

THE SUPERFICIAL RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING IN HADITH MEMES: MEDIATIZATION OF HADITH IN THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION 4.0

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Submission date: 08-Jan-2022 06:40AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 1738705767

File name: The_superficial_religious_understanding_in_Hadith_Memes.pdf (3.32M)

Word count: 9381

Character count: 50258

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Abstract: Mediatization of religion inevitably has changed various aspects of people's lives, including the method of delivering and learning hadith. Today's society no longer relies on hadith experts to study hadith, but they learn hadith from the internet instead, through hadith memes, and sites that concerns with hadith studies. This paper aims to explain the mediatization of hadith in cyberspace in the form of hadith memes and the factors to contribute to the emergence of various hadith memes on popular social media networks, which result in the superficial religious understanding of the community towards hadith. The data collected from online sources related to hadith learning were analyzed descriptively. It was revealed that, on one side, the mediatization of hadith in the cyberspace has enabled rapid dissemination of information along with its attractive illustration and presentation. However, on the other hand, there is an obvious inclination that the captions in the meme have disrupted viewers from the essential meaning of the hadith. This paper also finds that the presentation of hadith through memes is a new way to construct Muslim's way of thinking. It turns out that behind the memes, there lies some intended messages of a particular ideology adhered by the memes creators. This finding, hence, requires further measures to prevent the community from the trap of the attempt to silence religious understanding by way of mediatization.

Key words: hadith memes, mediatization, declining understanding, condensation of meaning.

1. Introduction

Today, there has been a notable shift in religious authority from the hand of the ulama to the increasingly intensified mediatization of religion. This trend is observable from the practice of religious teaching in various media, which indicates how the traditional method of learning religion starts to lose its legitimacy, meaning, and validity due to the mediatization of religion. In terms of religious matters, people no longer seek for the advice of ulama since they can easily search for the particular hadith they require through the internet, which brings about the hadith information at an instant. The internet provides immediate answers to frequently asked questions on religion on various websites and social media only within a one click away of browse through the search engines. The emergence of new media on the internet becomes the new main source to disseminate religious messages that gradually substitutes the central role of ulama in religious learning. This fact is evidence from the escalating number of users who access various information and knowledge through the internet from year to year. APJII data (www.apji.or.id) shows that the current internet users in Indonesia amounted to 171.17 million people with social media as one of the main reason for using the internet (19%). The mediatization of religion by the internet seems to have substituted the essential role of religious institutions in guiding the community in terms of spiritual, moral, and other aspects of life (Hjarvard, 2011). Aguilar et al. (2017) confirmed this fact by revealing that currently, the use of social media in communicating messages has turned into an expression of participatory culture and living religion.

Thus far, studies on the relationship between hadith and technology are divided into three tendencies: first, studies that address the use of technology for hadith dissemination, which allows broader scope of hadith reception (Aldhaln, et.al., 2012; Aldhlan, et.al. ., 2010; Ibrahim, Noordin, Samsuri, Seman, & Ali, 2017; Luthfi, Suryana, & Basari, 2018; Najeeb, Abdelkader, Al-Zghoul, & Osman, 2015; Rahman, Bakar, & Sembok, 2010); second, studies on the software development and digitalization of hadith (Halim et al., 2018; Zulkipli et al., 2017; Zemakhsyari & Fadlillah, 2018; Fikriyyah, 2018); and third, studies concerning on the development of hadith in the cyberspace (Suryadilaga, 2014; Miski, 2018; Mudin, 2019; Andi, 2019). However, the effects or consequences of the use of technology on the hadith are relatively still understudies. In particular, some topics on the superficial meaning of hadith as a result of mediatization of hadith in cyberspace, as found in hadith memes, still receive little attention from the academic communities.

On this basis, this paper aims to fulfill the abovementioned gap in the literature of hadith studies by examining the consequences of using technological development in hadith dissemination in the cyberspace,

particularly by referring to the manufacture of hadith memes as a research focus. In this case, the mediatization of hadith, apart from an attempt to facilitate hadith learning, also threatens the community's understanding of the hadith text contextually. Accordingly, three questions are formulated to analyze the problem: a) how the mediatization of hadith is presented in the cyberspace in the form of memes? b) what are the factors to cause the popularity of hadith memes in social media? c) what is the impact of hadith memes on the superficial public understanding on the hadith memes? These three questions serve as the starting points to guide the entire discussion in this article, as well as to explain the reasons behind the superficial religious understanding due to mediatization of religious literacy.

This paper is based on the argument that there has been an observable shift of form in the transmission of hadith to meet the demands of mediatization of religion. Hadiths are presented in attention-grabbing and easy-to-find forms, especially through memes, slogans, and captions, which leads to sloganization and captionization of hadith. On the one hand, slogans and captions have made the old fashioned and unattractive presentation of hadith into conspicuous forms that attracts readers' interest to learn about the hadith message, since there has been a shifting presentation of hadith through memes which appears in various visual forms. However, on the other hand, mediatization of hadith through hadith memes has resulted in the superficial understanding of hadith meaning. The absence of information on the occasions or circumstances of hadith revelation, and the context that brought about hadith revelation is one of the problematic things in presenting hadith through memes. What is of more concern is the fact that the hadith memes disseminated on various social media are accepted and received at face value by the readers, and thus constructing a superficial thinking structure in understanding hadith and other religious phenomena at a broader scope.

2. Literature review

2.1. Mediatization

In general, the concept of mediatization is slightly similar to technologization in terms of meaning. However, Lundby's (2014) noted that mediatization refers to a communication problem attributed to transformation in communication patterns due to the use of new communication tools and technologies. In its essence, mediatization not only refers to the presence of "media". Over time, communication patterns can change the social and cultural context where the process takes place. Mediatization has become a key concept for understanding

the relationship between media and the social-cultural field (Michelsen & Krogh, 2017). Recently, Michelsen & Krogh mentioned that mediatization was not only considered as a term, but also an emerging paradigm in media studies. Hjarvard (2008) proposed a broad media-sociological theory of the influence of media on society and culture. The central point in this theory lies in its definition of mediatization: Mediatization shall be considered as a process that refers to 'the two-sidedness of high modernism'. In this context, the media on the one hand emerges as independent institutions with their own logic that must be accommodated by other social institutions. On the other hand, the media simultaneously becomes an integrated part of other institutions, such as politics, business, family and religion, because there have been an extensive tendency to carry out these institutional activities in interactive media and mass media platforms (Hjarvard, 2008).

The initial application of mediatization theory could be traced from its wide adoption in the education, as found in the study of the development, use, and effects of computer technology in education. Most studies on mediatization address the changing modes of information transmission. Second, the use of mediatization is related to the politics of education, a topic which was addressed by Andrade and Valero (2019). Third, a study of mediatization focuses on the impact of image and representation on educational practices. According to Lundby, the concept of mediatization captures the sociocultural transformation associated with media-based communication (2014). In this context, the media, act as agents of cultural and social changes (Hjarvard, 2008). In its essence, mediatization puts more emphasis on social and cultural transformation, rather than the technical aspect of the media (Lundby, 2014). On this basis, Verón (2014) further clarified that the most important example of the impact of mediatization is the literacy emergency. Communication over time and space is significantly altered, and at the same time, the materialization of written speech acts allows the examination, manipulation, and reordering of these speech acts in various ways (Verón, 2014), which brings about the emergence of distinctive messages void of context. Verón (2014) also wrote how mediatization creates new forms of control, bureaucratization, and new domination.

2.2. Desacralization (Profanation) of Religion on the Internet

The advent of the internet has in turn led to the rise of the practicability of religion in innumerable online platforms. This fact is well explained by Bunt (2018: 21), who asserted that the internet allows an immediate dissemination of any events in the public sphere through social media, including the mention of religion, symbols and language. This description suggests that the activity in internet-based platform serves as an extension of the real-life situations. Furthermore, Helland (2005: 1-6)

¹ *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 20, issue 60 (Winter 2021)

provided a strict boundary between online practice of religion, which allows the freedom of expression without any restrictions and urges high interactivity among internet users, and the presence of religion in online media platforms as a tool to disseminate religious information per se without any permissible interactivity among users. Desacralization is seen in Helland's description, which describes the distinctive perceptions of the online framework as a way to disseminate readable or verbal statements and the mouse 'click' as an icon in online religion which is considered to be equivalent to performative needs in real religious acts. These differentiation indicates the adoption of religious values in technological sphere which serve as an extended space of religious interaction. Apart from this notion, others may consider the religious practices in online media as a mere tool for disseminating information, but someone is still required to practice religious worship in the real life situations to be labeled as a devout.

Desacralization is observable from the case of e-Jihad. Bunt (2018: 99-102) explained the radical transformation of the term 'jihad' from its intended meaning as a spiritual struggle towards the divine path of God to its English translation as 'holy war', which positions 'jihad' as the primary trigger of the act of radicalism after going through some internet-based influences through online media platforms. This fact especially applies when social media has become part of popular culture, which can easily disseminate jihad-related contents coupled with global and local symbolism and the use of religious languages taken from the Qur'an and other related sources. The interrelation between the practices of religions in the online media platforms goes far beyond informative tools, since online platforms can serve as an effective mass mover (M Pabbajah et al., 2020). Bunt (2018: 6-7) described how the use of internet-based technology can create problems and trigger the occurrence of real-life cases. He further described the concept of cyber-Islamic environment (CIE) to explain various online activities, be it the online statements from Islamic scholars or the statements from social media activists.

2.3. Religion and the Industrial Revolution

Schwab (2016) tried to define the meaning of the industrial revolution from its literal meaning. The word "revolution" refers to sudden and radical changes in the industrial field. Schwab (2016) pointed out that society is on the brink of an industrial revolution that will fundamentally change the way we live, work and relate to others. The transformations or changes during the age of revolution will lead to different life experiences from the experiences of those in the past. For him, there should be an integrated and comprehensive manner to respond to the age of industrial revolution by involving all stakeholders, academia and civil society. This era allows a powerful public participation in various

fields, since the industrial revolution gave rise to a very strong practice of democracy (Dalton, 2000). The strong practice of democracy has eventually led to the massive presence of the public in the digital era (Jackson, 2014). The public presence not only touches the niche in economic aspects, but also in the massive transformation in religious affairs. Beckford (2019) demonstrated how the transformation has had an impact on the practices of religion in everyday life. At a certain point, it is justified to say that the stability and survival capacity of industrial society has been affected by the decline of religion, but to some extent, the peculiar situation that occurs in the age of industrial society allows the creation of more opportunities for the growth of new faces of religious expressions to a greater degree and intensity.

There, currently, has been countless debates on the interrelation between religion and the industrial revolution, which represents a clear indication that religion and the religious institutions are in a position to reposition and improve themselves. An interesting notion on the relationship between religious education and the industrial revolution was proposed by Dhikrul (2019), who highlighted how pesantren transforms their educational model in the face of the industrial revolution era (Hariady, 2019; Athoillah, Wulan, 2019). This confirms the transformative attempts of Islamic religious institutions, especially in Indonesia, in facing the tough challenges of this industrial revolution, by way of improving the curriculum and enhancing the learning methods in disseminating religious messages according with the current development.

3. Methods

This qualitative research, in particular, is written to examine hadith memes as a form mediatization of religious messages in Indonesia. These memes are widely spreading on many social media platforms, especially Instagram. Instagram was mainly selected because Indonesians ranked first as the largest user of Instagram in Asia Pacific (<https://tekno.kompas.com/>). The primary data in this article relies on the distribution of memes on Instagram, while the secondary data were some published articles or books about memes and some hadith books. The secondary data were selected based on the intensive use of online media platforms in publishing hadith memes.

Hadith memes are widely disseminated on Instagram with a variety of existing accounts and hashtags. These memes along with their explanation in many Instagram accounts or hashtags have become one of the main source of information in learning hadith. Some available hadith memes were selected and categorized based on the content of hadith information, titles, and brief statements about hadith. After the categorization, the data on hadith memes were listed in one table to help

the ease of reading the memes. The data that were classified based on some category and tables were then analyzed interpretatively by referring to the concept of mediatization as the basis of analytical framework.

4.1. Text as Restatement and Interpretation in Hadith Memes

The mediation of hadith through memes in cyberspace is present on various sites and social media. Hadith texts were textually rewritten in meme narratives and were published by some popular Instagram accounts, such as @muslimorid, @programmate, @salamdakwah, @surabayamengaji, @haditsapp, @rumaysocom, @dakwahsunnah.ig, and @kata_nabi, and others. Departing from the fact of this textuality, these memes and images were classified into two: first, the memes which only mentions the hadith text (its translation) and restate the hadith message by writing captions based on one of the highlighted topics or by restating the interpretation of the hadith; second, the memes that mention the text of the hadith, restatement of the hadith title, and its interpretation.

Table. 1. Mediatization of hadith in the form of memes

Hadith texts	Hadith Restatements	Sources
Whoever does not love humans, surely Allah will not love him (HR. Bukhari & Muslim, Shahihul Jami 'No. 6597)	Loving each other	@muslimorid, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bzrb7thAscq/
Two Muslims will not meet and shake hands having their sins forgiven them before they separate. (HR. Abu Daud, No. 5121)	Handshaking is part of sunnah	@surabayamengaji, https://www.instagram.com/p/B62YrpXhUQ6/
The best friend in the sight of Allah is he who behaves best towards his friends. (Hadith narrated by Abdullah bin Amr, authenticated by Albani in Shohihul Jami ')	The best companion	@muslimorid, https://www.instagram.com/p/BuSUVhvgcDx/
Rasulullah bersabda: Whoever offers the Dawn Prayer, he is under the protection of Allah, so do not betray by betraying those who are under His protection. Whoever kills him, Allah will seek him out until He throws him on his face into Hell.	Whoever offers the Dawn Prayer is under the protection of Allah.	@rumaysocom

<p>“Whoever is mandated by God to lead his people and then dies in a state of deceiving the people, surely God has declared that Heaven is forbidden for him.” (HR. Muslim: 203)</p>	<p>The deceivers are forbidden from going to Heaven.</p>	<p>@haditsapp, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bo1FG5UH2Lz/</p>
<p>And maybe Allah gives you a test to see if you are a pious believer or not. Whoever is relieved with the sustenance of Allah to him, He will bless him in his sustenance and expand it. Whoever is not relieved, He will not bless him in his sustenance. (Silsilah Ahadis al-Shahihah, 1658), source:</p>	<p>The blessing in sustenance</p>	<p>@muslimorid, https://www.instagram.com/p/BuIDSQ1DLg4/</p>
<p>The Prophet said: There is none born but is created to his true nature (Islam). It is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian.</p>	<p>The utterance of your child is the result of your teaching.</p>	<p>Sumber @salamdakwah, https://www.instagram.com/p/B4gvg2BnZP-/</p>
<p>The Phrophet said: And whoever is an ally to them among you – then indeed, he is [one] of them.</p>	<p>Birthday, or Anniversary greetings are purely from the customs of the pagans. Whatever the word, whatever the form.</p>	<p>@salamdakwah, https://www.instagram.com/p/B1qeALnHAPT/</p>
<p>“Seeking knowledge is a compulsion on every Muslim.” (HR. Ibnu Majah)</p>	<p>Dear Muslim friends, Start your hijrah by studying.</p>	<p>@muslimorid, https://www.instagram.com/p/BmUeG5mlkli/</p>
<p>O Prophet of Allah, what are you most afraid of me? He held out his tongue and replied: “This.” (HR. Tirmidhi: 2334)</p>	<p>Spicy food? No Problem Evil Tongue? No Way!</p>	<p>@haditsapp, https://www.instagram.com/p/BgBAqHKgqC9/</p>
<p>The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “He who is favoured by another and says to his benefactor: ‘Jazak-Allah khairan (may Allah reward you well)’ indeed praised (the benefactor) satisfactorily.” (HR. Tirmidzi: 178)</p>	<p>Do you know the best way of expressing gratitude?</p>	<p>@haditsapp, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bo8qzueHh1z/</p>
<p>“For fasting the day of ‘Ashura, I hope that Allah will accept it as expiation for the year that went before.” (HR. Muslim: 1976)</p>	<p>An easy way to wipe out all the sins in the previous year</p>	<p>@haditsapp, https://www.instagram.com/p/BZnX6KqAGW6/</p>

<p>2 “Whoever attends Isha (prayer) in congregation, then he has (the reward as if he had) stood half of the night. And whoever prays Isha and Fajr in congregation, then he has (the reward as if he had) spend the entire night standing (in prayer).” (HR. Muslim no. 656)</p>	<p>“Subuh prayer is the measure of faith</p>	<p>https://www.facebook.com/MemeAndRageComicIndonesia/photos/pcb.1379999868789113/1379999615455805</p>
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Source: Compiled Sources (Author, 2020)

Table 1 shows that hadith texts are often found in colorfully designed attractive memes. Most of Hadith memes consist of the translation of hadith text, caption, or a restatement of the text, as well as colorful images and symbols to help readers in understanding the message of the hadith memes. Some examples of hadith memes are presented in the following randomly selected pictures in the link above mentioned in the table. Some images are captured below for further details.



Hadith memes are generally presented according to the aforementioned description in the table. The makers of Hadith memes only highlighted the titles and text of the hadith and share it on their social media networks. Indeed, in general some titles are closely related to the text of the hadith displayed, but the most notable aspect of these memes lies in the visualization of the displayed image. The way the hadith text is presented in memes, with a highlight on the title and the image of hand shaking (Picture 1) will instantly construct the readers’ perception. It is highly presumable that everyone can easily understand the essence of the hadith text even without struggling to read the hadith text. The images and caption ease readers’ understanding of the presented content of the hadith. In this context, it is clear how a powerful visualization of images are in harmony with the textual construction of the readers’ understanding of the hadith. Principally, images represent a restatement of the text to make it easier for readers to perceive and receive messages.

The last half of the above table presents the interpretations of the meme creators on the hadith text. This interpretation covers the title of the meme. Figure 2 highlights that “The utterance of your child is the result of your teaching.” This meme is interpreted based on the hadith narrative that every child is born in his true nature. However, in the meme presentation, the title is enlarged with a highlighted font, while the font of the hadith text is reduced to a smaller size. In fact, the highlighted tagline in figure 2 is a mere form of reception of the meme creators for the hadith narrative. After receiving the hadith narrative, the meme creators transformed it into a caption using an easier to understand expression for the current readers. The presentation of selected pictures is also another plot to help the readers guess the meaning of the hadith text, as indicated by the picture of children’s toys and pictures of someone reading a text. The hadith memes have gone through several process of receptions before they are produced and created by the meme creators. Prior to the production, the hadith narratives are received by the meme creators who then created the hadith memes by reproducing the received message into a caption based on his own reception. Thus, the readers only receive the reproduced message in the hadith captions, which no longer focus on the hadith narratives.

Figure 3 illustrates a rather intriguing message: “An easy way to wipe out all the sins in the previous year” by referring to Ashura fasting (10 Muharram) as the solution. Such memes and captions are prone to mislead the readers because they place the practice of fasting Ashura as an expiation for one year’s sins. This caption seems to contradict the Muslim beliefs that those who have fasted on that day without practicing other compulsory practices, are still considered to commit a sinful act. Some respondents might have been misled by the intended message and may misunderstand the core message of the hadith caption “an easy way to wipe out all the sins in the previous year”. One respondent said: “The caption indicates that we can commit a sin before the next ashura, then fast during the ashura” (Quma Interview, 2020). The captions which are written based on an irrelevant restatement of the intended meaning of the hadith narrative indicates the attempt of the meme creators to contextualize the hadith narrative in the existing social scope and in accordance with the public sphere of the meme makers.

Similarly, the utterance of “Jazakallah” (Figure 4) which are currently popularly spoken by the Indonesian Muslim community seem to be also influenced by the hadith captions as presented in the picture above. The most noteworthy point is that the caption restatement is used to try to influence the new way for people to express gratitude on social media, such as Whatsapp and so on. The above hadith narrative is mostly derived from some websites with certain ideological tendencies, such as rumayso.com, and muslim.or.id.

Table 2

Hadith Text	Hadith Restatements	Text Interpretation	Sources
The Apostle said: Purify yourselves from urine for most of the punishment in the grave is because of urine (HR. Ad-Daraqutni, No. 459)	Beware, be and careful, since most of torment in the grave is due to unpurified urination.	It is obligatory to clean oneself from urine stains. Urine should be completely cleaned from the body, clothing or place of prayer. Anyone should never neglect the cleaning of urine, because most of the torment of the grave is due to trivial matters. So if you want to urinate, you have to find a place that prevents you from being exposed to the urine.	@dakwahsunnah.ig, https://www.instagram.com/p/B5W2TRRAw_m/
Rasulullah said: "By Allâh, the world is incomparable to the hereafter except like one of you who dipped his finger- the narrator named Yahya pointed his index finger- to the ocean, then he should pay attention to what is found on his finger". [HR Muslim, no. 2858].	Is this the world you are really proud of?	A mere drop of water is not worth the amount of water in the ocean.	@surabaya mengaji, https://www.instagram.com/p/B54OzhkhzLp/
QS. Al-Baqarah, 195, An-Nisa, 29, the prophet saying "No one shall cause any harm, nor can he harm (others), HR. Ibnu Majah No. 2340	"Smoking not only kills you but also those around you"	This is the legal standing to ban smoking.	@dakwahsunnah.ig, https://www.instagram.com/p/B6sjZLxAMER/

<p>2</p> <p>“Whoever attends Isha (prayer) in congregation, then he has (the reward as if he had) stood half of the night. And whoever prays Isha and Fajr in congregation, then he has (the reward as if he had) spend the entire night standing (in prayer).” (HR. Muslim no. 656)</p>	<p>There is nothing special to do to night.</p>	<p>No need to worry about a thing, since tonight is the same as any other nights. We shall sleep early and then wake up early tomorrow to perform Congregational Dawn Prayer.</p>	<p>@surabaya mengaji, https://www.instagram.com/p/B6vI7lqBneS/</p>
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In principal, the descriptions in table 2 are similar to table 1, but the stark difference lies on the highlighted reception and interpretation of the hadith narratives as presented in the following memes.



Figures 5 & 6. Captions, images and Coloring featured in the hadith meme

The memes presentation denote some observable patterns of highlighting the hadith text and meme captions as a way to connect between the caption and the hadith narrative. There are also noticeable play of coloring and symbolization in this section to emphasize certain parts. For instance, the word “beware” is printed in red font as an emphasis (Figure 5). The use of symbols, such as the prohibition symbol with a red circle as a widely used symbol in everyday life on the highway is denoted as a form of emphasis on the prohibition of improper purification of urinating. Meanwhile, the meme created by an Instagram account known as *Surabaya Mengaji* depicts the common habit of sleeping early for the whole night. However, when someone performs Congregational Dawn Prayer, he is considered to have prayed the entire night. The provision of interpretation next to the hadith text as an additional elucidation and explanation both through pictures and sentences indicates an attempt to

provide a form of syarah (interpretation) as something currently in demand.

The description in this section, implies that memes presentation convey some messages and intended impression. First, the presentation of hadith memes only captures the textual aspect by displaying the captions and the hadith narrative. Such model of presentation is mostly found in numerous hadith memes disseminated in various social media platforms in the cyberspace. Second, the presentation of some memes has attempted to provide the interpretation or meaning of the hadith text. The latter model is the most current trend to be found in many hadith interpretation at some online media platforms.

4.2. Concealing the Primary Messages of Hadith Narratives behind the Popular Captions

The currently circulating memes ¹⁷ on social media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, mostly concern with the current movement for performing the Congregational Dawn Prayer at the mosque. The meme above represents those circulating on many Instagram accounts. These memes highlight that the Congregational Dawn Prayer at the mosque is one of the benchmarks for one's faith as mentioned in the following meme:



Figure 7. Congregational Dawn Prayer as a standard measure of faith

Various hadith literatures have labeled people who leave the Dawn Prayer and Isha prayer in congregation at the mosque as a hypocrite, because the Dawn Prayer, besides the Isha prayer, is one of the hardest prayers for Muslims to perform. Given the level of difficulty of the Dawn Prayer, various memes are created to explain that the best place to find an ideal man to marry is at the mosque during the Dawn Prayer. The following meme illustrates the level of difficulty of the Dawn Prayer and those who can perform are said to be a devout Muslim. Those who struggle to perform Dawn Prayer are labeled as “Pejuang Subuh” (Dawn Fighters)

and they are labeled as a devout Muslim. The devout label attached to these people are attributed to two factors. First, the Dawn fighters are known with their innumerable rewards for performing Congregational Dawn Prayer at the mosque which is similar to carrying out night prayers throughout the night. Allah has assured the piety of these people and the fact that they are not classified as hypocrites. Second, those who perform the Dawn Prayer are included in the special group of Muslims, since many people will pray them for their future sustenance and soulmate. For certain groups, these two characteristics serve as the standard for finding an ideal and true husband (see picture below).



Figure 8. Praise and compliments for the dawn fighters

Furthermore, the movement for the Congregational Dawn Prayer at the mosque then gave birth to a new structure, namely an effort to mobilize Muslims in the movement for the Congregational Dawn Prayer. This has happened and is being carried out in various areas. This movement took place in various regions under the term GSSB (Dawn Prayer Movement in Congregation). The memes shown below are among the breakthroughs initiated by the ulama, at the local and national level, in an effort to mobilize and enliven mosques and prayer rooms in the implementation of this congregational dawn prayer. In Aceh, there has been a continuous practice of Congregational Dawn Prayer at the mosque. Even after performing the congregational prayer, they continue to have coffee and started the dawn safari movement to help build houses for the poor (www.acehprov.go.id). Thus, this movement then turned into an effort to improve the welfare of the Acehnese Muslims.

¹⁹ The movement for the Congregational Dawn Prayer at the mosque has led to the emergence of new standards of piety for men, that the ideal and true person is the man who prays at dawn at the mosque, that all Muslims shall perform congregational Dawn Prayer at the mosque, and

who does not do so is labeled as hypocrite. Then, new movements emerged as a form of efforts to improve the welfare of Muslims. This new movement has recently sparked a separate trend to move and even mobilize people for certain objectives by performing congregational Dawn Prayer. Popular captions such as “Congregational Dawn Prayer is equal to praying all night” or “Dawn Prayer is a measure of faith”. These captions cover the hadith of the Prophet that is merely listed, and thus creating more emphasis on the message in the caption, instead of on the hadith, as presented below.

4.3. Slogанизation of Hadith: Constructing the Community’s Way of Thinking through Memes on Social Media

Many people will recall the ever popular slogan that cleanliness is part of faith (an-Nadzafatu minal iman), and consider it as a hadith. In fact, the academic circles have denied the widely held assumption about this slogan, since it is not a hadith but an Arabic proverb. The same thing happened again today. Various slogans as shown in some of the memes are constantly created. The captions in these texts are then legitimated by certain hadiths, such as “the real man is the one who performs congregational dawn prayer at the mosque”. The slogанизation is at least influenced by the following three things:

a) The condensation of meaning, which refers to the attempt to briefly summarize the meaning of hadith text, and even reducing its essential meaning. The condensation of meaning arises when a hadith is reproduced in the form of a meme.



Figure 9. Condensing the meaning of the hadith text

My Subuh My Adventure is a form of condensation of meaning that derived from the hadith “Bring good news to those who walk in the dark

to the mosque, ⁴ with perfect light on the Day of Judgment". The use of My Subuh My Adventure is a duplication of sentences from the television program, My Trip My Adventure, which is well known among many Indonesian youths. Contemporary contexts that are widely known are used to make it easier for readers to understand hadith texts. Thus, some types of captions resulted from the condensation of meaning succeed in seizing readers' attention to read the hadith text further. Here, the use of popular narration will succeed in inviting the readers to read the text of the hadith further.

b) In addition, some memes, such as My Subuh My Adventure, also contain a connotative meaning (polysemy). Out of several memes about men performing congregational day prayer at the mosque highlight that the measure of a man's religiosity is by visiting the mosque. Hence, a man will be of high value if he performs the dawn prayer at the mosque, which in turn will show that the so-called Muslims are those who are identical with mosques, who always visit the mosque. Oppositely, those outside that, for example, those who do not perform Congregational Dawn Prayer at the mosque are included in the group of hypocrites.

c) In turn, memes like the congregational dawn prayer above imply some simplification and contradiction. For example, the following memes provide a clear evidence of the existing forms of simplification.



Figure 10. Simplification and labeling of men who do not pray Isha and Fajr as hypocrites

By using the hadith "Indeed the hardest prayer for the hypocrite is the Isha prayer and the dawn prayer", these group of meme creators have positioned the dawn prayer as the demarcating line that separates between the believers and the hypocrites in two different poles. In this view, a believer who does not perform congregational dawn prayer at the mosque can be simplified as a hypocrite if the above meme is used. The three things mentioned above show that a meme can be a condenser of meaning for a hadith. Memes can also have multiple meanings (polysemy) and in turn, memes can mislead opinions, and generate some

simplifications and certain labeling due to the misinterpretation of hadith text.

5. Discussions

5.1. Mediatization, Contextualization and Desacralization of Hadith on the Internet

Mediatization in the realm of religion has placed the media as one—if not the only—source of information for obtaining religious issues (Hjarvard, 2011). The currently occurring mediatization has deauthorized religious authorities (Cloete, 2016). In this context, people who have some religious queries will turn to technology as a reference, including in the search of hadith references. Meme, as a product of mediatization, has led to the production of superficial meaning. The emergence of textualistic readings and simplifications can mislead the way of thinking that leads to superficial understanding of religious text, as has been clearly shown in the findings of this article. The popularization of religious texts in the form of memes has placed hadith text at the textual level at its face value, without considering the social context of its revelation and the appropriate reading of the Muslim scholars in translating and interpreting the meaning behind these hadith texts. Reading hadith solely from memes will be prone to misunderstanding as has been stated in the case of “how to erase one year’s sins” which positions the fasting of Ashura as a shortcut and practical solution to wipe out all sins in the previous year. This partial and fragmentary reading that ignores other related dimension of the text will mislead readers from the intended contextual meaning of the hadith.

Contextualization of hadith messages is done by adjusting hadith text to the current contextual condition, for example with captions. This form of contextualization is not the same as what appears in the contextualization in hermeneutic tradition (Gadamer, 2006), which is based on the attempt to look for the meaning of the text according to the changing context and time. The contextualization of memes are more to the strategy of adjusting the delivery of hadith message to the contemporary acceptable context, while the way of interpreting the meaning of the hadith in the use of memes is still fixated on textualism. This way of conveying hadith through memes has led to the superficiality of the hadith messages. The provision of captions, titles, and slogans of hadith as a way to deliver hadith message to meet the contemporary tastes of the millennial society has generated a textual reading of hadith messages and led to decontextualization of meaning. Captions such as “Do you want to see a hypocrite boy? Wait for Isha’ and Dawn Prayers” further increase the labeling of hypocrites to Muslims. The popularization of

religious text messages through easily accessible media to the public has contributed to the superficiality of hadith interpretation (Abdullah, 2017: 119).

5.2. Salafism and Islamism Ideological Message: The Case of the Congregational Dawn Prayer in Hadith Memes

The widely spreading memes about the movement for the Congregational Dawn Prayer at the mosque in cyberspace is inseparable from the political constellation of the capital city of Jakarta when some Muslims organized the Defending Islam movement to reject Basuki Tjahya Purnama (Ahok) as the Governor of DKI Jakarta. The Defending Islam Movement was popularly known as the 212 Movement (Ahyar & Alfitri, 2019). At almost the same time, the movement of congregational Dawn prayer was launched nationally on December 12, 2016, exactly 10 days after the 212 movement. This moment changed the escalation of the activities of some Indonesian Muslims on social media (Syahputra, 2018; Ahnaf, 2016; Qodir, 2016; Wildan, 2016). Various forms of memes are widely spread, one of which is a meme about the movement for the Congregational Dawn Prayer. The emergence of hypocritical labels, for example, are words used by Muslim groups who do not support this action. During the heightened movement of Defending Islam Action period, the hypocrite label is often considered equal to the word *thoghut*, infidel, anti-Chinese, communist, and shia. (<https://serikatnews.com/rizieq-shihab-dan-period-212-dari-reuni-ke-mobokrasi/>). Even the word hypocrisy has also been pinned on groups who are defenders of religious blasphemy (Supporters of Ahok) with many banners saying “This mosque does not pray for the bodies of supporters of religious blasphemers” (<https://www.republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/fatwa/17/03/13/omprfk3394-measuring-law-ban-menshalati-bodies-hypocrite>).

It is in this context then the ideology of the meme makers can be read. The hypocritical condemnation in this action emerged as a form of Muslim excitement and euphoria for the rise of Islamic movement activism (Wildan, 2016) driven by groups of salafism and Islamism. By having a closer look, the Instagram accounts that posted these Instagram memes are the supporters of the 212 movement, or accounts that support salafism movements in Indonesia. The labeling of the word hypocrisy on the man who do not perform congregational dawn prayer is used intentionally, based on the hadith of the Prophet, as a hard hit or punishment for people who do not carry out this religious order. Labeling those performing congregational dawn prayer as the real men serves as a reward or praise for the fulfillment of this religious obligation. If at first the word hypocrisy was attached to supporters of religious blasphemers,

the structure of—to borrow Bourdieu's term (Swartz, 2002)—hypocrisy has shifted to people who did not perform the Congregational Dawn Prayer.

5.3. The Industrial Revolution and the birth of public participation in constructing religious knowledge

The industrial revolution has necessitated the inclusion of religion in online media. It allows public participation to have equal rights and voice, and can have an impact on one's morality (Pabbajah et al., 2020). Before the advent of online media technology, people who had the authority to speak out and give opinions in religious debates were clergy and elites. Nonetheless, nowadays, everyone can express his/her voice and opinion freely (Hjarvard, 2011). Technology has enabled non experts to gain a direct access to religious knowledge on the internet without having to consult the experts and those bearing the authority in the religious field. Memes, consequently, can change religious messages through symbols and codes, which may mislead the readers from its intended meaning. (Abdullah, 2017). The process constantly works to reproduce meaning, since the message in a meme is strongly correlated to the ideological inclination of the meme makers, which thus needs further analysis. For instance, it is clear that the creation of memes on the congregational dawn movement is closely tied to the 212 Defend Islam Movement in Jakarta.

A meme can serve as a labeling and simplification of religious messages (hadith). The ideology embedded in the meme, will direct its readers towards a certain opinion or label certain groups of people after reading the hadith. The highly intense public participation in online platforms has allowed a network of rapid sharing and reshare. Hadith texts are presented in the form of memes with attention grabbing titles and captions to be widely shared and reshared to the global network. These memes are then received by people in the offline platforms, form certain practices in the community, and construct religious knowledge of the community. In this context, Beckford's notion is highly relevant, that the industrial revolution on the one hand gave birth to a movement to ignore religion, but on the other hand, it gave birth to new forms of strongly persistent religious movement. The congregational dawn movement was initially started from the dissemination of hadith memes in the online social media platforms, and it could mobilize a large group of people regardless the fact that these movements are initiated by salafism or islamism. In its essence, the successful mobilization was made possible by the share and reshare activities to the available networks that gained its momentum during the heightened political situation.

6. Conclusion

Ideally, hadiths are learned from expert scholars or primary books as the legal standing for religious authorities. Nonetheless, there has been a commonplace dissemination of hadith texts in various print and online media, especially hadith memes today. This article delineates the practical attribute of hadith memes in conveying an intended hadith message on the one hand, but on the other hand, it also reveals the superficial and shallow interpretation of these hadith memes that are prone to mislead the reader's understanding of the messages behind the hadith memes. This superficial meaning is attributed to several factors. First, hadith memes are inclined to deliver a hadith partially without explaining the general context of its revelation. Second, hadith memes mostly convey condensation of meaning by way of popularization and sloganization of the hadith text. The mediatization of hadith through memes has increasingly reduced the social context of hadith revelation and lessened intended message of hadith revelation. At the same time, it also narrows down the meaning of hadith text by the attempt to direct the reader's understanding towards certain ideological messages or interests embedded in the captions. Third, the unrestricted production of hadith memes on social media indicates that the intense public participation on a religious issue in this era of the industrial revolution 4.0. This condition has allowed everyone to create a meme regardless of his religious knowledge and authority attached to him. This fact further sharpens the shallow understanding of certain memes because these memes are very likely to be produced by those having no competence in the field of hadith science.

The theoretical concept in reading this hadith meme phenomenon has succeeded in providing a different point of view. The use of mediatization in this paper shows that the use of hadith memes on the one hand shows the practical method of da'wah in the industrial revolution era. However, on the other hand, it has led to some consequences given the practicality of this era, in the form of textualistic attitudes, and the presence of hidden ideological messages in certain memes. This theoretical concept is able to show how a meme is constructed and used to support certain interests. The use of this concept has also highlighted the shifting way of transferring religious knowledge from the ulama as the central figure in the process of transferring religious knowledge, especially in the matter of the study of hadith, into the narratives on hadith derived from the internet, both in the form of hadith texts, images, and memes.

Because this paper only focuses on the existing phenomenon of hadith memes widely disseminated on social media, it has many limitations. The main limitation of the study lies in the relatively small number of samples observed. This opens up further research to examine

the same research object more comprehensively using a contextual approach, such as the impacts caused by this hadith meme or the forms of desacralization resulted from the transition of a teacher as the central figure in learning hadith to learning hadith through an online source. Given the newly explored topic in the field of hadith study, there is a wide open possibility for further researches in this area for the development of the discipline of hadith. It is possible to determine the new direction of hadith studies not only through two main sources: scholars and reading books, but also through digital media in learning and understanding hadith.

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