

*Case Study*

## **The Dramaturgy Communication of Beggars in an Indonesian Market**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In Padangsidempuan, Indonesia, the Sangkumpul Bonang market is a prominent place for individuals begging. A beggar is a person who earns money in public in various ways in the hopes of receiving charity from others and who engages in activities by exploiting physical impairments to make others feel sorry for them. In addition, some beggars deliberately create physical disabilities and poverty that lead to feelings of compassion from others. However, these beggars' lives are not as poor as it seems; they live decent and luxurious life. The research focuses on how persons who engage in begging activities manage their front stage, backstage, and impressions. Through a study of dramaturgy, this study employs a qualitative methodology. The results demonstrate that beggars verbally managed impressions by saying, "have mercy, sir, madam." Using bowls as a symbol of asking, beggars with unclean clothes, sorrowful faces, and sluggish movements remove

their hands. Their onstage image takes advantage of physical handicaps, pretending to be crippled, and living an impoverished and nomadic existence to elicit sympathy. It contrasts with a figure in the backstage appearance who is in good physical condition, goes about her daily activities, dresses well, smiles, lives in luxury, and has good social contacts with her family and society.

*Keywords:* Backstage beggars, dramaturgy communication, front stage

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## INTRODUCTION

Beggars are an issue in any city, especially in a metropolis (Paul & Joy, 2018; Saatci, 2013; Song et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2020). *Cities* are relatively large residential areas inhabited by people with heterogeneous social environments (Petermann & Schönwälder, 2014). The city is a central hub of the economy, culture, government, and politics, and therefore that it has an appeal for people to come and stay (MacLeod, 2011; Qian et al., 2021). A city's population grows yearly, resulting in an imbalance of space and work opportunities (Xiao et al., 2021). The level of competition in life is high and difficult. Since some people lack skills and a high level of education, many people miss out on the opportunity to live a normal or good life (MacLeod, 2011; Qian et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). It is one of the reasons why many people, especially in cities, choose to become beggars to survive.

It is happening not only in Indonesia but also in big cities in the world. This problem has occurred for a long time, and begging has been handed down from their ancestors (Hardiyantina & Sukardi, 2016). It makes begging a profession. There is a process of internalization and externalization in the family so that their children also become beggars (Ahmad et al., 2018); they create vertical networks, kinship, and new networks to expand their network (Yatim & Juliardi, 2016). In some cities and villages, this beggar has become an identity symbolized by the city of beggars (Saputra, 2019). Sumenep is labeled as a

beggar village (Hardiyantina & Sukardi, 2016).

In Jordan, some families encourage their children to beg and seek assistance from strangers. Furthermore, families are preoccupied with other duties and do not provide their children with the necessary support to educate them and discourage them from begging. Several factors have contributed to the widespread begging phenomena, including Jordanian society's current terrible predicament due to economic, social, and political situations (Al-Muhareb & Alzyoud, 2018). Many factors contribute to street begging in Tanzania, including poverty, unemployment, physical problems, parent death, and family fragmentation (Namwata et al., 2012).

Beggars are those who are paid to beg for money from others. It is necessary to do this work to exist. By understanding, beggars ask for cash or other goods from people who do not have a social obligation to support their life (Bethina et al., 2016; Pawestri & Euis, 2021). Social welfare difficulties, homeless persons, street children, neglected children, and beggars are all examples of people who engage in begging. Beggars are people who earn money by begging in public in various ways and hoping for mercy from others, according to 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 (The Audit Board of The Republic of Indonesia, 2012). Diverse viewpoints lead to different perceptions of beggars in

terms of socioeconomic, religious, values, beliefs, and sociocultural aspects (Mansour, 2017; Rahman, 2021).

Begging is a strategy for people to satisfy the demands of life and survive (Bethina et al., 2016; Muñoz & Potter, 2014; Pawestri & Euis, 2021). Communicating with beggars is a social concern (Rahman, 2021). They are considered deviating from the prevailing values and norms. They are healthy people in perfect body condition (Mansour, 2017; Rahman, 2021). Begging is done by praying verbally, writing, or making gestures, according to Rahman (2021). This category includes singing, playing the violin, guitar, angklung, and flute, as well as performing outside shops and dwellings (Mansour, 2017; McIntosh & Erskine, 2000), which are usually done in a metropolis.

It is also what distinguishes beggars in Indonesia from beggars in other countries that their reason for begging is due to the imbalance of space and employment opportunities, the level of competition in life is high and hard, do not have the skills and higher education. As a result, so many people miss the chance to live a daily or decent life. Meanwhile, besides the reasons above, in Indonesia, begging is caused by many things, such as being passed down from generation to generation by the family. Therefore, the culture of begging is ingrained in their families, and they influence each other and create new social networks. Even more ironic, some beggar towns and villages have become identities symbolized by beggar towns or villages. In

this context, when the village is mentioned, the image is that all the villagers are working as beggars.

According to Pawestri and Euis (2021), internal and external variables cause beggars' emergence. Carelessness, being uncooperative, being mentally unstable, being physically and intellectually impaired, and not having the life independence to not rely on others are all internal causes. Meanwhile, economic, geographical, social, educational, psychological, cultural, environmental, and religious elements contribute to the begging phenomena (Mansour, 2017; Rahman, 2021). From an economic point of view, beggars are faced with family poverty and limited employment opportunities (Mansour, 2017; McIntosh & Erskine, 2000). Barren land conditions and unexpected natural disasters are geographical factors that compel people to become beggars. The passage of urbanization from villages to cities without incorporating the community in social welfare initiatives is one social aspect that pushes people to become beggars (Muñoz & Potter, 2014). Low levels of education and a lack of job skills help (Mansour, 2017; McIntosh & Erskine, 2000) begging activities from an educator. Family difficulties resulting in children's neglect are psychological elements that lead to someone becoming a beggar (Ruggiu, 2016). The community tending towards fate and customary law is another cultural factor that causes the perpetuation of beggars. Environmental factors, for example. From a religious standpoint, beggar families who

educate their children to be beggars lack comprehension of religion (Moon, 2017), and a weak faith are also less resilient in facing life's challenges.

Beggars communicate with the target by displaying unique characteristics such as pleading oral speech and asking for pity. Beggars also use nonverbal or body language that makes other people feel sorry for them and causes a distressing effect on others. It can create a world and social structure, including symbols in the communication process, so other people give them alms. Beggars use this communication to construct the reality of their life. Using verbal and nonverbal language convinces the community or its target that they do not have a decent life, are deprived and deserve to be pitied. However, when not begging, they live everyday life in their daily lives, sometimes have proper living facilities, and are sometimes even affluent.

Human social life and interaction always present themselves as a theatre play. Depending on the situation, each person's appearance can change. It occurs throughout our lives, regardless of who we are, and we continually interact with symbols in all scenarios (Charon, 1989; Dolgin & Kemnitzer, 1977; Sulaeman, Rijal, Malawat, et al., 2021). If everything is viewed as an interaction, participants will use symbols, both verbal and nonverbal, according to Mead (2008). Nonverbal symbols are body language, physical movements, mimics, artifacts, and statues (Sulaeman, Rijal, & Ridwan, 2021), while verbal symbols are communicated through

words, sounds, intonation, and others. These symbols derive meaning from the participants of the communication (Charon, 1989; Dolgin & Kemnitzer, 1977). These symbols will impact a person's conduct when speaking (Rahman, 2021; Ridwan et al., 2020). The presence of a symbol is significant in social life, particularly in multi-ethnic communities (Ridwan et al., 2020; Sulaeman, Rijal, Malawat, et al., 2021).

Symbolic communication describes a frame of reference for understanding how humans create a symbolic world when together with other people (Charon, 1989; Dolgin & Kemnitzer, 1977; Sulaeman, Rijal, Malawat, et al., 2021). Communication is symbolic because fundamental ideas form meaning from the human mind, about self, and their relationships in social interactions, to mediate and interpret meaning in society (Rahman, 2021; Ridwan et al., 2020; Sulaeman, Rijal, & Ridwan, 2021). Before acting, humans use specific meanings to their world according to the interpretation schemes conveyed to them through social processes. As a result, their behavior and the behavior of others are usually adjusted and harmonized with specific meanings. In contrast to animal reactions which are intuitive and direct, human behavior begins with these processes, which initiate human social behavior (Littlejohn & Karen, 2009; Mansour, 2017; Rahman, 2021; Sulaeman, Rijal, & Ridwan, 2021). These ideas are the foundations of human social conduct, and the concept of "role-taking" is crucial. Before acting, a "self" puts himself in

the shoes of another person and attempts to comprehend what that person wants from a man, husband, citizen, religious leader, police officer, and so on (Mead, 2008; Musgrove, 1997; Sulaeman, Rijal, & Ridwan, 2021). Only by conforming to the expectations of others will interaction become possible.

Goffman (1959) is frequently seen as Mead's (2008) "self-interpreter" in the symbolic interaction approach, emphasizing the symbolic character of human interaction and the interchange of meaning between individuals through symbols. Another variant of symbolic interaction theory apart from Mead's (2008) proposed theory is the dramaturgical theory pioneered by Goffman (1959). Dramaturgy is a play of life presented by humans. This approach splits the situations into two categories: front and back. The frontstage includes setting, personal front (self-appearance), and expressive equipment (equipment to express yourself). The backstage is the self, all hidden activities to complement acting or appearing on the front. When discussing dramaturgy, Mead interprets using the concept of the self, which influenced Goffman's theory.

According to Goffman (1959), dramaturgy is divided into front and backstage. Beggars can use the act of begging regarding communicate their attitude in life as live actors. It can shape their social values, shape their role as front-stage actors when dealing with possible donors (Shalin, 2021), and allow them to perform more naturally backstage when not

begging, in front of their families and social communities, or when preparing to become beggars. Beggars (actors) present themselves according to Goffman's (1959) theory by modifying their settings, looks, and manner. Everything is done to give the appearance that he is deserving of the moniker "beggar." They create or portray themselves in such a way that the potential philanthrope falls in love with them and is eager to offer them alms because of their outstanding performance, such as in theatrical plays. Backstage refers to the places and events that enable him to prepare for his role on the front stage. In communication science, this impression formation is called impression management. It is a self-presentation effort used by actors to cultivate specific messages on the front stage that differ from their appearance backstage. Goffman's (1959) dramatic approach has the core that, when humans interact, they want to cultivate the impressions they expect to grow in others. Dramaturgy views human beings as actors on a metaphorical stage playing their roles. Thus, the dramaturgy approach, a variant of symbolic interactionism, often uses social roles to analyze social interactions.

Roles are socially defined expectations that a person plays to give a particular image to the audience. How the actor behaves depends on his social role in certain conditions. The focus of dramaturgy is not the actor's self-concept from other situations or individual experiences but rather the socially situational self that develops and regulates specific interactions.

Goffman (1959) divides social life into two areas. First, the front region is a social place or event that allows individuals to perform a formal role or style like an actor who plays a role, also called the “front stage.” The back region is appropriate for preparing for their role in the front area, also known as the “backstage” or the dressing room, where the performers relax, prepare or practice playing their position on the front stage.

In the front appearance, a person creates an image or show whose scenario has been arranged in a way vastly different from the rear appearance. Goffman (1959) assumes that they want to present a self-image that others will accept when people interact. He calls this effort “impression management” (Boenisch, 2012; Marianne, 2009; Trencsényi & Cochrane, 2014).

It is the techniques used by actors to cultivate certain impressions in certain situations to achieve specific goals. Most attributes of human properties or activities for this self-presentation include the clothes they wear, the places they live in, the houses they live in, and the way they arrange the furniture, talk, walk, and spend their free time. Indeed, anything open about them can tell others who they are.

The phenomenon of how the interaction of beggars communicates to carry out their two social roles in society is interesting to study. This study aims at investigating how beggars communicate when they play their role as beggars in society; for instance, it includes the investigation of their appearance, utterances, and

decision to use another party (person) as a team to play the role. It also looks into how beggars function in their daily lives in their communities. Dramaturgy theory, as a symbolic interaction method (Nilson & Edelman, 1979), can explain the phenomenon of beggars communicating through verbal and nonverbal language through particular symbols, showing a beggar’s actual existence outside of his begging activities.

This condition is an important reason to conduct this research. The purpose of the explanation and the focus of the discussion is based on the theory of dramaturgy and symbolic interactionism, emphasizing the front stage, impression management, and backstage appearance of beggars in the market.

## METHODS

This research uses a qualitative methodology. This method is used to analyze the dramaturgy of beggars in Sangkumpul Bonang Market, Padangsidimpuan. The qualitative research method aims to find information and focus on the problem to see the subtle reality of the social phenomenon whose meaning will be expressed (Bogdan & Steven, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 1998; Sulaeman, Rijal, & Ridwan, 2021). This research tries to describe what it is or provide a clearer picture of the dramaturgy of beggars in *Sangkumpul Bonang Market*, Padangsidimpuan. The results are expected to objectively tell what happened without giving an assessment and intervention to the subject (Lindlof, 1995; Ridwan et al., 2020; Wolcott, 1994).

Parties who are used as research informants are referred to as research subjects. Because this study was conducted on 17 beggars at the Sangkumpal Bonang Market in Padangsidempuan, the research subjects will be subject to the conclusion. The researcher employs the snowball sampling method, which is unable to offer comprehensive data by searching for additional subjects (Lindlof, 1995; Moustakas, 1994; Rossman & Rallis, 1998; Sulaeman, Rijal, & Ridwan, 2021).

In this study, the researcher pretended to be a beggar and joined the beggar as he went about his business. The researchers conducted remote observations so that beggars would not be aware that researchers were present, allowing them to watch their behavior without being disturbed. The symptoms evaluated on the state of the beggars (begging behavior), time of activity, site of living, and the contact of the beggars with their relatives was systematically observed and recorded. The researchers paid close attention to where they worked, where they lived, and how they spoke with potential helpful people and other beggars at work. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews in addition to participant observation. Explaining the meaning of the beggar's life experience is the most crucial component of gathering data from informants. In-depth interviews are the preferred data collection strategy in beggar research. Researchers attempt to remove the formal impression by adapting to the beggars' situation; for example, the researcher wears worn and worn clothes.

This method is essential for examining impression management, particularly in the front context stage. Observations were also conducted where the beggars live to obtain data on their backstage communication behavior when beggars are outside their work activities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Actors were divided into groups and individuals in the dramaturgy communication investigation of beggars on the front stage at the Sangkumpal Bonang market. First, the beggars were divided into three groups: disabled individuals, children, and punks. Secondly, there are individual beggars.

The front stage is the part of the individual who regularly functions to appear in public with the ideal figure played by the actor. Backstage refers to the places and events that enable him to prepare for his role on the front stage. The following section will describe the actors in the dramaturgy communication of people with beggars at the *Sangkumpal Bonang* Market.

### The Front Stage Beggars

The first type of beggars was separated into two groups: disabled individuals and children. Only blind beggars and children accompany the beggars with impairments who employ the group system. According to observations, Beggars talk in groups to gain the attention of possible benefactors by exploiting children's eyesight and paralyzed legs. They toured the market, from the first, second floor, and basement to the fruit market. They have a complex

where they can deliberate and rest. Because these groups of beggars pray with diverse partners, it is impossible to tell them apart at first glance. Beggars on stage in front of the group play their part by coordinating. The gang acted out their acts on stage by begging with equipment such as bowls, baskets, and damaged and soiled garments. Beggars demonstrate that they are deserving of pity by following individuals with disabilities and singing while playing musical instruments together.

The part played on the front stage shows that the youngster is the biological child of a blind beggar and has a terrible economic condition. Beggars appreciate it with physical disabilities and children who accompany them. Blind beggars and their companions are not related by blood, but they work together with children and blind individuals who wish to make a fortune as beggars. It is supported by interview data from one of the interviewees.

We beg for this as a group, I am blind, I will be accompanied by children in turns, each child will guide me one time around the market and then another child will replace it. (Informant 2, personal interview, May 11, 2021)

We are blind, where we can see the road, can't even see people. We need someone who can see it, so we invite the children around here so that they can both earn money. (Informant 5, personal interview, June 9, 2021)

A collaborative performance between the blind beggar and his friend was visible on stage. They walked and tripped while pointing their hands and making sorrowful faces, and they frequently spoke pitifully. Punk gang groups also perform communication actions like street children doing their activities at the market by begging, using musical instruments, and singing in front of prospective benefactors. The song they performed was a song with lyrics in the *Mandailing* language. "I play a musical instrument while sitting down, while singing in the *Mandailing* language" (Informant 2, personal interview, February 22, 2021). The punk gangsters dress in metal style with complete chain accessories, bracelets, and necklaces. This gang does not have a unique name, but this punk kid has a nickname for them, and the group shares the results of their begging. Usually, punk kids operate in the basement, shop houses, and around *Anugrah Plaza*. They share this location with other beggars.

Most of us from broken homes keep asking market people for more accessible snacks. (Informant 1, personal interview, May 11, 2021)

People here often call us punks, sometimes homeless, but we also ask people who visit the market. (Informant 3, personal interview, June 17, 2021)

I dress up in metal style with complete chain accessories, both bracelets and necklaces. (Informant 7, personal interview, April 28, 2021)



Secondly, there is the individual beggar's type. Individual beggars only act for their benefit, and the results are tailored to their specific requirements. Individual beggars typically sit cross-legged, hoping to elicit pity from passers-by by donning improper, filthy, tattered clothing with manual hooks. Some even play musical instruments while placing bowls in front of them. Some beggars were deafeningly quiet, speaking only through a nonverbal gesture of giving a bowl to a potential sponsor. Some tried to elicit pity by saying, "the alms, sir ... madam ... beggars sit back and expect to be pitied" (Informant 9, personal interview, May 16, 2021).

The dramaturgy communication of beggars in the market can be seen as self-identity influenced by drama, theater, or physical performances in which the beggar plays a character other than his authentic self (Ingenhoff & Richner, 2018) so that the audience can get a picture of the beggar's life and follow the show that has been presented. On the front stage, the beggars hope that the sense of self they display to the prospective benefactor will be strong enough to influence the benefactor to determine that the beggar fits into the show. Beggars present themselves as worthy of pity. It is necessary to appreciate the role that the beggar must control to attract the attention of others. Beggars manage their appearance using verbal language and display nonverbally using specific attributes.

The action communication of beggars in the market is the front stage in which they display an attitude that they deserve to

be pitied. There are communication actions carried out by beggars while performing the show. First, the movement of beggars uses codes or symbols. The beggars act on the front stage using symbols or codes, such as blind beggars. For instance, there was another beggar who was begging. The beggar also comes from the same community. It was observed that beggar companions like to code each other with a signal agreed upon. For example, giving a thumbs-up means the potential income is decent; if the thumbs are carried, it signifies paltry income. Not only that, set the distance between beggars from one another so that visitors do not suspect anything they are doing is an act and arrange this distance to get more money because potential benefactors find it challenging to give money when beggars come or close together. As coded with her hand pointing at the ATC shop house, she coded her fingers to form an X, which means she accompanies the blind beggar to the ATC shop house, and other beggars may not go there.

Performances also occur between the companion and the blind beggar in carrying out his actions to play a role on the front stage. A beggar uses a stick to appear that he cannot see, but he is only nearsighted, not blind. Beggars already understand the character of their prospective benefactors. If the generous candidate looks Muslim, he will give money; if he seems angry and does not wear a headscarf, beggars will not act with an arranged appearance, shabby negligee, messy veil with sticks, and bowed walk. A beggar uses the word as a stabilizer for his actions to get alms. "Please, madam...I ask

for alms” (Informant 13, personal interview, June 28, 2021), he said pitifully after getting donations from generous people in a plastic bowl. The beggar then asked for help from his companion to put the money in his shirt pocket. It is done to trick other people. The bowl is still empty to sign that they have not received a penny, so the prospective benefactor will feel sorry for him and give his alms.

Second, the performance is done by displaying signs of poverty. Beggars display poverty in many ways to invite pity from potential benefactors in the hope that they can give a little money. “It’s normal, it’s like pity, sir, it’s alms, sir” (Informant 11, personal interview, March 13, 2021). The beggar who builds trust with compassion will move their heart to do what the actor asks—giving alms such as money, food, and clothes. “If you ask in a pitiful voice, if someone has difficulty giving money even though we are waiting and while asking with pity” (Informant 6, personal interview, March 24, 2021). It happens because of the pity that arose after seeing what the actor was doing. The dramaturgy communication of beggars is demonstrated by mastery of the drama on the front stage in the selection of beggar characters and the role they play to perform.

Third, forced beggar behavior is a communication pattern of begging displayed on the front stage by “suppressing, frightening, and even threatening until their wishes are fulfilled.” Sometimes “the beggars get angry, and usually, this is done by beggars who are elderly as she was furious

when she was not given money” (Informant 16, personal interview, April 12, 2021). There is also disruptive behavior. Beggars and children disturbed her, wanting to ask for money if visitors did not give money, often she disturbed visitors’ activities, as “when diners ate, beggars shook the dining table, or when walking would follow these visitors” (Informant 14, personal interview, February 24, 2021). These are some ways to get this beggar’s money on the front stage. In Goffman’s (1959) view of social interaction, the exchange of meaning between these individuals is due to what people expect us to do. Then, when faced with this demand, the person performs a performance in the presence of something worthy, not another individual—playing a symbol of a specific role on the stage (Shalin, 2021). In interactions with generous candidate beggars, the beggars play a role through exchanging meanings as someone worthy of pity in the performance on the front stage.

In conclusion, there are two types of beggars. They both have different ways of communicating their intention. The first type is the involvement of disabled people and children to get people to pity them. The second type is individual beggars who work alone using properties like a bowl, dirty clothes, and others. However, both have the same intention: to attract people to pity them and give them some money. However, a different situation was encountered when they gathered with their community, which in this article is referred to as backstage.

### The Backstage of Beggars

Backstage, all the actors' preparations are adjusted to what will be encountered on the set (Proehl, 2003). To conceal their identity, the individual will appear "completely" in the sense of their true identity at this stage. At this stage, beggars behave differently than in front of their benefactors, as they are no longer in the public eye. Therefore, backstage impression management differs significantly from front stage impression management. Backstage, there are some important aspects of a beggar's life. In the dramaturgy communication research of beggars on Backstage, "I gathered with their group while resting on the first floor of the *Sangkumpul Bonang* market" (Informant 11, personal interview, March 26, 2021). Based on observations, the beggars appeared happy and laughing together, ordering food to their tastes rather than starving as they appeared on stage. The backstage is also a private stage, which should be kept private. Beggars' roles differ from those they play when begging. In this place of rest, "beggars prepare all the supporting attributes, whether make-up, roles, clothes, body language, facial expressions, message content, speech, and language style" (Informant 7, personal interview, February 14, 2021).

They returned to the gate of the first floor, far from the crowd, after they finished begging and immediately shared the results of their begging. Backstage, while relaxing with their group, they demonstrated how blind beggars took turns begging. The other beggars' rest, awaiting the time when they will carry out their actions. Beggars

who are children rest while playing online games and other social media. Before acting in front of generous child beggars, he entrusted his cellphone, bracelet, and gold ring and then dressed the children to make them look dull and sad while joking with blind beggars. Begging in groups has indeed been arranged, both the partner who accompanies them and the distribution of the results. They take turns outside of working as beggars by the Association of the Blind (PERTUNE), established in 2004 and chaired by *Iran Rambe*. "Association of the Blind (PERTUNE). I am the chairman of the association, as the chairman, of course, I expect the members to get as much money as possible as beggars" (Informant 5, personal interview, March 27, 2021).

Beggars usually gather in front of the main door of the market and sit while drinking coffee, eating, and joking. The purpose is to gather to deliberate on a partner. They 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. Beggar wives only wait for their husbands when begging. The wife's job is to make up the children so that they look dirty and pathetic. Beggars with their families at home are harmonious and respect each other, unlike those performing on the front stage with no family and broken home. Sometimes they go out of town with their families: "The results of my work. It is quite good; it is all for the family so that they are happy I bought a car for sightseeing tours in *Bukittinggi*" (Informant 11, personal interview, March 13, 2021).

The life of the beggar backstage is a reverse reflection of the front stage. Beggars also have a community, namely PERTUNE. Children always accompany beggars with visual impairments. "Every prayer time we rest in front of the market, and we make rules about which children will accompany the blind and make arrangements to take turns" (Informant 10, personal interview, May 21, 2021). In this community, beggars prepare all their attributes, such as appearance and dress the child beggars to make them look shabby; their clothes are deliberately ripped, and their hair is messy. It is also the place to train their voice intonation in begging and the place where they rest and joke around. The preparation has been done, and the beggar is ready to play their role in the market, ATC shop-houses, and parking lots.

The punk gangsters dress in metal style with complete chain accessories, bracelets and necklaces. However, the communication action that they exhibited was different backstage. "I had a peaceful dialogue and empathy in the group, and *Rantau*, punk kids, also held Friday prayers. He changed his clothes into a sarong" (Informant 11, personal interview, June 9, 2021). Not all punk gangs have no parents; most of them live with their relatives. However, other people think they are street children who are not taken care of by families or broken home families. This punk gang does not have a unique name, and visitors call them punk gangs, but punk gangs in various regions are different.

Individual beggars only act for their benefit, and the results are for their benefit.

Individual beggars arrive and depart on their own. Individual beggars only beg for necessities; their earnings are not shared with anyone. Typically, this type of beggar performs the action in his or her unique manner. The tone of voice is regulated, beginning with the clothes, and there is no community (Serafis, 2020).

In their daily life, some of these beggars mingle with the local community, and some do not mingle at all. Those who associate with the community are in *artisan* groups, *wirid*, and various other events. Those who do not mix are very individualistic, do not care about their surroundings and surroundings, nor do they care about anything. Beggars are not ignored in the community; beggars carry out social activities every day. It differs from the front stage, which shows that they are society's lowest. The stage behind this is also called a private stage, which other people cannot know. The individual arena has a different role from the front stage; there are specific reasons for unique covers or not highlighting the same position on the front stage. At this stage, individuals will appear "completely" in the sense of their identity.

Beggars engage in different communication actions when they are in the presence of a potential benefactor. Their social appearance is top-class, with a loud tone of voice, trudging, and happy facial expressions, as opposed to the fake appearance made by beggars on the front stage. Because beggars are never separated from the use of certain symbols in their lives, the effort to analyze the impression

management carried out by beggars can be more easily studied from a dramaturgy perspective through Goffman's (1959) self-presentation study with attention to the front stage and backstage aspects (Raz, 2014).

Beggars appear to be poor people who deserve to be pitied on stage, but backstage, they have a good life because their income is growing. The money given to beggars is sufficient to support them. They can even purchase whatever they want. Their income is not much different from that of civil servants and traders. The income of a beggar per day is between 100–300 thousand rupiah. The amount of income is not permanent but can increase to more, particularly on Saturdays, Sundays, Eid, New Year, and the holy month of Ramadan. To get maximum results, beggars carry out the communication action by moving to other big cities like Medan, Bukittinggi, Padang, Palembang, and Jakarta. In these cities, they earn 500 thousand rupiahs per day. With such a significant income, it can be understood that they are begging not because of poverty. However, begging has become an informal sector because the appeal of begging is promising enough to meet life's needs.

To sum up, beggars do not show how they are to society. They only show their identity and how they are in their community. While society thinks they do not have or live with family or relatives, some do. Also, they tend to show people that they live poorly while some live well. A different situation was also encountered when they did impression management in the frontstage.

### **The Impression Management of Beggars**

According to Goffman (1959), when people interact with other people, they want to present an image that others will accept. It is known as impression management, or the techniques used by actors to cultivate specific impressions to achieve specific goals using symbols on stage. The management of verbal impressions through language is the first component of this. For example, management is spoken to the prospective benefactor in the beggar's language. When the beggar first meets their prospective benefactor to get alms, and then when they meet the prospective benefactor, the performance on the front stage begins (regardless of giving or refusing to donate).

While some beggars just sat, in the case of beggars walking around the market, they mostly use spoken words like greetings or direct requests. The verbal language that is pronounced as a greeting is mostly "*Assalamu'alaikum* or excuse me. Alms, sir, madam! I am sorry, sir, I do not have money to eat...excuse me, madam, share a little sustenance" (Informant 6, personal interview, April 13, 2021). Beggars also repeated the phrase "Love, Mother ... Pity Sir" (Informant 13, personal interview, March 25, 2021) to market visitors. In addition, "I beggar who recited verses from the Qur'an, and some beggars sang an Islamic song entitled "*Jagalah Hati*" (Informant 14, personal interview, April 12, 2021).

On the front stage, beggars use spoken words to obtain pity and attract the attention

of generous prospective people to get the maximum result. Some beggars are silent, considering the energy they must spend talking about the possibility that they will get money in a short time. However, the role of language or verbal symbols is not dominant. Beggars, after meeting their prospective benefactors, when a generous candidate gives or does not give alms, generally make a good impression by saying “*tarimokasih da ibu* (thank you, madam)” (Informant 14, personal interview, May 11, 2021) and some praying for generosity. “O Allah, add to this maam’s fortune, be healthy and give her what she wants, save her wherever she is” (Informant 3, personal interview, February 27, 2021) while raising her hands. The beggar does not say a word when they are not given alms. Some beggars are angry because they are not given alms. One beggar, pretending to be blind, said in the mandating language: “*Na kikit Maho, Halak na kayo pe mate do* (you are stingy, the rich person is also dead)” (Informant 13, personal interview, March 18, 2021). Beggars get angry if they are not given money, even more so at generous candidates who are indifferent when beggars approach. Sometimes beggars stay quiet and then go to other better candidates.

The second component is written impression management. Beggars use writing to manage the impression of compassion for potential benefactors. Beggars only use writing when performing their actions on the front stage, namely when the beggar show occurs. Nevertheless, outside these activities, beggars do not use

them. As carrying a toddler with verbal communication, “Asking for help for a child’s life as sincere as possible” (Informant 17, personal interview, April 15, 2021, using the phrase “Alms Aid for Mosques and Orphans” (Informant 3, personal interview, March 26, 2021). On the front stage, beggars create an impression by writing so that the generous ones are interested in giving alms, whatever the beggars do to smooth their performances. However, backstage, they only kept the writing and replaced it the next day, “Sometimes, I have made to achieve the expected results by typing the text with a marker” (Informant 13, personal interview, March 13, 2021).

As Goffman (1959) explained, beggars perform nonverbal impression management; impression management on the front stage emphasizes the nonverbal communication process, using nonverbal symbols such as clothes, gestures, and facial expressions, which is never done backstage. When confronted with a generous candidate, almost all beggars have low tones in front stage appearance. It was not observed that the beggar spoke in a high and loud tone, but when backstage, namely the place where fellow beggars rest or live, the lazy manner vanished and was replaced by an angry shouting voice. A low, lazy tone of voice is used when begging to attract the attention of potential benefactors.

Beggars use gestures and signs to communicate their message. For example, most people raised their hands in response to a request for alms. Beggars use begging signals by handing them a bowl, container,

or cup; nearly all market beggars use this tool. They also made a variety of facial expressions. According to Goffman (1959), facial expressions are part of the personal front, namely the person regulated by beggars. On stage, an actor conceals or conceals his identity. Beggars change their self-image at this stage by adjusting everything, including their facial expressions, which range from sad, disappointed, and flat (Shen et al., 2017). The appearance of a beggar's face begs his prospective benefactor with an expression of exhausted, lazy, and sorrowful sadness. Then, when a generous candidate refuses to give alms if he does not get a donation, the beggars will show a disappointed and sad face.

On the front stage, the beggars create an image for the performance, and this scenario has been arranged and differs from backstage. Appearance becomes a symbol for beggars in performing their performances. Appearances are divided into two types: the first appearance because it was not planned (for example, physical disability, due to birth or an accident or illness); the second is intentional, such as worn clothes, bandaged feet, and others. Usually, they design their appearance by highlighting dresses directed to begging activities. The impression management made by beggars brings children, charity boxes, and worn or torn clothes.

In conclusion, beggars manage impressions by using different ways. First, some of the beggars use verbal language to manage their image. Next, some use written

language with expressions that will get people to feel sorry for them. Finally, using a bowl, container, or cup also completes their action, and there is always a tendency to use a low tone of voice to get the prospective benefactors to pity them.

## CONCLUSION

On the front stage, two categories of actors are in begging at the *Sangkumpul Bonang* market. The first group of beggars carries out a collective begging communication action. The results are divided into two, namely blind beggars who are always accompanied by children and the gang of punk children who beg with musical instruments in groups. Second, individual beggars engage in communication action themselves, and the costs are only used to meet personal needs. Their performances scope from speech to writing to gestures to demonstrate that they are deserving of pity. Beggars use coercive, invading communication to obtain money. The beggars utter a pitying sentence in front of their generous prospective audience. When given donations and signs, some say greetings, ask for pity when asking for alms, pray, and stretch out their hands, bowls, and baskets to prospective benefactors. Their bodies are bent, and their movements are slow. 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 expression is flat and silent. The appearance of beggars is not threatened,

as beggars with physical disabilities use assertiveness to beg. Planned beggars wear dirty, torn, and shabby clothes. On the front stage, beggars seem like poor people who deserve to be pitied, while backstage, they have a decent life because their income is up-and-coming. When in a family and environment, beggars are friendly, kind, and caring for others 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. It is recommended that beggars accept suggestions from the government and the community by not carrying out begging but looking for other, more decent work and deepening religion. Other researchers can continue this research regarding the communication behavior of beggars in the market or social service communication techniques in overcoming homelessness and beggars. This research can also be continued regarding actions regarding religious development with group guidance services to beggars at the *Sangkumpul Bonang* market.

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