

## Street Clown Phenomenon: Contradictory Presence of Beggars Dressed In Character Costumes In Banjarmasin City

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### ABSTRACT

Banjarmasin has a serious problem with unemployment. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of the City of Banjarmasin, the togetherness rate in the city of Banjarmasin rose by 0.78 percent between 2019 and 2021, with the COVID-19 pandemic playing a role. This forces individuals to adapt in order to continue facing life's challenges. One of the occupations chosen by the residents of Banjarmasin is that of the street performer. The concept used by street clowns in the city of Banjarmasin originated from the criteria of clowns themselves, which is that the clown is a supporting character by displaying interesting, funny, and endearing choreography and is now a clown who only sits while displaying facial expressions that beg for mercy from people. This study seeks to determine the motivations behind a person's decision to become a street clown and the significance of their emergence. The researcher employs Max Weber's Social Action theory and Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory in the analysis. This study employs a phenomenological research methodology. According to the findings of this study, someone becomes a street clown because one of their needs is unmet. Moreover, the public considers the presence of street clowns to be extremely disturbing. Since their practise has reached a crossroads. Therefore, it can endanger both motorists and clowns. Some consider street clowns beggars due to their practice of displaying a pitiful face to solicit money from the community. But the children had a different perspective; whatever face the clown saw was entertaining to them. This implies that the street clown has multiple meanings, depending on how the actor interprets the street clown's actions.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Banjarmasin is one of Indonesia's major metropolises. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Banjarmasin City in 2021, the city, also known as the city of a thousand rivers, has a population of around 657,663 people. The population growth rate of Banjarmasin City increases each year; nevertheless, this does not automatically make job rivalry among people more competitive. This city's economy grows in tandem with its population as it expands. In addition to the pandemic of COVID-19, which has worsened the economic state of the neighbourhood. This condition leads in the

loss of some people's means of subsistence and the appearance of squatters in this metropolis of a thousand rivers.

A significant unemployment problem plagues Banjarmasin. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of the City of Banjarmasin, the togetherness rate in the city of Banjarmasin grew by 0.78 percentage points between 2019 and 2021, with the COVID-19 epidemic being one of the contributing factors. It is recognised that this is a problem that emerges as a result of the restricted number of available employment relative to the number of job seekers, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic, when there are several enormous layoffs.

Individuals must adapt in order to overcome life's challenges. The citizens of Banjarmasin have chosen to work as street performers. Clowns are entertainers with a variety of traits and mannerisms, such as movement or device expertise (Fahridho, 2021:14). This street clown is one of the methods of singing practised by the community, particularly the people of Banjarmasin, since it is well-known that the qualities of a busker are singing songs of many genres of music to entertain people and earn a living. While the street clowns wear costumes of animated characters, they frequently carry music speakers and do dances to attract the attention of benefactors who provide money freely.

Researchers saw several street clowns in Banjarmasin's diverse districts due to their initial observations during the COVID-19 outbreak. They dressed up like cartoon characters and some wore speakers around their necks. However, they frequently merely use modest containers to present from others without doing anything exciting. There are also street clowns that do not wear the heads of their costumes and merely put on a sad look to receive a gift from people. A clown, in general, is an actor or showman who is also known as a comic.

According to PP NO 31 of 1980 concerning the Countermeasures of Homeless and Beggars, in Article 1 Paragraph 2 Beggars are defined as people who earn income by begging in public in various ways and reasons to expect mercy from others. There are several categories of beggars, one of which is contemporary beggars. According to Engkus Kuswarno, contemporary beggars or contemporary beggars are begging practices that follow the times or the present, living for today or in the short term, for example for daily life.

In Banjarmasin, the concept of street clowns evolved from the criterion for clowns; in KBBI, a clown is an actor or playwright who is also known as a comedian. This indicates that a clown is a character who entertains the audience with interesting, funny, and adorable choreography. However, the clown spotted in the city of Banjarmasin at the moment simply sits with a face that begs for forgiveness from others. Based on the phenomena of street clowns in Banjarmasin, researchers want to know and comprehend the background of the individual who is a street clown in Banjarmasin. Furthermore, the researcher want to learn about the community's reaction to the presence of street clowns in Banjarmasin.

## **2. METHOD**

The researcher did phenomenological research for this study. The purpose of phenomenology research is to comprehend people's responses to their presence in society as well as their experiences in interpersonal relationships (Nursapia, 2020:42). This study offers a strategy to comprehend the phenomenon of Banjarmasin's street clowns. In terms of data validity, the researchers employed data triangulation by conducting interviews with a number of groups, such as academics, communities, affiliated agencies, and clowns. The documentation produced by the researchers throughout the investigation is intended to support the data in this study.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The emergence of clowns in the city of Banjarmasin created a new social phenomenon. This is because apart from being an alternative entertainment for the people who see it, it also disturbs the view of the city. In this study, the author conveys the results of interviews and analyzes how the phenomenon of street clowns is seen from various perspectives.

#### 1. Causes of Street Clowns Appear

There are several reasons for the emergence of street clown work. This is caused by factors that occur, including Termination of Employment (PHK), the bankruptcy of their own business, the environment in which they live, and their lack of skills.

- **Job Breaker**

At the end of 2019, the whole world was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic without guarantees in the City of Banjarmasin. This has caused many people to be laid off because their workplaces went bankrupt, even though the layoffs were carried out following Law No. 12 of 1964, so many looked for side jobs to meet their daily needs. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of Banjarmasin City, the rate has increased from 2019 to 2021 by 0.78% due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the jobs chosen by some people in Banjarmasin City to fulfill their daily needs is to become a Street Clown.

- **The bankruptcy of Independent Business**

In addition to the layoffs factor that causes people to carry out Street Clown jobs, the businesses they run independently have gone bankrupt due to the Covid19 disaster. The decline in business means that the capital that must be used to run a business is forced to be used to meet the necessities of life. Thus, the capital for which they live where during the pandemic is eroded and directly the economy of the people of Indonesia's economic growth reaches -6.13% in August 2020 (Mulyani, 2020). This has an impact on small businesses run by the community.

- **Living Environment**

As for another thing that causes people to work as street clowns, namely because of their environment, many of them work as street clowns. In addition, many clown costume rental places make it easier for people to rent clown costumes.

- **Lack of Skills Possessed**

In addition to the limited job opportunities available, the lack of skills and intense competition make it difficult for people to find work. For someone who does not have the skills needed in the old workplace, it will be difficult for that person to find a job. In addition, a low level of education possessed also affects finding a job, because a high level of education makes a person meet the requirements to apply for a job.

#### 2. The Presence of a Street Clown: Rationalizing the Action of Working as a Street Clown

Weber categorizes the types of social action. The four types were grouped by Weber, which he saw from their orientation: action-oriented goals, values, actions, and the last action-oriented action (Weber in Ritzer, 2012). This classification is also called Weber as an ideal type because humans can understand that the actions taken can be determined as previously mentioned.

seen from the implementation of people who carry out work as street clowns, they can be categorized at the time of purposeful action (instrumental). Because those who work as street clowns, before deciding to choose the job, think rationally first by considering everything to achieve an expected goal, namely being able to meet the needs of life.

#### 3. Street Clowns as Jobs To Meet Needs

Every individual has something that must be fulfilled in his life. One of these things is the need to live life. The existence of needs that must be met makes individuals have a motivation

to meet the needs to be achieved. There are many reasons why someone thinks well in carrying out certain actions, these actions are often carried out consciously or planned. Abraham Maslow divides needs into five levels from the simplest needs to the most complex needs. According to Maslow, however, individuals as human beings cannot be separated from their needs (As'ad, 1991: 48).

One of society's five needs must be met is psychological needs (physiological needs). This psychological need is a basic need commonly referred to as a primary need that humans are first trying to fulfill. Primary needs are basic needs that must be met by all humans, namely food, clothing, and shelter.

Street clown is a job that some people in Banjarmasin City choose. This they do to meet their life needs first during the COVID-19 pandemic which is trying various sectors. One of the sectors experiencing weakness is the economy. So, the explanation above asks about the theory from Abraham Maslow that the emergence or background of a person chooses to work as a street clown to fulfill his life needs, especially the first level needs, namely psychological needs in the form of psychological needs, as well as a place to live.

#### **4. Analysis of the Meaning of Street Clowns: Contradictions to the Presence of Beggars in Costumes**

Social actions carried out by a person have a separate meaning for the perpetrator. As quoted by Weber quoted by Warriner *"For Weber, action is meaningful behavior, social action is action, that is, meaningful behavior that is oriented towards others. (Warriner in Truzzi, 1974)*. The actions of the perpetrators have meanings that are directed at others. This means that the perpetrator takes no meaningless action against another person.

Every human action is inseparable from the judgment of others. The action taken is often a reference from others to assess the actor who took the action. However, those who see may not know the meaning of the actions taken by the actor. In this study, trying to use a meaning given by the community an action taken by a street clown who has already used the clown costume using the verstehen method. In general, clowns are known as characters in an event and look attractive. However, what happened was that the clowns made changes by taking to the streets and their practice could be said to be inconsistent with the concept of clowns in general. So that the practice carried out by street clowns, produces many views or meanings from the community towards the presence of street clowns, ranging from positive or negative. The views on clowns are expressed from the point of view of the Government, academics, and the general public regarding the presence of street clowns.

##### **● Government**

The Civil Service Police Unit As an institution that always interacts directly with the community, especially in the comfort and convenience of the city, has a view on the emergence of clowns. According to him, these street clowns are due to several factors experienced by some people.

*"The phenomenon of clowns on the road is classified as negative because it can endanger both road users and themselves and also disrupt the flow of the road. Apart from being on the road, this clown is also in front of a mini market where there are many reports from the shop owner because their presence is disturbing, some are forcing their activities to get money, that's why we secured it."*

Excellence due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is the community's economy. This is what makes people have to adapt to still be able to meet the needs of daily life, one of which is working as a street clown. In addition, the negative presence of these street clowns includes the practice they carry out on the streets. Their placement can disrupt the flow of the road and

can endanger road users and the street clowns themselves. In addition to civil service police, the researcher also interviewed social services with the view that ;

*“With the street clowns, we see that there are factors that make them work as clowns, such as economic, environmental, and circumstances. Apart from that, there are other aspects, namely coercion. The point is because of the conditions and circumstances that require them to carry out the profession to fulfill their life needs.*

- **Academics**

According to Nasrullah, S.Sos., IMA, as an academician and Anthropologist at Lambung Mangkurat University, the emergence of street clowns is a *trend* originating from cities in Java that have expanded to the city of Banjarmasin. This street clown is one of the jobs that risk their lives on the highway because the income they get comes from their activities on the streets. From this income, they can fulfill their needs with certain properties and often add speakers worn around their necks. In addition, he also views street clowns in Banjarmasin as beggars who only wear costumes.

- **Public General**

According to the community, the presence of street clowns is diverse if the eyes of children can be said to be entertaining, on the contrary for adults it will be annoying and look like beggars. However, they judged that working as a clown was better than asking directly without using a costume. Because of the costumes they wear, they can entertain the public even without the choreography they have.

In addition, they are of the view that the presence of street clowns is disturbing road users who pass. What clowns do is tend to force the driver to ask for money by knocking on the car door and chasing the car he wants. What the street clowns do is very dangerous for the driver and himself.

## **5. Government Policy in Handling the Street Clown Phenomenon**

In dealing with the phenomenon of street clowns, there are several policies contained in the PERDA, one of which is from the PP SATPOL which has the authority to discipline road users, one of which is street clowns who carry out their activities at crossroads or red lights. This rule is contained in the Regional Regulation of the City of Banjarmasin Number 20 of 2013 concerning the Implementation of Cleanliness, Beauty, Order, and Environmental Health.

The Banjarmasin City Social Service also has the authority to guide homeless people, beggars, and prostitutes. The regulation is also related to street clowns which are based on the Banjarmasin City Regulation No. 12 of 2014 concerning Combating Homelessness Begging and Immorality.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The advent of this street clown is a trend that began on the Indonesian island of Java and has spread to Banjarmasin. Several variables influence the amount of people who choose to work as street clowns, including job loss, business failure, living conditions, and a lack of skills. Their unmet needs fuel this. Especially since the COVID-19 pandemic that swept the world was unforeseen in Banjarmasin, weakening the community's economy. As a result, they must adapt and examine their activities to suit life's needs by working as street clowns.

The activity of street clowns contradicts the definition of clowns in general. Unique, amusing, and endearing choreography is strongly associated with the clown character. However, clowns on the streets to entertain the public display their faces in the hope that the public will pity them and give them money. This is the same as the definition of a beggar,

which is someone who earns a living by taking advantage of circumstances without expecting charity from others. So that it causes the community's use of road traffic interruptions.

Several parties in the city of Banjarmasin continue to use the term "street clown" to refer to costumed beggars. However, it differs from the author's interpretation of street clowns in terms of notions and people's perspectives. A street clown has a twofold meaning in the author's mind. Like the presence or absence of amusement provided by street clowns, as well as the absence of beggars. This means that a clown can become a beggar if he cannot entertain others who see him, or he can become a road if he can make those who see him useful. Whether entertaining or not, a street clown will return to the concept of social action that can give significance to both the performer and the intended object.

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