

# Communicating Identity in LinkedIn from Indonesian Cultural Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines how Indonesians communicate identities in LinkedIn as a means of personal branding from Indonesian culture. The study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach with textual analysis focusing on LinkedIn profiles. The analysis involved some notions: positive ethos in LinkedIn, and Indonesian culture social order to unveil the motivations in making profiles in such ways. From the findings, the participants sought to be regarded as professionals in work, and sought positive values as hierarchy remains crucial in Indonesia. The participants wanted high positions in that hierarchy in order to stand out and be given a priority in job-seeking context. Hence, they made their profiles using the English language, made a detailed description, and provided self-portraits wearing suits. They also mentioned the name of their alma mater and positions in their present work. People planning to take part in the job market best serve their interests by becoming familiar with LinkedIn.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis in Business, Social Media, Cultural Analysis, Indonesian Culture.

## INTRODUCTION

LinkedIn has grown quite popular in the recruitment process since employers tend to look for employees who are technologically savvy, but also have the ability to communicate effectively, and have high awareness of the company's business. The employers are basically looking for qualified employees so that they can contribute more to the performance, growth and profitability of the company. Thus, LinkedIn is popular these days because it is a social media, similar to Facebook, where people can share their ideas in the form of texts, or images and post it in their own page and seen by others who visit the page. Being similar to Facebook, the only difference between them is the context employed within, though. Fundamentally, LinkedIn is a professional networking site where employers, corporates, employees, and job-seekers are connected together in one container where they can share their ideas and views about the business, hire people or job-seekers from other organisations, build connections, and even conduct the business. In that way, LinkedIn can be indirectly seen as a shortcut to building a public profile in a business context as it lets people build connections with other business people and even find a job there. However, people need to understand that besides having a great awareness about the company's business, the job itself, and technology, employers also seek people

who emit a positive aura through his/her soft skills such as good personalities and positive ethos, meaning a positive appeal on ethics since they are essential in making huge contribution to the work-performance. For that purpose, employers look for those qualifications within applicants that fit the job and the company. Therefore, employers use LinkedIn to discern technological savvy, overall qualifications, and good personalities reflected from positive ethos in applicants' profiles.

In using LinkedIn, most employers would see how people made their profiles. The reason behind the process is simply because personality can be inferred quite accurately because it is similar to the concept of understanding the personalities and qualifications of the writer from application letters, resume, or even articles. Research by Niel van de Ven, et al (2017) found that personality traits such as extraversion or self-presentation can be inferred from profiles at LinkedIn if the user made the profile carefully (Ven, N. van de., et al. 2017. p.426). In that sense, carefully created profiles could be used to understand the personality of the user. Moreover, those profiles also explicitly reflect the overall work performance quite accurately. Thus, LinkedIn has become a great tool in selecting employees more effectively, especially in the preliminary recruitment process where Human Resource officers have to spend countless hours

seeing mountains of physical resumes, resulting in paper waste as well. Those profiles which have been carefully created are believed to contain more relevant and accurate information about the person. Therefore, initiating preliminary recruitment based on the carefully created profiles is seen as more ethical. As a result, people nowadays are starting to make appealing profiles and socialising within LinkedIn in the hopes of being provided with desirable job offers from a quality connections.

This paper examines how Indonesians communicate their identities in LinkedIn as a means of personal branding as seen from Indonesian cultural perspective. The study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach with textual analysis focusing on profiles in LinkedIn. Recent research by Van de Ven, et al (2017) stated that a carefully created profile in job-related social media such as LinkedIn tells stories about the personal traits or characteristics of its user, however, it was unclear on how to create the profile carefully which speaks about the personal traits of the user. This is very likely to be based on preliminary research by Oslund (2013) which stated how to build the positive ethos. However, as a reader and a fellow academic writer, I feel inclined to further inquire on its cultural perspective; of whether similar tactics were employed by people in Indonesia in building their positive ethos on LinkedIn from an Indonesian cultural perspective. This is because the same traditional rhetorical concepts such as pathos or what appeals to audiences' emotions, logos or what appeals to audiences' logical argument, and ethos which appeals to an understanding of ethical behaviour are also at work employing similar context in digital spaces like LinkedIn. However, the practice in constructing the rhetorical value, especially ethos, is different from one culture to another as different cultural perspectives might value, see, and do things differently which includes behaviour in job-related social media. Therefore, it is highly important to see how people do things based on a certain cultural perspective as it may mean that while using LinkedIn can help create a positive ethos in workplace context, failure in building a positive ethos because of different culture in LinkedIn communities may create a negative ethos.

## **METHOD**

This study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach with textual analysis focusing on an individual's profile in LinkedIn in order to find out how individuals communicate and express personal branding while creating a positive ethos within LinkedIn as seen from an Indonesian cultural

perspective. The instruments used within this research were the participants' LinkedIn profiles, a male and a female. The participants chosen for this research were native Indonesians who were my acquaintances. Both of them were born in the 1990s which make them peers coming from the same age group. They were graduates of bachelor degrees and had been working in different backgrounds. Thus, they felt the necessity to create LinkedIn profiles. Jessica was my upperclassman who I met when I pursued my bachelor degree. During the time this paper was written, she was working in an export-import trading company. On the other hand, Alex was my childhood friend and was working in a prominent advisory financial firm, auditing, assurance, and investment banking. Their profiles were authentic and carefully made by each of them personally and separately without knowing each other. I did not ask them to make the profiles as they had already made the profiles purely with the purpose of providing each of themselves with a quality networking. Both of them had given me their consent in using those profiles as the instrument and source of data of this research. However, I will still use fake names and censor their photos for confidentiality purposes.

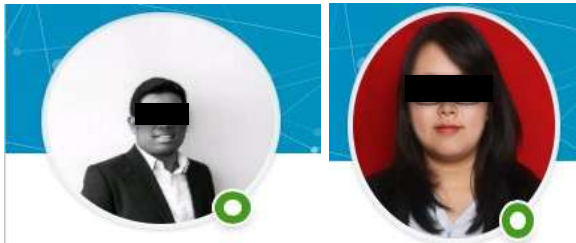
## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The result of the research is presented in two parts. The first part deals with the communication of identity through visual expression. The visual expression that is discussed within this research is about the ethos of resume for working purposes which involves visual expression that the participants included in their profiles. The second part deals with the communication of identity through verbal expression. The verbal expression discussed within this research are related to the written part of the profile such as how they write their working experiences, education background, and other things that may be related. The findings are presented in such way to give a detailed and focused discussion towards elements which created positive ethos in communicating identity.

### **Communicating Identities in LinkedIn through visual expression**

LinkedIn is a professional networking site where business people are connected together. They can share their ideas and views, hire job-seekers, establish business connections, and even do business. LinkedIn could be indirectly seen as a shortcut to build a public profile in business as it lets people build connections with other business people and even find a career leap. In that way, visual expression in LinkedIn

should be used with those opportunities as the goals. People usually begin their LinkedIn profile with a visual image which lets themselves be recognised clearly by others. Communicating identities in LinkedIn through visual expressions mainly discussed how participants reflect their personalities, characteristics, or work-performance and engage or connote positive ethos simply through the use of the avatar from Indonesian culture perspective. Surely, both participants did not use any default avatars, the blank icons with human silhouette, as it may not suggest a good thing about the person as there are a lot of negative connotations for leaving the avatar icon blank such as lacking attention to details, lacking self-confidence, and lacking ability to finish the job properly.



**Picture 1.** Participants' LinkedIn Avatars: Alex (male, left), Jessica (female, right)

After observing the avatars of the participants, I realised there were undergoing patterns and similarities that could be observed in the two pictures. First, both of them put their own self-portrait as the display photo, the photo that could be seen by public. Their motives were probably so that others can easily recognise them and make it easy to establish future relationships. People feel safer and more assured establishing relationships with people whom they recognise. In that sense, each of them treated LinkedIn the way it is supposed to be: as an immediate way to build a public profile and ethos among professionals in community as LinkedIn provides opportunities to build a global professional profile (Oslund, 2013, p. 252) with the purpose of engaging a connection with other professionals in terms of business clients, or employers. It is amazing to think what a single picture can do for financial opportunity within LinkedIn as it affects what people think.

Second, both of them dressed formally with suits. As Alex worked in an advisory company, and Jessica worked in a trading company, formal clothes have become necessities in their working context and could be treated similarly to a uniform because they were working in an office atmosphere. Furthermore, in the context of an office atmosphere, the formal clothes have become uniforms which tell people who they are and, at the same time, associate them with profes-

sionalism through the use of visual expressions. In Indonesia, hierarchy remains as critical and as established as ever, but its value has changed (Mulder, 1992, p.147) since globalisation as people in Indonesia started to look up to Western countries' cultures which became popular cultures at that time. As a result, charismatic status which used to be determined from birth with the order of sultanate, aristocracy, or caste has diminished and has been replaced by affluence, wealth, and power. In that way, the social order in Indonesia which was static and clear from the beginning has become more fluid as people's statuses go mobile and the hierarchy changes from one society to another. In that sense, both participants dressed formally and put their self-portrait as the display picture because they wanted to be put in a high position in the hierarchy. They wanted to be looked upon as charismatic people who are powerful, skilful, and professional. In the new social order in Indonesia, people tend to be more individualistic rather than social; their self-interests have become closer to the surface of their public life instead of keeping it private while prioritising public interests like how it used to be.

Selecting a picture to become the avatar is a rhetorical choice and depends on the target audience that will connect with it because different avatars might have a different sense of ethos imbued within and, thus, reflect different personalities and values to the viewers (Oslund, 2013, p.258) as personalities can be inferred quite accurately from carefully made profiles on LinkedIn (Ven, N. van de., et al. 2017. p.426). Essentially, the avatar is seen as a tool to set a theme to a profile on LinkedIn. From their avatars, Alex and Jessica wore suit connoting professionalism and formalities from which they hope to create a positive ethos with a purpose to highlight and market themselves as professionals who take both works and appearances seriously. In that way, LinkedIn avatar also acts as a means of personal marketing and branding. The users hoped to be provided with job opportunities within their desired workplace which led them to put pictures which best describes themselves while evoking ethos in a workforce context as their display picture. In the job market in Indonesia these days, people are competing to stand out from others in a positive way as the more they stand out from others, the better the chances of career improvement they will have by gaining job offers.

However, it is crucial to take note that different people have different sets of personality and ethos they want to portray through their profiles. The employers are behaving similarly as well as different companies, different cultures, different persons had

their own preferences in seeing things. Some people even value personalities differently; some see that being introverted is a negative trait because it makes it hard to communicate properly, get the job done, and most importantly solve issues involving teamwork. Meanwhile, others react in a neutral or even positive way towards introverted personalities because they think introverts can reliably keep a company's secrets and efficiently use their time because they do not communicate much to each other. Similarly, some people may have a positive view on either one's profile and some may see their profiles negatively. Some people may see Jessica or Alex negatively and see the other one positively, or both of them positively, or perhaps both of them negatively. There is neither one image that is always appropriate nor one that will have the same impact on all viewers (Wysocki, 2003; as cited in Oslund, 2013, p.258).

Essentially, a LinkedIn avatar sets an ambience or a context for the kind of ethos that the user wants others to recognise. In this way, the participant's field of job served as a context which had similar sets of ethos they wanted to portray, which in this case was the formality. However, different jobs may portray or require different ethos. For example, jobs in offices may have a different portrayed ethos from jobs related to modelling, fieldwork, medicine, culinary, or automotive engineering. Moreover, personal preferences may affect the way of a user may portray themselves in LinkedIn, as some people may choose different attires that suit their job better, or even choose to put another picture for many possible reasons (their personality, their working preferences, their working behaviour, etc.). In order to know these facts, people have to do their research first; to see how other people did it, and consider the personality traits that they wanted to portray regarding their personal and job value.

In that sense, communicating identity in LinkedIn requires people connect to other people, socialise with them, and see how they do things before they made their profiles. Each of them wants to be similar to others in some kind of way while also wanting to be different enough from others to stand out. This concept is similar to those of cafes where everyone wants to see and be seen by others. In this case, their images portrayed in such a way as a LinkedIn avatar, connect with audiences, connoting their personal value such as being professional who takes care of the job and appearances properly. I find these avatars important in profiles, especially in LinkedIn profiles as they create connections between image and the personality reflected through them and the user's

actual work performance itself. Creating a positive connection between image and what is actually done in the job is one of the goals of creating a LinkedIn profile (Oslund, 2013, p.258).

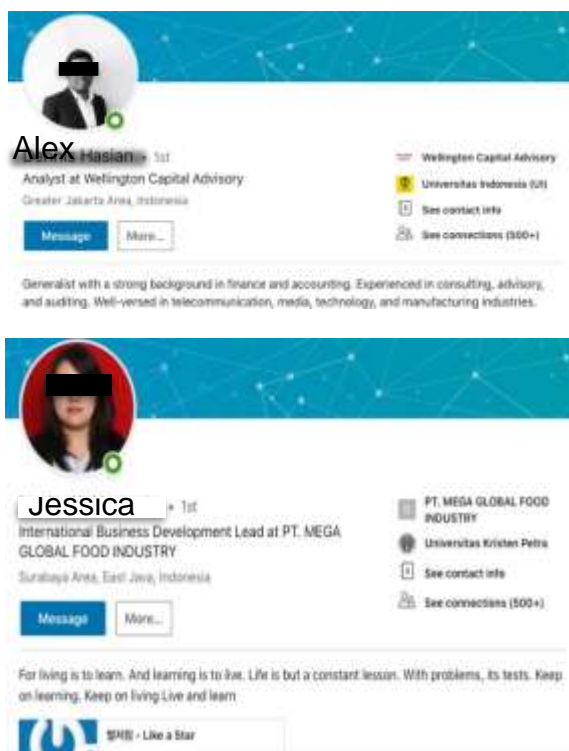
### **Communicating Identities in LinkedIn through verbal expression**

Oslund noted from Wysocki (2004) that people sometimes look at the online content they create as "objects to be seen, to be physically manipulated" (Wysocki, 2004, p. 22; as cited in Oslund, 2013, p.257). With that perspective, people usually begin by filling the homepage first when they make their LinkedIn profile, e.g., getting an avatar (profile picture), writing work experience (if there is any), listing achievements or certificates, filling the education background, and mentioning the job or the work that they are doing right at that moment with the motive to see others and to be seen by others. In that way, people connect based on their similarities and they become able to chat or talk with each other which may become one of the reason, aside from job-seeking. As a result, people tend to fill in the profiles in LinkedIn more carefully and seriously compared to those of Facebook, as people in LinkedIn hope to be connected with people of similar background who can offer them a career leap, a partner in the business, etc.

In Indonesia, some people put up that information with the motivation to put themselves in a hierarchy where they stand out from others in a job-seeking context, although Indonesians tend to appear humble and social on the outside. In fact, hierarchy is crucial in Indonesia, but globalisation has changed its value to become more business-like and less personal as people in Indonesia start to look up to Western countries' cultures which has become the dominant culture. As a result, charismatic status which used to be determined from birth with the order of sultanate, aristocracy, or caste has diminished and has been replaced by affluence, wealth, and power, *ngelmu* has been replaced by diploma, and mystery has been replaced by theology (Mulder, 1992, p.147). The new social order in Indonesia seeks something more positive and tangible: something people could see, touch, and feel such as wealth, diploma, formal study. Essentially, the social order in Indonesia which was static and clear from the beginning has become more fluid as the people's status may become mobile and the hierarchy or the order changes from one society to another.

In Indonesia, the content of LinkedIn profiles are usually focused on the homepage, which is the text

that first appears when visiting a profile, as they serve as the first thing people see when they visit. In that way, the homepage also serves as the hook of the profile, a little taste of the whole profile. Similar to advertisements, therefore, the homepage should be made in concise and brief but unique, specific, and detailed information about the user which makes it stand out from others. However, giving too much information, whether general or specific, would make the homepage profile boring. Giving too little information, however, would leave the employers clueless about the person. In order to do that, we need to step back when making the profile and put ourselves in the potential employers' shoes. That way, we can consider what they want and try looking at the homepage from the employers' perspectives to see how the homepage is viewed within its current context. Besides putting ourselves in the employers' shoes, another possible, and perhaps the most effective method is to see how other people make their own homepage on LinkedIn. We can see how other people do it, yet it would not be as creative as if we make the homepage profile by ourselves based on our highlighted personalities because the user is the only one fully aware of his/her personality and the way he/she wants it to be highlighted.



**Picture 2.** Alex's and Jessica's LinkedIn initial profiles

The initial content should be a brief self-introduction, what professional services and knowledge the user has to offer, what experience the user has, and if available, some sample references from co-workers

(Oslund, 2013, p. 261). Seeing from Alex's initial profile in LinkedIn, it appears to me that Alex followed the theory to a significant length although he may not be aware of it himself. He wrote about himself briefly including his job at the present time, his education background, and a summary of his characteristics and his qualifications in the English language. He certainly looked professional in terms of creating a good ethos by picturing himself in the profile wearing suit and summarising himself neatly. In this way, when employers see his profile, they can already extract some basic important information such as the education background, the job-related qualifications, and the position that he is in right now without wasting time dwelling in his profile.

Meanwhile, in Jessica's profile, I could see similar patterns going on between hers and Alex's profile as the information was filled accordingly to further associate themselves with the professionalism that they had previously done with their avatar. People usually begin by filling the homepage first when they make their LinkedIn profile, e.g., getting an avatar (profile picture), writing work experience (if there is any), listing achievements or certificates, filling the education background, and mentioning the job or the work that they are doing at that moment with the motive to see others and to be seen by others. In this case, both of them filled the position they were working, the university they had graduated from, and a general description in the summary column. However, I had to agree that Luptia's profile looked unique as she used the summary column differently from Alex. Alex wrote a summary of his qualifications. Meanwhile, Jessica put a life quote in it and added a link to a Korean-Pop song which I reckon is her hobby which looked unusual at first.

Jessica's way of using the summary column by putting out a life quote and a Korean-pop song to give further identification about her hobby does not render the summary column ineffective or inefficient as it can be seen as a way of self-branding. In that way, the homepage also serves as the hook of the profile, a little taste of the whole profile. Similar to advertisements, the homepage should be made in concise, brief, but offers something unique, specific, and detailed information about the user which may make themselves stand out from others. Rather than following others who write typically the same things over and over again, I think Jessica begged to differ from them by doing a self-branding that could make employers know her better in that way. That part of self-branding is combining image with a promise of what is offered such as being experienced and professional, creative, etc (Fleming, 2006, p. 33). Think



of the life quote she put as her way of seeing life and her personality. That way, her personality and her high willingness to learn can be inferred accurately simply from the quote that she put in the column meant for summary as what is put in a profile may reflect the user's personality. Jessica's way of making her profile by putting a quote could be considered a good way to engage with employers as the profile reflects the actual personality. Therefore, her profile contains more accurate and relevant information about her, and they are more ethical and accessible to the employers. Based on the profile alone, we can infer how Jessica will fare in her job and draw a more relevant conclusion about processing her profile to the next step in the recruitment process.

Meanwhile, it is important to note that there is no right or wrong in making the profiles as different people have different sets of personalities and different ethos they want to portray through their profiles. From their profiles, the two participants chose to portray different ethos in their profiles in LinkedIn. For starters, Alex chose to portray his formality since he followed the standard and saw how others made their profiles while improving it. On the other hand, Jessica chose to portray her own personality, mindset, and hobby through a quote which may connect to her audience, the employer, by reflecting her own personality.

In choosing the quote to reflect the personality, I think that it would be better to search for a quote that reflects the generally positive ethos or positive personality sought from job-seekers. For example, a quote indicating that the person loves to learn new things, a quote indicating that the person loves to work hard and never give up, a quote indicating that the person is a good communicator, etc. It is possible to select a quote with a more specific meaning which reflects the personality, e.g., "Planning to fail is failing to plan - Alan Lakein" to highlight that the user is a planner. That way, employers are able to know the candidate's personality and their mindset better and they are more interested in the candidate as he/she engages with them on a higher level which is the level of a personality, rather than simply talking about their qualifications. Therefore, the profile will contain more accurate and relevant information about self, be more ethical and accessible to the employers, and as a result, have a higher chance to be recruited. However, I think it is highly important for people to search for the positive ethos that the job requires and connect the ethos with them first to avoid mistakes in self-portraying for the job. For example, it may not sound ethical for a person desiring a position as a doctor in a hospital to have his life quote be something related to money, business, and/or a lavish lifestyle. Using quotes in profiles may look artistic and intelligent at first, but there are also risks in doing so.



**Picture 3.** Alex's (Top) and Jessica's (Bottom) experiences from the LinkedIn profiles

There are some differences noted from the two profiles which reflect the qualifications that the two would like others to recognise from their working experiences. First of all, Alex preferred to write in details about his job in the two companies: Deloitte, and Wellington Capital Advisory. He mostly wrote his job descriptions in the two companies. Interestingly, people in their early careers have a tendency to put more details on their LinkedIn profiles (Zhitomirsky-Geffet & Bratspiess, 2016) with the purpose to highlight their qualifications, professionalism, and achievement in doing the job. Even more so, as hierarchy is crucial in Indonesia and that people are actively looking for something more tangible such as achievement, diploma, wealth, etc, it could be concluded that their motive in writing their working experience in detail is simply to associate themselves with professionalism as to gain power which would put them in a higher position in the hierarchy compared to other job-seekers.

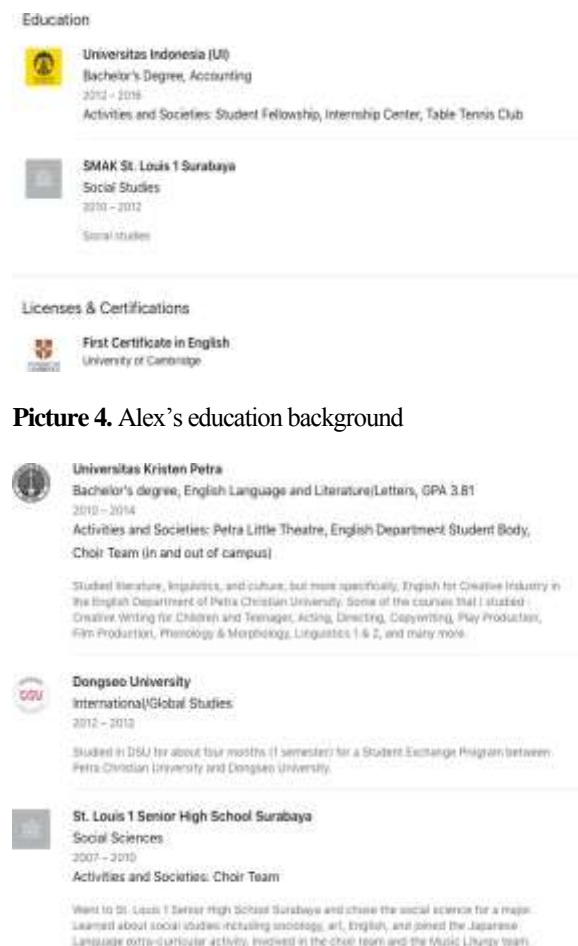
In addition, Alex's motive in writing his working experience in the details of his job-description is because qualifications are also reflected on the job description that he had in his previous job. It is very unlikely for people to not be able to do the job that has similar job descriptions as their previous job because they already have the knowledge and experience

necessary to do the job. Furthermore, Alex also included the logo of the company in his profile. Technically, including a logo in LinkedIn means that both of the companies also have their LinkedIn profiles or pages. It also means that the companies are big enough to be recognised in LinkedIn. Both are true for Alex as he had worked for big companies. Deloitte is included as one of the biggest four accounting firms in the world, while Wellington Capital Advisory is an advisory company on an international scale. Simply by looking at the name of the companies alone, especially Deloitte, people may believe that Alex is someone who is qualified and more than capable to do the related job.

On the contrary, Jessica also wrote the experiences in detail, but with a different method from Alex. Instead of writing the job descriptions and such, Jessica chose to include the websites or the catalogues of the products that were likely to be her projects back then. Probably, her motive in doing so is because projects are different from the job description as a project is the extra job or contribution that she did while she was doing the job. Of course, listing those projects will be a plus for Jessica rather than listing the job descriptions because the employers are looking for people who can make an impact in their company. Furthermore, the companies which Jessica was working for were not on a great scale compared to Alex's, although Jessica was in a higher position compared to Alex as she was an Export Head in her previous place. If Jessica modeled her profile similarly to Alex's, she would not portray an ethos as positive as she portrays now. It was simply because the employers would not be able to accurately measure her quality of the job except from her job title which stood out in her resume. People were able to do so to Alex simply because they know the scale of the company. Thus, they drew a conclusion based on that alone. People working in big companies have gone through a series of tests and are seen as more qualified compared to those who do not work for big companies.

The way these two informants wrote their work experiences are similar, but they focus and weigh on different items in the section. Alex, a finance analyst, chose to highlight the companies he worked for as those companies were big and internationally recognised companies, especially Deloitte, one of the four biggest accounting firms in the world. His audience may see him positively for his qualifications, although his positions in those companies were on the associate level. Nevertheless, Alex highlighted the company he was working for in his profile. On the other hand, Jessica highlighted her position as an

Export Head and her contributions to the companies. The companies Jessica worked for were not as big as Alex's. Even so, she filled a more senior position in the company compared to Alex. In addition, she had also done several projects in the company she was working for, so her image as a competent person is strengthened. Essentially, the two informants had similar goals which is to sell each of themselves in the job market even if each of them used different methods.



Picture 4. Alex's education background

Picture 5. Jessica's education backgrounds

The two participants also wrote different educational backgrounds. Alex chose to write a simple background with few details, including his major and activities. In addition, he also added a qualification related to English proficiency. However, he did not say anything about his grades. On the other hand, Jessica gave details in her education background, such as her majors, GPA, achievements, and courses. The way Jessica wrote her education background was similar to how Alex wrote his working experience. On the contrary, Alex wrote his background education without much detail, unlike how he wrote his working experience. Meanwhile, Jessica wrote her background education with much attention to details similar to how Alex wrote his.

Seeing from their educational background and certifications that were included in their resumes, I believe people can already measure their competence alone. Beginning from their high school education in which both of them graduated from St. Louis 1 Surabaya, one of the most prestigious schools in Indonesia especially in East Java, Central Java, and Borneo, audiences coming from Indonesia can already see their competence. Even so, people coming from outside of Indonesia may not recognise this high school as it is not as famous as Singapore's Anglo-Chinese School International (ACS International) or Methodist Girls' School (MGS). Moving on to their university background, some people may recognise Alex's background better as he graduated from the top and most prestigious public university in Indonesia which is Universitas Indonesia (UI/University of Indonesia). Graduates from this university are seen as smart and capable as the university itself is seen as one of the most prestigious in Indonesia. On the other hand, Jessica herself also graduated from a prestigious private university: Petra Christian University, a Christian university famous in East Java, Central Java, and Borneo. To leverage herself, Jessica included her student exchange experience to Dongseo University, a university in South Korea as people in Indonesia appreciate graduates from overseas universities. Alex also did something similar by putting his language proficiency certification: First Certificate in English (FCE), a certificate made by Cambridge to certify language proficiency, so as to provide an image of his level of English proficiency. By doing so, Alex hoped to be recognized positively and provided with further opportunities to work with other people coming from different countries using English as the main language.

However the way they wrote their education skills, their motivation in doing so are simply to leverage and put themselves in higher positions in a hierarchy compared to others in their fields. This is because in Indonesia, hierarchy is seen as important. Although Indonesians appear to be humble and social on the outside, they are deliberately looking for any method to establish the hierarchy system in the society. Thus, they are seeking something more tangible and definite: something people can see, touch, and feel such as wealth, diploma, or formal study, which leads to why the two participants wrote off a lot details in their educational background. Alex probably did not need to write much details on his education background as he comes from a good quality education as Universitas Indonesia (UI/University of Indonesia) is one of the most famous university in Indonesia. Jessica also comes from a good quality education background either. Even so, Alex's education back-

ground put himself in a slightly higher position as it was renowned as the most prestigious university in Indonesia compared to those of Jessica. Nevertheless, Jessica included her student exchange experience to Dongseo University, a university in South Korea. That way, Jessica's image may be further leveraged as people in Indonesia really look up to those who have graduated from overseas universities as those graduates were seen as internationally recognised in academic, smart, and as people who could speak multiple languages. Essentially, they put a lot of details in their LinkedIn profiles to get noticed by the employers, acknowledged as qualified people, and thus strengthen their professionalism while engaging with the employers through the portrayal of a positive ethos.

Despite differences in portraying themselves using verbal and visual expression, both of them use English as their main language in their profiles instead of using Indonesian, the main language spoken in the country. In Indonesian culture, English is seen as an international language and therefore more prestigious than Indonesian as a first language/daily language. Dardjowidjojo stressed that the reason for adopting English as the first foreign language is because science and technology are the world culture and the means to acquire and keep up with the development of science and technology in Indonesia is English (Dardjowidjojo, p. 44 as cited in Rini. J, 2014, p. 22). Thus, by using English as the language, the participants wanted to be seen as people who hold proficiency in speaking an international language and is hoped to be seen as smart people who have vast knowledge and valued positively based on that. Furthermore, English is used because of various reasons related to the job-seeking process as job vacancies require English as one of the requirements. English is regarded as important because by mastering English, people can have higher salaries and better opportunities (Rini. J, 2014, p. 23). From the participants point of view, using English in their profiles can be seen as an indirect method in demonstrating their ability and proficiency in using English as the language and can be seen positively from employers' perspectives.

Essentially, both of them use the language differently. However, one thing that stands out the most from their profiles is the fact that both of them use English to fill out the description of themselves. They mainly use the language describing their job descriptions as well as giving details to their resumes to give them more credibility. To improve the credibility, Alex filled the description briefly about himself, while Jessica put out a quote or her life philosophy which describes her best. Although they filled their description differently, they did all that with one purpose in



mind which is to be valued positively by future employers. In that sense, English has given them a new identity (Rini, J, 2014, p. 26). Essentially, everything put in the profiles is not there only to provide information, but also as a means to earn credibility. That information has been catered greatly to fit the person, the information connoting something which reflects the person in order to impress the employers and connote a positive ethos in their profiles.

## CONCLUSION

This paper examines how Indonesians communicate their identities in LinkedIn as a means of personal branding as seen from Indonesian culture. The study was conducted using descriptive qualitative approach with textual analysis focusing on profiles in LinkedIn. The analysis involved some notions such as positive ethos in LinkedIn (Oslund, 2013), and social order from Indonesian culture (Mulder, 1992) to unveil the purpose in making the profiles in such a way. From the findings, each of the participants sought to be regarded as professional and credible in their work, and wanted to be valued positively as hierarchy is a crucial matter in Indonesia. That way, the two participants sought to be put in high positions in such hierarchy so as to stand out and be given a priority in the talent pool.

In doing so, they made their profiles using English, made a description about themselves, and provided a self-portrait wearing formal attire. Furthermore, they involved the name of their alma mater and their work positions at present. It is clear that people who plan to take part in the job market best serve their interests by becoming familiar with and present on LinkedIn.

Essentially, paying attention to the visual expression and the connotation of the avatar, and shaping information to reflect the actual personality are the most effective and the most used methods in creating a positive ethos in the LinkedIn profile which could affect career path positively. It is a necessary step in creating the image of a proficient and technologically savvy personality that potential employers or potential clients expect.

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