DECODING HUMOR AND RELIGION IN INDONESIAN NAMES

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the structure and meaning of unique Indonesian names, their origins, and the humor they encompass. The topic was selected due to its recent viral status on social media. Utilizing qualitative methods and library research, data were gathered from internet news articles and analyzed through theories of names and nicknames, humor, and Arabic and Islamic religion. These theoretical frameworks were particularly pertinent as the study revealed that many unique names are intricately linked to Islamic and Arabic elements. The findings suggest that the uniqueness of these names often arises from spontaneous selection, with minimal deliberation or understanding of the religious terms incorporated. Predominantly found among the lower-middle class, these names stand out due to their distinctiveness, which often elicits humor. The humorous aspects of these names can be categorized under incongruity theory and, in some cases, superiority theory. This research highlights the cultural and social dimensions of naming practices in Indonesia and their unintended comedic impact.

Keywords: *Arabic; decoding; humor; Islamic Religion; Indonesia*

1. Introduction

Recently, with the rise of social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, many previously unknown or unpopular phenomena have gained public attention. One such phenomenon is the emergence of unique names in Indonesian society. These names deviate from traditional structures and meanings, creating a humorous effect. This article aims to explore the structure and meaning of these unique names, their origins, and the humor they contain.

The naming structure in Indonesian society exhibits notable diversity. According to Lee (2011: 548), Indonesians vary widely in their adoption of surnames: some retain their father's surname, while others eschew family names altogether, opting instead for their mother's surname. Such practices reflect the poly-cultural and polyglot nature of Indonesia's diverse ancestral roots. In regions like Java, Bali, and Madura, marital traditions do not universally entail a woman adopting her husband's surname. Additionally, family names are not a standard practice in these areas. Across Indonesia, naming conventions vary extensively among ethnic groups and cultural traditions. Some individuals adopt single-word names like Slamet, Harianto, or Suharto, while others use longer, multi-word names such as Maria Magdalena Aminatum Ruth. Family names, when used, typically appear as surnames, varying in length from short forms like Paijo to longer ones like Wignjosoebroto.

The naming traditions vary based on the individual's regional origins. For instance, in Bali, children are typically named in accordance with their birth order (e.g., the eldest boy is named "Wayan" and the second boy is often called "Made"). Generally, Indonesians, particularly the Javanese, typically have a single formal name that is straightforward and easy to pronounce. The use of surnames is not customary; however, some individuals adopt family names to simplify matters when traveling or residing abroad. It is common for spouses to retain different surnames, though often a woman will informally adopt her husband's surname. Conversely, there are instances where a man may take on his wife's surname. Another prevalent naming practice involves having two or more given names without a formal family surname (Evason, 2021).

In addition to the naming system above, there are also names that combine Javanese and Islamic elements in them. As stated by Ricklefs (in Askuri & Kuipers 2018, 78) that there is a shift in the naming practice among the Javanese, especially with the increased use of Arabic names. This must be understood in the Javanese socio-cultural context. For a Javanese, a name is a mandate, which includes the wishes, desires, hopes, or prayers of the parents for their children. The use of Arabic-Islamic names is an indication that the parents want to connect their children's future with Islam. If the shift in naming practices involving Arabic names occur in a large scale, it will be difficult to avoid the conclusion that Islamization, which is a process of deepening commitment to Islamic normative standards of belief, practice, and religious identity, is taking place.

Combining the names of the two elements often creates something unique. As stated by Priantono (2013) that the Indonesian naming system depends on aspects of ethnicity, family background, religious background, and degree of background (perceived royal heritage). Based on ethnicity, many Indonesians have unique names that cannot be found in many parts of the world. Many Indonesian Muslims will tend to give names that sound Islamic to their children, even though in some aspects, the names are not even known among Middle Easterners and in other Muslims countries, examples are names such as *Misbakhul Khair, Miftahul Huda, Itsna Syahadatud Dinnuriyah,* and others. Conversely, there are many Muslims parents who do not bother to give names that sound Islamic to their children. They tend to use local sounding names based on Sanskrit's words or even names that sound Western. Meanwhile, other Muslims will combine the nuances of Islam with other elements so that the name sounds unique.

As for the humorous elements in nicknames, Kolawole, Otuyemi, & Adeosun (2009: 115) state that nicknames are informal names, which for someone might be funny, if associated with real names, personalities, appearance or with something they have. Nicknames often replace individual names as a form of identification and can be used as a marker for someone's reputation. Nicknames may not always humorous, but they can also make people popular. Nicknames can often be a form of ridicule that may not be pleasant for the individuals. Nothing can be separated from a nickname, and well-known members of the community may also have good or bad names. Nicknames are a problem when they are not wanted and can cause various types of reactions from the individuals. Not all nicknames are related to an individual's real name. The sources can vary from physical appearance to actions taken or carried out by individuals in the past.

According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1995: 121), names are very individual, marking the unique identity of people as members of a group. Every family has the right to choose a name for a newborn baby, but the community also has the right to limit someone's freedom to choose and use a particular name. This is one of the obstacles of a social organization.

Another obstacle that arises in contemporary society is the process of economic, political, and cultural integration and state control that is institutionalized to individuals. These processes limit the private space to speak and act in the public sphere. These constraints may go hand in hand and can only run individually; for example, individuals can call each other by any name outside of other people's hearings but may be forced to use certain names only in public.

Therefore, when studying nicknames, a researcher must not only analyze the data but also provide a cultural description of their semantic characteristics. Nicknames should be examined in terms of their semantic structure to express cultural models (Gladkova, 2002: 1). A speaker might use a nickname with negative communicative intent to express disapproval or a negative attitude. This type of nickname is often used referentially without knowing the actual name of the person it describes and is typically used within specific groups. However, it is important to note that in some instances, these nicknames are used intentionally to offend someone (Crozier, 2002).

Based on the above information, this article aims to analyze the form and meaning of unique names and nicknames in Indonesia, their origins, and the elements of humor they contain.

2. Literature Review

Research on names and nicknames in Indonesia has been conducted by several scholars; including Sahid Teguh Widodo (2014) in his work entitled *The Development of Personal Names in Kudus, Central Java, Indonesia*. The aim of the research is to solve the problem of understanding the name of oneself among the Javanese, which is associated with knowledge, hopes, prayers, special events, periods, and Javanese characters in complex cultural traditions. There are various meanings of self-names in Java, which causes uncertainties among researchers to find a midpoint between the name (signifier) and the concept of reality that is represented (signified). The research method used by Widodo is a qualitative one. The data studied were the names of students obtained from various elementary schools, junior high schools, and senior high schools in 2005-2010 and some names of common people. Based on the analysis, it was identified that certain characteristics of self-names in Java were related to uniqueness, denotation and connotation, different sounds, certain grammatical criteria, words and correlations between meanings and references. The results of Widodo's research are intended to help us understand how the Javanese society developed over time based on their names.

Meanwhile, for the theory used in analyzing the names and nicknames, first is the theory used by Jeffrey (2008), which state that in general, names in Indonesia can be divided into several categories, namely *mononymic names*, i.e. names that only consist of one name, *polinymic names without family names*, i.e. names consisting of two or more names but without family names, *polinymic names with family names,* i.e. names consisting of two or more, complete with surnames and *polinymic with patronymic family names*, that is, a name consisting of two or more names without a family name, but equipped with patronymics, that is placing the father's name behind the name. The names, according to him, could come from Sanskrit, Arabic, Chinese, Western, or a mixture of these languages (Jeffrey, 2008). This theory is used to see which groups belong to unique names found in Indonesia.

In addition, the theory put forward by Ganyi (2013: 945) asserted that nicknames are divided into several types, namely Peer Group Nicknames, namely nicknames made by

members in a group and assigned to other members; Family Nicknames, namely nicknames made by private families, family groups, or wards. Although not very common, this nickname is also created by parents who describe the special characteristics of their children. Then, there is the Work/School Nicknames, namely nicknames made for their friends at work or the school environment. The nickname shows the close relationship between coworkers or classmates. This nickname is only known by members of the group and not known by outsiders. Moreover, there is also the Inherited Nicknames, namely nicknames that are inherited, both from the family line. This theory is also used to analyze unique nicknames in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, the theory of humor used in this article is the theory of incongruity, because it is assumed that the names contained in the data are included in the category of incongruity theory. As stated by Littlejohn et al. (2009: 481), incongruity theory holds that something can be considered humorous if it is irrational, paradoxical, illogical, incoherent, erroneous, and inappropriate. The humorous effects arise from something that is not in accordance with the rational nature that exists in an environment.

In addition, the superiority theory is also used in the analysis, and it is about humor that occurs when someone feels that his/her ability or status is higher than or superior to other individuals. For example, someone would laugh when he/she saw a foolish old man, who was drunk, tripped over his own robe, and fell in front of him/her. The person feels that misfortune does not belong to him/her, and he/she tends to view himself/herself as someone who is above others. For this reason, every time there is a mistake or error in others, it is considered funny to him/her (Afflerbach 2015, 15).

According to Eva Dadlez, Superiority Theory is humor that contains ridicule. People feel superior when they see the weaknesses of others. Meanwhile, according to David Monroe, Superiority Theory is humor that occurs when people underestimate anyone they laugh at because they consider that the person is lower than certain standards (Lintott 2016: 347). This theory is used because it is also assumed that there are names and nicknames in Indonesia that belong in the category of this theory.

3. Research Method

In researching this topic, this article employed qualitative methods and a library study. First, data on Indonesians with unique names were collected through news on social media. The data were then classified into several groups, allowing for the identification of the most widely circulated unique names and nicknames in Indonesia. It was found that many of these names used terminologies from Arabic culture and Islam. Therefore, this article specifically focused on discussing these unique names.

4. Results and Discussion

This section discussed these unique names. It began with one name, noting that some Indonesians only had one name, although many also used both a first name and a family name, particularly among the middle class.

The discussion started with an individual named Tuhan (God):

Figure 1. Source:
https://regional.kompas.com/image/2015/08/25/16134041/Nama.Tuhan.Jadi.Populer.Setel
ah.KTP-nya.Dipinjam.Orang

From the data presented by Akmal (2015), a person named *Tuhan* lives in Kluncing Village, Licin. In this modest, yellow-painted house in the corner of Krajan Hamlet, *Tuhan* (48) lives with his wife and two daughters. The man was born on June 30, 1973. He is polite and does not talk much. He is so friendly and quite open to talk about his daily life. Around the village where he lives, this man is actually more familiarly known as *Tohan*. However, many also called him *Pak To* or *Pak Han*. He did not expect that the photo on the resident identity card, which bears his unique name, became famous. *Tuhan*, who is the youngest of seven siblings, never knew the reason behind his unusual name, his parents when they were alive, never told him why they named him that way. Likewise, his six other brothers also never gave an explanation of the special meaning of the name. He did not feel that his name is strange, just ordinary. People are also familiar with the name.

Regarding this unique name, Sa'diyah (2015) added that the Chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) at the time, Kiai Haji Ma'ruf Amin also commented on the controversy in the community regarding the existence of a man named *Tuhan*. Amin suggested that the man add his first name in front of his name. He explained that Muslims are encouraged not to name their children with nicknames that are too pompous, but neither should give a name that is condescending. Likewise, at that time, the Chairperson of the Nahdhatul Ulama Executive Board, one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, Said Aqil Siradj stated that the practice of conferring a good name has been exemplified by the Prophet and his companions. According to him, Sayidina Ali bin Abi Tholib once wanted to name his son *Harb*, which means war. However, the Prophet forbade it. Eventually Ali changed his son's name to Hasan, which means good. Essentially, using the word for God as a name is unethical. It would be better for him to change his name. The name change advice is in accordance with the Prophet's recommendations and the prevailing ethics in the community. However, the man named *Tuhan* was not then categorized as a polytheist just because of his name.

This name became famous because it was considered unique. No one would dare to use the word for God to name a child who by the way is only a human, because it is simply unethical to use the word *Tuhan* as a person's name. *Tuhan* means, "Something that is believed, worshiped by humans as the Almighty, Omnipotent, the All-powerful and so on" (https://kbbi.web.id/God). Therefore, the uniqueness makes this name somewhat funny. Actually, in Indonesia, the number lf people who would name their child as *Tuhan* is quite rare. What usually happens is the use of the word *Allah* (as what God is called in Islam). However, it cannot be just that single word, it is coupled with other word placed in front of it, for example *Abdullah*, *Abd* (servant) and *Allah* (God), so that it means a servant of Allah or

Abdurrahman, abd (servant) and *Rahman* (other names of Allah), meaning a servant from a loving God. As a result, it is allowed in Islam, because human beings are creatures (created), whereas Allah is Khaliq (the Creator). It is impossible for a creature to use the name of God that created it.

Based on the information above, this article suggests that using the name *Tuhan* for a child does not indicate a lack of understanding by the parents about its meaning. Instead, it reflects their desire for their child's name to be unique and different from others. Evidence that the parents understand the meaning of *Tuhan* is their avoidance of the name Allah, which also means God, as Islam forbids this and heavy social sanctions would follow. Additionally, some parents use the name *Gusti* for their children, which is another term for God or a deity (https://kbbi.web.id/gusti). The use of *Tuhan* as a human name is humorous, aligning with the incongruity theory of humor, as it presents something inappropriate.

In addition to the name of God, in Indonesia there is also a person named *Nabi* (Prophet) as shown by identity card below:

Figure 2. Source: https://www.wowshack.com/18-outrageous-indonesian-names/

The person in the identify card above is named *Nabi* (Prophet). He lives in Bulangan Timur Village, Pegantenan District, Pamekasan Regency, with his wife and two children. The man said he was born on March 1, 1948, and his father named him *Nabi.* He added, despite bearing the name *Nabi*, his neighbors did not find it strange, and instead they regarded the name as an ordinary name. Every day, the neighbors greet this man as *Gutteh Nabi*, which means "Uncle Prophet". Even though they are used to it, no doubt the neighbors often use the name *Nabi* as a joke. What is more, Nabi has an in-law named *Syafaat* (help), so that when the two people are seen together, the neighbors call them both by the name of *Nabi-Syafa'at* (help from the Prophet) (Taufiqurrahman 2015).

When you read the news, you may laugh when you read the name, because is funny, and it is not appropriate that the name is pinned onto an ordinary person. The word *Nabi* comes from Arabic, meaning "the person chosen by God to receive His revelation" (https://kbbi.web.id/nabi). The difference between a prophet and an ordinary person is the intention and effort of a prophet in his devotion to Allah, and to purify oneself from all sins, so a prophet moral is greater than ordinary people, i.e. that the conscience and mind of the prophet are always decorated by the Divine light (Hadi 2005: 20).Typically, parents may adopt the name of a Prophet as a name for their children, for example the Prophet Muhammad, parents will use the name Muhammad for their child's name, in other words, they using the name and not the status of Muhammad as a God's Prophet.

Unlike the name of *Tuhan*, the use of *Nabi* as someone's name does not seem too outrageous. This can be seen from the reaction of neighbors who consider it normal. In the news, it was also mentioned that the father, the person who gave the name, provided the name spontaneously, not through a selection process. It could be that the reason he gave

the name so his son would have a prophet like morality, or it could be that he wanted his child's name to be different from others, but there was no intention of him to make his son's name popular. Something is clear people who hear the name are laughing because of the uniqueness of the name, which in the theory of humor belongs to the incongruity theory since the name is not suitable in general.

Another example of a unique name is presented below:

Figure 3. Source:
https://pemilu.kompas.com/read/2017/05/19/10000021/9.nama.unik.di.indonesia.dari.tuh an.y.hingga.andy.go.to.school.

The name of the person whose picture is on the resident identity card above is *Saiton*. Initially, the Population and Civil Registry Office of Palembang, South Sumatra, denied the existence of the resident named Saiton. However, after searching, it turns out that there really is a resident by that name. On the Resident Identity Card, the resident's name is spelled *Saiton. Saiton* was born in Paldas Banyuasin, on February 10, 1976. The name was given by his parents. The man was given the name because of the 12 siblings who were born, only two survived. Ten siblings could only live until the age of 5-7 years old. When *Saiton* was born, his parents were pessimistic if his youngest child would survive or would die young like his siblings. At the age of 3 years old, he protested his name because his name was often mocked by his friends. His parents then changed his name to Iskandar. However, when the name was replaced, *Saiton* was sick for 3 years. Despite being treated and injected, he still could not walk and talk (Inge 2015).

A number of scholars in South Sumatra have responded the name Saiton. The name should be changed because it is considered haram. The Chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of South Sumatra, KH Sodikun, revealed that in Islam the human race is encouraged to give names and calls their children with good names with good meanings. We must not give names carelessly, and the names must be good and proper. This is because the name is a prayer. Meanwhile, a name that is contrary to the prayer will affect the person's behavior, such as the name of Saiton, Satan, Setan or the like, and Islam forbids that strictly. It is unlawful to give such a name to children (Irwanto 2015).

The word *Saiton* comes from Arabic, namely *Syaiton*. In Indonesian, it means the devil. The dictionary mentions that the word devil means "an evil spirit (who always attempts humans to carry out evil deeds)"; "Words to express anger; expletive", and "people who have very bad temperament (like pitting sheep and so on)" (https://kbbi.web.id/setan). Thus, it is hilarious for some people when they hear somebody with a name like that. People think it is funny because they think that they are above a person who uses that name, they feel it is weird that person uses the name of the devil, even though he is a human. Humor like this can be included in the category of superiority theory.

Next is an example of a unique name consisting of more than one word:

Figure 4. Source:
https://wartakota.tribunnews.com/2016/12/27/lahir-pada-25-desember-kenalkan-nama-saya-slamet-hari-natal

The name of the person whose picture is displayed above is *Slamet Hari Natal*. He is a resident of Jalan Sangadi, Wonomulyom Village, Poncokusumo District, Malang Regency, East Java. Every year before Christmas, his name always brings in anxiety to this 57-year-old man. *Slamet Hari Natal* works as a garbage man every working day. He is called by his family *Slamet*. However, by his friend, he is often called *Slamet Jesus*. However, there are also those who call him *Natal*. In fact, *Slamet* is a Muslim. *Slamet* was born on December 25, 1962 at Welasasih House, which is owned by Kis Kiyo, a midwife in Kebonsari Village, Tumpang. Kis Kiyo is also a Christian of Jawi Wetan. At that time, his parents had trouble finding a name. The word *Selamat* was replaced by *Slamet* due to the Javanese accent. He was given the name *Slamet Hari Natal* because he was born on Christmas day, and his birth was assisted by a Christian of Jawi Wetan. At that time, the midwife suggested that name since it was difficult to find a name; she simply gave the name *Slamet Hari Natal* to the newborn baby to make it easy and simple. Because his name is not common, he admitted that he often had to deal with difficulties with bureaucratic administration. That is because quite a few officials doubt that his name is really *Slamet Hari Natal* (Hardiansyah 2019).

According to Kelvin, every child born is always given a name. The name can remind people of a certain memory. The name given can also contain certain hopes and ideals from the parents. For example, the name *Slamet* contains the hope that the child will be safe until the end of his life (1993: 31). The name *Slamet* reflects the hopes of the people in the Banyumas Regency area in particular and in all parts of Indonesia in general that the person having the name will always be safe in the world and hereafter (Kantor Sensus & Statistik Propinsi Daerah Tingkat I Jawa Tengah Kantor Sensus & Statistik Propinsi Daerah Tingkat I Jawa Tengah 1987: 328).

The word *Selamat*, actually, comes from Arabic, i.e. *salamat*, which means safety. However, in Indonesian, the word *Selamat* means congratulations. In the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian Dictionary), the word *Selamat* means to be free from danger, disaster, catastrophe; avoid danger, mishap; calamity; all right; undisturbed; unhurt, etc.; healthy; successful; thriving; or as prayers (words, statements, etc.) that contain hope that prosperity (luck, wholeness, etc.) and best wishes (prosperous, healthy and affective, etc.) will be with the person (https://kbbi.web.id./selamat).

Perhaps, this word is categorized by Askuri and Kuipers (2018: 81) as a Javanese-Arabic hybrid name, which is one of the categories of names in Java that carries the

hybridization of Javanese children. Growth in this name category has increased from a decade to another decade in the last hundred years. As a hybrid name consisting of two elements, Javanese and Arabic, parents actually want to give hybrid identities to their children. Parents want to build a new world for their children, by synthesizing two identities simultaneously, namely Javanese identity and Islamic identity. In connection with the textual construction of the combination of Javanese-Arabic names over the last hundred years, there have been two growth patterns seen in this category. In the first half of the twentieth century, the synthesis of hybrid Javanese-Arabic names generally consisted of one word and tended to be patterned. After that, the Arabic name was modified into a combination so that it sounded both Arabic and Javanese at the same time and did not have a specific Arabic meaning related to Islam or piety.

Meanwhile, the meaning of *Natal* is someone's birth; it was the birth of Jesus Christ: the feast to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ (December 25) (https://kbbi.web.id/natal). In fact, the use of the name associated with the word *Natal* is mostly done in Indonesia; for examples in the name of a girl, *Natalia*, with the addition of the suffix, which indicates that the person using the name is a woman. However, the word *Natal* is rarely used solo, without being given additional letters. This is what makes the name unique because it is different from what is commonly used.

Another factor that makes this name unique is in terms of its format. In general, names consisting of three words are divided into the first name, middle name, and last name, and usually the last name is the family name. However, this is not the case. For one thing, the first, second, and third words do not form a common name structure, but it is rather a combination of words that have the meaning of an utterance to people who are celebrating the birthday of Jesus Christ. This is what makes this name funny because it is different from names in general. Humor like this can also be included in the incongruity humor category.

Another example of a multi-word unique name is as follows:

Figure 5. Source:
https://regional.kompas.com/image/2017/05/18/16053771/cerita.di.balik.nama.alhamdulill
ah.lanang.anakku.

His name is *Alhamdulillah Lanang Anakku*, and he is 13 years old. This name was chosen by his parents, not bestowed by anyone else, for their first child born on May 5, 2004. According to his father, the name expresses gratitude because God answered their prayers for a son. Their house is located on Jalan Kapas Gading Madya III, Surabaya. Some relatives find the name commendable, while others consider it unconventional. In fact, based on Javanese philosophy and customary beliefs, some feel the name carries a weight that might impact the child's future. Despite this, the father hopes the name will continue to bring blessings, as his artistic business thrives. He resides there with his wife and three

children. Due to his son's distinctive name, he became well-known at Soewandhi Regional Hospital in Surabaya, where his son was born 13 years ago. The name "*Alhamdulillah Lanang Anakku*" gained popularity on social media, is recorded on the birth certificate, and appears on his son's student examination card from State Elementary School 6 Rangkah 6, Surabaya (Faizal, 2017).

The name above consists of three words, namely *Alhamdulillah* which is Arabic, which means "all praise is to Allah", the word *lanang* which is Javanese, which means male, and the word *anakku* which is Indonesian for my child. Actually, these words are not funny at all, because they are the usual expressions of gratitude to God for the birth of a son. However, after being combined into a name, it becomes funny, because there is no name whose structure is taken from an expression of gratitude. Humor like this can be included in the category of incongruity theory because it is not common.

In Indonesia, aside from official names, informal names or nicknames are also prevalent. This article explores the phenomenon of unique nicknames. According to Starks (2011: 87), nicknames typically reflect personal attributes of the individual. They often relate to physical characteristics like weight, height, or hair color, as well as personal habits and traits. Some nicknames derive from personal history, cultural background, or racial identity. Sociological studies on naming practices indicate that naming often occurs within specific domains of language use, such as gangs, military units, sports teams, politics, and family settings.

In connection to this, in Indonesia there is also an example of a nickname that cannot be separated from the Betawi cultural background, namely the phenomenon of *Si Doel*, as in the following example:

Figure 6. Source: https://www.boombastis.com/pemeran-si-doel/45338

The name of the person wearing a black skullcap, white shirt, and standing on the right is *Doel*, the main actor in the popular soap opera *Si Doel Anak Sekolahan* that was aired in one of Indonesian televisions in 1994. Actually, the name *Doel* was popularized for the first time in a book called *Si Doel Anak Betawi*, the work of Aman Datoek Madjoindo, which was published by Balai Pustaka in 1932. The main character in the book, *Doel*, is a boy of Betawi descent who lives in a small neighborhood in the heart of Batavia. *Doel* lived his life in the same way as many other Betawi people. Besides playing, he likes to recite the Koran (attending religious classes, and reading the Koran) every afternoon. The book clearly tells the daily adventures of little *Doel* and his friends and enemies in the village (Loven: 2008).

The nickname *Doel* (the name is pronounced *Dul*) is a type of a nickname that implies a positive emotional attitude. According to Crozier (2002), this positive emotional attitude can be expressed through the use of nicknames that show affection. Likewise, De Klerk and Bosch (Soban: 2009) added that positive nicknames are usually used to reflect the strength relationship of solidarity between the speaker and the person named. Because of this, it is

used among people who know each other, such as close friends, relatives, and even close associates. The use of nicknames is an indication of the need to express warmth and affection towards people who are given a nickname or in some cases to create a sense of belonging between the user and the carrier. Positive nicknames are usually used vocally because they are not intended to offend people who are given a nickname. Positive nicknames are semantically transparent, as they do not carry hidden offensive meanings. As a result, they are usually free to use in the hope that the person nicknamed will approve the nickname.

In addition to the name *Doel*, another nickname featured in the soap opera is *Atun*, *Doel*'s younger sister, seen standing to his left in the picture. Both names are linguistically unique, especially when analyzed morphologically. In Indonesia, nicknames often derive from the sound at the end of a person's name. For instance, the nickname "*Dul*" might originate from the name *Abdullah*. *Abdullah* is composed of two Arabic nouns: "*Abdu*" (meaning servant) and "*Allah*" (meaning God), resulting in "Servant of God." What adds a humorous twist is that "*Dul*" diverges from the typical nickname convention, which usually combines syllables from the first noun (like "*Abdu*") with the first letter of the second noun (like "l"), creating "*Dul*" in this case.

The humor lies in its departure from the theory proposed by Liao (2006: 70), who researched nicknames in Taiwan and identified nine distinct forms:
(1) in the form of a name that means affection
(2) a prefix consisting of one character from the full name
(3) in the form of homophonic word play;
(4) in the form of opposition from an official name;
(5) in the form of births in the family;
(6) in the form of instructions from a fortune teller;
(7) describing people, abilities, figures, preferences, etc. of opposite qualities;
(8) in the form of a name given by the family;
(9) in the form of birth year, gender, or horoscope.

The name *Dul* does not match any of the criteria. Maybe this is the hallmark of nicknames in Indonesia. Likewise, it also happens to the nickname *Atun*. The name *Atun* is usually used to call women who use Arabic names as their official names. The names of Arab women mostly use the suffix *ta marbutah /-atun/* behind, for example *Halimatun, A'isyatun, Khadijatun* and others, even though in Indonesia the suffix */-atun/* is not mentioned and replaced with the letter */-h/*, because it is placed at the back of the word, so it becomes *Halimah, A'isyah, Khadijah,* and others. Actually, the proper nickname for these names is to use the official full name, because the name is short or usually only one part of the name. Meanwhile, this is referred to not as part of the official name but the suffix of the name. It is well known that the suffixes are not part of the name. For example, if the name *Muthm'inatun* (in Indonesian it becomes *Mutma'inah*), logically, the nickname will be *Muth*, not *-atun* because *Muth-* is part of the name *Muthma'inah*, while *-atun* is not part of its name, but it is the ending of each Arabic feminine noun. This unique combination of words is what makes this name funny. Humor like this is included in the category of incongruity theory.

Besides the nicknames *Dul* and *Atun*, in Indonesia, there is also another nickname that was once popular, namely *Udin*.

Figure 7. Source: Halo Entertainment Indonesia (HEI)

A young man named *Soaludin* in Central Lombok suddenly became popular after he sang a strange song called *Udin Sedunia* (*Udin* the World). Although there were protests because they were seen as insulting to people named *Udin*, the creativity of the *Udin* gained the attraction of a television channel and the simple young man was given the opportunity to appear several times on screen (Sujana, 2014: 28). Many people are familiar with the creative videos that are uploaded via YouTube, videos containing Udin's parody songs. *Udin*'s name is supposed to be good, so the singer and blasphemes are also unconsciously carried out by the singer. Maybe the goal is just being funny (Qolawun, 2014: 26).

Regarding the name *Udin* that became controversial, this article cites Wilson's opinion (Liao, 2006: 71) which confirms that the nickname is universal. People use it among relatively closed groups, such as slang and other forms of exclusive behavior, to strengthen attachment and control their access. Nicknames can be in the form of harassment and ridicule, whether the object of ridicule is present and addressed directly, or does not exist and is 'called' only in the third person. In the extreme, nicknames can be a scapegoating and insulting mode. However, not all nicknames are hostile; some express respect.

Likewise, Kennedy (2015) provided an overview of his research on the structural and sociolinguistic properties of nicknames, detailing various forms, content, and functions. In a form, nicknames vary from short hypochorism to complex unit phrases. In content, nicknames vary between forms derived internally from formal names and items created through a more creative process. Functionally, nicknames vary, that is, used personally in a community or used by the general public. Sociolinguistic patterns also emerge; for example, nicknames for men and women tend to have different patterns of phonemic structure and semantic content. According to Alford (in Kennedy 2006: 391) the social function of nicknames is very dependent on the people who use it; in some cases, nicknames are underestimated, and in others, they indicate social hierarchy, while in others, nicknames connote solidarity or kinship.

Similar to the nicknames *Dul* and *Atun*, the formation of the nickname *Udin* can be considered unique. Typically, *Udin* is used to refer to someone whose official name combines two Arabic words, both ending with "*din*." For instance, the name *Zainudin* consists of "*Zainu*," meaning "decoration", and "*ddin*," meaning "religion". When combined, it forms "*Zainuddin*," interpreted as "religious decoration". From a morphological perspective, the vowel actually belongs not to the noun "*Zain*" but to the suffix "*u*," serving as a subject marker. This vowel can change to "*a*" if the noun acts as an object, resulting in "*Zainaddin*," or to "*i*" if the noun's letter is final after a preposition, producing "*Zainiddin*." The humor in this nickname stems from its unique combination of final vowels with subsequent nouns, deviating from the typical practice of combining nouns directly with other nouns.

5. Conclusions

Based on the residences of the individuals with unique names mentioned above, this article argues that those who favor such unique names and nicknames predominantly belong to the lower middle class and are mostly found in the regions of Java. This finding aligns with Michelle Brady's observation that contemporary parents increasingly prefer unique names for their children. Many parents aim for their children to stand out and succeed, opting for original names that are easy to spell and not overly complex. However, upper-middle-class parents still favor historic or family names, while middle-class parents often avoid conventional names with unusual spellings, which can signify the child's non-middle-class status (Jennings-Edquist, 2019). Another significant finding of this article is that many unique names incorporate Islamic religious terms, and the naming process is often spontaneous without careful selection, due to parents' limited understanding of the terms used. This aligns with Schimmel's (1992: 125) observation that Arabic names adopted by people in the eastern regions of the Islamic world frequently change, as few parents in Indonesia comprehend the true meanings of these names. It also supports Ahmad's (1999: xiii) assertion that most Muslims who adopt Arabic names do not consider their meanings, or are unaware of the meanings of ancient Islamic relics from which these names are derived. Muslims unfamiliar with Arabic must recognize the importance of understanding which Arabic names are inappropriate for children or do not reflect the genuine aspirations of Muslims. Overall, it can be concluded that names and nicknames in Indonesia are not only unique in semantics but also in morphology, contributing to their humorous nature.

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