

Muslim Identity of Indonesian Public Figures on Social Media during Eid al-Fitr

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Muslim identity; Instagram; social media; digital culture

This study aims to explain how Muslim identity is constructed through Instagram content by Indonesian public figures, specifically within the context of the 1447 H Eid al-Fitr celebration. Employing a qualitative approach rooted in the constructivist paradigm, the study views meaning as the product of interpreting cultural symbols. Roland Barthes' semiotic model is used to analyze signs, symbols, and visual elements across three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. The study focuses on three Indonesian Muslim public figures Husein Ja'far Al Hadar, Oki Setiana Dewi, and Zaskia Adya Mecca selected for their high visibility, active social media presence, and consistent representation of Islamic values. These findings reveal that Muslim identity during Eid al-Fitr is expressed through visuals that highlight spirituality, modesty, and togetherness. The content shapes an "ideal Muslim" archetypal, reflective, and digitally active with the three public figures presenting diverse yet consistent models of identity.

1. Introduction

Statements, posts, and conversations on social media can be conceptualized not only as static repositories, but also as socially evolving artifacts constructed by their authors and readers (Stark & Fins, 2012). Conversations on social media cannot be viewed solely as communication processes; multiple meanings emerge in each exchanged message and also shape the identities of those involved.

Social media platforms provide a free space for individuals to showcase their identities. Social media also empowers users to disclose information about themselves, how they perceive themselves, and how they express themselves (Morioka et al., 2016). These platforms also facilitate user engagement in two adaptive activities: identity exploration and identity reaffirmation (Ibarra, 1999).

For Muslims, social media has become a significant space for expressing, negotiating, and mediating religious identity (Pennington, 2018). This phenomenon is most visible during religious moments, when expressions of faith intersect with cultural practices and platform dynamics.

The celebration of Eid al-Fitr is a significant occasion for Muslims worldwide. In Indonesia, Eid al-Fitr is not only a religious event celebrated every 1st of Shawwal as a day of victory after successfully completing the fasting month of Ramadan. It is also a cultural phenomenon marked by various traditions such as family gatherings, modest dress, festive meals, and other social activities. In the digital context, these traditions are increasingly being transformed into visual content, where moments of spirituality and togetherness are shared and consumed online.

Public figures play a crucial role in shaping representations of Muslim identity. As highly visible actors, they influence how religious identity is framed, aestheticized, and normalized in the digital

space. Through curated posts, captions, and visual storytelling, public figures construct a particular version of Muslim identity. They often project ideals of piety, harmony, success, and lifestyle.

This research aims to highlight the denotative and connotative meanings of Eid symbols used in the content of public figures in Indonesia, and how public figures construct their self-identity as Muslims in the context of Eid celebrations on social media. This research focuses on the Instagram platform as the analytical platform. This is because Instagram is visual based and plays a crucial role in shaping its users' digital identities.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm, which views meaning as being shaped by the interpretation of cultural symbols. This approach aims to explain how Muslim identity is constructed through social media content posted by public figures in Indonesia, particularly in the context of the Eid al-Fitr 1447 H celebration.

The researcher employed semiotic analysis to examine how meaning is produced and communicated through signs, symbols, and visual elements on Instagram. The analytical framework employed Roland Barthes's theory, which distinguishes meaning into three levels: denotative meaning, connotative meaning, and mythical meaning. The subjects of this study were three Indonesian Muslim public figures: Husein Ja'far Al Hadar, Oki Setiana Dewi, and Zaskia Adya Mecca. These three figures were selected because of their high public visibility, active social media presence, and consistent representation of Islamic values in their Instagram content.

Data collection was conducted through non-participant observation of content uploaded on Instagram by research subjects. The data collected included visual content (photos and videos), and textual elements (captions). The steps for data collection were as follows: (1) Identifying the official Instagram accounts of each research subject. (2) Collecting posts published during the Eid al-Fitr 1447 H period. (3) Selecting content that explicitly or implicitly represents the Eid al-Fitr theme, such as religious symbols, family togetherness, Muslim clothing, and expressions of Islamic values. (4) Documenting data through screenshots and descriptive notes as analysis material.

3. Result and Discussion

Eid al-Fitr is a major Muslim holiday that is eagerly awaited every year. It's not only celebrated with various religious and cultural activities. On social media, Eid al-Fitr is a time for Muslims to share greetings, family gatherings, and other activities they engage in on the occasion.

Husein Ja'far Al Hadar is known as a young preacher who conveys Islamic messages through an approach that is moderate, inclusive, and relevant to the digital generation. His relaxed and contextual communication style makes his preaching easily accessible to young people, and he frequently addresses issues of tolerance, humanity, and everyday life from an Islamic perspective.

Oki Setiana Dewi is known as an actress and preacher who consistently projects the image of a religious and educated Muslim woman. Her content frequently focuses on Islamic values, the role of women in Islam, family life, and religious practices. She also embodies the figure of a Muslim woman who successfully balances her professional, academic, and spiritual lives.

Meanwhile, Zaskia Adya Mecca is known as a public figure who embodies the modern Muslim lifestyle. Through her content, she showcases her daily life as a mother, wife, and career woman while upholding Islamic values. The image she projects tends to be casual and relatable, reflecting how Muslim identity can be dynamically integrated into everyday life.

Barthes developed a concept about the difference between denotation and connotation. Denotation is the first level of meaning, or interpreted as the literal meaning of the words in a statement. Denotation at the first level is the meaning as it appears in the dictionary and the generally agreed-upon ideal meaning. Connotation is the second level of meaning, or the meaning that appears

implicitly from a statement. This meaning is an associative meaning that can change. In Barthes's view, every sign has two messages at once: the aesthetic aspect that appears on the surface and the hidden ideological meaning (Sui & Fan, 2015).



- At the denotative level, the post depicts the shadows of two individuals standing side by side without revealing their faces.
- At the connotative level, this visual choice signifies intimacy, modesty, and a rejection of excessive self-display.
- At the level of myth, the content constructs an ideological narrative of an ideal Muslim who prioritizes gratitude and meaningful relationships over visual representation in digital spaces. Through this, Husein Ja'far Al Hadar constructs a self-identity as a reflective, modest, and intellectually grounded Muslim figure.



- At the denotative level, the post presents an illustrated depiction of a Muslim gesture, gesture, and food
- At the connotative level, these elements signify religiosity, cultural identity, and intellectualism.
- At the level of myth, the content constructs the ideal image of a modern Muslim who harmonizes religious devotion with cultural traditions in the digital space. Through this representation, Husein Ja'far Al Hadar positions himself as an intellectual, and digitally adaptive Muslim public figure.



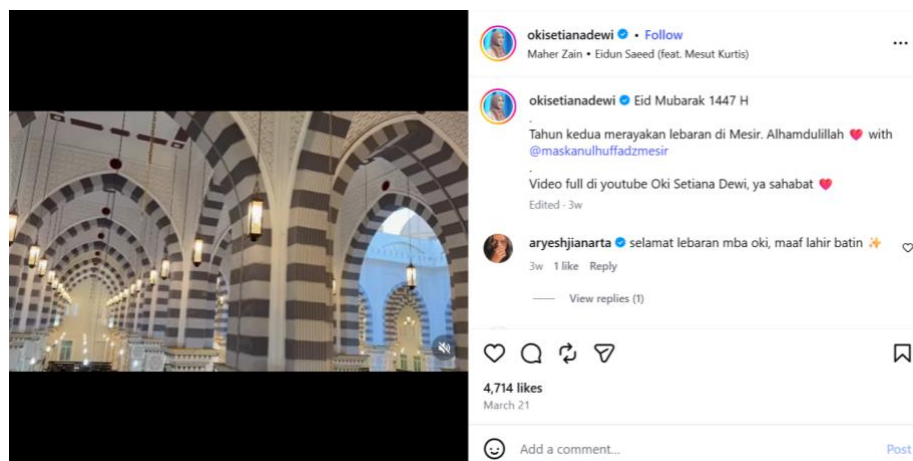
- At the denotative level, the post portrays a family gathering during Eid, with coordinated outfits and expressive interactions.
- At the connotative level, it signifies togetherness, warmth, and familial harmony.
- At the level of myth, the content constructs the ideal image of a Muslim family centered on emotional bonding and shared traditions. Through this representation, Zaskia Adya Mecca positions herself as a warm, authentic, and family-oriented Muslim mother in the digital space.



- At the denotative level, the post shows Oki a hijab-wearing woman speaking in front of the Kaaba at Masjidil Haram, alongside an Instagram caption from Maskanul Huffadz about Eid al-Fitr.
- at connotative level: It conveys spirituality, gratitude, and renewal, emphasizing closeness to God and the emotional meaning of Eid as a time for forgiveness and new beginnings.
- At the level of myth, the post constructs an ideal image of a modern Muslim identity—pious, reflective, and digitally engaged—where religious devotion is publicly shared and normalized on social media.



- At the denotative level, The post shows a family posing happily in front of a mosque, wearing modest white and maroon clothing during Eid al-Fitr.
- At the connotative level, The white clothing symbolizes purity, while their togetherness reflects harmony and strong family bonds. The mosque and “Eid Mubarak” caption emphasize religious devotion and gratitude.
- At the level of myth, The post constructs the image of an ideal Muslim family religious, harmonious, and united. Figures like Oki are portrayed as pious and family-oriented, reinforcing social expectations of Muslim families on social media.



4. Conclusion

Muslim identity during Eid al-Fitr is expressed through visuals highlighting spirituality, modesty, and togetherness. The content constructs an “ideal Muslim” as religious, reflective, and digitally engaged. Husein Ja'far Al Hadar, Zaskia Adya Mecca, and Oki Setiana Dewi present varied yet consistent models of this identity.

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