

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A book could be very special to people who value the importance of reading and literacy in their life. As a basic skill, reading skills should have been developed in younger days with the intention to help oneself to be a lifelong learner. Reading could also be a hobby that allows people to create or join book clubs to gather and talk about books. Furthermore, the development of technology and networking has taken part in community creation, including a community that consists of people who are interested in books and reading activities. BookTwt on Twitter is one of the examples of how social media users can establish an online community yet at the same time create a new identity.

BookTwt, the simplified form of Book Twitter, can be defined as a label of an account created by the users on Twitter to which it is used to identify the account type or the contents that the user posts would be about books including reading, reviewing, trading, and other activities related to books. It can also refer to an open online community where people who love books and enjoy reading books gather to share, recommend, and post reviews of books they read on Twitter.

The advance in technology has allowed people to create alternative communities in the virtual world. Virtual communities have emerged from the net and people in it do everything when they are together yet they do it with words on screens and collectively strangers (Rheingold 1993). This happens to people who

are interested in books and becoming part of BookTwt where users with their interest in books and book-reading are able to gather with others who enjoy the same thing in the virtual world. Eventually, these people formed an open community. Adding the term BookTwt on Twitter profile information could help to identify the type of users' accounts and tell other users that their accounts mainly talk about books. Using it as a hashtag (#BookTwt) and including it in the tweet enables the users to find other accounts with the same interest if they are new to the community.

In Indonesia, this community is most likely acknowledged by many Twitter users as a corner or community of accounts where the users that are part of it would discuss books and reading activities. It works the same as the AniTwt (Anime Twitter) community which was created to be a corner where Twitter users who are interested in anime and *manga* would gather and discuss it or StudyTwt (Study Twitter) community that consists of accounts whose owners focus on studying as students and share their studying experience with fellow StudyTwt accounts. The majority of people on Twitter would also think about how to account users that are part of BookTwt would gather to talk about books and not immediately recognize how consumption issues occurred there. This has been the reason why the writer of this study is interested in studying this topic.

Indonesian BookTwts can be found easily in an automatically-post account, @literarybase, as the majority of its followings and followers are from Indonesia. The account itself was created by some Indonesian people who are interested in literature. If we look through @literarybase, there are hundreds of thousands of

Twitter users who enjoy literature. Furthermore, the existence of Indonesia's book readers or lovers' community continues growing and its number keeps increasing, especially on social media including Twitter. The development of technology has helped the readers to find access to any book clubs online or offline. The members of the book clubs are not limited to jobs, age, gender, or social status. Those who enjoy reading can join as a member.

Reading a book can be considered a form of consumption done by people who consume a book based on its use value. Readers in contemporary society are highly considered consumers (Nybacka 2011). The reading activity could be associated with book clubs. Many people might have not recognized how consuming books could be no longer due to the books' values. Consumption has become important to people and their lives due to its possibility to satisfy one's specific motives or any intention that brings out their component acts (Campbell 2004). Consumers do not only give their money to possess a product or take a service, but they also consider their needs and personal desires in their purchasing decision (Saltık, et al. 2013). Cleveland and Laroche (cited in Arıkan Saltık, Firat, Kutucuoğlu, & Tunçel, 2013) infer that an individual's "needs" means "wants" and "demands" if it is associated with the power of purchasing. Meanwhile, Barthes argues that consumption is only about the aspect of needs, but consumption itself carries and is embedded with social, cultural, and structures.

Consumption practices have never been absent in society as human beings have needs and demands that have to be fulfilled. It is the study of individuals or groups selecting, purchasing, and using goods, services, experiences, or ideas in

order to give pleasure and satisfaction to their personal needs and wants (Kotler and Keller 2016). This occurs as the effects of certain possible factors such as culture, psychology, economics, politics, and many more. There is also a possibility that people consume goods or spend other values on which they actually do not need to do it. Torlak (cited in Arıkan Saltık, Firat, Kutucuoğlu, & Tunçel 2013) suggests that consumption could be explained as consuming tangible or intangible values which are meant to fulfill certain demand, regardless of whether it is real or fake.

Being part of BookTwt would let Twitter users discuss, share, and recommend books with other users on Twitter. The term can be used as a hashtag to make it easier in finding fellow BookTwt accounts on Twitter. BookTwt accounts would often post and upload a picture of books they were reading or have just bought. Some discourse on Twitter about how BookTwt accounts tend to keep buying books but never read the books occurs quite often. Several factors could be able to give certain influences on their decision to consume books. One interesting thing is that BookTwt account users would display the number of targeted books they would read each year on their Twitter profile information and the writer of this study found its relation with a consumption issue.

While there are many platforms that provide free books and libraries to borrow books, however, they would keep buying them. Hence, this matter leads the writer of this study to examine and investigate the underlying intention or motivation behind their actions as it is considered a consumption issue, specifically on BookTwt accounts that are based in Indonesia, college students, and/or employees. The selection of job or type of work is based on the source of monthly

income which can also be a consideration for consuming books. Furthermore, the writer of this study would verify whether their consumption behavior eventually influences them to create a certain identity.

Many studies have shown how people tend to consume goods not because of their value, but due to other things. A previous study entitled “The Study of Identity Built by Tobikko (Hey! Say! Jump's Fans) in Surabaya through the Consumption of Hey Say Jump's Merchandises” examined how fans would spend their money on their idols' goods and consume their music or works to show their close and intimate relationship with HSJ along with the feeling of being encouraged and motivated for doing certain things. The writer of this related study applied Jenkins' Textual Poachers theory in analyzing the issue and used ethnography as the approach of the study. Meanwhile, a study by Destiny, conducted in 2020, finds out that consuming foods could be a way in which the consumer shifts the meaning or value of the objects they consume. Through the application of the theory of consumer culture by Featherstone and the interpretive qualitative method, this study has examined how millennial followers of a food reference account may create meaning and value of their own towards the foods they consume idols goods and it is influenced by the media showed along with the captions and comments that contains the review of the food. An earlier study conducted by Rahmaningtyas *et al.* in 2017 analyzed the factors that influence the purchasing decision toward local foods. It is resulted in how perceived price and perceived risk have a significant effect on local food consumption. Another study about how consumption behavior constructs people's identity was conducted by Amin in 2020. This study finds out

that activities in the community have affected the community member in building their own identity through how they consume the helmets. A theory by Featherstone was applied to examine the issues. The last related study was conducted by Lestari and Tiarawati in 2020. It discusses how hedonic motivation and consumer attitudes affects purchase decision. This study examined the influence of hedonic motivation and consumer attitudes toward purchasing decisions on the KPOPSURABAYA community. The result shows that both factors have a significant effect on purchasing decisions on K-Pop CD albums.

According to the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs Republic of Indonesia, the literacy issue that occurs in Indonesia still needs to be managed better. Based on the survey conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2019, Indonesia's literacy rate is considered low and ranked 60 of 70 countries listed. However, Twitter has become the medium for Indonesian book readers to express their interest in books, hence the writer would like to study the intention of book consumption activity that occurred in BookTwt nowadays could be different from how the majority of people think. This topic would be further discussed in order to investigate the pattern and underlying motivation of Indonesian BookTwt accounts on Twitter in consuming books and figure out what kind of identity is built by them. The writer of this study would like to relate this issue with the theory of consumer culture by Featherstone in which he classifies the Three Perspectives of Consumer Culture. The findings of this study are expected to be useful and helpful to other researchers who study a

similar object or issue and people who are interested in the issue analyzed in this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of the study above, therefore the problems that will be examined in this study are

1. How do Indonesia BookTwt account users consume the books?
2. How do BookTwt account users construct their identity through book consumption?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is conducted in order to:

1. Examine the consumption pattern towards books done by Indonesian BookTwt account users.
2. To reveal how BookTwt accounts users the identity construction that they do through their consumption of books.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Despite being known as a group of accounts whose owners are book lovers and talk about both books and reading activities, there is a consumption issue that occurred in the middle of BookTwt accounts and/or community and a certain identity that is believed to be constructed through the consumption of books done by them. Therefore, the researcher chose to do a study regarding the issue mentioned and intends to provide further insight into the consumption pattern toward books done by Indonesia BookTwt account users, acknowledge the

underlying motivation and intention of their consumption behavior, and how it builds their identity. This study would like to reveal the explanation along with the data obtained from interviews with some Indonesian BookTwt accounts that meet the criteria needed for the research. This study hopefully could give a contribution to cultural studies research and become a reference for the next researchers who would do a similar study in the future.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

- Twitter : Twitter is a microblogging platform and social network service that allows diverse people to gather and talk or share various perspectives, ideas, and information in a form of a post that is called a “tweet” (Twitter)
- BookTwt : A simplified term for Book Twitter that can be defined as a label of a Twitter account, an open online community, and/or a forum where users that love books and enjoy reading activities could gather with others with the same preference to share their experience and interaction with books to other people.
- Consumer Culture : a form of culture in which a certain thing is being consumed as there is the influence of the production of consumption, modes of consumption, and dreams, pleasure, wishes, and desire that become the cause of the consumption practice. (Featherstone 2007)

Identity : refers to what we are, have, and act; and somehow we identify it with someone or something. (Coulmas 2019)