

## A dramaturgical theory approach: Symbolic interaction and self-image formation of dangdut singers

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**Abstract** Dangdut music performances with their dangdut *biduan* have become an inseparable part of culture and tradition, specifically in Tangerang City, Banten Province, Indonesia. Dangdut music is often present at various events, ranging from celebrations to big events in the city. However, the public's view of this profession still varies; therefore, symbolic interaction is essential in shaping the image of dangdut *biduan* (singer) so that it can influence public views. The purpose of this study is to understand the role of symbolic interaction in creating the self-image of dangdut both on stage (front stage) and in their roles as housewives (backstage), as well as to determine the response or perception of the community to the formed self-image by dangdut singers from this symbolic interaction by employing a qualitative descriptive research method through a dramaturgy approach. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, participant observations, and documentation. A triangulation method was used to ensure the validity of the data. Data analysis techniques included data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions drawn. The results of this study show that symbolic interaction has a central role in forming a positive image for dangdut singers through attractive physical performance, adaptability to the music played, interaction with the audience, and teamwork. The ability to effectively communicate and adapt to others is crucial in providing a special experience on stage. In addition to being a housewife, symbolic interactions also combine commitment, balance, communication, and family support to create a positive and motivating image. The positive response from colleagues, the social environment, and the audience reflects humility and an attitude that is in harmony with the culture of dangdut *biduan*, so that it is in harmony with the wider community.

**Keywords:** performance studies; self-image; symbolic interactionism

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## INTRODUCTION

Music reflects the culture of a community group because it can represent the fundamental values and principles that inspire and cultivate a culture (Putri et al., 2023). Therefore, music can unite the differences that exist in people's lives and function as a medium of communication among all levels of society (Sari, 2024). Based on survey data released by the Indonesian Survey Scale (SSI) about the results of a survey of the music genres that are most liked by Indonesians in 2022, dangdut music placed first with an average of 58.1%, this exhibits that dangdut music is the most popular music for Indonesian people today (Dihni, 2022). Compared to other music genres, Indonesian dangdut music used to be considered by some people as the music of the lower middle class (Fitriyadi & Alam, 2020). However, various community groups highly appreciate the current popularity of dangdut music (Kiram, 2023). The majority of dangdut singers in Indonesia are women, which are called dangdut singers. This phenomenon arises from the public perception that still views women as heterosexual entertainers and sexual commodities that have high commercial value (Firmansyah, 2022).

As a result, dangdut *biduan* (Singer) as a profession has become quite popular in Indonesia. Specifically, in Tangerang City, dangdut music is highly well-known and has become an integral part of people's daily lives, as seen from its spread in public transportation, food stalls, and important events. Compared to other cities like Jakarta, where dangdut is also popular but faces stronger competition from various modern and international music genres. In Yogyakarta, dangdut may be less prominent than the musical traditions of gamelan (Javanese Musical Instruments) and Keroncong (Traditional blend music of Portuguese mixed with Javanese Heritage), so dangdut is more pronounced as a typical cultural phenomenon in Tangerang. In other Metropolitan cities such as Surabaya, dangdut also has its own place, but the level of integration in daily life may not be as strong as in Tangerang. Based on initial observations, dangdut music performances with their dangdut *biduan* have become an inseparable part of the culture and tradition of the people of Tangerang City. Dangdut music can be heard in various places, such as in public transportation, food stalls, private homes, and celebratory events such as weddings and circumcision ceremonies. In addition, dangdut music is also often included in television shows, particularly talk shows, comedy shows, and music shows, which almost always feature dangdut music with distinct styles and characteristics.

The city of Tangerang is also known as the city that has given birth to many famous dangdut artists, such as Cici Paramida, Siti Rahmawati (Siti KDI), and Anisa Bahar with the 'Patah-Patah' rocking as the artist's trademark. Juwita Bahar and many other artists also started their careers as dangdut singers, originating in Tangerang. With the existing potential, it is unsurprising that more and more new dangdut musicians and singers have emerged with various genres to entertain the public. Neglasari District, for example, has dangdut music groups such as Ratu Goyang, Agistha Entertainment, Soraya Entertainment, Jaya Abadi, Sinar Nada, Pantura 3 Entertainment, Rizky Entertainment, and many others. In addition to that list, Agistha Entertainment and Soraya Entertainment have even been in the Dangdut music industry for over 20 years. They require their dangdut singers to master various types of music, such as keroncong, pop, jazz, and gambang, which can later be combined and matched with dangdut music. With experiences and developments that continue to develop in various aspects such as music, stage performances, clothing, and dance, the dangdut *biduan* now appears more elegant and classy and that dangdut can now be enjoyed by various levels in the society (Couch, 2022). The Tangerang City Government also supports dangdut singer performances provided that they present a respectful and appropriate appearance which was seen in the anniversary of Tangerang City. However, with the existence of Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2005 shows efforts to prevent immoral behaviour and realise moral values in the region, as well as Regional Regulation No. 7 of 2005 which prohibits the sale of liquor, which may considerably add to the dimension of rules that must be followed in the city environment in holding events or programs.

In the research titled *Biduan dangdut in the Present Era* (Fatur, 2023), dangdut *biduan* can adjust and highlight their singing talent, contributing to the positive self-image formed. Through wearing clothes that look appropriate, some ought to wear wardrobes that align with societal norms. This helps diminish the stigma and negative perceptions ascribed to this profession, despite the fact that they no longer consider their appearance that fulfill their personal preferences but as a necessity to reflect professionalism and their dedication to artistry (Selin, 2021). A study published in the the Malaysian Journal of Communication, that studied

'naughty' dangdut biduan which is often more focused on erotic dance movements rather than vocal quality. This has led to the development of dangdut music in a direction that some audiences may perceive the performances as unfavourable, creating a negative impact on the self-image of the performers. For this reason, it is crucial for dangdut singers to establish a commitment in their career to uphold the true principles of dangdut, such as entertaining with quality singing talent. From the two studies above, it can be deduced that symbolic interaction is pivotal in the self-image formation of dangdut singers because it can heavily affect the public's perception of them (Pertiwi, 2021)

As discussed by George Herbert Mead, symbolic interaction is a social process where individuals interact with each other through symbols that can be understood together in communication, these symbols can be in the form of words, signs or movements that have the same meaning for the individuals involved in the interaction (Hidayani, 2020). Symbolic interaction between a dangdut singer and the public involves certain signs or symbols such as the costume used, stage actions while on stage, and interaction with the audience (Zanki, 2020). In this context, the dramaturgy approach views social life as a drama performance wherein each individual plays as an actor on the stage, either on the front stage or on backstage, in the same manner, that dangdut singers can also be seen as actors in a musical performance when they perform on stage (Rolando & Walidah, 2021). Simply, the theory of dramaturgy emphasises that individuals play different roles in social interactions like actors in dramas.

Similarly, the concept of self-image generally refers to how a person perceives themselves, shaped by social interactions and others' perceptions. A dangdut singer's self-image is formed through their interactions with the audience, media, and social environment. Dangdut singers develop their identity and self-image based on how they are perceived and interact with existing cultural symbols in the form of clothing style, stage presence, and musical expression.

Erving Goffman (Hidayani, 2020) puts forward the concept of 'interactive theatre' where individuals demonstrate themselves to achieve specific social goals and manage other people's perceptions of themselves. Using a dramaturgy theory approach, this study explored the role of symbolic interaction between the public in shaping the desired image (Hutagalung, 2022). By understanding the symbols of dangdut culture and developing self-awareness about the dual role of a dangdut singer being a performer and a housewife, dangdut biduan can manage their image effectively, build a positive reputation, and overcome the negative stigma that may exist in their social environment.

So, in this context, research on the role of symbolic interaction in shaping the image of dangdut biduan remains scarce. Therefore, this study will focus on the role of symbolic interaction in shaping the image of biduan dangdut in Tangerang City, employing a dramaturgy theory approach. Through this research, it is hoped that it can provide a deeper understanding of what factors affect the formation of the image of dangdut biduan in Tangerang City. So that it can help improve the appreciation and quality of the dangdut biduan profession.

## METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative method, which aims to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Fadli, 2021). In the selection of informants, a snowball sampling or chain sampling method was used (Guidance, 2024). This method allowed the researchers to select initial informants who meet certain criteria, in this case are housewives who work as active dangdut midwives, who reside in Neglasari District, Tangerang City, with over 10 years of experience in the field and are members of at least 2 or 3 music groups in Tangerang City, individuals demonstrate deep skills and knowledge as well as adaptability to various musical styles. Their unique characteristics and willingness to share experiences reflect a strong professional commitment and the ability to collaborate effectively on diverse musical projects. Based on these criteria, the researchers managed to identify three (3) main informants, namely Aulia (Dede Yolanda), Intan Subandini (Andini), and Putri Susanto. In addition, the researchers also assigned three supporting informants from colleagues, spectators, and neighbours/communities. The supporting informants will confirm the data provided by the main informant (Heryan, 2018). As seen in the following table 1.

The data used in this study consisted of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews through a semi-structured interview, participant observations, and documentation (Fadilla et al., the results of the interviews and field

observations are the main source of primary data (Abror, 2019). Meanwhile, secondary data came from various sources such as literature materials, previous research, books, and others (Tohardi, 2020). In the data analysis process, the researchers carried out several stages. First, analysis is carried out at the time of data collection. Then, data reduction is carried out, where data is organised, sorted, and simplified so that it can be further processed. Furthermore, the data is presented by describing the relevant findings. The next process is drawing conclusions, where researchers interpret the data and relate it to the research objectives (Raya, 2021). In ensuring the validity of the data, this study applied a triangulation model (Susanto et al., 2023). Source triangulation is carried out by comparing data from various sources, such as primary and supporting informants, as well as primary and secondary data (Rahmayati & Prasetyo, 2022). Time triangulation involves collecting data at different times to observe the consistency of the phenomenon (M. Husnallail; et al., 2024). Finally, triangulation methods were used to compare the results of various data collection techniques, such as interviews, observations, and documentation.

**Table 1.** Research informant data

no	Name	Age	Profession	Career period	Active dangdut group
1.	Aulia / Grandpa Yolanda	40th	Biduan dangdut	± 20 Years	Agestha Entertainment, Nada argitha Entertainment, dan soraya entertainment
2.	Intan Subandini	30th	Biduan dangdut	± 10 Years	Agestha Entertainment, Chinara Nada,
3.	Putri Susanto	30th	Biduan dangdut	± 10 Years	Agestha Entertainment, Arjuna Entertainment, Sinar nada.
4.	Antonius	60th	Sound Systems Technician	±12 Years	Dangdut Biduan Colleagues at Agestha Entertainment Group
5.	Yuli Yuliana	42nd	Audience		Audience
6.	Wuri Wulandari	24th	Aulia's Neighbors		Neighbors/Nearest Community in the home

Source: Processed by the researcher, 2023

This study adopted a comprehensive and systematic approach to collecting, analysing, and ensuring the validity of data in order to gain a deep understanding of the experiences and characteristics of housewives who work as dangdut midwives in Tangerang City.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Role of Symbolic Interaction: Frontage as Biduan Dangdut

The view of the dangdut biduan symbolic interaction related to physical appearance underscores the importance of elements such as costumes, makeup, and accessories in forming images and impressions on stage. Appearance is not only a visual aspect but also a strategy to form special characteristics, boost confidence, and attract the attention of the audience. Although the reasons are diverse, this common view confirms that performances have a deep message and charm, are connected to cultural identity, and play an important role in dangdut entertainment. As the main informant, Aulia, argues that:

".....Appearances during gigs such as costumes, makeup, and accessories, are very important. It can attract the audience, make them confident, and become a characteristic of the aunt. Now it's a different era, no longer wearing sexy clothes full of blink-blink, even thought to be tacky. Now it's more relaxed, if you perform at residents' houses, it's different from the one in the building, yes, you wear dresses or formal clothes according to the event, so we just adjust to the environment of the community where we show" (Aulia, 23 May 2023)

Inspiration from senior artists helps them choose the right outfit, combining aesthetics, comfort and personal identity. In a social context, appearance also reflects cultural values and norms. Awareness of the importance of symbolic performances and interactions on stage allows them to create a positive image that entertains and inspires audiences and fans alike. As the main informant, Intan, argued that:

"....my inspiration is senior artist Inul Daratista, she always looks glamorous and elegant with a modern bling-bling kebaya that is very elegant. Her hairstyle is also iconic, showing a feminine impression. Then there is also Ayu Ting-Ting, which is more of a young style with a fresh and funny appearance, which is very much in line with the current trend. Yes, it's very important, right, the clothes we wear fit the body and make us comfortable. Everyone is different, so not all clothes that are suitable for others are suitable for us. What is clear is that the clothes I choose for the stage must make me look younger, not tacky, not too revealing, and most importantly, comfortable to wear. (Intan, 28 May 2023)"

The characteristics of dangdut biduan include attractive performances according to characters, melodious vocals, adaptation of music genres, and intense interaction with the audience. The ability to perform songs well, flexibility in music, and interaction with the audience stand out while being ready to sing songs on demand. As stated by the main informants, namely Aulia and Putri, that..

"... Aunt has a characteristic of hoarse and wet vocals, mastering Malay diphthong, and sometimes she also appears to play the keyboard herself. But most importantly, the interaction with the audience must be intense! If the audience has started to lose enthusiasm, usually the aunt and the team stop singing for a while, then the aunt first invites the audience to sing together or make a joke on stage. So, the audience is enthusiastic about our performance again!" (Aulia, 23 May 2023).

"... So, the characteristic is that it combines dangdut music with jazz music which is a hit now, such as dangdut java koplo (Modern Disco Dangdut), can also perform the *gambang* song also at the Chinese event, because the dangdut singer must be able to sing all genres of music, that's why we always practice before performing. Well, if it shakes, we just follow the song's rhythm, and don't have to be very excited. The important thing is that we can perform the song well and correctly. Anyway, as dangdut singers, we must be ready to perform any song that the audience or the host requests. (Putri, 2 June 2023)

Effective interaction and cooperation with colleagues are also crucial, as evidenced by hand gestures that ensure coordination with keyboard players and sound system technicians and close relationships within the team. Gestures and expressions become an influential language in cooperation. The main informant, Aulia, argued that:

"Interaction with colleagues is an important point for a successful performance, in addition to chatting, exchanging ideas with each other and using the symbols we use so that the performance is not chaotic when you start singing. For example, if we swing our hand downwards, it means asking for the pitch to be reduced; if we swing it upwards, it means asking for the pitch to be raised again. Well, if we show our hands in a fist, it means asking the music to be turned off for a while so that we can talk to the audience or make jokes to make it more exciting. So, we use these hand codes to make it more connected between us, keyboard players, and sound system technicians" (Aulia - 23 May 2023)

In the world of performance, interaction and communication with the audience has a major role. It involves elements such as non-verbal communication, audience participation, humour, and improvisation. This approach emphasises active interaction, entertainment, and adaptation to keep the audience on the sidelines. The career journey as a dangdut singer requires more than just musical and vocal talent; interpersonal skills, adaptability, and challenge management are also required. Experience teaches the importance of calmness, adaptability, and proper communication in dealing with unexpected situations, preventing misunderstandings, and keeping the show running smoothly. Technical challenges, such as sound system issues, can be overcome with professionalism and teamwork, creating memorable moments for the audience. Overall, the career journey of Dangdut Biduan underscores the need for interpersonal skills, flexibility, and cooperation in facing diverse challenges, all aimed at providing a memorable

experience for the audience. As the main informants, Intan and Aulia, shared their experiences on stage:

"... I always involve or invite the audience to sing together, rock together, and most importantly always thank the host, the audience who attended the event, with enthusiasm and spoiled cheerfulness. Sometimes, in the middle of the song, I take the time to give a little humour and improvise the singing, so I try to dilute the atmosphere so that the audience doesn't get bored." (Intan, 28 May 2023)

".... Maybe during the course of this career there have been a lot of stories, both joyful, sad and strange. One of them was when my aunt was singing on stage; suddenly there was a female audience who immediately went on stage and grabbed my mic for her to sing; although I was pretty surprised but I had to be calm and friendly towards her, fortunately the sound system team was very quick to give me a replacement mic, so yes a duet to sing together with the audience. (Aulia - 23 May 2023)

### **Symbolic interaction role: Backstage (backstage as a housewife)**

These dangdut biduans show how important it is to maintain a balance between career and family in an effort to achieve personal happiness. They describe how good communication with a partner and flexibility in managing time can help navigate both roles successfully. Ultimately, the main conclusion is that one can achieve happiness and success in one's career and family by integrating values such as commitment, balance, effective communication, and flexibility. Family has a critical role in supporting and shaping their careers as dangdut singers. Although with different contexts, all three statements show how family support, trust, and dedication can turn negative views into positives and provide motivation to develop talent and interest in the world of dangdut music. Their success in achieving success and meeting the needs of their families is also reflected in their passion for maintaining a good name and quality of performance, showing how important integrity and commitment are in carrying out this profession. As stated by Intan and Aulia are as follows:

"... In order to stay balanced as a midwife and housewife, I always set my schedule. So, I only work on Saturdays or Sundays because my husband can care for the children. I am always committed and involve my husband in everything, of course, always communicating first. Alhamdulillah, my husband is super supportive! (Intan, 28 May 2023)

".....At first, my family was a bit worried because many people had a negative view of being a dangdut singer, but I tried to prove that this job is not as bad as they imagined. So that it gets a positive response from family and neighbours, Praise the Lord,, it's been 20 years since I got a gig job and sometimes helped at neighbouring events around the house. Anyway, it all depends on ourselves, huh!" (Aulia - 23 May 2023).

Have an inclusive, adaptive, and caring attitude towards relationships with neighbours and the surrounding community. They all show concern for social relationships and the environment in which they live. While there are differences in the level of involvement in social activities, family priorities, and appearance styles, they all prioritise maintaining positive relationships with neighbours and communities and respecting existing social norms. As stated by the main informant, Putri, that:

".... My relationship with my neighbours is very close, and they often share food, chat, and gather together like other mothers around the house. I'm like a housewife in general, just relax in her appearance, not excited like when I'm performing as a midwife. At home, I just use moisturiser, not complicated by makeup. But of course, if I have a business to bring school children, I must dress politely and neatly. Anyway, my family and I always try to respect still the norms and culture in the environment where we live." (Putri 04 June 2023).

Biduan dangdut seeks to maintain a good and harmonious relationship with the surrounding environment while respecting prevailing cultural and social values. They not only seek support from the audience but also act as members of an integrated society, creating positive connections and mutual respect in every interaction.

### **Response or perception of colleagues, spectators and neighbours**

Dangdut Biduan has always adopted an inclusive approach to their appearance, which not only includes various cultural and social elements but also upholds ethics and professionalism in every aspect. As to Antonius' perception as a colleague that:

"....Dangdut biduan are usually those who prepare themselves. They are very professional and know the needs of each discipline as well as the limitations in appearance, sometimes also adjusting to what events we will present.... So far, our interaction on stage is still very well-maintained and compact. Because it is not possible to speak directly if you are already on stage, so usually we, with dangdut singers, use codes or symbols with hand gestures, expressions and gestures..."(Antonius - 4 June 2023)

The importance of effective non-verbal communication as well as the ability to manage emotions are important factors in maintaining harmony on stage and overcoming potential misunderstandings with the audience. Overall, the dangdut singer and his team highly prioritise cooperation, adaptability, and professionalism in creating quality performances and maintaining a positive relationship with the audience. This is proof of the success of Dangdut Biduan performers in building a positive image in the work environment with his colleagues.

The audience of the dangdut biduan performance also gave a positive response to the performance of the dangdut biduan and their group. The vocals of the dangdut singer, as well as the music and the visual performance, also received appreciation. The interaction with the audience was successful, inviting all ages to sway and sing together. In fact, many of the audience gave a lot of *saweran* as a form of appreciation for the fascinating impression of their performance. As the supporting informant, named Yuli Yuliana an audience in the dangdut biduan performance, argued that:

"The dangdut singer's voice is cool, the clothes and appearance are also very good! The look is not tacky, the long dress is very suitable with the accessories. The performance of the song was cool, so many mothers and gentlemen joined in singing and rocking together. The event became more exciting, and I really enjoyed it. I also gave *saweran* (doorstop money) because the group's performance was really cool!" (Yuli Yuliana - 4 June 2023)

Overall, this shows that dangdut biduan has succeeded in creating an entertainment experience that connects with the audience in a positive way. So, a positive image of dangdut biduan is drawn in the perception of neighbours and the surrounding environment. In response to the dangdut biduan, the impression of being humble, friendly, and maintaining cultural norms give a positive perception of the personality and behaviour of the dangdut biduan. Symbolic interactions that are established through daily interactions form a positive image of the dangdut singer as a figure who respects the surrounding environment, establishes good relations with neighbours, and is able to blend in with the community. A dangdut singer becomes an individual who is harmoniously connected to the community and positively impacts his family and community.

".... They are really great, so my mother and her dangdut career are still smooth. No matter how complicated their problems at home are, they never affect their stage action in the slightest. At home they also do their duties as mothers and wives well, consistently taking advantage of the time in preparing before the show" (Antonius - 4 June 2023).

"..... She's a very humble person. For ten years of being a neighbour, I have never heard of any problems with him. She is friendly with the mothers here, likes to chat and gather for meals. Even though he is a dangdut singer, she still respects the norms and culture here, never doing anything strange. Her family is also good, her children are well educated, all are educated. For me, she is a true dangdut artist, able to connect and blend with the surrounding community. His appearance at home is very simple" (Wuri 23 June 2023)

Symbolic interaction has a significant role in shaping a positive perception of dangdut biduan in the surrounding environment. Using appropriate cultural and social symbols, such as costumes, body language, and stage styles, dangdut biduan can create a desirable impression among fans and the local community. The use of these symbols not only strengthens their identity as dangdut artists, but also presents an inclusive, cultural, and inspiring image. By choosing the appropriate symbols, the dangdut biduan is able to build a harmonious relationship with fans and the wider community. A positive response to their appearance that reflects values such as togetherness, concern for local culture, and professionalism in entertainment can reinforce their positive image. In this context, symbolic interaction is not only about aesthetics or physical appearance but also about how dangdut biduan interprets and revives cultural values in their artworks.

Overall, Symbolic interactions help create an image that is not only visually appealing but also inspires and promotes positive values within the community. This allows dangdut biduan to remain relevant and respected in the dangdut music industry and in the eyes of the wider public.

### **The role of symbolic interaction of dangdut biduan**

According to George Herbert Mead (Nugroho, 2021), symbolic interaction is a social process in which individuals interact with each other through symbols that can be understood together, these symbols can be in the form of words, signs or movements that have the same meaning for the individuals involved in the interaction. The practical and theoretical implications of symbolic interaction for the self-image of dangdut singers include understanding how cultural symbols such as costumes and stage styles shape the artist's image, which can aid music professionals in designing more effective performances and communication strategies. Theoretically, applying symbolic interaction theory provides insights into how social and symbolic meanings are formed through interactions, enhancing the understanding of how identity and self-image are constructed and maintained. This also helps researchers explore the impact of social symbols on public perception and individual behaviour within various cultural contexts.

Symbolic interaction theory is one of the theories that states that humans are creatures that create or produce symbols as a product of social interaction, which is then used as the basis for common understanding and the same meaning between individuals involved in these interactions (Randi Rizky Kurniawan et al., 2023). Therefore, symbolic interaction is very important in shaping a person's self-image and influencing the behaviour and views of others towards themselves and their environment. Symbolic interaction (Pawewang, 2022) is based on the following premise: first, the individual responds to a symbolic situation. They react to the environment, including physical and social objects, based on what those environmental elements mean to them. Second, because meaning is a product of social interaction, meaning is negotiated through the use of language and not attached to objects. Third, the meaning an individual interprets can be different from time to time according to the situation found in social interaction.

Symbolic interaction is a relevant sociological theory to understand how the image of biduan dangdut is formed through interaction with social symbols. The principle of symbolic interaction theory expressed by Ritzer and Goodman (Anwar, 2022) is that humans have the ability to think, which distinguishes them from animals, and these thinking abilities are formed through social interaction. Through the process of social interaction, humans learn and use symbols and meanings specifically to follow specific behaviours and interact with their environment. Humans are also able to change symbols and meanings when behaving and interacting, as well as making modifications and changes based on wisdom in evaluating various possible actions. Finally, the patterns of behaviour and related interactions will form groups and communities. Thus, symbolic



interaction theory provides an in-depth understanding of how humans behave and interact in social contexts.

Symbolic interaction plays a crucial role in shaping the identity and self-image of dangdut biduan. Through the use of costumes, makeup, and distinctive stage styles, dangdut biduan is able to express the cultural values and identity of dangdut music to their audience. These symbols are not just a visual aspect, but also a means to communicate with fans and the wider public about the essence of dangdut music and the values they adhere to. In addition, symbolic interaction also includes the behaviour and non-verbal communication of the dangdut biduan on stage. The way they interact with the audience, the style of speaking, and the use of humour and improvisation, are all part of the image they build. This helps to strengthen emotional bonds with fans and increase their artistic appeal.

Symbolic interaction basically describes the frame of reference for understanding how humans, together with others, create the symbolic world and how it influences human behaviour (Amini, 2024). Symbolic interaction arises because of the basic ideas in forming meaning that come from the human mind (mind) about themselves (self) and their relationships in social interaction (Alhasbi, 2023). The ultimate goal is to mediate and interpret meaning within the society in which the individual is located (Effendi et al., 2024).

It can be deduced based on the first concept of George Herbert Mead, the 'mind' is a cognitive process in which dangdut singers form an understanding of the world through symbolic interaction. The singer interprets their social experiences, such as audience or media responses, through the interpretation of symbols, such as language, expression, and music. This thought is what leads singers to realise how their appearance, style, and behaviour are accepted or interpreted by others.

According to the second concept pointed out by Mead, the 'self' refers to the ability of individuals to see themselves through the perspective of others. In the context of dangdut singers, they have developed a self-image based on how they are perceived by society. They internalize social responses and expectations, so that their self-image, both as a singer and as individuals, is shaped by how they think others perceive them—whether as an idol, a cultural symbol, or an icon of a particular social class.

According to Mead's third concept, society is a framework that provides symbols and norms that underlie social interaction. For dangdut singers, the community offers certain symbols related to dangdut music, such as clothing, singing style, and stage attitude. Through this interaction with the community, dangdut singers not only form their self-image but also play a role in strengthening and changing people's perception of the dangdut music genre itself. This interaction between individuals and society is dynamic so the self-image of a dangdut singer continues to develop along with changes in social norms and expectations (Mita Rosaliza et al., 2024).

From these three concepts, symbolic interaction has an important role in shaping their image. The ability to think and interpret symbols in the social environment, self-awareness of dual roles on stage and backstage, as well as people's views on dangdut art all contribute to shaping the image desired by dangdut artists. By understanding and managing these factors, dangdut biduan can create a more positive, authentic, and accepted image by the community.

### **Image formation in the dramaturgy approach**

Self-image generally refers to how a person perceives themselves, shaped by social interactions and others' perceptions. A dangdut singer's self-image is formed through their interactions with the audience, media, and social environment. Dangdut singers develop their identity and self-image based on how they are perceived and how they interact with existing cultural symbols, such as clothing style, stage presence, and musical expression.

According to Robert Burns, self-image is not only the image that a person has of himself as a physical being, but also involves an individual's view of other aspects of himself, including his personality, abilities, values, and social roles (Dianingtyas., 2019). Self-image includes not only physical characteristics such as appearance, body size, way of dressing, hairstyle, and use of cosmetics, but also broader psychological and social aspects. Self-image is a perception made by an individual about his appearance and feelings based on his own judgment as well as the views of others towards him (Sesiwawani et al., 2021). Human social life is inseparable from

interaction with society, in that way every individual is always connected or sociable with others in living their lives (Yones, 2021).

In the process of forming a self-image, there are four (4) stages involved. The first is perception, where dangdut biduan interprets and gives meaning to the surrounding environment, including appearance, dress style, and interaction with fans. The second is cognition, where confidence arises based on the reactions and responses from fans and the surrounding environment. The third is motivation, where the drive and desire to achieve their goals as a dangdut singer affects their actions and performance on stage. Finally, the attitude stage determines how dangdut biduan likes, appreciates, and reacts to things around them, including fans and the dangdut music industry. By applying the concept of dramaturgy and role-playing, humans create a variety of atmospheres and interaction situations that then have special meanings (Firmansyah, ling Saefudin2, 2022).

In the dramaturgy approach, the formation of the image of a dangdut midwife who is also a housewife involves various stages and complex elements. First of all, as a dangdut dancer, the performance on stage becomes a structured drama. The chosen costumes, dramatic makeup, and energetic stage movements not only reflect a strong artistic persona but also express a cultural identity and lifestyle that is respected by fans and the music industry. On the other hand, as a housewife, dangdut biduan performers need to balance her career on stage and her daily tasks at home. It involves dramatising the often-conflicting dual roles: from being a glamorous and well-known figure on stage, to being a loving and thoughtful figure in the household. Their appearance in public and private spaces should be coherent, reminiscent of their success as individuals who have this dual role.

The formation of this image is also influenced by symbolic interaction with the social and cultural environment. Dangdut biduan performers must be sensitive to the values and norms accepted in the society in which they live. These allow them to maintain an inclusive and cultured reputation while respecting traditions that are considered necessary by their fans and local communities. Overall, through the dramaturgic approach, the formation of the image of a dangdut singer who is also a housewife becomes a complex journey and is often open to different interpretations. By judiciously utilising these dramatisation elements, dangdut singers can build an image that is authentic, inspiring, and relevant to their audience, both on stage and in everyday life. Thus, the dramaturgic approach depicts social life as a theatre stage, where individuals play the role of actors who try to play their role well to create the desired image in front of the public and society. A dangdut singer must be able to manage their dual roles as an entertainer on the front stage and a housewife behind the scenes.

## CONCLUSION

Symbolic interaction plays an important role in shaping the self-image of dangdut singers, influencing their physical appearance and personal character. Through costumes, makeup, and appearances, these interactions reflect cultural identity and help create a positive image. In appearance, non-verbal communication, humour, and interaction with the audience are key elements to maintain support. For dangdut singers who are also housewives, symbolic interaction emphasizes commitment, balance, and communication, while family support increases success. Their inclusive and adaptive attitude strengthens positive relationships, so peers and spectators see them as professional and harmonious. Ultimately, dangdut singers maintain a strong and cultured image that resonates with fans and the wider community through balanced personal and artistic values. This research shows that symbolic interactions not only serve to shape an individual's self-image but also contribute to the creation of cultural identity in a broader context. Further research can explore the dynamics of this symbolic interaction among singers from other music genres, to understand the differences and similarities in the formation of self-image. In addition, future research directions may also include longitudinal studies to see how social and cultural changes affect the self-image of dangdut singers over time, as well as the impact of social media on symbolic interactions in the formation of their public identities.

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