

RELIGION IN NEW MEDIA: Anti-Dating Movement in Instagram

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Abstract

The young marriage movement on Instagram is able to become a new ideology and identity for young Muslims in Indonesia. This research aims to show how the work of new media affects and blurs the barriers between the private and the public. The youth marriage movement promoted through new media can make someone simply let strangers influence their views on private matters and open up spaces to share views on these matters. To explain this, this study examines how written and visual narratives are conveyed. This research also examines how the pros and cons emerge in the social context of the Indonesian Muslim community, particularly regarding the marriage issues. To build an argument, the study analyzed some content and interactions between users in online publications on the Instagram accounts @gerakannikahmuda and @indonesiatanpapacaran. This study also analyzes counter responses conveyed through articles in several online media. This research uses content analysis which is not limited to these two accounts, but also the debates that arise from these ideologies and movements. In sum, this study confirms that in the era of new media, a person has options that are open, broad and very easy to influence himself to become a new grip, ideology and identity, only with digital activities.

Keywords: Marriage, Islamic Movement, New Media

Abstrak

Gerakan nikah muda di Instagram mampu menjadi ideologi dan identitas baru bagi pemuda Muslim di Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan bagaimana peran media baru mempengaruhi dan mengaburkan batas antara pribadi dan publik. Gerakan pernikahan muda yang dipromosikan melalui media baru dapat membuat seseorang membiarkan orang lain mempengaruhi pandangannya tentang masalah pribadi dan membuka ruang untuk berbagi pandangan tentang masalah tersebut. Untuk menjelaskan hal tersebut, penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana narasi tertulis dan visual disampaikan. Penelitian ini juga mengkaji bagaimana pro dan kontra yang muncul dalam konteks sosial masyarakat Muslim di Indonesia, khususnya terkait masalah perkawinan. Untuk membangun argumen, kajian ini menganalisis beberapa konten dan interaksi antar pengguna dalam publikasi online di akun Instagram @gerakannikahmuda dan @indonesiatanpapacaran. Studi ini juga menganalisis tanggapan balasan yang disampaikan melalui artikel di beberapa media online. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis isi yang tidak terbatas pada dua akun tersebut, tetapi juga perdebatan yang muncul dari ideologi dan gerakan tersebut. Singkatnya, kajian ini menegaskan bahwa di era media baru, seseorang memiliki pilihan yang terbuka, luas dan sangat mudah mempengaruhi dirinya untuk menjadi pegangan, ideologi dan identitas baru, hanya dengan aktivitas digital.

Kata Kunci: Pernikahan, Gerakan Islam, Media Baru

1. INTRODUCTION

Persuasion of young marriage in social media -especially Instagram- is the Islamic youth movement against phenomena of dating among young boys and girls. Nowadays, some Islamic youth make a movement to be better person using the ways of Islamic teaching, called as *hijrah*. Young marriage movement is the one of effort of *hijrah*. These movement employed some 'new ways', such as: social media accounts, books with its eye-catching cover, youth seminar, and so on. This paper will limit the object of research on Instagram accounts which are @indonesiatanpapacaran and @gerakannikahmuda. In 2020, @indonesiatanpapacaran posted 37.5 thousand posts with its 1 million followers. In the other hand, @gerakannikahmuda posted 22.5 thousand posts with 433 thousand followers. In these accounts, users discuss with each another, persuade toward their friends, debate in some religious issues, promote of Islamic product, and so on. Focused on Instagram accounts -which were used by some young activist of young marriage movement-, this paper will examine: How does this discourse persuasion many Islamic young? The relationship between two persons is their private affair, how does this issue emerge publicly? How did this movement make anti-dating discourse emerge and how was it discussed? These questions will be answered by analyzing content and observing the interactions between users that appear in response. Furthermore, this research will put this anti-dating phenomenon into the socio-political context of Islam and scholar studies in religious studies related to new media and identity, youth, and religious movements.

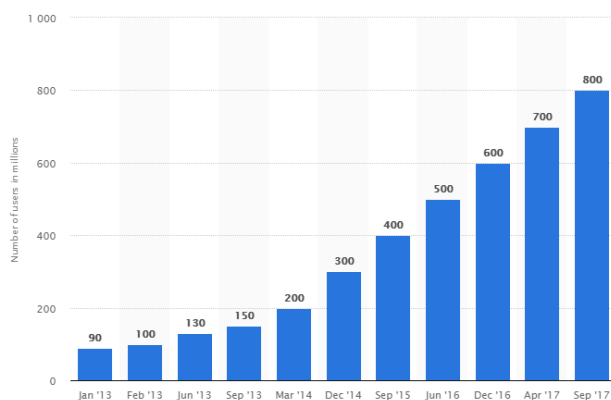
In this article, I propose that the new media with visual is able to provide a new identity (for stranger people who do not know each other into it), to form certain views on a problem or phenomenon. In forming a view, a person will always define himself to be part of a certain group or certain thoughts or not. As Ford referred to Giddens's concept of the "reflexive project" which means the process of identifying oneself against various identities formed from people who are manifested in the process of appropriation in their daily lifestyle. (Ford, Shaluhayah, Suryoputro, Sciences, & Campus, 2007, p. 71) This reserch will be analize and explain how does it work in people of new media.

2. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

2.1. Visual Persuasion and Instagram

Instagram is the one of popular social media. It was found by Kevin Systrom and Mike Kreiger. It became popular because of its display of picture that was shown in the bigger proportion. (Arceneaux, 2016, p. 9) The number of Instagram user has been increasing from day to day, and then in September 2017, it reached 800 millions. (www.statista.com, 2018) In the other word, as the number of user that diagram provided, Instagram have the huge influence and would be extend its influence on and on. According to Porter: "The explosion in the number of circulating images and in the variety of platforms for seeing those images has transformed the way people read, write, and think." (Elizabeth G . Porter, 2016) It is also proved in Zhou dissertations: "As Wishpond indicates: 90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual. Visuals are processed 60,000 times faster in the brain than text." (Zhou, 2017) However, based on the enhancement of the number of user from January 2013 to September 2017, it is

about more than 8 fold, and hence it could be predicted how many people in the world would be influenced by its various visual messages.



Picture 1. *The number of Instagram user*

In send the message, visual message is more impactful then letter message. As Porter said: “Images are efficient, accessible, and memorable.”(Elizabeth G . Porter, 2016) In the other word, the message become more catching in the person mind because of visuality, which is have colorful and attractive content. Nevertheless, visual message give wide possibility of viewer interpretation. Furthermore, Porter add that the constant connectivity and digital footprint toward the colorful and interactive visuals are enable make the people experiencing it, internalize it, so blurring the border between lived experience and narration, between reality and marketing (Elizabeth G . Porter, 2016). In sum, the multi-interpretation that visual message produce, would enable it to reaching more user with many its diversity.

The huge diversity of argument is so possible to emerge. However, it would produce the common discourse that was supported by the huge number of people authomatically. According to Sherwin that was cited by Porter: “As goes popular discourse, so goes legal rhetoric.” (Sherwin & Sherwin, 2007) Digital society have their own system that is no rule and no authority. In the other word, it would be move and produce some demands, needs, and interests within discourses that is appropriate with the bigger number of people aspiration of many issue. As Zhou mentioned: “Generally, uses and gratifications theory (U&G theory) suggests individuals are active media users and able to choose and use media based on their motivations and needs”(Zhou, 2017). Therefore, the number of user represent the motivation as well as the influential discourses that would be produced from it.

Many interests pass over and over again, every user would fiter some information and discourses that appropriate with his or her identity and interests. Instagram was provide the proper platform to represent indivual existence as well as group existence as the collective representation. According to Zhou: “In other words, Instagram, as a visual-based social media platform, can be used not only by individuals to self-express their personal identity, but also by organizations to construct and show their unique brand identities visually and strategically.” (Zhou, 2017). Furthermore, there are many link that intertwine between users either in personal account or in community account. Instagram enable to collect some people in a platform that they have some similarity, either identity, needs, interests, favorites, and many more. The collective people communicate and do intervention in mutual relation. According to Ronkin: “The strategic use of

interactive online social media allows for a tribe to communicate clearly in four directions: “leader to tribe, tribe to leader, tribe member to tribe member, and tribe member to outsider” (Ronkin, 2014). In sum, Instagram created the new social imaginary based on some similarity of personality, which would always emerge social communication and reconstruction within it.

2.2. Engagement in The Persuasive Post

Based on the fact that mentioned above, the needs in religiosity became a part of links that relate each another. In the internet era in which the freedom of expression is not limited by place and time. Every kind of ideology or the way of life could show off in persuasion platforms, especially Instagram, which depend on how the user utilize it. Ronkin argued that there are people who have skill to convincing and influencing others to change an attitude or behavior.”(Ronkin, 2014) For instance, there are @gerakannikahmuda and @indonesiatanpapacaran that promoted their way of life, especially about the phenomena of dating in Indonesia young generation. They were able to collect ten thousands follower and got mostly thousands in their each post. In short, Instagram was a kind of persuasion platform that was able to huge number of people in the religious needs.

The persuasion in the religious needs become success to get the huge number of people, if it is able to satisfy people demand in the easy and practical way in order to become pious. In fact, digital era inevitably has produced ‘Instant Generation’ that their needs should be fulfilled by easy way. Furthermore, these account became reference of the users in particular Islamic law, especially in the relation between man and woman. Borrowing from Norhaidi term, ‘Islam Instant’ people choose and consume the religious affairs based on predisposition. According to Norhaidi: “Religious commodification entails ideologization of commodities and commoditization of religion, as it is as much about selling ideology as it is about selling products.” (Hasan, 2009) Therefore, there are trade relation between digital platform or social media –here, especially Instagram- and believer who use it as one of religious reference.

Mutual relation, equality, and freedom of expression in digital platform enable to every user becoming agency. However, every one could contribute to build the discourses. In the other words, the discourse could not emerge without the contribution from the number of people. Mahmood referred to Asad which utilizes Foucault’s conception of power and discourse, according to Asad “formulation of tradition draws attention both to micropractices of interpersonal pedagogy, through which the truth of a particular discursive practice is established, and to the macrolevel of historically sedimented discourses, which determine the possibility of what is debatable, enunciable, and doable in the present.” (Mahmood, 2005) Moreover, every one also was influenced by his or her identity and particular context around him or her. In sum, based on previous paragraph idea, either some one who become the first creator of discourse or many people who share and contribute to build the discourse in order to make it more impactful and influential.

In additions, the discourse would have power and become impactful, if it enable to present in common people daily life and change their way of life with change their thought. Hence, society have its own system to direct and determine the rule and norm, or even normal designation. Furthermore, to know in what extent that the discourse is impactful and influential, it would be known by

measure the vastness and the length of the discourse impact that influence, was practiced and was believed particular people in particular place and period. According to Mahmood the specific gestures, styles, and formal expression cannot be used as a certain moral measure, but it can be used as a means of understanding the existing relationship between the self and the structure, which shapes a person's self and existence in the social as she/he wishes to be. (Mahmood, 2005) Therefore, every discourse was created by complex connection of effect-cause from people within their context as well as it was been sustain by it.

2.3. The Most Type of Post That Persuaded Many Followers to Involve in Comment Column

Persuading come from the two account as well as their followers who continue the persuasion effort to persuade others to feel what they feel after get and read the message either visual or its caption message. Even though, the post contains mostly still highlight the letter rather than the picture contains. Visual could be the attractive letter with its full color and unique design of latter as will. Either @gerakannikahmuda or @indonesiatanpapacaran account posted more than three posts per day. Most of their posts got more then ten thousands likes, but only some of them that got and persuaded the followers to involve in the debate and the discussion of the comment columns. There are some type of posts that success to persuade many number of followers:

a. Wedding couple photos



Wedding couple photos showed to emerge jealous and maintain followers desire to marriage as soon as possible. Followers would persuade each other as well by mentioning others account name, such as their loved person, unmarriage friend, kinship, and many more. Furthermore, some followers send the sign to someone that was loved by him or her to know his or her desire of marriage soon. However, the persuasion message of marriage soon was delivered within or by Islamic narration.

b. *Question persuasion*

Picture 3.

Question persuasion on @indonesiatanpapacaran



The most influential post is question persuasion type. This type enable to make everyone who read it to rethink and ask to his or her self. The idea that everyone have –as his or her aspiration, expression, expectation, and other type of idea that emerge based on personal experience- wrote in the comment columns as his or her personal existence.

c. *Doa (Answered with “amiin”)*

Picture 4.

Doa on posted picture of @indonesiatanpapacaran



This type make many followers to write “amiin” as a wish to God to making the good future come true. The wish not only address to his or her self but also to someone who he or she mention his or her account name in comment columns, they hope that the good future come also to someone who was mentioned.

d. *Satire*

Picture 5.

Satire caption on posted picture of @gerakannikahmuda



As the question persuasion type, this type also enable to make everyone who read to ask to his or her self about what he or she did. In the same result from the pervious types of posts, followers who read try to persuade other users either followers of the same account or non followers of it. Moreover, this type would be reflection to something that someone have did ever. The reflection also come from someone who mentioned the others account name, even complated by remembering them about what they did in the past that related by the issue in the post.

e. *Persuasion statement*

Picture 6.

Persuasion statement on posted picture of @indonesiatanpacaran



One of the followers said that Indonesia government should have a role to solve this problem. Many followers involve in the discussion about phenomena of dating based on their own view of it. Their view could be such as apprehensive statement, affirmation to previous statement, showing the cause, support to the movement that someone plan against phenomena of dating, and so on. Some of them also provide the solution from state level to decrease emergence of phenomena of dating in the young generation.

f. *Religious advice*

Picture 7.

Religious advice on posted picture of @indonesiatanpapacaran



The example post is about prohibition to women being outside of house, which is based on Quranic verse. The post invite followers to involve in the discuss, and even debate about Islamic law. Everyone could argue and decide the law based on their insight of Islamic law. Some of them also ask about some related practice that he or she hesitate to do it in the daily life. As usual, the most comment come from people who mention the other Instagram user to persuade them

g. *Trending issue*

Picture 8.

Persuasion statement on posted picture of @gerakannikahmuda



There are not Islamic issue that would be miss from @gerakannikahmuda and @indonesiatanpapacaran attention, including Rina Nose issue. The post above, contains religious leader -that some people lisen to him- speech that told about Rina Nose who take off her veil. The speech persuade them to involve the debate about this issue. A part of them judge Nose's decision and a part other try to stand in the soft approach even though they actually did not agree with Nose's decision. Interestingly, a part of them criticize religious leader speech, which was felt too rude. As the result, everyone enable to be agency with this freedom of expression that was provided by Instagram, and even was supported by some author who maintain these accounts aim and persuasion toward their followers.

2.4. The anti-dating movement

@gerakannikahmuda and @indonesiatanpapacaran, which is marriage in the young age movement, emerge because of La Ode Munafar disappointment toward phenomena of dating that was complaint by many young people around him. Munafar saw that the young people problem today emerged because of dating trend. Munafar and some people -who agreed with him argument- strive against this phenomena with some kind of movement. (Sari, Husein, & Ratna Noviani, 2020) As the instances above, they showed how persuasion was strived by many people as followers who have the same idea of it. All of them was called as “agency”. Mahmood’s concept of agency is “modality of action” that play between the subject and the norm and between performative behavior and inward disposition. Furthermore, action does not occur from natural feelings but discursive formation. (Mahmood, 2005) As the result, the young marriage movement was promoted as the effort of their fight against phenomena of dating.

The young marriage movement has not obvious terminology of young. However, the “young” term that they used emphasize to effort against phenomena of dating which occurred in the young age. Moreover, phenomena of dating occurred to child from elementary school until collage extent. (Siaw, 2013) Therefore, these effort would generalize to all of relation between two young man and girl as ilegal in the religious determination. As Norhaidi argued: “The rising tide of Islamic militancy in the Indonesian public sphere has corresponded with the accentuation of religious symbols and the proliferation of Islamic institutions and new life-styles.” (Hasan, 2009) Therefore, the effect of this massive movement was the number of young people who marry in the early age of man and woman was judged as good decision, pious person, and so on.

The main motivation of this movement was in order to maintain Islamic law and becoming pious Muslim. Specifically, the aims were in order to avoid *zina*, namely every form of sexuality action before marriage. Based on verses of Quran and Prophet Muhammad traditions, they always try to practice and obey the God determination. Norhaidi argued every Muslim tend to become a Muslim *kaffah* (total Muslim) with practice and applies Islam in all aspect of life. Moreover, believing in one God and applying the totality of Islam is not enough. A total muslim also have responsibility to prevent the bad deeds the principle of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* and become the most committed defender of Islam. (Hasan, 2009) In contrast, based on the variety of religious pedagogy in Egypt context, in fact, God determination that was embodied by Muhammad traditions was not rigid and sole interpretation of it. Muhammad tradition became the standard because Muslim believed that he never did out of God determination, because God promised to keep him from mistake. According to Mahmood: “In other words, the practice of hadith is not limited to the citational protocols of religious scholars, but comprises a field of proliferating discourse with multiple dislocations that, nonetheless, engages with scholarly procedures in some form or another.” (Mahmood, 2005) In sum, the religious ideology that was based on the same believe but different interpretation would make the same aim with the different way to achieve it.

The number of movement with their various embodiment was occurred as the part of Islamic resurgence. The young marriage is a part of Islamic resurgence. The root of the young marriage aims come from the general aim of Islamic

resurgence, namely purify Islamic teaching and belief. The emergence of this movement in the context of many scholar said as “Islamic resurgence”, that marked by increasing prominence politicization of Islamic ideologies, symbols, and performances in public life of Muslim individuals (Paper, Jinan, Muhammadiyah, & Jinan, 2015). In Indonesia context is marked by after revolution period. Many Muslim in Indonesia tend to bring Islamic identity publicly and to “cleanse” and “purify” society from the alleged vices and evils of modernity or western people and to lead their lives according to Islamic ideological and social values.(Hasan, 2009) Therefore, based on the previous evidences of Indonesia and Egypt context, it could be different effort for different context, and even in the same context, it is possible to emerge the differences.

The common problem that young people afraid to marriage in the early age was about financial matters. People who promoted marriage in the early age believe in the guarantee that God will be give if they struggle in the religious ways. According to Nancy: “Nor do we follow rational choice theorists in positing that religion is always about “supernatural rewards.” (Nancy Ammerman, 2007) Belief in the God power and guarantee would be strong reason to believer to omit the fear and be strength to do everything, because no thing compared with the God’s torture. In contrast, some people that disagree to this notion or the ways of life argued that many evidences of many problems occurred because of marriage that was done by young people. They argued that religious narration, which was used by some people who promoted the young marriage, is not the realistic to live in this era.

The people who criticized it also see the unfair judging toward male and female. In this discourse, male was always judged as human with uncontrolled sexuality. In the other side, female was always judged as human with lesspower to protect herself and make decision. These argument come because of the young marriage people narration that always said about girl who become victim of boy. Moreover, based on this reason the people who criticize argue that marriage merely become religious legality to do coitus. (Folia, 2016) They argued that marriage not only about coitus but also about life after marriage that would be until the death, and many problem would emerge in it. Therefore, the readiness from boy and girl would be the main consideration to decide marriage, and not merely about sexual legality.

The marriage was about love and not about sexuality. Mostly Indonesia people failed to distinct between love and sexual orientation. To face the life in marriage it should be need the couple love. The love need maturity and readiness in some aspect. This failure occurred because the sexuality issue was regarded taboo and was undercommunicated in the puberty.” (Utama, 2016) In some cases of youth relationship between a girl and boy which are seen as inappropriate with moral code of sicial and religion will be solved by under age marriage. control to prevent those things are done with appling and sometime imposing women to follow the moral code of sosial anad religion. Based on Parker and Nilan research in Minang Muslim youth, they argeud: “The solution was invariably to strengthen religious commitment and to build a moral fortress (benteng) against the incursions of the West through a revived adat, and for young women to choose the ‘right path’ of modest dress, polite language and proper respect.”(Parker & Nilan, n.d., p. 118) In contrast, young mentality, actually, had readiness to do marriage,

if it was prepared appropriately. Debineva said: “Because, young people should been had freedom of intellectual, freedom of reproduction, and responsibility, and you (and me) is not rational as much as I was imagine!” (Debineva, 2016) However, some people argued that it was wrong if some people deny the young marriage because of unreadiness of young people to do marriage.

3. CONCLUSSION

New media is able to encourage its users to engage, have a commonly new identity, and see something from a certain perspective or ideology. In this case, the @gerakannikahmuda and @indonesiatanpapacaran accounts encourage young Muslims to leave dating as part of obedience to religious orders. The young marriage idea emerged because of some people argued that some young people’s problem occurred as the effect of the phenomena of dating. Hence, they strive against the phenomena of dating. In the same time, religious reason, in which avoid *zina*, was one of the efforts to purify Islam as the aim of Islamic resurgence. The combination of visuals, narratives, and the use of well-packaged religious propositions in uploaded posts of Instagram, as well as the intensity of the uploading time, are able to make the followers question themselves, address their friends, (some of them) feel guilty. The effect of this combination can be obtained from their engagement in the comments column. The formation of discourses on youth marriage and anti-dating has also encourage people to contest this opinion and choose to have opposing views. The ability of the new media to bring private matters into the public sphere, makes private problems general, simple and dualistic. Dating or anti-dating. Following religious teachings or not. Even though in reality the problems of marriage and dating are particular and personal, even in the law of religion these acts tend to be vary. Furthermore, in fact, each person will interpret differently what is called as dating or not. As a result, new media enable to obscure and even remove the complexity of problems and choices of someone’s life.

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