



Infographics and Memes on Social Media New Practice to Disseminate Islamic History Knowledge in the Digital Age

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Abstract:

Knowledge of Islamic history has begun to decrease in demand, especially for the younger generation of Islam in Indonesia. For this reason, a change in the dissemination of information must be more relevant to the times and in demand by the younger generation. Barisan Ummat Neo (BUMN) is a community on social media on Facebook and Instagram that is working progressively to disseminate Islamic history. The focus of the discussion is 1) The root of infographics and memes from their emergence to the development of learning Islamic History on social media, and 2) The role of BUMN in excitingly disseminating Islamic history using infographics and memes. The authors use a qualitative approach by collecting the sources from several interviewees of BUMN and obtaining several primary sources digitally, such as history infographics and memes. This research concludes that the way to learn Islamic history has changed to be more impressive in the digital age using infographics and memes. This dynamic happened because of the contribution of social media fan-page like BUMN, which has an impact on disseminating Islamic history regularly on social media and responded more positively by the young generation.

Keywords: infographic; meme; Islamic history; digital age

INTRODUCTION

Islam and Indonesia are something that cannot be separated from each other. This is because Islam is part of the history of Indonesian society. Some figures who studied Islam in Indonesia, such as Hamka, Djajadiningrat, and Snouck Hurgronje, have revealed that Islam came to Indonesia in the VII century, and its existence continued to develop into an Islamic sultanate in the XIII century to the XX century before the rule of the Islamic sultanate was replaced by the Dutch colonial government.

The period of Islamic history is still going on today when Indonesia entered the digital era. In the era of 4.0, Islamic history is not only concerned with traditional Islamization but also adapts to the times. The digital era provides an opportunity for Indonesian



Muslims as part of historical actors to Islamize, disseminate information, and study Islamic history digitally, namely by utilizing the role of social media.

Before the advent of the internet in the late 20th century, people studied and spread the history of Islam using conventional methods. In Indonesia, the method of teaching and learning Islamic teachings and history has been going on since the 14th century AD when Maulana Malik Ibrahim established Islamic boarding schools in Java (Fitri & Syarifuddin, 2022). At that time, many students from various corners of Java came to study Islam, then after graduating, taught it again to other students in their area. Along with its development, the method of learning Islamic history is also growing.

After the emergence of public schools in the early 20th century, a teacher conducted the study of Islamic history through oral interaction. The source of learning materials still depends on the books provided by the curriculum. This method is not wrong; it is just too ordinary and boring for students. Even Abdul Rasyid, in his article, said that the subject of Islamic History is seen as just a compliment, with a learning ratio of 2 hours/week, while the material is quite dense and very important (Rasyid, 2018).

In this digital era, anything can happen; even learning Islamic history can be digitized. Therefore, discussing infographics and memes as a medium for spreading Islamic history on social media is very interesting to learn. With infographics and memes, Islamic history can be easily studied by anyone. To use this opportunity, the online community Barisan Ummat Neo exists as a platform that focuses on sharing Islamic history infographics and memes through Facebook and Instagram. This community aims to provide easy and exciting access for social media users, especially the younger generation, to learn and understand the history of Islam. Infographics and memes shared by Barisan Ummat Neo combine visual elements and concise information, making it easy for readers to understand and absorb.

In this article, the author will review more about the role and influence of Barisan Ummat Neo in building awareness of Islamic history through infographics and memes. The author will analyze how this innovative method of communication can influence the way young people learn and understand the history of Islam, as well as explore the positive impact generated by this community in encouraging deeper discussion and understanding of Islamic history.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Previously several writings had discussed similar things. First, Suswandri and M. Badrus Soleh, in their research report entitled “Memes as a Media for Learning History in Cultural Entities of Millennial Communities,” discuss memes used by millennial communities in studying history and how the criteria for memes that can be used in history learning (Suswandari & Soleh, 2020). Second, Suswandri et al. again made a similar article with the title “Meme as a History Learning Media in The Post-Millennial Generation” found that memes can be used for learning media that do not eliminate historical facts but are still attractive (Suswandari et al., 2021). Third, an article by Hendra Kurniawan which contains the results of research on infographics in history learning with the title “History Infographics in Social Media: Public History Education Trends,” said infographics could present history briefly, and interestingly, if presented in visual form, infographics can also be a golden opportunity to grow awareness of the nation’s history (Kurniawan, 2020).

The research the writers focus on is different from the previous studies above. The use of infographics and memes on social media for disseminating Islamic history has not been researched yet. As part of Indonesian Muslim history, Islamic history is one of the important fields that must be explored. Therefore, this research will fill the gap in the relationship between social media and Islamic history in the digital age and how the agent employed the media of infographics and memes to disseminate Islamic history.

RESEARCH METHOD

The writers use qualitative techniques to analyze the role of infographics and memes to disseminate Islamic history on social media. The method begins with collecting primary sources, such as Islamic history infographics and memes created by Barisan Ummat Neo (BUMN), and interviewing several members of BUMN. Oral history is essential to construct the past event and how it happened. For the secondary sources, previous studies conducted the relevant topic, such as Dawkins’s masterpiece about memes, Edward Tufte’s book on infographics, and several Indonesian writers of learning history using infographics and memes.

To understand how infographics and memes played a significant role in spreading Islamic history knowledge from person to person on social media, the writers borrow Knobel and Lankshear’s theory about the impact of infographics and memes. It is said that



using infographics and memes on social media initially reaches a micro basis. However, they affect macro scales, such as shaping peoples' mindsets, behavior, and actions of many people (Knobel & Lankshear, 2015).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Infographics and Memes Before the Era of Digital

Infographics began in prehistoric times, around 30,000 BC when humans described what they did during life. They drew it on the walls of the cave where they lived. They draw visual forms like animals, plants, and their family activities. Infographics then increasingly developed during the Egyptian civilization in 3,300 BC. At that time, the Egyptians invented hieroglyphs to tell things related to their religion, work, and life (Anonym, n.d.).

In the early period of the industrial revolution, an inventor and engineer from Scotland created charts that made people understand several aspects of economic circumstances, including graphs about taxes, labor, and product costs (Anonym, n.d.). The explanation followed by pictures or infographics has been utilized even before the modern era to make people understand the case quickly. The use of infographics continued in the modern age in various media, such as newspapers, books, and news programs on TV.

In Indonesia, Kompas Daily newspaper has used infographics since 1965. Because digital media had not developed yet during the Soekarno Era (1945-1967), infographics in the form of maps were used to describe the location of natural disasters visually, the point locations of poverty, industry, and politics, until the travel tracks in Indonesia. The infographics help to provide contextual information, so they do not need to show all of the items or even a very long explanation (Patriari & Franzia, 2022).

Infographics are not the only picture used by people in the modern era. Memes are also famous for explaining information in books, newspapers, and social media. The origins of modern memes can be traced back to 1976 when biologist Richard Dawkins's book titled "The Selfish Gene" introduced the concept of "memes." Dawkins defines a meme as a cultural unit that spreads from one individual to another through imitation. He described memes as analogous to genes in biology, saying that memes can evolve and be transmitted to the next generation like genes. (Dawkins, 2006)



Because most people easily understand short information followed by infographics and memes, several creative people on social media began to utilize those pictures to disseminate information about history. Many social media fan pages on Facebook and Instagram post information about history using attractive infographics and memes, such as Neohistoria.id, Neochristposting, Barisan_ummat_neo, spi_uinbandung, and etc. They progressively used infographics or memes to disseminate history knowledge to social media users, especially the youth generation.

Infographics and Memes in the Digital Age for Learning Islamic History

Infographics and memes are two visual media that are very popular in today's digital culture. Both have great potential for use in the study of Islamic history. Infographics can present historical information in an easy-to-understand and engaging way, whereas memes can combine humor with historical content, making it more exciting and entertaining.

Infographic

In this digital era, there is much information spread with various discussions. Infographics are a way to disseminate information efficiently and intensely so that it is shorter and easier to understand. Infographics are information presented along with visualization in objects and graphic design. The pioneer in data visualization is Edward Tufte, author of a series of books, "Visual Explanations, The Visual Display of Quantitative Information, and Envisioning Information," on infographics. He thinks information is also an art, so the information he disseminates is not only in the form of words but also in the form of visual data (Saptodewo, 2014).

Infographics have two kinds: information presented with numbers and information presented with concepts. Information presented with numbers can be in graphic form, while that presented with concepts can be in text form. Research shows that 75% of the information humans can capture is visual. This helps humans understand information more quickly, and humans are also able to remember thousands of images by looking at a few seconds (Senjaya et al., 2019).

The history of infographics on social media has begun when social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter exist. With this platform, various visual content can be disseminated along with its information. With attractive visuals from creators that make readers feel interested in reading the information in the content they create, this also

benefits creators in reaching more enthusiasts. Several social media communities on Instagram, such as @spi_uinbandung and @tanyasejarah, actively posted infographics of Islamic history.

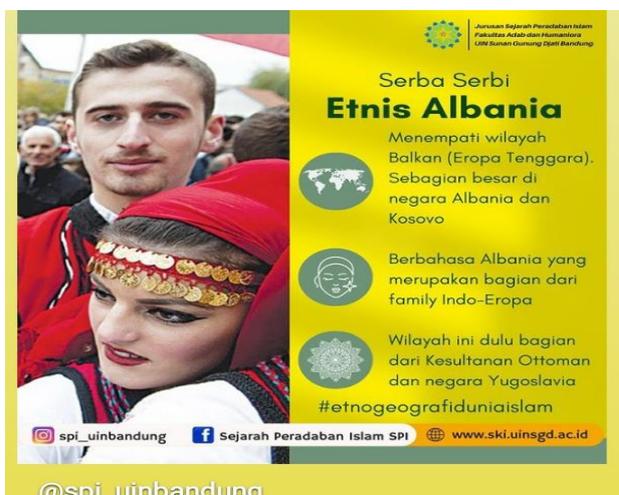


Figure 1: Infographic about Muslims in Albania, created by @spi_uinbandung

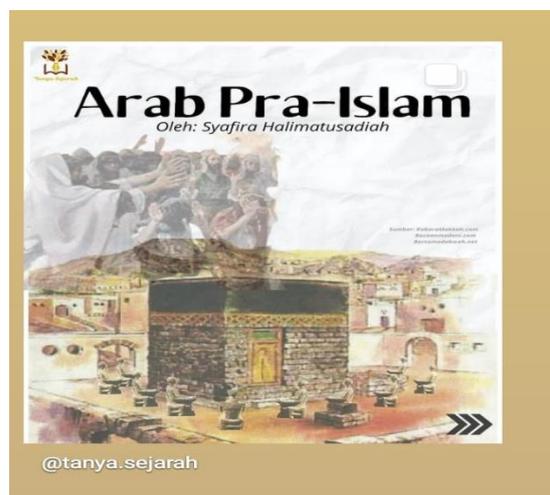


Figure 2: Infographic tells about the condition of Arab Pre-Islam, created by @tanyasejarah

Meme

The development of social media memes is an internet marketplace that evolves. Memes are used to share humorous content, jokes, trolls, sarcasm, and even irony. Like infographics, memes have also grown on social media since the advent of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Memes are used to provide context briefly, in the form of images or videos, and add short text.

In Indonesia, it is uncertain when the beginning of emergence of memes, but memes in Indonesia are undoubtedly due to influence on the internet. It is suspected that the term meme in Indonesia is popular because of yeahmahasiswa.com sites that contain parody content of students in everyday life. Memes are internet cultures available online, but their sources may represent the real world (offline). For example, memes that contain jokes come from real-world events and are parodied in the form of memes, then disseminated to the internet and consumed by the general public in online media (Saptodewo, 2014).

Memes are increasingly varied when they become the consumption by the general public on the internet, just like a culture that continues to evolve, and human intervention through ideas and ideas will produce new meme products. Sometimes it is difficult to find the origin and cause and effect of memes on the internet because everyone also consumes

memes, so it could be that memes made are not explicit about whom they belong to and where they come from. This can happen because of interactions with each other between internet users. When someone finds a meme and spreads it, someone else will spread it again. This is also called 'viral.'

Mememes for history learning have at least a few tools, (1) using images from cartoons; (2) using good images with attractive colors and non-rigid fonts; (3) creative and not too long; (4) not insulting historical figures; (5) memes that are made capable of intriguing; (6) the message conveyed; (7) meme templates that have gone viral (Suswandari et al., 2021). This is the basis of making historical memes. Of course, making historical memes is not fixed with these seven tools.

People must be prepared with enough knowledge when spreading historical memes on social media. Memes are not just spread with humorous context but must be based on credible sources. When the meme has reached a large enough audience, it will cause discussion in the comment section. As a disseminator, it would be nice to be responsible for straightening out information if there is a misunderstanding.

In addition to using credible sources, if people want to create memes, they must choose a meme template that follows the historical context so as not to cause errors in memes, also called 'misused.' This relatively trivial is only crucial when memes and historical contexts are not aligned because the history presented in memes is understandable depending on the meme template used.

Thawaf nir-busana di Mekkah masa Jahiliyah :



Figure 3: Meme created by BUMN about Thawaf nir-busana (without cloths) in Makkah Pre-Islam

Setelah mendengar pendapat Imam Abu Hanifah mengenai Poligami



Figure 4: Meme about the reaction of Chaliph al-Mansur listening to Abu Hanifah's opinion on polygamy

The Role of Barisan Ummat Neo (BUMN) and their post

Barisan Ummat Neo (BUMN) is a social media community on Facebook and Instagram that focuses on spreading Islamic history with infographics and memes. BUMNs are autonomous from the Neo Historia online community under the auspices of PT Neo Historia Digdaya. BUMN is one of the autonomous engaged in religious wings other than Neo Christposting and Neo Mystic. All these religious wings are led by Hanafi Wibowo as different people handle his advisor and each religious wing.

BUMN began with the proposal of five people who initiated establishing a particular community that focuses on Islamic history. The people who initiated it were Doni, Afga, Irfan, Hanafi, and Marvel. With the results of discussions with Neo Historia officials, finally, BUMNs were born as Neo Historia's special autonomy in the religious wing. The main objective of BUMNs is to open up the history of Islam that is covered up and explain Islam rationally to the general public.

BUMN has three divisions, namely, first the writer division, which prepares historical material that will be discussed and disseminated on social media. The second graphic design division, engaged in making infographics and memes as an introduction to the material to be disseminated, is the third editor division. All divisions have their respective division heads and are responsible by Hanafi Wibowo as an autonomous leader at Neo Historia. In general, infographics in the spread of Islamic history by BUMN have four forms: characterization, incident, territory, and Islamic principles. Here is an example:

1. Characterization/biography

This first form of infographic shares information about a character through his background and the story of the character. With a picture of the character's face, the text is added with his name and a brief description of the character, while a full explanation is written in the description of the post.



Figure 5: Biography of Habib Ali Kwitang

2. Incident

The second infographic form is an image that contains the occurrence of an event with image visualization that matches the background of place and time. Like the first form, BUMNs insert the text on the picture while a full explanation is written in the description of the post.



Figure 6: Massacre of Mulimin in Lucera

3. Territory/geographic

The third infographic is a form that displays Islamic territory, such as the territory of a caliphate, kingdom, sultanate, state, territory, or Islamic influence, by adding visualizations in the form of maps, local culture, or showing images of the area.



Figure 7: Map of Turkish Dynasties &; Circrassia in Egypt

4. Islamic principles

Islamic principles, teachings, and doctrines The fourth form of infographics is a visualization that displays how Islamic teachings, included in this fifth form, are infographics that explain Islamic teachings, disciplines, the process of spreading Islamic teachings, Islamic doctrine, and culture.



Figure 8: Rosulullah's Hope for His Ummah

The target of BUMNs is the younger generation (Millennials and Gen Z) unfamiliar with their religious history, which, if not appropriately managed, is feared to deviate from understandings and ideologies that are not following Pancasila. Doni, the manager of BUMN, said that young Muslims are less interested in studying the history of their religion. Even if some are interested in religious history, they are more interested in the history of religions or groups other than Islam. This is because of their curiosity about groups other than their own.

The presence of BUMNs can attract the younger generation to know the history of Islam and fight secularism and scooterism. It is also intended that they view Islam more rationally. The benefits are also felt by BUMN administrators, like the literacy industry. BUMN administrators also feel benefits such as getting free knowledge, growing knowledge, and charity that also accompanies because they voluntarily distribute knowledge for free to the general public.

BUMNs can take responsibility for the historical information they post on social media because they have strong references. They look for credible sources such as books and articles that are trusted by being more selective in choosing sources to be used as references. After they compile the material, they do not necessarily share it casually. They have to double-check the material to be loaded many times.



Figure 9: Meme About Qabil Losing to Shith



Figure 10: Memes About Ammar bin Yasir's Parents

The positive response from the younger generation tends to like history loaded with memes. In comparison, the boomer generation tends to be contra because of their layness to the humor of the younger generation and the development of internet culture. The contradiction of BUMNs is also caused because the history contained by BUMNs is a history that is rarely known to people. Besides that, some atheists and agnostics have different understandings of Islamic teachings. Criticism for BUMN writers also circulated. BUMN managers do not necessarily reject criticism; they are open to criticism from history connoisseurs, but they also tend to filter disturbing comments that cause unrest.

CONCLUSION

Infographics and memes are new practices to attract the younger generation to be interested in Islamic history, considering that the younger generation of Islam lacks awareness of the importance of studying the history of their religion. Infographics and memes are practices of spreading a history that is not boring. These two ways have their characteristics, namely presenting data briefly, concisely, and clearly, so that it is easy to understand for audiences who like history or not.

Using the opportunity to attract social media users in Islamic history, Barisan Ummat Neo (BUMN) presents history with infographics and memes on Facebook and Instagram.



They posted Infographics characterized by short and precise information and memes of Islamic history with humor and not rigid. The reaction of social media users is interesting to be evaluated more. This could be a new topic of research to be explored by some historians in the future.

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