
**The Identity of Piety in the Digital Age
(Study of the Use of Religious Symbols in Social Media)**

Abdul Muiz Amir

IAIN Kendari

Email: abdulmuiz@iainkendari.ac.id

Abstract

This article is a study of the use of religious symbols on social media that the authors associate with the concept of religious identity. This study targets some dakwah content that has become a trend in social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter. The author uses a phenomenological approach as a basis for conducting social analysis, so that the phenomenon of the rise of the use of religious symbols on social media can be manifested well. The result of this study confirm about the indication of the use of religious symbols as an imaging tool from among literalists. Some content also indicates the existence of economic motives in the use of these symbols. I see the phenomenon is part of the symbolic expressions of certain groups in portraying their godly identity through social media

Keywords: *Identity of Piety, Religious Symbols, Social Media.*

INTRODUCTION

Today there is a lot of religious jargon that calls for a better life (pious), as does the jargon "back to the Qur'an and Sunnah"¹ or "hijrah". Such slogans are often found especially in Islamic studies groups through social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, etc).² This phenomenon is a growing social reflection on the religious spirituality awareness that arises due to the influence of religious doctrine based on a literal understanding of the

¹Achmad Bahrur Rozi, "Radikalisme Dan Penyimpangan Ideologi Gerakan Salafi," *Empirisma Jurnal Pemikiran dan Kebudayaan Islam* 26, no. 1 (2017): 107–116.

²Asep Muhammad Iqbal, "Agama Dan Adopsi Media Baru: Penggunaan Internet Oleh Gerakan Salafisme Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Komunikasi Indonesia* 2, no. 2 (2013): 77–87.

sources of Islamic teachings (Al-Qur'an and Hadith).³ The emergence of the slogan was accompanied by the rise of conflict of understanding of religion that claims the truth of each individual or group that led to blaming each other and the inevitable physical contact.

The discussion of religious studies, especially Islamic studies that develop more influenced by classic fiqh content oriented to life style, ritual worship, and social muamalah. This tends to appear to the surface as a symbol of Islamic identity, starting from the discussion theological normative, economic, and political. The theme of the discussion raised was more likely to lead to debatebel material (khilafiyah furu'yah) which incidentally as a matter of debate that seemed unable to find a solution base, starting from the discussion of beards, types and models of clothing, usury ' , government systems, and so on.⁴ In fact, this study continues to be a central theme that is repeatedly discussed, but is not oriented to problem solving, but instead it causes religious and social cultural conflict, such a model of study that then triggers the emergence of social radicalization in the name of Religion.⁵

The model of the studies mentioned above assumes the assumption that when a Muslim is able to migrate by changing his appearance like an "Islamic" appearance in this case using clothes and lifestyle in the style of Arabic culture, then it has been considered to follow the Prophet's sunnah, so that the appearance seems to show someone's piety , dressed in a robe (Khaliji-style or Pakistani Arabian robe), wearing a veil, displaying a beard, using siwak, anti-conventional banking system, anti-democratic government system, etc. as if it has become a representative of someone's piety. Hence, the person at first glance have been considered worshipers, but sadly that most of these studies they get, not through formal education, but through the internet media, especially websites and social media.⁶

The form of classical Jurisprudence that developed at this time, resulted in the emergence of the dichotomy of science until the emergence of certain scientific restrictions

³Annisa Novia Sari and Adi Bayu Muhadian, "Perilaku Komunikasi Pelaku Hijrah (Studi Fenomenologi Pelaku Hijrah Dalam Shift Gerakan Pemuda Hijrah Di Kota Bandung)," *Jurnal Linimasa* 1, no. 1 (2018): 1–12.

⁴Al-Zastrouw Ng, *Gerakan Islam Simbolik: Politik Kepentingan FPI*, ed. Fuad Mustafid, Cet. II. (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2013). 1-2

⁵Ahmad Isnaini, "Kekerasan Atas Nama Agama: Perpektif Politik," *JSP: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 13, no. 1 (2009): 1–19.

⁶Khairul Anam, "Radikalisme di Dunia Maya: Menemukan Tuhan di Mesin Pencarian," *Empirisma Jurnal Pemikiran dan Kebudayaan Islam* 26, no. 1 (2017): 1–12.

which they considered could only plunge them into misleading understandings. This includes philosophy, Sufism, and modern scientific science which they considered to be dynastic science pure and does not have continuity with the spiritual needs of Religion. This assumption tends to make old-fashioned thoughts (close minded), which results in the narrowness of their views about the truth, so that it is easier to blame opinions that are contrary to the ideology they profess.⁷

The phenomenon invites a variety of scientific academic studies that have a lot of theoretical criticism as an antithesis to literal studies that develop. Yet, the fact the study has not been able to stem radical understanding through appeared literal understanding. The base of the problem is scientific studies around the issue only dwelling on the realm of the academic community, and seems still awkward to be conveyed or applied to the realm of social society at large, making it difficult to be an alternative choice for ordinary people. Besides, literal people seem to be more active in socializing their studies using digital media, so that they are more accessible to the public,⁸ whereas scientific studies oriented to stem the literal understanding and are still struggling with written media such as books, journal articles, so that they appear unable to compete in publications through digital visual cyber media.

Based on the general description of the religious phenomenon above, it is certainly interesting to study using the phenomenological approach of Religion, so that it can reveal how much the influence of literal studies on the essence of the understanding of religion that makes religious symbols as benchmarks of individual piety or groups through social media, and how much the community's enthusiasm especially in Indonesia against religious symbols as pious identities published through social media as a form of expression and existence. By using descriptive qualitative data through social media as a means of expression of the response of people's lives today is considered capable of being representative to represent the assumptions of the general public, the authors do the collection and analysis of data through several posts on social media. In this case Facebook as social media most loved by today's digital society.

⁷Muchlis M Hanafi, "Integrasi Ilmu Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur' an," *Subuf: Jurnal Pengkajian Al-Qur'an dan Budaya* 3, no. 2 (2010): 175–191.

⁸Mahmuddin, "Dakwah Kontemporer Dan Radikalisme Agama Di Bulukumba," *Al-Ulum* 16, no. 2 (2016): 454–473.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Phenomenology as an Approach to Social Research in Religion.

At first phenomenology was a part of philosophy and social science which became the main foundation in understanding social phenomena that arose in the midst of society, so that it would be more appropriate and in accordance with the spirit of social science if the phenomenological approach was applied praxis to observe social behavior of the community. According to Schutz, phenomenology in its development is a new perspective on the focus of social research studies, so that a researcher is able to get meaning from the reality of everyday people's life as a form of social science development.⁹

Basically, a phenomenon arises when someone starts observing to understand a reality of life, according to Brouwer, a phenomenologist tends to see phenomena as the basis and main requirements in a scientific study, it shows that phenomenology is part of the perspective (a way of looking at thing), so that a phenomenologist in convincing the perspective of the phenomenon invites others to witness it, both directly and through writing by looking, listening, and listening to the language it expresses.¹⁰

According to historical records that the figure who first introduced the term phenomenology was Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), a German philosopher who was heavily influenced by the thoughts of the French philosopher Rene Descartes, for Husserl. A philosophical reality can only be found through listening, paying attention and directly involved in that reality, because the basis of a philosophy is the reality that results from consciousness to find facts as they are. Therefore, phenomenology is very closely related to awareness of reality.¹¹ According to Husserl there are important points about the definition of a theological approach, namely (1) subjective phenomenological experiences; (2) a study based on self-awareness of the principal perspective of the researcher. So basically the phenomenological approach in a research study is a study based on descriptive and

⁹Stefanus Nindito, "Fenomenologi Alfred Schutz: Studi Tentang Konstruksi Makna Dan Realitas Dalam Ilmu Sosial," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 2, no. 1 (2005): 79–95.

¹⁰O Hasbiansyah, "Pendekatan Fenomenologi: Pengantar Praktik Penelitian Dalam Ilmu Sosial Dan Komunikasi," *Mediator: Jurnal Komunikasi* 9, no. 1 (2008): 163–180.

¹¹Heddy Shri Ahimsa Putra, "Fenomenologi Agama: Pendekatan Fenomenologi Untuk Memahami Agama," *Jurnal Walisongo* 20, no. 2 (2012): 271–304.

introspective analysis related to all consciousness born from human self experience, both in terms of sensory, conceptual, moral, aesthetic, and religious aspects.¹²

The adoption of a phenomenological approach that is specifically applied in the study of Religion as a subject of study needs to be identified as a separate entity. Disciplines that differ from it state that being able to explain Religion according to criteria using their own approaches, the statement can deliver on assumptions about the characteristics of phenomenology itself.¹³ Although Husserl never directly researched about Religion, but the concept which is a reference to his works is a methodological basic reference to the research of the phenomenology of Religion. The basic reference used by Husserl himself is epoche and eidetic. Epoche itself is a control or suspension as a basis in making decisions, epoche can direct researchers to objectively look at the essence of phenomena, even can also be a discussion for the subjectivity of perception and reflection.¹⁴

Kristensen considers that the phenomenological approach to religion is a complement to the philosophical, and historical approach, but according to him the task of phenomenology is more systematic grouping of data characteristics to describe the character of human Religion. Phenomenology as an approach that aims to uncover essential and typical elements of Religion, it belongs to the descriptive rather than interpretive realm as is done by the philosophical approach, as well as the historical approach which only finds particular data in a particular religion that is not done when using a phenomenological approach.¹⁵

Globally there are four main points about the characteristics of the phenomenological approach that have been formed by scholars and academics. The authors of quote from the book "In Approaches to 'The Study of Religion'" edited by Peter Connolly, as follows:

“(1) its distinctiveness as an approach to the study of religion; (2) its credential as a “scientific” approach; (3) its ability to incorporate the range of religious phenomena; (3) its capacity to identify a coherent methodology.”¹⁶

¹²Abdul Mujib, “Pendekatan Fenomenologi Dalam Studi Islam,” *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 1 (2015): 167–183.

¹³Clive Erricker, “Phenomenological Approaches,” in *Approaches to The Study of Religion*, ed. Peter Connolly, Reprinted. (London: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006). 73.

¹⁴*Ibid.* 77.

¹⁵*Ibid.* 80.

¹⁶*Ibid.* 81.

From these characteristics, it can be understood that the concern of a phenomenologist in the study of religion is nothing but to describe all the symptoms that arise from the various religious behaviors of a community that lives in the setting of an area so that it can be classified the way of diversity of each community that is interrelated to find a coherent relationship between social life patterns and the values of the religion they profess.¹⁷

The link between research based on qualitative data and those using a phenomenological philosophical approach needs to pay attention to the following matters; (1) refers to facts; (2) understanding the meaning of the event that occurred and its relation to the people involved in the situation under study; and (3) try to do the research without the knowledge of the respondent, in order to obtain valid and objective data.¹⁸ Therefore, researchers should place themselves like students for the community that is the object of research, a researcher cannot put truth or error according to his own perspective, even a researcher considers all forms of religious practices that emerge as religious relativity using a phenomenological approach,¹⁹ then a researcher only tries to describe from the initial assumptions obtained based on the symptoms that arise. In this case the symptoms of religious practices conducted by the local community, until then the researcher comes to a conclusion that explains the facts of the findings he got in a theoretical and scientifically measurable form.

The Phenomenon of Digital Society (Netizens)

The presence of the internet as a new medium or media in the digital era, initially only functioned as a container of information, but as it grew, the function underwent a development with various features that provided a separate medium or medium for expressing human life, both communally and individually. Social media hadiths such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and etc. A new phenomenon that then creates a digital community or often referred to as "Netizen" (cyberspace society),²⁰ the emergence of these

¹⁷*Ibid.* 82-91.

¹⁸Chareen L Snelson, "Qualitative and Mixed Methods Social Media Research: A Review of Literature," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 20, no. 17 (2016): 1–15.

¹⁹Putra, "Fenomenologi Agama : Pendekatan Fenomenologi Untuk Memahami Agama."

²⁰Abdul Muiz Amir, Danial, and Syamsuddin, "Facebooker: Penista Agama Dimaafkan, Fatwa Ulama Diabaikan (Studi Living Qur'an QS. Al-Isra'/17:36)," in *Religion Society & Social Media*, vol. 1 (Yogyakarta: Depublish, 2018), 1–17.

phenomena naturally becomes part of the industrial revolution that is present coloring the civilization of human life, so that introductions to meetings between one individual or community with others do not need to occur directly (physical contact) but it can be realized through cyber or digital media today. Even intense interactions to influence each other can occur through these media.

Interactions that occur not only oriented to the social realm alone, but have been exploited to the ideological orientation of doctrines, especially theology of Religion, religious leaders see the opportunity to convey ideology or religious teachings not only limited to mosque pulpit or halaqah in fact can only be done in a physical meeting directly, but it can also be done indirectly through social media. Thus, it can be easier for netizens to access religious teachings information instantly without requiring special time that must be planned in advance. The presence of such technology not only brings benefits efficiently, but also can have bad implications, because only someone can instantly access religious doctrine without considering that the teachings they have received are effective and comprehensive.²¹

Various contents are displayed sometimes in the form of systematic episodes and sometimes also consist of only one episode called incomplete, so it is likely that the information received by netizens does not arrive at the climax result. It often triggers misunderstanding in the explanation displayed, other than that interaction through the media is greatly influenced by the power of access to use the internet. Consequently, if internet access is not sufficient (limited internet quota owned), it can affect the quality of incomplete understanding because of incomplete access. Another bad impact is that information is easily processed from a variety of different perspectives. The saddest thing is when data manipulation occurs in order to spread hoax news (slander) or bad behavior such as hate speech (derision, reproach, and etc.) is easier to do by netizens through these social media facilities.²² The used social media are applications that have friendly features (easy to use and access) such as Facebook and YouTube, which have become the default application on every Android and Apple-based smart phone. Even ordinary people

²¹Y Arfiko, "Pengaruh Pesan Dakwah pada Channel Youtube Yufid. Tv terhadap Motivasi Belajar Ilmu Agama Islam," *Jurnal Online Mahasiswa (JOM) Bidang Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 5 (2018): 1–8.

²²Dedi Rianto Rahadi, "Perilaku Pengguna Dan Informasi Hoax Di Media Sosial," *Jurnal Manajemen dan Kewirausahaan* (2017).

belonging to the community "do not understand technology,.... . ", Can they easily operationalize the application.²³

Based on the facts above, the authors consider the presence of various facilities in accessing digital cyber services, which has formed a new tendency for netizens to understand religious ideology instantly without requiring certain criteria and conditions to have. It is certainly interesting to study using a phenomenological approach, so that a tendency to understand the religion produced by netizens can be found, whether it can be in accordance with the substance of the actual teachings of religion, or just in that way can give birth to an instant understanding that adversely affects the image of Religion itself.

Symbolic Interaction as Religious Identity

Besides humans are known as creatures that have the logic of al-natiq hayawan, humans are also known as creatures that can not be separated from the interaction of symbols. Ernest Cassirer also refers to humans as homo symbolicus which means all human interactions, both through sight, hearing, reasoning, and feelings are always based on the symbols around them.²⁴ The phrase is at the same time a marker of the difference shown between animals and humans as creatures who think through cues based on the symbols that influence it.

The word symbol itself is a term adopted from the Greek "symbolos" which means a sign or characteristic that can be captured by human reason so that it can obtain information that can be processed through reason which is then verbalized in the form of words or sentences as an expression of the meaning of the symbol in question, so that in finally the interpretation can influence human behavior itself, for example the white symbol which is often considered as a sign that shows purity and submission.²⁵ Another question arises, namely, whether the symbol is the same as a sign ?, To answer this, CA Van Peursen further tries to distinguish between symbols and signs through three definitions: (1) a sign has a close relationship with what is marked from an object (symbol), for example the phrase that says "there is smoke, then there is fire" smoke is a sign, while fire is a symbol,

²³Fadly Usman, "Efektivitas Penggunaan Media Online Sebagai Sarana Dakwah," *Jurnal Ekonomi dan Dakwah Islam (Al-Tsiqoh)* 1, no. 01 (2016): 1–8.

²⁴Ernest Cassirer, *An Essay on Man on Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New York: New Heaven, 1994). 23

²⁵The Liang Gie, *Dictionary of Logic* (Yogyakarta: Karya Kencana, 1975). 26.

animals can only catch signs, but are not able to recognize symbols, this is what distinguishes between humans and animals; (2) symbols are authentic signs of the existence of an object. Researchers can find out about the traces of the history of previous human life based on the symbols found. One of which is in the form of letters arranged to form a separate language signal, then it can become a series of stories about what happened in the past, both religious and non-religious; (3) symbols embody the process of human development, so that humans can recognize certain conditions, and can even change these conditions based on the sign that is indicated by the symbol.²⁶

Therefore the symbol is something abstract, even the meaning can be relative according to the perspective of an individual or group, the symbol is only an appearance that can be achieved by the five human senses, but the meaning behind the symbol is the substance of value for human life, in the end whether the symbol can be a sign as a guide for humans. Basically there are two types of symbols, namely verbal and non-verbal symbols. Verbal symbols are communication tools produced by speech tools, while non-verbal symbols are physical symbols that can be limbs, sounds, objects that have cultural or ritual significance.²⁷

No exception Religion also teaches many manifestations based on symbols contained in the scriptures, namely in the form of revelation sentences written and enshrined in the scriptures themselves. Not only that, including religious practices involving many symbols in it, such as rituals of worship, places of worship, colors, etc. that are full of meaning behind certain religious symbols, for example the cross as a symbol of the Christian God, crescent and star as symbols of Muslims, five-star precision as a symbol of the Jewish people. Through these symbols each adherent of Religion shows its existence as a symbolic differentiator between one adherent of the Religion to another.²⁸ More than that, sometimes even a person's name can be a symbol of the religious identity that he professes. A Muslim can be known by the name pinned to him, usually using Arabic as a sign that he is a Muslim, as well as other religions.²⁹ These symbols have been institutionalized in the

²⁶Van C.A Peursen, *Strategi Kebudayaan* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1976). 141.

²⁷Alex Sobur, *Semiotika Komunikasi* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2003). 122

²⁸Eric Kunto Aribowo, "Aspek-Aspek Linguistik Penanda Identitas Religi: Selayang Pandang Masyarakat Tutar Jawa Muslim," in *Seminar Nasional Dan Launching ADOBSI*. (Surakarta: Asosiasi Dosen Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia (ADOBSI), 2015). 48-53.

²⁹Eric Kunto Aribowo and Nanik Herawati, "Pemilihan Nama Arab Sebagai Strategi Manajemen Identitas Di Antara Keluarga Jawa Muslim,," *PROSIDING PRASASTI* 1, no. 1 (2016): 270-277.

tradition of community understanding, so that when these symbols are ignored, they are considered to have violated the values of the religion they hold.

The use of symbols as identity markers cannot be denied as a barrier between one religious identity and another religious identity, but if it is associated with more general problems, without trying to attack other religious symbols. It can also be said that this is contrary to the standardization of the teachings of Religion which incidentally aims to create peace in the form of tolerance. Is the importance of religious identity a necessity that must be present in every line of human life, hence it can be called a religious piety?, for example a Muslim when using the name of the language certain regions (not Arabic) but have good meaning, is it still considered un-Islamic? Or is it basically not a symbol that is the emphasis of religious teachings, but the sign that appears behind the symbol is the substance of values? If only the symbol becomes in reference, the same thing creates boundaries from the reach of the teachings of Religion itself? These questions are important to be answered in order to find the essence of the teachings of Religion behind the "deification of symbols" that have been echoed by a group of communities who call themselves "Islamic or Sunnah".

In line with the description above, the writer quotes Clifford Geertz's statement stating that Religion is a symbol system that is oriented to create strong feelings and impulses so that it is easy to spread and difficult to be eliminated from within humans, by forming conceptions in a general order as a form of existence, manifested in factual life, so that it appears as a unique reality.³⁰ It seems that Geertz sees that religious symbols have motivated a person with certain goals in order to present something that he considers important, right, and wrong, according to the motivation that arises from within him and then pushes him to exist. Suppose a woman who wears the veil is her self-awareness about the concept of the veil as a dress that is obligatory for a Muslim woman to cover the genitals, then the veil here is a symbol which then gives birth to motivation within the woman based on the subjectivity of her experience.

The phenomenon of religious symbolism as a trend of piety through the stage of social media

³⁰Clifford Geertz, *Kebudayaan Dan Agama*, ed. Francisco Budi Hardiman (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1992). 5.

Nowadays, it seems that viral behavior is being patterned by some Muslims, both individually and in groups who declare their Islam through certain symbols, especially those who call themselves emigrated, or have practiced Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and Hadith or Sunnah, this phenomenon is often found in cyberspace, especially on social media facebook and youtube, the symbols they show in the form of a transformation of lifestyle or patterns of conventional appearance to the appearance of Arabization or what they call "Islamic", by trying to practice the text of the Qur'an and Sunnah (nash) such as growing a beard, shaving mustache, dressing in Arabic robe, switching to using siwak wood from previously using conventional toothbrushes, cap, wide or large hijab, veil, pants above the ankle, and other behaviors that form a symbol of Islam. They consider this behavior to be an Islamic trait taught by Islam through the ways and patterns of life of the early generation of Islam (the time of the Messenger of Allah.), Even they refuse if such behavior is only part of the Arabic tradition, because the Qur'an and Sunnah are textually teach that.

Before the writer further explains about the phenomenon of religious symbols as a marker or benchmark of piety in carrying out the teachings of Religion, particularly Islamic Religion through social media is necessary to be tracked in advance about the roots of understanding so as to give birth to practices in praxis of social life in society . When referring to texts (Al-Qur'an and Hadith), there are several precedents that are used as a basis or foothold for the point of view of why they are motivated to appear using religious symbols, including verses of the Qur'an that show about the closing order aurat or veil for women, which is contained in the QS. Al-Nur / 24: 31, QS. Al-Ahzab / 33: 53, and 59, Al-A'raf / 7: 31, and some of the traditions narrated by Imam Muslim number 3028, Abu Daud number 4017, and 4104, Baihaqi number 3218, Al-Nasa'i 8923 , and Al-Tirmidzi number 2794.³¹

Based on quoted verses from the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet, this then becomes the main argument for people in cyberspace to understand the law obliged to use the hijab as a Muslim's identity clothing that aims to cover genitalia. This uses a literal textual study approach so that the meaning of the text in language becomes their basic reference, although occasionally they refer to historical studies context, but only limited to

³¹Haikal Basyarahil, "Kewajiban Menutup Aurat Dan Batasannya," *Al-Manhaj.or.Id*, last modified 2015, accessed January 7, 2019, <https://almanhaj.or.id/4114-kewajiban-menutup-aurat-dan-batasannya.html>.

seeing the historical side without trying to analyze the substance of the context, so that the conclusion that the practice according to the text is a necessity. Based on this method, it seems that ordinary people easily accepted and digested about Islamic studies, because it does not require a complex effort to understand it, often they just simply quote the text and translation of verses of the Qur'an or the Hadith of the Prophet without attaching an explanation of the 'Ulama' convention so that it appears to be argued based on the meaning of the text without any attempt to analyze the text based on the comprehensive understanding of the text of the text.

One source of their referrals is the al-manhaj.or.id website page is a reference to Islamic textual studies that are widely accessed by netizens. The website is very easy to find when netizens type keywords on Islamic study themes, then the website link which is one of the top recommendations shown by the search engine (google). In addition, there are still a number of website links that are the same affiliations that present textual studies, including www.al-manhaj.or.id, www.muslim.or.id, www.muslimah.or.id, www.rumaysho.com, www.yufid.com, www.salafy.or.id, and www.konsultasisyariah.com. The website link is ranked in the top ten Islamic websites with the most visits from April to October 2018, specifically for the website link www.alufid.com -al-manhaj.or.id ranks 5 out of all Islamic websites in Indonesia, while it ranks 598 out of all websites in Indonesia, and ranks 35,592 of all websites in the world according to version www.alexa.com.³²

The data above shows that these websites significantly get a lot of response from Muslims to access various contents that are displayed as a reference to various religious issues that surround the problems of the lives of Muslims, especially in Indonesia, using textual methods that are displayed since it is easy to understand without the need for logical and methodical reasoning processes. It is only based on literal meaning accompanied by global explanations from the author, although sometimes referring to the opinions of Ulama or reference books, but opinions and reference books also use the same method, so that it seems original and without human *ijtihad*'s interference in it.

Since the emergence of cyber media in the form of social media as a place of expression for the existence of netizens, various ways have been used to upload certain content, among social media functions for netizens, namely: (1) uploading stories of their

³²Andrew Ramm, "The Top 500 Sites on the Web," *alexa.com*, last modified 2018, accessed January 7, 2019, https://www.alexa.com/topsites/category/World/Bahasa_Indonesia/Masyarakat/Agama/Islam.

daily lives, like diary books; (2) uploading certain moments of events using text, photos and videos; (3) utilizing social media as a media for buying and selling stalls; (4) factual information news media; (5) self-existence media by uploading personal photos (selfies); (6) making social media as a hoax container (false news); and (7) using social media as da'wah media and self-expression in religion, specifically at point 7, this is what the author examines in this article.

The phenomenon of seclusion as a religious existence is rife by netizens through social media since the emergence of movements that use the jargon "migrate" or "return to the Qur'an and Sunnah" especially since the millennial era (in the 2000s). The movement is largely driven by teenagers who are discovering or feeling "religious puberty" so that such conditions they consider to be a godly or religious form of the person, the phenomenon is spreading from the laity to the public figures (artists, politicians, academics, etc.). If we look at the contents they upload, it seems more likely to be interested in showing themselves with various religious symbols in the form of "Islamic" clothing that resembles Arabic or Middle Eastern culture by using robe clothing, pants over the ankles, features special physical features (beards, shaving mustache, black marks on the forehead, etc), for women wearing large hijabs, veils, not uploading physical photos on social media, but rather a kind of animate image symbol, because they (women) assume that showing physical photos through social media is considered to be sinful because it shows physical attribute. Besides, they are also busy uploading various memes (information in the form of pictures), quotes (short sentences) with various themes such as advice, propaganda, invitations to follow certain groups, and so forth.



Figure 2.1: *Quote*



Figure 2.3: *Meme*

The trend is considered to have represented a phrase that shows that those who follow this way include following the Prophet's sunnah or those who are pious (worshippers) even they do not hesitate to criticize individuals or groups that are not in line with their understanding and manhaj. So through social media such propaganda is considered effective, because social media has now become an effective communication medium to convey messages to the public. Almost every smart phone user has a social media account, especially Facebook, even sometimes the media is used by individuals to spread hoax information and hate speech for the sake of venting their emotional desires for individuals, groups, and even social conditions that are deemed incompatible with their mindset, such dynamics are certainly a formidable challenge in the digital era primarily towards the industrial era 4.0 with various dynamics of increasingly complex problems.

In addition, commercial land is wide open due to the impact of the spread of euphoria of netizens on religious symbols, business opportunities and even used by some netizens by opening "shak'ah shanties" as a container for buying and selling these symbols. There are those who offer syar'i clothes' such as Muslim clothes (robes), shar'i pants (sirwal), Muslim clothing (robe, hijab, and veil). Some offer services, such as archery courses, horseback riding, swimming, shar'i clinics (ruqyah, cupping), shar'i property, as well as various activities labeled shar'i or sunnah, this is a form of sunnah activity offered by some Hadith through literal understanding.



Figure 3.1: Selling of Sunnah Clothing



Gambar 3.2: Archery Training



Figure 3.3: Syar'I Clinic



Figure 3.4: Syar'I Property

The religious symbols used by netizens seem to have represented the assumption of religious piety that they live by showing such expressions. They assume they have been in the "hidayah" zone according to the guidance of the Prophet's sunnah taught through various lectures, Islamic advice, or recitation which was delivered by the missionaries through social media. This phenomenon is certainly inseparable from the role of social media which is very significant by netizens, this is supported by social media features that are increasingly complete as if completing the needs of netizens to publicize their existence through cyberspace, ranging from feature groups, upload images and videos, to live streaming features that are increasingly being used and utilized by netizens.

In addition to the phenomenon of life style as a religious trend (piety) shown on social media by netizens, lately it has also been viral by netizens who uploaded "monotheism flags" after the event of burning the monotheism flag by unscrupulous on Santri Day at Alun-lun Square in Limbangan District, on Monday, October 22, 2018,³³ The incident drew a response by netizens with the rampant Facebook status that uploaded criticism in various forms, some uploaded in the form of a picture meme that read "you burn 1 tauhid flag, we flew 1000 tauhid flags", others replaced their profile photos with flag labels or monotheism sentence as a form of protest against the incident, some people do not want to miss to take advantage of the moment by opening booth sales of monotheism flags on social media, until the occurrence of monotheism in various regions in Indonesia, the phenomenon shows the euphoria of netizens due to a condition that is considered

³³Hakim Ghani, "No Title," *Detik.Com*, last modified 2018, accessed January 8, 2019, <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-barat/d-4288587/begini-kronologi-pembakaran-bendera-di-hari-santri-versi-uus>.

tending to the piety of the sacredness of the sacredness of Islamic symbols, this kind of dynamic cannot be separated from the perceived importance of religious symbols as a form of respect or sanctification in carrying out the teachings of Religion itself.



Figure 4.1: Criticism Meme



Gambar 4.2: Profile Photo

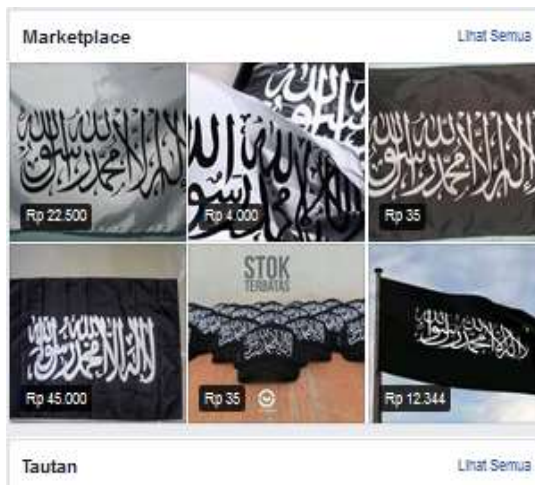


Figure 4.3 : monotheism flag shanties



Figure 4.4: Action of Tawhid Defend

Some parties consider this kind of phenomenon is influenced by politics that are rolling in Indonesia, so that Religion is used as a weapon as well as a shield to defend certain political groups. The author does not want to comment related to the motives for the occurrence of these phenomena other than those related to the euphoria of religious symbolism in the current digital era. The point is that the expression and existence that is shown by netizens is a form of sacred symbolism of religion as a form of observance of piety that they understand according to the literal teachings they receive.

At this stage the writer can draw a red line that the expression of religious existence is rife published especially netizens who incidentally receive Islamic studies instantly

through digital media, in the form of study videos, short retail in the form of quotes, memes, and the like which are uploaded through social media, although sometimes these studies are not comprehensive but only the results of video clips according to a specific theme, so netizens cannot listen to the theoretical and methodological processes of the results and conclusions of the studies submitted, even impressed only limited to displaying the text of the Qur'an and Hadith along with its translation, as if inviting netizens to reflect on their own according to the degree of limitations of their knowledge of the meaning of the text without going through a methodological and theoretical process of understanding the texts as is generally learned in formal institutions of religious education.

The presence of this phenomenon can contribute information about the new nuances of understanding religious teachings instantly through social media in the digital age, so that Religion appears to be very easily understood by merely capitalizing on literal-textual understanding so as if the understanding is the most correct. In addition, the authors also see a new phenomenon, namely the rise of the use of digital media to express classical understandings. This is of course interesting because in fact they are anti-modernity with various labels embedded, such as heresy, *tasyabbuh*, and an antithesis to the development of modernity itself, but on the other hand it is this group that uses more modern communication media to denounce modernity itself, and expand the reach of their literal preaching.

CONCLUSION

Literal understanding of the holy book (Al-Qur'an and Hadith) is increasingly gaining a wide space for netizens through social media to express themselves as a form of religious existence, given the literal approach in understanding the text of religion is considered an instant approach, so that one can only grasp the meaning of the text or literal translation according to their ability level without the need for scientific *ijtihad* efforts as a methodological and theoretical. Various reference media can be easily found through website services. There are several links that provide these, one of which is www.al-manhaj.or.id. These factors have contributed greatly to the development of a literal mindset in understanding religion, triggering the emergence of religious symbolism with

various text speculations to justify religious teachings based on the symbols they understand.

Social media is not just an expression to show the existence of the literal symbolism, but also is used as a business area, by commercializing various products and services by adding shar'i or sunnah labels to strengthen their business promotion. That opportunity also seems to bring benefits to political activists who can make the issue of Religion a soft propaganda in order to reap the attention and sympathizers. Religious symbols are traded for the sake of worldly profit as legitimacy of piety, both on a communal and individual scale.

REFERENCES

- Ahmadi, Dadi, and Nova Yohana. "Konstruksi Jilbab Sebagai Simbol Keislaman." *MediaTor: Jurnal Komunikasi* 8, no. 2 (2007): 235–248.
- Amir, Abdul Muiz, Danial, and Syamsuddin. "Facebooker: Penista Agama Dimaafkan, Fatwa Ulama Diabaikan (Studi Living Qur'an QS. Al-Isra'/17:36)." In *Religion Society & Social Media*, 1:1–17. Yogyakarta: Depublish, 2018.
- Anam, Khairul. "Radikalisme di Dunia Maya: Menemukan Tuhan di Mesin Pencarian." *Empirisma Jurnal Pemikiran dan Kebudayaan Islam* 26, no. 1 (2017): 1–12.
- Arfiko, Y. "Pengaruh Pesan Dakwah pada Channel Youtube Yufid. Tv terhadap Motivasi Belajar Ilmu Agama Islam." *Jurnal Online Mahasiswa (JOM) Bidang Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 5 (2018): 1–8.
- Aribowo, Eric Kunto. "Aspek-Aspek Linguistis Penanda Identitas Religi: Selayang Pandang Masyarakat Tutar Jawa Muslim." In *Seminar Nasional Dan Launching ADOBSI*. Surakarta: Asosiasi Dosen Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia (ADOBSI), 2015.
- Aribowo, Eric Kunto, and Nanik Herawati. "Pemilihan Nama Arab Sebagai Strategi Manajemen Identitas Di Antara Keluarga Jawa Muslim." *PROSIDING PRASASTI* 1, no. 1 (2016): 270–277.
- Basyarahil, Haikal. "Kewajiban Menutup Aurat Dan Batasannya." *Al-Manhaj.or.Id*. Last modified 2015. Accessed January 7, 2019. <https://almanhaj.or.id/4114-kewajiban-menutup-aurat-dan-batasannya.html>.
- Cassirer, Ernest. *An Essay on Man on Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture*. New York: New Heaven, 1994.
- Erricker, Clive. "Phenomenological Approaches." In *Approaches to The Study of Religion*, edited by Peter Connolly. Reprinted. London: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006.
- Geertz, Clifford. *Kebudayaan Dan Agama*. Edited by Francisco Budi Hardiman. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1992.
- Ghani, Hakim. "No Title." *Detik.Com*. Last modified 2018. Accessed January 8, 2019.

- <https://news.detik.com/berita-jawa-barat/d-4288587/begini-kronologi-pembakaran-bendera-di-hari-santri-versi-uus>.
- Hanafi, Muchlis M. "Integrasi Ilmu Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur' an." *Subuf: Jurnal Pengkajian Al-Qur'an dan Budaya* 3, no. 2 (2010): 175–191.
- Hasbiansyah, O. "Pendekatan Fenomenologi: Pengantar Praktik Penelitian Dalam Ilmu Sosial Dan Komunikasi." *Mediator: Jurnal Komunikasi* 9, no. 1 (2008): 163–180.
- Iqbal, Asep Muhammad. "Agama Dan Adopsi Media Baru: Penggunaan Internet Oleh Gerakan Salafisme Di Indonesia." *Jurnal Komunikasi Indonesia* 2, no. 2 (2013): 77–87.
- Isnaini, Ahmad. "Kekerasan Atas Nama Agama: Perpektif Politik." *JSP: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 13, no. 1 (2009): 1–19.
- Liang Gie, The. *Dictionary of Logic*. Yogyakarta: Karya Kencana, 1975.
- Mahmuddin. "Dakwah Kontemporer Dan Radikalisme Agama Di Bulukumba." *Al-Ulum* 16, no. 2 (2016): 454–473.
- Mujib, Abdul. "Pendekatan Fenomenologi Dalam Studi Islam." *Al-Tadzkiyyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 1 (2015): 167–183.
- Ng, Al-Zastrouw. *Gerakan Islam Simbolik: Politik Kepentingan FPI*. Edited by Fuad Mustafid. Cet. II. Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2013.
- Nindito, Stefanus. "Fenomenologi Alfred Schutz : Studi Tentang Konstruksi Makna Dan Realitas Dalam Ilmu Sosial." *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 2, no. 1 (2005): 79–95.
- Peursen, Van C.A. *Strategi Kebudayaan*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1976.
- Putra, Heddy Shri Ahimsa. "Fenomenologi Agama : Pendekatan Fenomenologi Untuk Memahami Agama." *Jurnal Walisongo* 20, no. 2 (2012): 271–304.
- Rahadi, Dedi Rianto. "Perilaku Pengguna Dan Informasi Hoax Di Media Sosial." *Jurnal Manajemen dan Kewirausahaan* (2017).
- Ramm, Andrew. "The Top 500 Sites on the Web." *Alexa Internet, Inc*. Last modified 2018. Accessed January 7, 2019. https://www.alex.com/topsites/category/World/Bahasa_Indonesia/Masyarakat/Agama/Islam.
- Rozi, Achmad Bahrur. "Radikalisme Dan Penyimpangan Ideologi Gerakan Salafi." *Empirisma Jurnal Pemikiran dan Kebudayaan Islam* 26, no. 1 (2017): 107–116.
- Sari, Annisa Novia, and Adi Bayu Muhadian. "Perilaku Komunikasi Pelaku Hijrah (Studi Fenomenologi Pelaku Hijrah Dalam Shift Gerakan Pemuda Hijrah Di Kota Bandung)." *Jurnal Linimasa* 1, no. 1 (2018): 1–12.
- Snelson, Chareen L. "Qualitative and Mixed Methods Social Media Research: A Review of Literature." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 20, no. 17 (2016): 1–15.
- Sobur, Alex. *Semiotika Komunikasi*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2003.
- Usman, Fadly. "Efektivitas Penggunaan Media Online Sebagai Sarana Dakwah." *Jurnal Ekonomi dan Dakwah Islam (Al-Tsiqob)* 1, no. 01 (2016): 1–8.