

Gender Expression in the Work Activity Patterns of Baristas in Coffee Shops: A Case Study of Six Baristas in Padang City

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Abstract

The development of coffee shops in Padang City has increased the demand for baristas as part of the service sector, requiring technical skills, customer service, and social interaction. This study aims to describe baristas' work activity patterns and analyze gender expression in their everyday work practices in coffee shops in Padang City. This study employed a qualitative paradigm with a case study approach. The research was conducted from October 2025 to July 2026, with approximately two months of fieldwork through participant observation and in-depth interviews. The main participants were six baristas, comprising three men and three women, working at Café Dari Sini, Parewa Coffee, and Baraw Coffee. The locations were selected based on variations in their characteristics, work systems, and male-female barista composition. Participants were purposively selected, with managers and customers serving as supporting informants. Data were analyzed using the concept of gender expression and Butler's theory of gender performativity. The findings show that barista work consists of opening, operational, and closing stages carried out flexibly and collaboratively. Gender expression is manifested through appearance, communication, service attitudes, self-presentation, and interaction management. These expressions are not solely determined by sex or task distribution but are shaped through repeated work practices and social interactions. The process is influenced by Minangkabau sociocultural values, coffee shop work culture, social relations, and customer expectations. The novelty lies in positioning barista work as a performative arena where gender expression is produced and negotiated through the intersection of local Minangkabau values and professional service-sector demands.

Keywords: gender expression, barista, coffee shop, gender performativity, service sector work

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1. Introduction

Work is a social activity that not only serves to meet economic needs but is also part of the social and cultural practices that shape identity, social relations, and an individual's position in society. In contemporary anthropology, work is understood as a practice that is always influenced by cultural context, power relations, and the social processes that unfold in everyday life (Hayes, 2021). The development of modernization and a service-based economy has transformed the nature of work, making it increasingly oriented toward service, communication, social interaction, and managing customer relationships, so that workers' identities have become an integral part of the work process itself (Ott, 2020).

The workplace is not merely an economic space but also a social arena where workers construct their identities, negotiate meanings, and express themselves in various ways through daily interactions (Hayes, 2021). Various studies show that the work environment is a crucial

arena for the formation and reproduction of masculinity and femininity through task division, social relations, and expectations placed on workers. Therefore, work is not merely an economic space but also a cultural space where gender identities are practiced, interpreted, and negotiated in daily life.

One sector that exemplifies this dynamic is the rapidly growing coffee shop industry in various cities across Indonesia. The coffee shop industry no longer serves merely as a place for consumption but has evolved into a social space that facilitates interaction, the exchange of ideas, and community building in urban life (Guercini & Runfola, 2018). Within these spaces, baristas occupy a central position because they are not only responsible for the beverage production process but also for shaping the customer experience through interaction, communication, and service. Therefore, the job of a barista requires technical skills, interpersonal communication, and emotional labor, that is the ability to regulate and display emotional expressions in accordance with service demands and organizational rules (display rules) when interacting with customers (Grandey et al., 2022).

The growth of coffee shops in Padang presents an interesting phenomenon to study. Padang was chosen as the research location because it has experienced rapid growth in the coffee shop industry and has become one of the centers of service-based economic activity in West Sumatra. More specifically, in West Sumatra Province, the number of coffee shops reached 9,273 in December 2025. Among all regencies and cities in West Sumatra, Padang City was recorded as the area with the highest number of coffee shops; 2,201 establishments, making it the center of the coffee shop industry's growth in the province. This figure shows that Padang accounts for approximately 23.7% of all coffee shops in West Sumatra, indicating a relatively high concentration of coffee shop business activity and reaffirming Padang's position as a strategic urban center for the growth of coffee culture and the service sector today.

This growth has also increased the demand for workers in the service sector, including baristas. Baristas are professionals in the coffee industry who are expected to possess technical skills, product knowledge, and the ability to provide a high-quality service experience to customers (Samoggia & Riedel, 2020). However, preliminary observations indicate that the barista profession remains male-dominated, particularly in roles involving beverage preparation and the operation of coffee equipment. On the other hand, women's participation in this profession has also continued to rise alongside the growth of the coffee shop industry. This situation demonstrates that coffee shops serve as workplaces where men and women engage in relatively similar work activities, yet still have the potential to give rise to distinct gender dynamics.

In their daily work, baristas not only perform technical tasks but also express their identity through the way they speak, their appearance, body language, patterns of interaction, and customer service. Gender, in this context, is not understood as a fixed identity but rather as a social practice that is continually produced through repeated actions and interactions. Contemporary studies building on Judith Butler's work demonstrate that gender is the result of performativity, a series of repeated actions that create an impression of a specific gender identity in social life (Jenkins & Finneman, 2018). Accordingly, gender expression is understood as the way individuals present and practice gender through attitudes, behavior, language, appearance, and social interactions within a specific cultural context. Setiawati (2016) categorizes gender expression into three main forms; masculine, feminine, and androgynous, which are fluid and do not always correlate directly with biological sex.

A number of studies have examined the barista profession from the perspectives of gender and work experience. Aldha (2019) shows that the femininity of female baristas is often exploited as part of a marketing communication strategy in the coffee shop industry. Islam and Utami (2023) explain that baristas' identities and self-concepts are shaped by job demands and the social expectations that develop within the workplace. Hanifah and Azman (2022), as well as Samoggia and Riedel (2020), observe that the evolution of the modern coffee industry has transformed the barista profession into a job that demands technical competence, interpersonal skills, and customer service. Furthermore, Ott (2020) demonstrates that the barista's role within third-wave coffee culture is not merely about serving beverages but also serves as a space for

identity formation and the maintenance of social boundaries in urban life. Meanwhile, Guercini and Runfola (2018) highlight that work practices in the specialty coffee industry increasingly emphasize social interaction, the creation of customer experiences, and baristas' involvement in the process of value co-creation. Nevertheless, most research still focuses on work experiences, communication, or the construction of workers' images. Studies that specifically examine gender expression as a daily work practice from the perspectives of anthropology and gender performativity theory remain relatively limited, particularly in the local context of West Sumatra.

Given this disparity, this study aims to analyze how gender expressions are constructed, performed, and negotiated by male and female baristas in their daily work practices at coffee shops in Padang. This study is expected to contribute to the fields of gender anthropology and labor studies by demonstrating how gender is produced through work activities in public service settings within contemporary urban society.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using the case study method to gain an in-depth understanding of baristas' work patterns and expressions of gender in their daily work practices at coffee shops in Padang. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to understand social experiences, cultural practices, and the subjective meanings constructed by individuals in their social interactions. Qualitative research allows researchers to explore and understand the meanings individuals ascribe to a social phenomenon in the context of everyday life (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The case study method was used because the research focuses on a specific phenomenon within a particular social context and allows for an in-depth understanding of a case within its real-world context (Ridder, 2017).

The study was conducted at three coffee shops in Padang City, selected based on the intensity of service activities, the presence of both male and female baristas, and the characteristics of coffee shops that are active in urban consumption culture. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique that involves intentionally selecting participants based on specific criteria to obtain in-depth data relevant to the research objectives (Ames et al., 2019). Furthermore, informants were categorized into primary and supporting informants based on their level of involvement and knowledge regarding the phenomenon under study (Palinkas et al., 2015). There were six informants, consisting of three male baristas and three female baristas. The criteria for participant informants were: (1) working as a barista and not as a coffee shop owner; (2) gender (male and female); (3) having at least one year of work experience; (4) working at a coffee shop that employs both male and female baristas; and (5) having an educational background. Supporting informants consisted of coffee shop managers and customers who provided information regarding work systems, task distribution, service, and perceptions of barista practices. All informants were selected because they were deemed capable of providing information regarding patterns of work activity and expressions of gender in barista work practices.

Data collection was conducted through participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, documentation, and a literature review. Participatory observation was used to directly observe baristas' work activities, including service patterns, task distribution, communication styles, appearance management, and interactions with customers and coworkers (Windle et al., 2020). In-depth interviews were conducted to explore informants' experiences, perspectives, and interpretations of their work as well as expressions of gender within the barista profession (McGrath et al., 2019). Documentation in the form of photographs, field notes, and supporting documents was used to supplement the field data (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). Additionally, a literature review was conducted by examining various relevant works on gender, gender expression, and Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity (Snyder, 2019). The literature review was used to strengthen the analysis of gender, gender expression, and gender performativity. Regarding the theory of performativity, this study draws directly on the work of Judith Butler, particularly "Gender Trouble" (Butler, 1990), which serves as the conceptual

foundation for understanding gender as something produced through repeated social actions, rather than as a completely fixed identity.

The primary research instrument was the researcher herself (human instrument), while observation and interview guidelines were used as supporting instruments. The observation guidelines were used to record work activities, interaction patterns, body language, and forms of gender expression that emerged in daily work practices. Meanwhile, the interview guide was used to explore the informants' subjective experiences regarding their work, social relationships, division of labor, and their experiences in presenting their professional identity as baristas.

The research analysis is grounded in the understanding that gender is a social construct distinct from biological sex. Setiawati (2016) distinguishes gender into three aspects: gender roles, gender expression, and gender identity. In this study, the focus is on gender expression, that is the ways in which individuals present masculinity, femininity, or androgyny through appearance, behavior, language, body gestures, and social interactions. This understanding aligns with the constructivist perspective, which views gender as the result of social and cultural constructions shaped through interactions, norms, and social practices in daily life, rather than being determined solely by biological factors (Westbrook & Saperstein, 2015).

In contemporary gender studies, gender differences are understood as the result of social constructions shaped by power relations, cultural norms, and social practices that are continually negotiated in everyday life. Thus, gender expression is understood as a social practice that is learned, negotiated, and subject to change depending on the context of time and place. These expressions are reflected in the ways individuals present themselves, including their appearance, dress style, language, voice, and behavior in social interactions (Schilt & Westbrook, 2015).

Data analysis utilized the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles et al. (2020), which includes data condensation, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Data condensation was conducted by selecting, simplifying, focusing, and organizing data from observations, interviews, and documentation in accordance with the research focus. The data were then presented narratively to illustrate patterns of work activities and forms of gender expression that emerged in baristas' work practices. Drawing and verifying conclusions is carried out continuously by linking empirical findings to Setiawati's (2016) concept of gender expression and Butler's (1990) theory of gender performativity. Thus, the interpretation not only examines what baristas do but also how those actions acquire meaning within the context of local culture, coffee shop work culture, social relations, and professional demands.

To ensure the validity of the data, this study employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from various informants, while methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of observations, interviews, documentation, and literature reviews. Through this process, the data collected are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of baristas' work activities and gender expressions in the workplace of coffee shops in Padang (Fusch et al., 2018).

3. Results and Discussion

Patterns of Barista Work Activities in Coffee Shops

The term "*barista*" originally referred to workers responsible for preparing and serving coffee to customers at a bar or coffee shop. The term "*barista*" comes from Italian and refers to someone who works behind the bar and serves various types of beverages. The rise of cafés in Italy in the early 20th century made coffee an integral part of urban culture; in the contemporary era, coffee shops have transformed coffee not only into a consumer commodity but also into a cultural element that shapes spaces for social interaction and people's lifestyles. Consequently, the barista profession has evolved into a specialized career that focuses not only on serving beverages but also requires mastery of technical skills, knowledge of coffee, and the ability to provide a quality customer service experience (Samoggia & Riedel, 2020). This shift has gained further momentum since the rise of the third wave of coffee, which places product quality, the brewing process, and interaction with customers at the heart of a barista's professional practice.

The growth of the coffee shop industry in Indonesia has also driven an increasing demand for baristas as part of the modern service sector. Data from the International Coffee Organization (2024) shows that Indonesia is one of the world's largest coffee producers and consumer markets, with domestic consumption levels continuing to rise. These conditions have contributed to the growth of coffee shops in various regions, including the city of Padang, thereby increasing the need for workers who not only possess coffee-making skills but also strong communication and customer service abilities. In this context, baristas are no longer viewed merely as beverage preparers but as service professionals who play a role in shaping the customer experience through social interactions that take place within the coffee shop environment.

Research findings indicate that the growth of coffee shops in Padang has helped expand employment opportunities for young people as baristas. For some informants, this profession is no longer viewed as a temporary job but has become a career option within the service sector and the coffee industry. A barista's duties include preparing beverages, serving customers, managing social interactions, and creating an atmosphere that enhances the customer experience at the coffee shop. These conditions indicate that the barista profession has evolved into an integral part of contemporary urban work culture, combining technical skills, customer service abilities, and social interactions in daily work practices.



Figure 1. Barista Activities in Coffee Shops in Padang City
Source: Research Documentation (2026)

Barista Work Practices

The research findings indicate that the work routines of baristas at coffee shops in Padang follow a structured and repetitive pattern consisting of three main stages: opening, operations, and closing. These three stages form an interconnected daily work cycle that supports the smooth operation of the coffee shop. Although each coffee shop has different characteristics and work systems, the activity patterns observed at Café Dari Sini, Baraw Coffee, and Parewa Coffee show similarities in the division of work stages. These routines not only serve as operational mechanisms but also reflect work discipline, team coordination, and the baristas' professional responsibility in maintaining service quality and the customer experience.

Barista Work Routines (Opening–Operational–Closing)

The opening phase is the preparatory stage before a coffee shop begins serving customers. During this phase, baristas perform various tasks such as cleaning the work area, checking the condition of the coffee machines, calibrating equipment, preparing ingredients, and ensuring that all operational needs are met. These activities demonstrate that a barista's job is not only focused on serving beverages but also requires technical proficiency and strong organizational skills. The opening phase serves as a crucial foundation for smooth operations because it determines the readiness of the space, equipment, and resources before service begins.

The operational phase is the most dynamic part of a barista's work because it involves direct interaction with customers. During this phase, baristas perform multiple functions simultaneously, such as taking orders, preparing beverages, serving products, managing transactions, and providing customer service. Research findings indicate that the division of labor in coffee shops tends to be flexible and collaborative, so baristas often take on multiple roles simultaneously based on operational needs. During busy periods, the focus of their work also

shifts toward inventory management and service efficiency to ensure service quality is maintained. These conditions demonstrate that the barista's job requires technical skills, interpersonal communication, situational adaptability, and strong team coordination.

The closing phase is the process of wrapping up operations, which serves to restore the workspace to a condition ready for use the following day. Activities carried out include cleaning the work area, washing equipment, checking machines, and restocking raw materials. This phase demonstrates that a barista's responsibilities do not end when service is complete, but also include maintaining cleanliness, order, and operational readiness. Overall, the pattern of a barista's work activities demonstrates that this profession is a service-oriented role that integrates technical skills, customer service, time management, and teamwork into a continuous sequence of activities.

Duties and Workflow (Production, Service, Interaction)

The research findings indicate that the duties and workflow of baristas at coffee shops in Padang consist of three main aspects: production, service, and interaction. These three aspects are integrated and form a unified set of work activities that occur simultaneously in daily operations. This indicates that a barista's job is not only focused on technical skills in preparing beverages but also encompasses customer service skills and the management of social relationships with customers.

In the production aspect, baristas are responsible for the beverage preparation process, operating equipment, managing raw materials, and monitoring product quality. Production activities are carried out in accordance with the operational standards in place at each coffee shop to ensure consistency in the taste and quality of the beverages served. The research findings show that quality control is a crucial part of the production workflow, whether through the implementation of work procedures or the assignment of specific responsibilities to senior baristas or the head barista. Thus, production is not only oriented toward fulfilling orders but also toward the continuous maintenance of product quality standards.

In addition to production, customer service is a crucial aspect that directly involves customers. Customer service encompasses taking orders, serving products, providing menu information, and various forms of communication aimed at ensuring customer comfort. In practice, customer service is not merely understood as a transactional process but also as an effort to create a positive experience for customers during their time at the coffee shop.

The aspect of interaction highlights that a barista's work takes place in a social setting that demands communication skills and the ability to adapt to a variety of customer personalities. Baristas are expected to adjust their communication style, maintain a comfortable atmosphere, and uphold a professional demeanor in various service situations. Therefore, interaction plays a vital role in fostering social connections between customers and the coffee shop.

Overall, production, service, and interaction form a dynamic and interrelated work system. These three aspects demonstrate that the barista profession is a form of service work that integrates technical skills, customer service, interpersonal communication, and social relationship management into a single, continuous work activity.



Figure 2. Barista Operational and Service Activities
Source: Research Documentation (2026)

Division of Labor and Work Systems

The research findings indicate that the division of labor and work systems among baristas at Café Dari Sini, Baraw Coffee, and Parewa Coffee serve as both operational management mechanisms and adaptation strategies to the dynamics of daily work. The division of labor not only organizes the distribution of tasks but also supports efficiency, team coordination, and service quality. In practice, the division of labor coexists with flexibility, allowing baristas to adjust their roles according to operational needs.

There are variations in task-sharing patterns across the three coffee shops. Café Dari Sini implements a semi-structured system with relatively clear role divisions, yet still allows baristas to assist one another when necessary. Baraw Coffee employs a more fluid, collective work system without strict specializations, requiring each barista to master the entire workflow, from production and service to transactions. Meanwhile, Parewa Coffee has a more hierarchical work structure with responsibilities assigned based on position, particularly regarding product quality control and workflow management, although flexibility is still applied in service-related aspects.

Based on the research findings, barista work systems can be categorized into three main patterns. Baraw Coffee implements a flexible or “all-in” system, in which all team members can take turns performing various operational functions. Café Dari Sini combines a structured workflow with situational flexibility, allowing tasks to be adjusted based on on-site conditions. Meanwhile, Parewa Coffee employs a semi-flexible system that combines role specialization with cross-functional capabilities. Although their implementations differ, all three coffee shops prioritize flexibility as a key element in ensuring smooth operations and high-quality service.

The study also shows that, formally speaking, there is no gender-based division of labor in coffee shop operations. The assignment of tasks is determined more by individual abilities, work experience, and operational needs than by the worker’s gender. Men and women have relatively equal opportunities to engage in production, service, and customer interaction. However, in daily practice, certain adjustments related to assumptions about physical ability are still observed. Male baristas tend to handle tasks requiring physical strength more often, while female baristas are more frequently assigned to the bar or cash register areas. These findings indicate that although there is no formal gender-based division of labor, gender dynamics are still implicitly present through daily work practices. Overall, the division of tasks and the barista work system demonstrate adaptability, flexibility, and a focus on the operational needs of the coffee shop.



Figure 3. Division of Barista Work Activities in Coffee Shops

Source: Research Documentation (2026)

Social Relations in Work Activities

Social relationships are a crucial aspect of a barista’s work that is inseparable from the coffee shop’s operational processes. In practice, social relationships in a coffee shop are formed through interactions that occur routinely during daily work activities. The relationships between baristas and the owner or manager, among baristas themselves, and with customers reveal a variety of social dynamics. These relationships are not merely formal in a work context but also contain informal elements that strengthen solidarity and teamwork. This indicates that the operational success of a coffee shop is determined not only by work systems and technical skills but also by the quality of the social relationships built within it. Thus, social relationships in a barista’s work

activities serve not merely as a complement but as a key element supporting the sustainability of operations and the customer experience at the coffee shop.

Relationships Between Baristas and Coffee Shop Managers

The relationship between baristas and managers at the three coffee shops demonstrates a pattern of open communication that supports day-to-day coordination. Although there are differences in organizational structure, working relationships are generally built through cooperation, two-way communication, and support in resolving operational issues. Baraw Coffee exhibits a more horizontal relationship pattern with direct communication between managers and baristas. Café Dari Sini implements a more structured working relationship through the role of the manager, but still allows baristas the opportunity to provide feedback. Meanwhile, Parewa Coffee emphasizes professionalism in working relationships while maintaining a communicative work environment. In general, good relationships between baristas and managers contribute to effective coordination, a comfortable work environment, and the smooth operation of the coffee shops.

Baristas' Relationships with Customers

The relationship between baristas and customers is a crucial aspect that influences the customer experience and the coffee shop's image. Research findings indicate that this relationship is not merely transactional but is also built through communication, service, and interpersonal interactions. Baristas serve as the primary representatives of the coffee shop, tasked with creating positive experiences for customers. Each coffee shop adopts a distinct approach to building relationships with customers. Baraw Coffee emphasizes a proactive and communicative approach; Café Dari Sini focuses on hospitality and friendly service; while Parewa Coffee prioritizes professionalism and persuasive communication skills. Although their practices differ, all coffee shops share the same goal: to maintain customer satisfaction and build positive relationships through quality service.

Interaction as Part of Work (Hospitality)

Interactions in a barista's work serve not only as a form of social relationship but also as part of the job requirements that must be carried out professionally. Research findings indicate that hospitality is a key component of a barista's work, encompassing communication skills, emotional management, control of facial expressions, and the ability to adapt to various customer personalities. These interactions do not occur spontaneously but rather follow the service standards and expectations set by the coffee shop. Baristas are expected to maintain a friendly demeanor, provide appropriate service, and be able to handle various situations that arise during the service process. Therefore, hospitality can be understood as a form of work that requires social and emotional skills, while also serving as a key indicator in evaluating barista performance and the quality of a coffee shop's service.



Figure 4. Coordination and Cooperation Among Baristas (left), Hospitality Practices and Social Interaction in Coffee Shops (right)

Source: Research Documentation (2026)

Gender Expression as a Daily Work Practice

In this study, gender expression is understood as the ways in which baristas present and practice gender through their daily work activities. The research findings indicate that these

expressions are primarily evident through appearance, communication style, and service attitudes. These three aspects are not only related to male or female identity but are also influenced by demands for professionalism, the coffee shop work culture, Minangkabau sociocultural values, and interactions with customers. Thus, gender expression is flexible and situational; it is not something automatically determined by biological sex.

Appearance and Self-Presentation

Appearance is the most visible form of gender expression in workplace interactions. Coffee shops have specific standards regarding attire and grooming that baristas must meet. These standards indicate that workers' bodies are part of the professional image presented to customers. Faudat explains:

"Setiap hari diberlakukan ketentuan berpakaian (dress code), seperti larangan menggunakan celana pendek. Bagi barista perempuan juga terdapat aturan mengenai kerapian penampilan, seperti rambut yang harus dirapikan atau diikat." (Faudat, 28 tahun).

Translation:

"A dress code is enforced every day, such as a ban on wearing shorts. For female baristas, there are also rules regarding neatness of appearance, such as keeping hair tidy or tied back." (Faudat, 28 years old).

These rules indicate that appearance is not entirely a personal choice but is regulated by workplace standards. However, these standards do not apply only to women. Jaeran, a male barista, states:

"Menurut saya, ketika bekerja kita memang harus menjaga penampilan. Minimal terlihat bersih dan rapi karena kita berhadapan langsung dengan pelanggan. Penampilan juga menunjukkan keseriusan kita dalam bekerja." (Jaeran, 22 tahun).

Translation:

"In my opinion, when we're working, we really do have to maintain our appearance. At the very least, we should look clean and neat because we interact directly with customers. Our appearance also reflects our commitment to our work." (Jaeran, 22 years old).

Neatness, therefore, is part of professionalism that applies to both men and women. The expression of gender through appearance not only reproduces gender differences but also indicates the existence of professional standards that transcend the division between masculine and feminine.

Communication Style

Communication is an integral part of a barista's job because interactions with customers take place face-to-face. Baristas need to adapt their communication style to the customer's personality, needs, and situation. Roni explains:

"cara berinteraksi dengan pelanggan perlu disesuaikan dengan karakter dan kebutuhan masing-masing pelanggan. Ada pelanggan yang menginginkan suasana santai, sementara yang lain mengutamakan pelayanan yang cepat. Oleh karena itu, cara berkomunikasi juga perlu menyesuaikan kondisi tersebut." (Roni, 26 tahun).

Translation:

"The way you interact with customers needs to be tailored to each customer's personality and needs. Some customers prefer a relaxed atmosphere, while others prioritize quick service. Therefore, the way we communicate must also adapt to these conditions." (Roni, 26 years old).

This adaptation is linked to Minangkabau social values, particularly "kato nan ampek" and "raso jo pareso," which emphasize the ability to read social context and maintain relationships with others. Thus, communication in a barista's work is shaped not only by service SOPs but also by cultural knowledge drawn from social life.

At the same time, the ability to adapt communication demonstrates that gender expression in service is situational. Baristas do not use a single communication pattern with all customers but adjust their speech based on the context of the interaction. Thus, communication becomes a space for negotiation between local cultural values and the demands of modern service.

Attitude in Service

A service oriented attitude reflects the hospitality standards that baristas must meet. The job goes beyond the ability to prepare drinks; it also involves the ability to build positive interactions with customers. For Jaeran, maintaining a positive atmosphere during interactions is also part of the job, Jaeran explains:

"Menurut saya barista itu lebih ke service dan hospitality kita jaga, bukan hanya soal kopi atau produknya aja karena kita ngadepin orang beda-beda bentuk dan jenisnya.. Sebisa mungkin menjaga mood tetap happy dan membuat pelanggan nyaman aja." (Jaeran, 22 tahun).

Translation:

"In my opinion, being a barista is more about maintaining service and hospitality, it's not just about the coffee or the product itself, because we're dealing with all kinds of different people.. As much as possible, I try to keep the mood happy and make customers feel comfortable." (Jaeran, 22 years old).

Both statements show that male baristas are also expected to demonstrate friendliness, make customers feel at ease, and manage their emotions. This is important because friendliness is often constructed as a feminine trait. In the workplace of a coffee shop, this trait transforms into a professional competency that workers must demonstrate regardless of gender.

These demands can be understood through the concept of emotional labor, as baristas need to regulate the expressions they display to customers according to service standards. Thus, service work creates a space for male baristas to engage in expressions that are socially associated with femininity, such as friendliness, empathy, and emotional regulation.

Sociocultural Factors in the Negotiation of Baristas' Gender Expressions

Baristas' gender expressions are not formed in a neutral workplace but are influenced by sociocultural values internalized before entering the workforce, the organizational culture of the coffee shop, and interactions with customers. In the context of Padang, Minangkabau cultural values such as raso jo pareso, kato nan ampek, sumbang duo baleh, malu, and politeness interact with the demands of professionalism in the service industry.

This intersection means that gender expression is not merely a personal choice or a consequence of biological sex, but rather a process of negotiation between local values, job demands, and social situations. Thus, the coffee shop becomes a space where cultural values brought from family and community environments are renegotiated within the context of modern work.

Minangkabau Sociocultural Values

Minangkabau sociocultural values serve as one of the foundations influencing how baristas conduct themselves in the workplace. Their appearance, manner of speaking, and attitude toward service are shaped not only by coffee shop rules but also by values learned within the family and social environment. In this study, these influences are evident through the values of modesty and politeness, kato nan ampek, raso jo pareso, and sumbang duo baleh.

The Values of Modesty and Decency in Appearance

The values of modesty and decency influence how baristas understand what is appropriate when in public spaces. For some informants, a neat and decent appearance has become a habit instilled by their families, which they carry over into the workplace. Naza explains:

"Kalau di Padang, apalagi kita perempuan, dari keluarga memang sudah diajarkan bagaimana berpakaian kalau keluar rumah. Kalau bekerja tentu harus berpakaian yang rapi dan sopan. Dari dulu juga kalau mau keluar rumah memang diajarkan untuk menjaga penampilan, apalagi kalau ketemu orang. Jadi ketika kerja pun menurut saya memang harus begitu, jangan sampai kelihatan tidak pantas. Kita juga membawa diri di depan orang banyak." (Naza, 24 tahun, Baraw Coffee)

Translation:

"In Padang, especially for us women, our families have taught us how to dress when we leave the house. When working, of course, we have to dress neatly and modestly. From a young age, we've been taught to mind our appearance whenever we leave the house, especially when meeting people. So, in my opinion, the same applies at work, we mustn't look inappropriate. We also have to conduct ourselves properly in front of others." (Naza, 24, Baraw Coffee)

This statement suggests that appropriate appearance does not stem solely from the workplace dress code, but is a value that has been internalized since childhood. The phrase “don’t look inappropriate” indicates an awareness of social judgment when in public spaces.

However, its application varies depending on the nature of the coffee shop. At Baraw Coffee, this value interacts with more specific appearance guidelines. At Café Dari Sini, appropriateness is adapted to the more open character of an academic environment, whereas at Parewa Coffee, a neat appearance is part of a professional image in a space with a more diverse clientele. Thus, the values of modesty and politeness do not result in a uniform appearance but are negotiated with the rules and character of each respective workplace.

‘Kato Nan Ampek’ and Ways of Communicating

The concept of “kato nan ampek” influences how baristas adapt their speech based on social relationships and the character of the person they’re speaking with. This knowledge is acquired through a learning process that begins in childhood and is later applied in interactions with customers. Yuna explains:

“Dari kecil juga sudah diajarkan kalau bicara sama yang lebih tua itu harus tahu cara dan sopannya. Apalagi lahir dan tinggal di tanah Minang, jadi memang benar-benar *kato nan ampek* itu diterapkan. Kalau sama yang lebih tua tentu cara bicaranya beda, tidak bisa disamakan seperti bicara sama teman sebaya. Jadi waktu kerja pun kebiasaan itu tetap terbawa, apalagi kalau pelanggan yang datang lebih tua dari kita.” (Yuna, 21 tahun)

Translation:

“From a young age, I was taught that when speaking to someone older, you have to know the proper way to do so and be polite. Especially since I was born and raised in Minangkabau, the ‘kato nan ampek’ is truly put into practice. When speaking to someone older, the way you speak is naturally different, you can’t treat it the same as when talking to peers. So even at work, that habit carries over, especially when customers who come in are older than us.” (Yuna, 21 years old)

This statement shows that the “*kato nan ampek*” serves as social knowledge carried from community life into the workplace. Baristas do not use the same communication style with all customers but adapt their speech based on age and social relationships. This cultural value then interacts with the demands of hospitality, which require baristas to remain communicative and friendly.

Thus, communication in the barista’s work represents a convergence of local cultural knowledge and professional service standards. In this context, the “kato nan ampek” values do not replace modern workplace demands but serve as a foundation for baristas to adapt how they interact with customers.

‘Raso Jo Pareso’ in Customer Service

The value of “raso jo pareso” is evident in a barista’s ability to consider the situation and others’ feelings before acting. In customer service, this value is reflected in how baristas interact with customers, resolve mistakes, and ensure that interactions do not cause discomfort. Rozi explains:

“Kalau ada pelanggan yang mungkin agak mengganggu, kita biasanya nggak langsung tegur di depan orang ramai. Kita lihat dulu, mungkin bisa disampaikan pelan-pelan supaya dia juga nggak merasa dipermalukan. Terus kalau misalnya ada pesanan yang salah, ya kita selesaikan baik-baik dulu, nggak langsung cari siapa yang salah. Kadang ada juga pelanggan yang kelihatan butuh bantuan, jadi kalau kita lihat ya kita bantu aja dulu, nggak mesti nunggu dia manggil. Menurut saya, kerja di pelayanan itu memang harus bisa lihat situasi juga, jangan asal bertindak. Namanya *raso jo pareso* gitu, kita kan harus pikirkan juga perasaan orang sebelum melakukan sesuatu.” (Rozi, Barista Parewa Coffee)

Translation:

“If there’s a customer who might be a bit disruptive, we usually don’t confront them right away in front of a crowd. We assess the situation first, maybe we can address it gently so they don’t feel humiliated. And if, for example, an order is wrong, we resolve it amicably first, rather than immediately trying to figure out who’s at fault. Sometimes there are also customers who seem to

need help, so if we notice that, we just help them first, we don't have to wait for them to ask. In my opinion, working in customer service really requires being able to read the situation; you shouldn't just act on impulse. It's all about empathy, we have to consider other people's feelings before doing anything." (Rozi, Barista at Parewa Coffee)

This statement shows that customer service isn't just about solving problems, but also about considering the customer's feelings and comfort. Baristas need to read the situation, choose how to communicate, and determine when to act or hold back.

Thus, "*raso jo pareso*" serves as a form of social knowledge that functions within modern service practices. This value isn't present as a written rule in coffee shops, but operates through baristas' habits of reading the situation and considering the impact of their actions on others.

'Sumbang Duo Baleh' and Appropriateness in Public Spaces

The concept of "*sumbang duo baleh*" relates to the understanding of what is appropriate for women in social life. In this study, this value is evident in the way female baristas consider their appearance and demeanor while working in public spaces. Zara explains:

"Karena kita perempuan memang diajarkan bagaimana membawa diri. Apalagi kalau keluar rumah dan bertemu banyak orang, penampilan dan sikap itu tetap harus dijaga. Jadi, kalau bekerja di tempat seperti ini, menurut saya jangan terlalu tomboy, tetap selayaknya perempuan saja. Bukan berarti kita tidak boleh aktif atau bekerja seperti biasa, tetapi tetap tahu batasnya supaya tidak dianggap sumbang." (Zara, 25 tahun)

Translation:

"As women, we're taught how to carry ourselves. Especially when we leave the house and meet lots of people, we still have to maintain our appearance and demeanor. So, when working in a place like this, I think we shouldn't act too tomboyish, we should just act like proper women. That doesn't mean we can't be active or work as usual, but we still need to know our limits so we aren't seen as out of place." (Zara, 25 years old)

Zara's statement shows that her understanding of what is appropriate for women has been shaped by her social environment and subsequently carried into the workplace. However, this value does not mean it limits women from being active in their work. Zara continues to work as a barista while considering the behavioral boundaries she deems appropriate for women.

This finding reveals a negotiation between the demands of being an active worker and cultural norms regarding what is appropriate for women. Thus, the concept of "*sumbang duo baleh*" has not entirely disappeared from the modern workplace but has been adapted to fit the context of the job and the coffee shop environment.

Coffee Shop Work Culture and Baristas' Gender Expression

In addition to local cultural values, coffee shop work culture also shapes baristas' gender expression. As part of the service sector, coffee shops require employees to possess both technical and customer service skills, such as maintaining a professional appearance, being friendly, communicative, adaptable, and able to manage their emotions. Faudat explains:

"Terdapat standar penampilan dan sikap yang berlaku bagi seluruh karyawan. Setiap hari diberlakukan ketentuan berpakaian (*dress code*) yang harus dipatuhi. Selain itu, terdapat SOP khusus yang mengatur aspek hospitality dan pelayanan, mulai dari pelanggan datang hingga meninggalkan kafe." (Faudat, Manager Parewa Coffee)

Translation:

"There are standards for appearance and conduct that apply to all employees. A dress code is enforced every day and must be followed. In addition, there are specific SOPs governing hospitality and service, from the moment a customer arrives until they leave the café." (Faudat, Manager of Parewa Coffee)

This statement indicates that professionalism is a requirement for all employees, regardless of gender. Baristas' appearance and behavior are part of the coffee shop's image in the eyes of customers. Hospitality standards also require baristas to manage their emotions. Naza explains:

"Ketika bekerja kita harus tetap ramah kepada pelanggan, meskipun kadang sedang lelah atau memiliki masalah pribadi. Pelanggan tidak boleh mengetahui suasana hati kita karena pelayanan tetap harus baik." (Naza, 24 tahun)

Translation:

"While working, we must remain friendly toward customers, even when we're tired or dealing with personal issues. Customers shouldn't be aware of our mood because service must always be good." (Naza, 24 years old)

This indicates the presence of *emotional labor* in the barista's job. Friendliness, patience, and the ability to manage emotions are professional competencies required of both men and women. Thus, traits traditionally associated with femininity, such as friendliness and emotional regulation, become part of a barista's professionalism in general. The work culture also allows for flexibility in task distribution. Jaeran explains:

"Kalau bekerja semua barista sebenarnya melakukan pekerjaan yang sama. Yang membedakan biasanya hanya siapa yang lebih cepat atau lebih mampu mengerjakan tugas tertentu ketika situasi sedang ramai." (Jaeran, 22 tahun)

Translation:

"When it comes to work, all baristas actually do the same job. The only difference is usually who is faster or more capable of handling a specific task when it's busy." (Jaeran, 22 years old)

This statement indicates that competence and operational needs are key considerations in task distribution. Although under certain conditions there is still a tendency to assign tasks based on physical considerations, the coffee shop work culture generally allows both men and women to perform a variety of tasks.

Thus, the coffee shop work culture encourages a more flexible expression of gender roles. Men are expected to demonstrate friendliness and emotional management, while women can be involved in technical and operational work. However, this flexibility remains within the bounds of professionalism and organizational needs.

Social Relationships and Customer Expectations

In addition to local and organizational cultures, baristas' gender expressions are also shaped by their relationships with customers. Coffee shops are social spaces that bring together workers and customers from diverse backgrounds. Because each coffee shop has its own unique character, customer expectations regarding how baristas communicate and provide service also vary.

Café Dari Sini: An Academic Space and Warm Interactions

Café Dari Sini is frequented primarily by college students, so the interactions that take place tend to be relaxed, communicative, and centered on academic activities. Jaeran explains:

"Kalau di sini kebanyakan pelanggan itu mahasiswa. Banyak yang datang untuk belajar, rapat organisasi, ngerjain skripsi, atau ketemu dosen juga. Jadi kita harus bisa menyesuaikan cara berinteraksi dengan pelanggan. Kadang mereka ingin mengobrol, tapi kadang juga ingin fokus belajar." (Jaeran, 22 tahun)

Translation:

"Most of the customers here are college students. Many come to study, hold club meetings, work on their theses, or meet with professors. So we have to adjust how we interact with customers. Sometimes they want to chat, but other times they want to focus on studying." (Jaeran, 22 years old)

These conditions require baristas to read the situation and adjust the intensity of their interactions. Baristas need to be friendly and communicative, but they also need to understand when customers need space to study. Thus, gender expression at Café Dari Sini is largely negotiated through interpersonal skills and adaptation to the academic atmosphere.

Parewa Coffee: A Relaxed and Dynamic Social Space

Parewa Coffee has a diverse customer base, ranging from college students, schoolchildren, and families to the general public. The live music creates a more relaxed and dynamic atmosphere. Zara explains:

"Kalau di Parewa pelanggan yang datang macam-macam. Ada mahasiswa, keluarga, sampai masyarakat umum juga. Karena ada live music, biasanya orang datang untuk nongkrong dan menikmati suasana. Jadi kita juga harus lebih santai dan bisa menyesuaikan diri dengan berbagai karakter pelanggan." (Zara, 25 tahun)

Translation:

“At Parewa, we get all kinds of customers, from college students and families to the general public. Because there’s live music, people usually come to hang out and enjoy the atmosphere. So we also have to be more laid-back and able to adapt to the different personalities of our customers.” (Zara, 25 years old)

This diversity of customers requires baristas to be more flexible in communicating and setting the mood. Both men and women are expected to demonstrate friendliness, openness, and the ability to manage interactions. As a result, gender expression becomes more situational and isn’t entirely determined by gender stereotypes.

Baraw Coffee: A Quiet and Personal Space

Baraw Coffee features a “slow bar” concept with a quieter and more personal atmosphere. Customers come to work, study, exercise, or enjoy coffee in a calmer setting. Naza explains:

“Kalau di Baraw suasananya memang lebih tenang. Pelanggan juga banyak yang datang untuk bekerja, belajar, atau sekadar menikmati kopi. Jadi kita tidak terlalu banyak berinteraksi kalau memang pelanggan ingin menikmati suasananya sendiri. Yang penting mereka merasa nyaman selama berada di sini.” (Naza, 24 tahun)

Translation:

“At Baraw, the atmosphere is indeed more relaxed. Many customers come to work, study, or simply enjoy a cup of coffee. So we don’t interact too much if the customer prefers to enjoy the atmosphere on their own. The important thing is that they feel comfortable while they’re here.” (Naza, 24 years old)

In this context, a barista’s professionalism is demonstrated not primarily through the intensity of communication, but through the ability to maintain a comfortable atmosphere and recognize the boundaries of interaction. Baristas need to know when to interact and when to give customers space.

The differences among these three coffee shops show that baristas’ gender expression is situational. Café Dari Sini requires the ability to build warm interactions within an academic setting; Parewa Coffee demands flexibility in dealing with a diverse customer base; while Baraw Coffee places greater emphasis on the ability to maintain comfort and respect interaction boundaries. Thus, the relationship with customers is one of the contexts that causes gender expression to be continually adapted in work practices.

The findings of this study indicate that gender expression in the barista profession is flexible and adapts to the demands of customer service. This aligns with contemporary studies showing that the workplace is not a gender-neutral space but rather a social arena where masculinity, femininity, and various forms of gender expression are produced, negotiated, and reproduced through everyday social practices (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018). These findings also align with Islam and Utami (2023), who explain that baristas continuously adapt their behavior, appearance, and interaction styles to meet workplace expectations and customer needs.

Coffee Shops as Spaces for Gender Performance

Based on the overall findings, the coffee shop can be understood as a gender-performative arena, that is a social space where gender is continuously produced through repetitive work practices. Baristas not only brew coffee and serve customers but also constantly manage their appearance, manner of speaking, demeanor, emotional expressions, and social interactions with customers. The repetition of these practices is clearly evident in service activities. Jaeran stated that he strives to maintain a happy mood and make customers feel comfortable, while Naza emphasized that even when tired or dealing with personal issues, baristas must remain friendly and not let their mood show to customers.

From Butler’s (1990) perspective, these repeated practices demonstrate that gender does not exist as a completely fixed identity, but is produced through continuously repeated social actions. In the context of this study, the ways of dressing, speaking, serving, managing emotions, and carrying oneself are actions that repeatedly shape and display the baristas’ gender expressions. However, this performativity does not occur in a vacuum. The baristas’ gender practices constantly navigate the intersection of Minangkabau sociocultural values, coffee shop work

culture, relationships with customers, and demands for professionalism. Consequently, the gender expressions that emerge are flexible, contextual, and constantly negotiated.

Thus, the findings of this study indicate that coffee shops serve as spaces where gender is “performed” on a daily basis. This represents a direct connection between the study’s empirical data and Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity. Coffee shops in Padang are not merely workplaces or spaces for consumption but function as social arenas where masculinity, femininity, and androgynous expressions are practiced, negotiated, and reproduced through daily work activities. The novelty of this study lies in the understanding that this process occurs at the intersection of the work culture of the modern service sector and Minangkabau sociocultural values.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that the gender expressions of baristas in coffee shops in Padang are flexible, contextual, and negotiated through appearance, communication style, and service attitudes. These expressions are shaped by the intersection of Minangkabau sociocultural norms, such as *kato nan ampek*, *raso jo pareso*, and *sumbang duo baleh*, with coffee shop work culture, personal experiences, social relationships, and professional demands. These findings confirm that coffee shops are not merely economic and service spaces but also social arenas where gender is produced, performed, and negotiated through daily work practices.

This study has limitations in its scope, as it focuses on six baristas at three coffee shops in Padang; therefore, the findings are not intended to represent all barista work practices or gender dynamics in the service sector more broadly. Future research could expand the geographic scope and number of participants through a comparative or quantitative approach, including comparing gender practices at coffee shops in other regions or different service sectors. Future research could also incorporate a consumer perspective to examine how baristas’ gender expressions are perceived and negotiated in service interactions. This recommendation aligns with the thesis’s suggestion to broaden the geographical and sectoral context to facilitate a more comprehensive comparison of gender practices in the workplace.

Academically, this study contributes to the fields of gender anthropology and economic anthropology by demonstrating that workplaces in the service sector are not socially neutral spaces. In the context of Padang, the work practices of baristas reveal an intersection between modern work culture and Minangkabau sociocultural values, such that masculinity and femininity are not fixed but are continually shaped through everyday social practices.

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