

DIGITAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF MOESLEM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Ivo Dinasta Yanuar

Sharia Tourism Department, Faculty of Economics and Islamic business

UIN Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, Indonesia

Email: ivodinastayanuar@gmail.com

APA Citation: Yanuar, I. D. (2025). Digital identity construction of moeslem university students in english classroom. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 13(1), 291-300. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v13i1.11139>

Received: 17-09-2024

Accepted: 18-12-2024

Published: 28-02-2025

Abstract: This research aims to explore the digital identity construction of Muslim university students learning English through social media and its impact on their offline identity in the English classroom. Digital identity refers to the online representation of an individual, group, or organization, constructed through various digital platforms, activities, and interactions. Digital identity involves the use of social media platforms to express oneself, including through usernames, profile pictures, personal information, and followers. Muslim students develop complex identities by blending local cultural and religious values with global influences, using social media to showcase their English language skills. This qualitative study utilized semi-structured interviews with eight university students who are active on social media. This research found that moeslem students construct their digital identity on social media by creating double identities virtually that aligns with their religious and social values. Furthermore, their digital identities have significantly contribution in academic context, particularly English classroom. It helps them to learn and improve their English competence.

Keywords: *digital identity; muslim identity construction; english classroom.*

INTRODUCTION

"Prioritize the Indonesian language, preserve local languages, and master foreign languages" underscores the belief that language is an intrinsic part of someone's identity. According to Kramsch (2020), language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a tool for constructing and negotiating social identities and realities. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language to enhance students' competitiveness in the global arena, particularly at the university level. However, English is often seen as a daunting challenge for many Indonesians, especially Muslims, due to the stark contrast between Western culture and Islamic values.

The rapid advancement of technology has also accelerated the spread of Western cultural norms. As of 2023, data from Data Reportal shows that there are 5.30 billion internet users worldwide, representing 65.7% of the global population, with 4.76 billion people active on social media. Sugiarto & Arif (2024) stated that globalization and technological advancements have significantly influenced the use and interpretation of English on social media. Social

media has become a primary space for teenagers, including Muslim students, to express and construct their identity freely, often beyond the limitations of social norms. It offers a platform for individuals to showcase various aspects of their identity, including cultural and linguistic affiliations. This process involves balancing religious values, cultural practices, and the social contexts they encounter daily. Social media, furthermore, provides individuals with a space to experiment with their identities, often resulting in personas that differ from their offline identities. Additionally, online communities are not limited by space and time (Mazeed, 2012). In digital communication, social media serves as one of the most commonly used tools for people to communicate, disseminate, and receive information. The process of information dissemination through technology is one of the key factors in identity construction (Garcia-Pastor, 2018). In contrast, the increasing use of social media among students today has the potential to reshape their identities. This phenomenon is attributed to the differences between virtual and real-world communities, particularly in the application of social and

religious norms. In the online world, these norms are often absent.

Armstrong-Carter & Telzer (2021) argue that virtual environments allow individuals to explore their identities more freely, unbound by the social norms of the real world. For instance, a Muslim student may adhere to Islamic values in real life but might feel more comfortable using harsh language on social media, knowing that they are interacting with strangers, and that this behavior will not affect their real-life reputation. This behavior can be understood as concept of public image which is shaped, influenced, and adjusted to align with the norms and expectations of the society in which it occurs (Goffman's, 1959 cited in Bahar, 2024). Online impression management is more easily controlled, as individuals can create, modify, or adjust informational cues to better align with their objectives (Sun, Fang & Zhang, 2021).

Gen Z, referred to as digital natives, gain social feedback from peers, parents, and teachers which can be very influential, a time when the desire to shape one's individual identity involves the challenge of incorporating various self-related information into a cohesive self-concept. This generation tends to seek guidance on questions about who they are (related to identity construction) more often. This is due to the fact that their stage of development involves a process of exploration and commitment, driven by reduced dependence on parents and increased relationships within a broader social circle. Additionally, the influence of Western culture is evident in the growing number of social media influencers who celebrate events like Halloween and Valentine's Day or participate in TikTok dances, all of which can shape the online identities of their followers. As Jackson and Luncher (2018) assert, online identity construction often differs significantly from offline identity.

Identity, as Talaifar & Lowery (2023) explains, is a complex and dynamic construct shaped by various influences, its multifaceted nature allows different aspects to surface in distinct environments, while its evolving nature reflects changes over time. In relation to English language learning, this identity shapes how learners think and behave, depending on how their social interactions are formed across different contexts. Therefore, students' commitment to learning English is closely tied to how they construct their identity within a given community. Research on the impact of identity

construction on English learning, especially as a foreign language, has long been of interest to scholars aiming to understand imagined communities. However, research on the identity construction of English students in the Indonesian context remains limited, with only a few studies (Puspitasari, et al. 2024; Anisa, et al., 2023) focusing on offline identity.

Most studies on online identity (Choi, M., Romero, D.M. & Jurgens, D., 2024; Metcalfe & Llewellyn, 2020; Susanti and Dwihantoro, 2022) have focused on general identity construction development, without specifically exploring the relationship between English language learning and Islamic backgrounds. For instance, Choi, M., Romero, D.M. & Jurgens, D., (2024) examined how identity disclosure on Twitter influences user behavior. They found that users tend to align their content and interactions with their disclosed identities, fostering stronger connections with like-minded individuals by revealing their identities. Interestingly, this disclosure does not result in a significant increase in offensive comments, suggesting that the fear of negative consequences may be overstated. Metcalfe & Llewellyn (2020) investigated how young people negotiate their identities concerning gender, focusing on two key contexts: physical interactions within school environments and social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook. Social media is identified as a significant space for young people to engage in discursive and identity exploration. Using a Bourdieusian framework, the research examines the flow of capital between different social contexts and the identities that emerge from these interactions. The study is based on data from 70 semi-structured interviews with 15- and 16-year-olds (33 boys and 37 girls; average age = 15.7) across three schools with varying socioeconomic backgrounds. Findings suggest that for young people to gain social capital, their identities often need to remain consistent between their offline and online worlds. These identities are shaped by polarized gender norms, emphasizing exaggerated forms of masculinity and femininity. A young person's popularity, reinforced both in school and on social media, is closely linked to how they manage their gendered body and identity. Similarly, Susanti and Dwihantoro (2022) conducted a quantitative descriptive study of 218 Indonesian social media users and found that many users provided real data on their accounts and that the average Indonesian netizen had more than one account.

Talaifar & Lowery (2023) believed that the evolving nature of identity signifies its continuous adaptation and transformation in response to personal experiences, social interactions, and shifting cultural or environmental contexts over time. Meanwhile, the interactions that occur within a classroom are crucial, as they are part of the negotiation of identity within language learning (Annisa, et al., 2023). In other words, English language students will be able to understand the importance of learning English in the future through social interactions in the classroom. Participation in language learning does not only depend on actual communities such as schools, churches, or language clubs, but also on the imagined communities constructed by students, which significantly impact their learning. Imagined communities go beyond single-language nations and explain how groups come together. When people cannot meet in person, imagination helps them feel part of a group, creating a shared connection and identity despite physical or social barriers (Amelvoort & Pireddu, 2023). Furthermore, nationality, religion, and social class can all be considered "imagined communities" (Malešević, 2020).

Despite these challenges, the drive for educational transformation, aimed at producing globally competitive human resources, necessitates the use of technology and its integration into English language learning, particularly at the university level. Syekh Nurjati Cyber Islamic State University in Cirebon is one such institution that strives to improve the quality of education to compete globally while upholding Islamic values. However, the integration of English and technology presents unique challenges for Muslim students, especially in maintaining their religious identity. Tajeddin, et al. (2021) argue that students are likely to use their first language or variations of English that serve an important function in creating a sense of belonging within a community. Sung (2020) states that individuals whose first language is not English construct their identity as global citizens. They view themselves as users of World Englishes, which causes them to face challenges in shaping their identity according to the socio-cultural norms and communities they are part of.

Social interactions on social media are not constrained by space, time, or users' backgrounds, nor are they bound by social and religious norms, particularly Islamic ones. To

address this gap, the present study will investigate how Muslim students learning English construct their online identities through social interactions, and how these online identities influence changes in their offline identities in English classroom. This research is especially relevant because many English learners at Islamic universities consider Arabic to be the most important foreign language due to its connection with Islamic culture, which often results in limited English proficiency. This mindset may influence how students construct their identity and form their imagined communities as part of a global society. Consequently, their commitment to learning English may be low due to a reduced sense of belonging to the target language. the results.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the construction of digital identities among Muslim students in the context of English classes. The descriptive qualitative approach is qualitative research as an approach that seeks to understand individuals' experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences. This method involves collecting non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, to gain insights into the complexities of human behavior and social phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Qualitative research is conducted in natural contexts to investigate directly experienced events and everyday life. The purpose of qualitative research is to provide an in-depth description and comprehensive understanding of intriguing phenomena.

This study is conducted in the city of Cirebon. Cirebon, with its cultural diversity and rich historical background, offers an interesting context for research on the digital identity construction of Muslim students. The city's diverse social environment and technological advancements create an ideal backdrop for exploring how Muslim students form and express their digital identities. Research in Cirebon can provide in-depth insights into the interaction between local identity, culture, and technology in the context of English education.

In terms of research subject, this study uses purposive sampling techniques to select subjects relevant to the focus of the study. The research subjects consist of 8 students (4 females and 4 males) enrolled in the Tourism English study program at an educational institution in Cirebon. Selecting subjects based on purposive sampling criteria allows the researcher to collect specific and

in-depth data on how Muslim students in the Tourism English class construct their digital identities. By obtaining insights from both genders, this research aims to understand the dynamics and religious influences in the context of higher education and the use of social media in Cirebon.

Additionally, subjects were selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. They must be Muslim, students from the Tourism English class, and active on social media. The selection of Muslim students from the Tourism English class is intended to gather relevant views on how their digital identities integrate with their English studies, with a focus on Muslim students to explore how religious values and identity influence their self-presentation in the digital world. The primary data collection technique in this study is interviews, which are conducted to gather in-depth information about the subjects' experiences and perspectives regarding their digital identities as Muslim students in the Tourism English class. This interview technique is chosen because it allows the exploration of subjective meanings and personal perspectives directly. Semi-structured interviews are used to provide flexibility in exploring topics and facilitate deep dialogue between the researcher and the subjects. A prepared interview guide contains key questions, but the researcher can ask additional questions based on the subjects' responses to explore certain topics further. This method enables the researcher to collect rich and detailed data and allows subjects to express their views and experiences freely.

The main instrument in the interview data collection is a structured interview guide with various open-ended questions. This guide is designed to ensure that all important topics are covered while allowing flexibility in the discussion. The interviews are conducted in a comfortable and suitable location for the subjects, face-to-face, depending on each subject's preferences and analysis, which involves identifying themes, patterns, and categories from the interview transcripts. This analysis aims to provide a deep understanding of the subjects' experiences and views on their digital identities.

In this study, the primary data collection method is semi-structured interviews, used to gather in-depth insights into Muslim students' digital identities in a Tourism English class. This technique was chosen for its ability to explore personal perspectives and subjective meanings directly. The interviews follow a flexible guide that allows the researcher to ask additional questions based on responses, ensuring that rich, detailed data is

conditions. The formulation of interview themes is a crucial step in the qualitative research process, as these themes form the basis of the discussions and help the researcher gather relevant data for the research objectives. Therefore, the researcher focuses on themes relevant to the research objectives, including:

Social media account ownership. This theme refers to the students' experiences in creating their social media accounts. It explores information about the number of social media accounts, social media account identities, profile photo usage, and followers.

Self-presentation on social media. This theme refers to the students' experiences in constructing their image on social media. Self-presentation is the act of showcasing oneself to project a positive image to other social media users (Xiao et al. 2020). The researcher gathers information related to the language they use when posting statuses, whether they edit photos before uploading, and their use of Islamic expressions when updating statuses.

Identity changes. This theme refers to the students' experiences regarding the influence of social media and the image they construct on social media compared to their identity in the English class. It explores whether they take pride in Western culture or maintain their own, and whether their pride in English is more than just using it as a tool for communication.

The researcher verified the accuracy and consistency of the themes with the collected data. This process may involve discussions and validation with experts to ensure that the identified themes are representative and valid. The researcher will also record and take notes on important information during the interviews. All interviews were recorded to ensure the accuracy of the obtained information. The recordings will then be transcribed for further analysis. The data from the interviews were analyzed by using thematic analysis. Themes guiding the interviews include social media account ownership, self-presentation, and identity changes, focusing on topics like account use, image construction, and cultural pride. The interviews are recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes that reflect the students' digital identity experiences.

For ensuring data trustworthiness, member checking (respondent validation) is used. This technique involves sharing interview transcripts with participants for review to confirm accuracy and the researcher's interpretations, ensuring that the findings are valid and reliable. Moreover, this study

employs the data analysis, which consists of the following stages: Data is gathered using methods such as interviews, observation, and documentation, ensuring accurate recording for integrity. The data is filtered, simplified, and categorized to eliminate irrelevant information, focusing on key elements. The reduced data is presented in tables, charts, or narratives to highlight key findings, making it easier to identify patterns and themes. Conclusions are drawn from the data and verified through detailed analysis and triangulation to ensure validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital identity construction in muslim students learning english through social media

The research reveals that many participants own multiple social media accounts, including accounts with real names and pseudonyms, allowing them to maintain privacy while expressing themselves freely. Participants use different accounts to align their behavior with perceived authenticity, differentiating between curated primary accounts and more casual secondary accounts. Furthermore, they disclosed accurate personal information on primary accounts but manipulate certain details on secondary accounts for privacy reasons. Participants curate their profiles to manage how they are perceived, using images that reflect their desired aesthetic or symbolic representations rather than using real photographs. This reflects the tension between authenticity and privacy in digital identity management. Some participants incorporate religious symbols, like the Prophet's prayer, to highlight their religious identity.

Participants carefully decide what personal information to share, aligning with Arifah et al. (2023) and Alharbi et al. (2021) on how individuals navigate authenticity versus deception in their online presence. The number and composition of followers also influence how participants construct their digital identities. Photo Editing on Social Media Respondents engage in photo editing to enhance their online persona. The use of contrast, lighting, and effects reflects a deliberate effort to align content with aesthetic standards and audience expectations. This strategic editing supports Hollenbaugh's (2021) view that individuals use self-presentation strategies to match the social context of the platform.

In term of language use, using English for its global appeal, reflect participants' desire to align with current trends and project a modern, cosmopolitan identity. However, they also use local languages like Arabic or Indonesian to connect with specific audiences. This adaptability in language use

demonstrates how online self-presentation is shaped by factors like self-perception and social context

Ownership of social media accounts

Ownership of multiple social media accounts plays a significant role in shaping digital identity. Social media offers a space for users to experiment with their identities, gaining social validation while expressing themselves in ways they might not in real life.

"My social media accounts, umm, Instagram has two... Yes, both, but the difference is that one is the first account and the other is the second account, yeah... The second account is more casual, yeah... I have one Twitter account and one TikTok account." (Participant)

This research found that most participants owned at least two social media accounts, some with real usernames and others with pseudonyms. The use of pseudonyms allows respondents to maintain privacy while freely expressing themselves in the digital world. The participant's use of a curated primary Instagram account and a casual secondary account reflects their effort to align behavior with perceived authenticity in different contexts. Align with Schwarz and Williams' view (2021) that authenticity and identity are closely linked, as authenticity depends on how one perceives their own identity. For instance, someone who identifies as honest will feel genuine when speaking the truth but will experience a sense of inauthenticity when being dishonest about their actions.

Their presence on platforms like Twitter and TikTok highlights how platform-specific norms shape self-presentation, requiring adjustments to maintain authenticity. This strategic differentiation shows their ongoing negotiation of identity, balancing personal and socially expected representations across platforms. This practice reflects the flexibility and control that individual have over their digital self-representation, allowing them to switch between identities depending on the platform and audience

Profile pictures

Individuals can shape their self-image by curating the content they share and customizing their displayed profiles through online self-presentation (Arifah, et al., 2023). Profile pictures play a crucial role in building digital identity, often acting as a means of "self-branding" on social media platforms. The findings reveal that while some respondents used their actual photographs, others preferred using objects or symbolic images,

reflecting a focus on aesthetics rather than direct self-representation.

"Not really, just pictures of stuff... Like now, glasses, hehe... It's just cute and looks aesthetic in the photo..." (Participant)

The participant used a picture of glasses for their photo profil in social media. This aligns with Goffman's view cited in Alharbi, et al (2021) about a concept of self-presentation in which self-representation refers to users' ability to regulate how they express themselves, whereas self-disclosure reflects whether the information users share is done voluntarily. Individuals consciously manage how they are perceived by others through specific symbols, such as profile pictures. Respondents who avoided using their real photos cited privacy concerns and a desire to maintain control over their personal identity.

Furthermore, Respondent 7, for instance, added religious elements to their Instagram bio, like the Prophet's prayer (solawat), to emphasize their religious identity. It shows that how digital platforms can be used to reflect personal beliefs. Online self-presentation is a deliberate or subconscious attempt by an individual or group to create a specific impression.

Information disclosure and identity management

The way individuals choose to present personal information, such as their name, birthdate, and gender, plays a crucial role in shaping their digital identity. Arifah, et al (2023) believed that individuals can present an authentic self, reflecting their real-world identity, or a false self, portraying an identity entirely different from who they are in reality. This study found that most respondents disclosed accurate personal information on their primary social media accounts, aligning with their real-life identities but different for second account.

"On Instagram, I use my real gender and also details that match my ID card, like my date of birth and place of birth—everything, except on Facebook. On Facebook, I use a slightly older date of birth... so that I'm perceived as more mature." (Participant)

This transparency reflects an awareness of the importance of credibility and consistency in the digital space and the users aim to gain recognition and validation from others by sharing information that reflects their authentic identity. However, some respondents opted to manipulate certain details to protect their privacy, such as altering

birthdates or using pseudonyms. Alharbi, et al (2021) stated that identity deception involves manipulating a person's identity information or impersonating someone else to mislead social media users. People set their own criteria for determining what personal information to share on social media and what to keep private.

Follower influence

While the number of followers is commonly used as an indicator of popularity on social media, the composition of a user's followers also significantly affects how they construct and manage their digital identity. Zabala, et al. (2020) associated the number of friends with social relationship support. In this research, the majority of respondents had a large number of followers on their primary social media account, which closely reflected their real-life identity. This suggests that users with more followers may feel greater social support, as their online relationships are more aligned with their offline selves. However, they were selective about their followers for secondary accounts, where they felt freer to express themselves without scrutiny.

"I know them, mostly people I'm close to, umm, the majority are people I know. Only a small number are people I don't know... Especially on my second account, it's for selected people... like, how do I say it, those I feel close to. They're not the type to talk much or leave a lot of comments. Family? They're not on my second account, hehe." (Participant)

It shows that the participant tailor his self-presentation to specific groups of followers on his social media account. By limiting their followers on secondary accounts, he created a safe space where they could express their true selves without fear of judgment. Shaipoo, et al (2020) stated that online social relationships are frequently facilitated by technology, like social media platforms, which can impact the nature and quality of these connections. Social media is vital for people of all ages as they engage with their sense of belonging in different communities (Roberts and David, 2020) and offer opportunities for self-disclosure, fostering greater trust and intimacy between users (Hatamleh, et al 2023). Thus, the construction of digital identity among Muslim students on social media is a complex and dynamic process. Through careful management of usernames, profile pictures, and information disclosure, they navigate between authentic self-presentation and privacy, while also reflecting their cultural and religious values.

Photo editing on social media

The research found that all respondents engaged in photo editing before posting, though the extent of editing varied.

"Editing, yeah... Usually adjusting contrast and lighting, then adding effects like a blur effect to give it its own aesthetic value." (Participant)

The participant's editing process is a conscious effort to enhance their content's visual appeal, ensuring it aligns with their desired online persona. By carefully manipulating elements such as contrast, lighting, and effects, they tailor their self-presentation to meet the aesthetic standards they associate with their intended audience. According to Hollenbaugh (2021), the concept of self-presentation refers to the deliberate strategies individuals use to showcase aspects of themselves that align with what they believe is suitable for a specific social context. By enhancing the visual appeal of their content, respondents aimed to meet these expectations, reinforcing their desired digital persona.

Language use in social media statuses

Language plays a key role in digital identity construction, with respondents frequently using English in their social media posts despite varying levels of proficiency.

"In my stories, I usually use simple words. But on my Instagram feed, I mostly use English... Because, as I mentioned earlier, English is trending these days. Millennials and Gen Z see it as cool. That's why English feels international and global—it's just cool. So I use English to make it look good, and also to add an aesthetic touch to my Insta stories... Sometimes I use Arabic, sometimes Indonesian, and sometimes English." (Participant)

The participant mentioned using English on their Instagram feed because it is seen as "cool" and "trending," particularly among Millennials and Gen Z. At the same time, respondents used Indonesian, Arabic, or local languages when engaging with specific audiences, demonstrating the fluidity of digital identity and its adaptability to different social contexts. This reflects how their self-perception influences their language choice—using English is not only a reflection of the broader cultural trend but also a way to align with what the participant sees as modern or fashionable. This aligns with their desire to present an image of someone who is in tune with global trends, thus

reinforcing their self-image as part of a contemporary and culturally aware group. Mocanu & Elorza (2023) stated that the language they use online is influenced by factors such as self-perception, past linguistic habits, and the image that wish to project to the followers. In this sense, language on social media serves not only as a communication tool but also as a means of expressing identity and social affiliation.

Islamic expressions

The use of Islamic expressions in social media posts further highlights the role of religion in digital identity construction. Most respondents reserved such expressions for religious occasions like Ramadan or Eid, while those with a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) background used them more frequently to reinforce their Islamic identity.

"Maybe on certain occasions, like on Islamic holidays, I use Arabic." (Participant)

It shows that participants use them in ways that help uphold the norms and values significant to their families, religious beliefs, and communities, consistent with Abokhodair's view (2020) where technology facilitates people to maintain their belief in communities. The internet has emerged as a crucial platform for Muslims to articulate their religious identities and participate in global Islamic discussions. For pesantren alumni, integrating Islamic expressions into their social media content enabled them to preserve their religious identity in the digital realm. This study also found that respondents of Santri background used Islamic expression for certain occasion and follower.

"Coincidentally, I've also written stories in Arabic, like using phrases such as Masya Allah or Barakallah fii umrik for people. On the other hand, I'm also an alumna of an Islamic boarding school, so it's like, 'Oh, this person is Islamic,' or 'Oh, this person graduated from a pesantren.' It's kind of the trademark of pesantren alumni to use Arabic, right? So I include Arabic phrases like Masya Allah, Tabarakallah, and Barakallah fii umrik in my writing."

The interviewee consciously uses Arabic phrases like Masya Allah, Tabarakallah, and Barakallah fii umrik as part of their writing. This aligns with the concept of self-presentation, where the individual carefully curates their digital identity to align with their cultural and religious background. The participant's goal appears to be to signal his Islamic identity and pesantren alumni status. He recognized that using Arabic expressions

is a culturally and religiously appropriate way to reflect their values and heritage. The Arabic expressions become symbolic of pesantren identity, reinforcing the cultural expectation that alumni publicly embody their Islamic education.

On the other hand, by highlighting these expressions as a "trademark of pesantren alumni," the individual demonstrates an awareness of the norms expected within their community, consistent with Zillich & Riesmeyer's view (2021) that young people should consistently reflect on the dominant norms and values of their perceived audiences, as well as the unclear distinction between "private" and "public" spaces, when determining how to appropriately present themselves on a particular platform. Respondent's desire to shape how they are perceived by others, balancing societal expectations with personal values. He aligned his self-presentation with these norms to resonate with their audience, imagined communities who recognize and value the use of Arabic expressions. These audiences might include fellow Muslims, pesantren alumni, or broader online communities that appreciate religious and cultural authenticity.

Impact of digital identity construction on offline identity in english classrooms

The construction of digital identity on social media has a significant impact on how individuals perceive and present themselves offline, particularly in academic settings like English classrooms. They can portray an idealized version of themselves that resembles their real-life identity or one that is entirely different (Arifah, et al. 2023). Respondents indicated that while they were influenced by Western culture through social media, they still maintained traditional Indonesian values in real-life interactions. They can portray an idealized version of themselves that resembles their real-life identity or one that is entirely different. This was evident in how respondents balanced Western trends with local norms.

While respondents acknowledged that using English on social media was perceived as "cool" and "modern," they expressed less pride in using it in classroom settings. This suggests that the digital space offers a more comfortable environment for experimenting with language and identity, whereas the classroom is seen as a more formal and restricted space. The preference for Indonesian in academic contexts highlights the tension between global and local identities, with respondents using English primarily to align with global trends rather than as a reflection of their true identity.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Muslim students tend to develop dual identities in the context of social media use and English learning. Their digital identity construction is dynamic and context-dependent, influenced by their desire to project authenticity, maintain privacy, and align with cultural, religious, and societal expectations. Social media serves as a platform for experimentation and self-expression, allowing them to negotiate their identities across diverse imagined communities while reflecting their evolving sense of self. The digital identities they create often reflect a combination of local cultural values, global trends, and religious beliefs. Self-presentation on social media, such as photo editing, language use, and Islamic expressions, plays a significant role in this process.

This digital identity construction not only affects how they present themselves on social media but also impacts their offline identity, including in English classrooms. Students active on social media often feel encouraged to display their English skills and global mindset in academic environments, though some remain more comfortable using Indonesian in line with local social norms. The flexibility of online identity allows students to experiment with different roles before integrating them into real life.

However, this study has several limitations, such as focusing on Muslim students learning English, which makes the findings non-generalizable to other groups outside this context, such as non-Muslim students or those from different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the study does not differentiate in depth between the social media platforms used by respondents, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, or TikTok. Each platform has its own unique user characteristics and culture, which can influence how digital identity is formed and presented.

Future research could expand the scope by involving more respondents from diverse religious, cultural, and geographical backgrounds. Given that each social media platform has unique characteristics, future research could also focus on comparing different platforms (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, TikTok) in the process of digital identity construction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This article is funded by Ministry of Religious Affairs with contract number 123/In.8/L.I/TL.01/05/2024

REFERENCES

- Abokhodair, et al. (2020). 'Holy tweets: Exploring the sharing of the quran on twitter', proceedings of the ACM on *Human-Computer Interaction*, vol. 4, no. CSCW2, 159. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3415230Ahmed>
- Alharbi, H. D., Yi, X., Tari,Z., & Khalil, I. (2021). Social media identity deception detection: A survey . *ACM Comput. Surv*, 37(4). <https://doi.org/10.1145/1122445.1122456>
- Amelsvoort, J. V., & Nicoletta, P. (2023). Introduction: Imagining communities, multilingually. *Parallax*, 28(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2022.2156688>
- Arifah, et al. (2023). How emerging adults present themselves on social media: Online Self-presentation influenced by self-esteem, narcissistic personality, and online privacy. *Journal Of Psychology And Instruction*, 7(3). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23887/jpai.v5i2>
- Choi, M., Romero, D. M. & Jurgens, D. (2024). Profile update: the effects of identity disclosure on network connections and language. *EPJ Data Sci*, 13(45). <https://doi.org/10.1140/epjds/s13688-024-00483-0>
- Bahar, V.S. (2024) Self-presentation theory: A review. In S. Papagiannidis (Ed), *TheoryHub Book*.
- Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2022). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches 6th Edition*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- El Bahri, O., et al. (2023). The impact of english language learning on identity reconstruction: moroccan english department undergraduate students as a case study. *European Modern Studies Journal*, 7(3),420-434. DOI:10.59573/emsj.7(3).2023.40
- Hatamleh, et al. (2023). Trust in social media: enhancing social relationships. *Social Science*, 12(7). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12070416>
- Hollenbaugh E. E. (2021). Self-presentation in social media: Review and research opportunities. *Review of Communication Research*, 9, 80–98. <https://doi.org/10.12840/ISSN.2255-4165.027>
- Kang, Y. (2020). Lessons learned from cases of COVID-19 infection in South Korea. May. <https://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2020.14>
- Kramsch. (2020). *Language as symbolic power*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108869386>
- Malešević, Siniša. (2020). *Imagined communities and imaginary plots: nationalisms, conspiracies, and pandemics in the longue durée. nationalities papers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Metcalf, S. N., & Llewellyn, A. (2020). "It's just the thing you do": Physical and digital fields, and the flow of capital for young people's gendered identity negotiation. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 35(1), 84–110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558419883359>
- Mocano, V. & Elorza, V. G. I. (2023). The construction of mono- and multilingual identity portrayals on social media: The case of instagram. *ILCEA*. <https://doi.org/10.4000/ilcea.17254>
- Pratama, B. A., & Sari, D. S. (2020). Dampak sosial intensitas penggunaan media sosial terhadap kesehatan mental berupa sikap apatis di SMP Kabupaten Sukoharjo. *Jurnal Kesehatan STIKES Aisyiyah Surakarta*, 18(1)
- Puspitasari, et al. (2024). Language choices and digital identity of high school student text messages in the new capital city of Indonesia: Implication for language education. *International Journal of Language Education* 8(1). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v8i1.63833>
- Roberts J. A., David M. E. (2020). The social media party: fear of missing out (FoMO), social media intensity, connection, and well-being. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*. 36, 386–392. DOI: 10.1080/10447318.2019.1646517
- Sabar, W. et al. (2022). Gender education in the practice of women's agricultural laborers in Enrekang Regency. *Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial Indonesia*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.21831/jipsindo.v9i2.51641>
- Saiphoo, et al. (2020). Social networking site use and self-esteem: A meta-analytic review. *personality and individual differences* 153, 109639.
- Schwarz K. C., Williams J. P. (2021). Introduction to the social construction of identity and authenticity. In Schwarz K. C., Williams J. P. (Eds.), *Studies on the social construction of identity and authenticity* (pp. 1–24). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429027987>
- Sugiarto, E., & Arif, M. F. (2024). The impact of question answer relationship (QAR) strategy on improving students' reading comprehension. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 12(3), 983-992. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v12i3.10321>
- Sun, Y., Fang, S. & Zhang, Z. (2021). Impression management strategies on enterprise social media platforms: An affordance perspective. *International Journal of Information Management*, 60, 102359.
- Sung, C. C. M. (2020). Cantonese learning, investments, and identities: Mainland Chinese university students' experiences during cross-border studies in Hong Kong. *Learn. Cult. Soc. Interact.* 26:100415. doi: 10.1016/j.lcsi.2020.100415
- Susanti, D. & Dwihantoro, P. (2022). Indonesian netizens' digital self and identity creation on social media. *Komunikator*, 14(2):104-113. DOI: 10.18196/jkm.16541
- Tajeddin, Z., et al. (2021). Learners' perspectives on imagined community of practice in English as an

- international language. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.1921784>
- Talaifar, S., & Lowery, B. S. (2023). Freedom and constraint in digital environments: Implications for the self. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 18(3), 544–575. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916221098036>
- Xiao, S., Metaxa, D., Park, J. S., Karahalios, K., & Salehi, N. (2020). Random, messy, funny, raw: Finstas as intimate reconfigurations of social media. *Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 1–13
- Zabala, A. F. et al. (2020). Sociometric popularity, perceived peer support, and self-concept in Adolescents. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 11:594007. Doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.594007
- Zillich A. F., Riesmeyer C. (2021). Be yourself: The relative importance of personal and social norms for adolescents' self-presentation on Instagram. *Social Media + Society*, 2056–3051, <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051211033810>