clothes, body language, facial expressions, message content, speech, and language style.

The groups of beggars were divided into people with adults and children. The beggars with adults who use the group system are only beggars and children as their companions. Beggars in groups to attract the attention of others potential by taking advantage of self-appearance bring children. They toured the Mardika market starting. After they finished begging, they returned to the place where they gathered at the gate of the Mardika market which was far from the crowd, and immediately shared the results of their begging. On self-management front appearance, a collaborative performance was seen between the people with adults and children beggars. The two strolled and stumbled while pointing their hands with sad faces; they also often speak pitifully. These findings are in line with Erlandsson et al. (2019). Their study has found that beggars in Sweden sell magazines, play musical instruments, or ask for money from passersby while sitting with a mug near grocery stores. Kongoley (2017) adds that street beggars in Freetown, Sierra Leone, pretend to be sick and disguise themselves as blind, deaf, or paralysed persons to draw sympathy. Also, in Heraklion, Greece, the strategy of panhandling includes sitting in shabby or tattered clothing, approaching the tourists one by one, playing music and singing world-famous songs, and performing some attractions, such as dressing up like Charlie Chaplin (Andriotis, 2016). These entire strategies are intended to draw the sympathy of others or to make them feel sorry and, then, give money to beggars.

The beggars with adults and children, as their companions, appreciate the role played on the front appearance by showing that the child is the biological child of a blind beggar and has a poor economic situation. When they were relaxing with their group, behind appearance, they demonstrated that the preparations for beggars took turns begging. The other beggars rest, waiting for the time they will perform their actions. Adults beggars and companions do not have blood ties but cooperate between children and adults people who want to earn a fortune in this Mardika market as beggars.

Secondly, there are individual beggars. Individual beggars only act by themselves, and the results are for their own needs. Usually, individual beggars sit cross-legged, expecting pity from passersby to attract the attention of others people by wearing inappropriate, dirty, torn, clothing full of manual hooks, and some using musical instruments while putting down bowls in front of them. Some individual beggars were silent, saying nothing but using a nonverbal symbol, a sign of handing a bowl to a potential benefactor. Some tried to elicit pity, individual beggars sit back and expect to be pitied. These individual beggars come and go home by themselves. Individual beggars only beg for needs; income is not shared with anyone. Usually, this type of beggar does the action in his own way. Starting from the clothes, the tone of voice is regulated, and they do not have any community (Serafis, 2020).

The self-management of beggars identities in the Mardika market can be seen as self-identity with the influence of self-management or physical performances where the beggar plays a character outside his authentic self (Ingenhoff & Richner, 2018), so that the others can get a picture of the beggar's life and be able to follow the show that has been presented.

### **The Self-Management Behind Appearance Persona of Beggars**

Self-management behind appearance, all the actors' preparations are adjusted to what will be faced in the field (Proehl, 2003). To cover their real identity, it is at this stage that the individual will appear "completely" in the sense of their true identity. At this appearance, beggars act differently than when they are in front of their others, far from the other's role. There is a significant difference in self-management of life behind appearance compared to the front appearance. There are essential aspects that are part of the life of a beggar behind appearance.

Beggars usually gather in front of the main door of the market, sit while drinking coffee, eating, joking. The purpose is to gather to deliberate on a partner. Beggars look familiar and

understand each other. In this place, the income they have earned is also shared. They have no problems with life, let alone financial issues. Beggars with their families at home are harmonious and respect each other, unlike those performing on the front appearance who have no family and broken home.

Beggars engage in self-management differently than when they are in the presence of others. Here, their appearance in the social environment is the loud tone of voice, trudging, happy facial expressions that differ from the fake appearance made by beggars on the front appearance. Through Goffman's (1959) self-management study with attention to the front appearance and behind appearance aspects, the effort to analyze the impression appearance carried out by beggars can be more easily studied from a self-management perspective because beggars are never separated from the use of certain symbols in their life (Raz, 2014).

Begging has become an informal sector because the appeal of begging is promising enough to meet life's needs. On the front appearance, beggars seem like poor people who deserve to be pitied, while behind appearance, they have a decent life because their income is up-and-coming. The revenue that beggars receive is enough to make a living. They can even buy what they want.

### **The Self-Management Impression Appearance of Beggars**

Self-management when people interact with other people, they want to present an image that others will accept (Goffman, 1959). This is called self-management, or the techniques used by actors to cultivate certain impressions to achieve specific goals through symbols on the front appearance. The first component of this is the management of verbal impressions through language. Self-management, in the beggar's language, is orally directed to the others. Performance on the front appearance between the beggar and the future others, when the performance on the front appearance begins when the beggar first meets their others to get alms.

On the self-management front appearance, beggars use verbal words to obtain pity and attract the attention of others to get the maximum result. Some beggars are silent, consider the energy they have to spend by talking with the possibility that they will get money in a short time. Beggars get angry if they are not given money, even more so at others who are indifferent when beggars approach. Sometimes beggars stay quiet and then go to other better candidates.

Beggars perform nonverbal self-management impressions as Goffman (1959) explained; impression management on the front appearance emphasizes the nonverbal communication process, using nonverbal symbols such as clothes, gestures, facial expressions, which are never done behind appearance. When faced with a others, almost all beggars have low tones in the front stage appearance. It was not observed that the beggar spoke in a high and loud tone, but when behind appearance, namely the place where fellow beggars rest or where they lived, the lazy manner disappeared, and was replaced by an angry shouting voice.

Beggars use gestures and signs in managing their self-management impression. Most raised their hands for a request for alms. Beggars use begging signals by handing them a bowl, container; almost all beggars at the market use this tool. They also displayed various facial expressions. Goffman (1959) explained that facial expressions are part of the personal front appearance, namely the person regulated by beggars. On the front appearance, an actor hides or puts aside his identity. At this appearance, beggars change their self-image by adjusting everything, including facial expressions ranging from sad, disappointed, and flat.

### **Conclusion**

On the self-management front appearance, actors in begging at the Mardika market, their performances vary from speech, writing, and gestures to illustrate that they are worthy of

pity. Beggars exhibit coercive, intruding action to obtain money. The beggars utter a pitying sentence in front of their generous prospective people. Some say greetings, ask for pity when asking for alms, and prayers, when given donation and sign, ask such as stretching out their hands, bowls, and baskets to others. While their body movements are slow, their bodies are bent.

Planned beggars wear dirty, torn, and shabby clothes. On the front appearance, beggars seem like poor people who deserve to be pitied, while behind appearance, they have a decent life because their income is up-and-coming. The expressions on the faces of beggars when they are not given alms make them look disappointed and sad. However, when they received donations, their expressions were bright. There are also beggars, whether they are given to or not, whose their expression is flat and silent. When in a family and environment, beggars are friendly, and often give things to family and other people.

The researchers suggest that the local government needs breakthroughs to reduce social ailments carried out by beggars. Other researchers can continue this research regarding the behavior of beggars in the market in overcoming homelessness and beggars of Mardika market in Moluccas, Indonesia.

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