

## Commodification of Religion in Sport Media (Study on Bola.com Online Media)

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### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** religious commodification, online media, social media.

This study critically examines the potential for religious commodification in Bola.com sports media. sports media that actually display sports-related news are interspersed with Islamic content, the author suspects that there has been a commodification of Islam, through the online mass media Bola.com. Using a qualitative method with a netnography approach, the author has seriously analyzed several Bola.com publications during the month of Ramadan 2022, from this vulnerable time there are as many as 39 Islamic content that have been published by Bola.com on websites related to Islam. The results of the Bola.com research As an online media engaged in sports news, articles related to Islamic religious content are inseparable from the political economy motives of media and forms of media innovation for sustainability and profit, the commodification of religion in the form of content as a product in bola.com part of the media business strategy, content is an important part of the media as a selling product to get a profit for media owners. The posting of Islamic content on Bola.com also provides information that makes it easier for its readers, most of whom are Muslims, to get information related to Islam. Most of the results of this study Bola.com readers give a response that there is no problem with religious content published by Bola.com as long as the source is clear, but it is not appropriate because Bola.com is an online media of sports news which is basically only sports news and should still provide information related to sports without interfering with religious articles.



### Introduction

Technology is something that is very inherent in our daily lives today (Apdillah et al., 2022). Islam itself never restrains its people to be advanced and modern, in fact Islam strongly supports the progress of its people to conduct research and experiment in any field, including in the field of technology (Ariyadi, 2018). In addition to containing a lot about the importance of science development, the Quran can also be used as an inspiration for science and the development of thinking insights, so that it is able to create something new in life (Fitri et al., 2022).

The rapid advancement of modern technology has triggered the emergence of advanced technological products such as radio, television, internet, communication devices and other luxury items, and offers various types of entertainment for every parent,

young person, or child (Ainiyah, 2018). But of course, those tools are not responsible for what they cause. It is precisely on the shoulders of humans that all these responsibilities lie. Because of the various information media and sophisticated tools that the world has today, it can do anything (Gassing, 2023). Perhaps it is the human factor that determines its operations. Sometimes it becomes a benefit, namely when humans use it properly and appropriately. One of the technologies that is on the rise today is the internet. In addition to connecting global communication, another benefit of the internet is as a medium of information and entertainment. Then another benefit is as a means of supporting educational activities. As is known that the internet is the easiest medium to get information (Ilham et al., 2023).

With the advancement of technology today, the phenomenon of content about Islam on the Internet is very easy to find, learning Islam now does not need to go to see teachers who are experts in the field of religion. In the current era of digitalization, people only need to have a computer, or a smartphone connected to the internet is able to access the needs of Islamic religious articles (Rozaki, 2013). This forms a culture in society as a consumptive society. Easy technological accessibility, following various channels and accounts, and liking ustaz/ulama who produce content on social media, make millennial Muslims feel like they want to satisfy their religious aspect by consuming Islamic content from the Internet (Tamburaka, 2016).

The abundance of Islamic content on the Internet is inseparable from the role of the media. Disseminating information and educating the public as one of the functions of the Media

Recently, Islamic content on social media (internet) content creators use Islamic content as content that sells and earns money, in the last discovery of the most viral content of Korean Muslim singer and YouTuber Daud Muslim, in May 2021 quoted from Viva.co.id using Islamic content as content in his media Daud Kim said that he uses Islam for his profit. David had made a statement that he did not really care about the interests of Islam itself and preferred to create interesting content rather than study Islam (Minan, 2016).

Not only that, content about Islam such as prayer songs, prayer pranks are also rampant in the cyberspace, call it the song Ya Habibul Qolbi, the music owned by Nissa and the band Sabyan had gone viral and was watched in large numbers on social media (Adawiyah, 2022). Likewise with content that smells of Islamic prank prayers, it is rampant by content creators, this is considering that the results of the video are very tempting, as reported by the merdeka.com of a youtuber's salary if calculated by advertising costs in Indonesia in 2022, 1\$ per 4 thousand views, the more content is watched, the greater the income generated. This makes content actors on social media compete to produce religious content that brings in as many visitors as possible (Batubara & Malik, 2014).

In connection with the presentation of the above problems, the objectives of this research are as follows:

- a. To find out why Sport Bola.com media post articles about Islam on its website
- b. To find out the response of Bola.com readers to the articles on Islam posted Bola.com
- c. Knowing how the forms of commodification of Islam in the online media Bola.com

## **Method**

This study uses a qualitative approach with the netnography method. According to Sigit Hermawan and Amirullah, in Muhammad Nasih's research, qualitative research is research that provides insight and understanding about a set of problems or problems. This qualitative research is included in the exploratory research method where the data collection is unstructured and the number of samples is small. Qualitative statistical observations are a series of observations where each observation contained in a sample or population may not be expressed in numbers. In another sense, qualitative research is research that explains phenomena in the form of words and does not use numbers and does not use various measurements. Qualitative research can be used in a variety of approaches, including: ethnography, naturalistic studies, case studies, field studies, technical work, and direct observation.<sup>16</sup>

This study uses a qualitative approach that emphasizes more on the exploration of meaning in its commodification. However, it's just that the meaning in question is not just a meaning at the basic level, but behind it concerns the problem of exploring people's awareness of the practice of religious commodification that is rampant in the political space. So to understand how the person's consciousness is, it needs to be understood through the process.

Meanwhile, Netnography Kozinets explained that Netnografi is a method to express and analyze self-presentation used by the public digitally in online interactions. This research method is designed for a qualitative approach that combines the internet and ethnography. Unlike ethnography, the basis of observation in netnography studies is in the online realm. Cresswell added that in the researcher's netnography, the selection of informants was carried out purposively. In this technique, the selection of informants is carried out according to the needs of the researcher.

The source of data in this study is as it is in the form of content related to Islam in online media Bola.com based on the focus of this research is the commodification of Islam on social media.

Subroto argues that data in research basically consists of all the information or materials provided by nature (in a broad sense) that researchers must seek, collect and select. Data can be found in everything that is the field and target of research.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Readers' Responses Bola.com Past Religious Contents in Bola.com**

Religion is still an interesting topic that will never end to be discussed, especially in seeing the reality that exists in society. One of its functions is as a guideline for religious believers in living every life. However, over time, religion is no longer just a teaching,

but religion at this time has undergone massive commodification, which is affected by the continuous interactive relationship between religion and the market.

Bola.com as an online media that has been established since 2015, in addition to publishing sports news content, it also has dozens of content about Islam on its website, the result of researcher observations related to several Bola.com posts about Islamic articles during April-May 2022, during the month of Ramdhan, among others.

**Table 1 of  
the Islamic Republic of Bola.com articles during the month  
Ramdhan**

Post title	Upload date	Writer
A Collection of Sample Texts for Ramadan Tarawih Prayer Lectures That Can Be a Reference	04 Apr 2022	Alfi Yuda
7 Effective Ways to Get Rid of Bad Breath While Fasting, Have Fresh Breath Throughout the Day	04 Apr 2022,	Alfi Yuda
Reading of Prayer Intentions 5 Correct Times, Complete and Their Meanings	05 Apr 2022,	Faozan Tri Nugroho
36 Quotes of Islamic Advice as Meditation in the Month of Ramadan	05 Apr 2022,	Rheza Aditya Gradianto.
Types of Virtues of Tarawih Prayer that Muslims Need to Know	06 Apr 2022,	<a href="#">Alfi Yuda</a>
35 Beautiful Islamic Quotes About Ramadan, A Driver For Goodness	07 Apr 2022,	Rheza Aditya Gradianto.
Various Manners of Breaking the Fast According to the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad	08 Apr 2022,	<a href="#">Alfi Yuda</a>

Miscellaneous Wisdom Ramadan Fasting That Can Be Harvested	08 Apr 2022,	<a href="#">Alfi Yuda</a>
The Intention of Zakat Fitrah for Yourself and All Family Members, Complete with Translation	11 Apr 2022,	Faozan Tri Nugroho
A Collection of Examples of Short Cults of Ramadan Fasting in Various Themes	11 Apr 2022	<a href="#">Alfi Yuda</a>
35 Beautiful Islamic Quotes About Prayer and Prayer, Collect Rewards in Ramadan	11 Apr 2022,	Gradianto Rheza
Various Conditions That Allow a Person Not to Fast in Ramadan	13 Apr 2022,	Alfi Yuda
Types of Practices That Can Be Done on the Night of Nuzulul Qur'an	13 Apr 2022,	Faozan Tri Nugroho
Prayer Reading Tahajud Prayer in Arabic, Latin, and Its Meaning	13 Apr 2022,	Faozan Tri Nugroho
Types of Practices that Menstruating Women Can Do in Ramadan	16 Apr 2022,	Faozan Tri Nugroho
Nuzulul Quran Prayer Reading and Its Specialties to Know	18 Apr 2022	Faozan Tri Nugroho
The Reading of the Intention of Zakat Fitrah Complete with the Meaning of What Muslims Need to Know	18 Apr 2022,	Alfi Yuda

The Virtues of the Night of Nuzulul Qur'an that Muslims Should Know	19 2022	Apr	Alfi Yuda
How to Make Tarawih Prayer More Comfortable and Smooth	19 2022,	Apr	Faozan Tri Nugroho
Miscellaneous Fulfillment Priorities Zakat Fitrah, Perfecting Ramadan Fasting	19 2022	Apr	Alfi Yuda
Ramadan Witir Witir Prayer Reading, Complete in Latin and Its Meaning	19 2022,	Apr	Alfi Yuda
32 Beautiful Quotes from Islamic Philosophers, Learning Materials in Ramadan	19 2022	Apr	Rheza Aditya Gradiano
4 Ways to Pay Zakat Fitrah Online, Making It Easier for Muslims	20 2022	Apr	Alfi Yuda
35 Quote Beautiful Islamic Bearers of Goodness in the Month of Ramadan	20 2022,	Apr	Rheza Aditya Gradiano
Lailatul Qadar Night Prayer Reading Along with Means Know the Specialties	21 2022,	Apr	Faozan Tri Nugroho
Examples of Subuh Cult Lecture Texts during Ramadan, Suitable Materials to Deliver	21 2022	Apr	Alfi Yuda
Various Virtues of the Night of Lailatul Qadar that Muslims Need to Know	22 2022,	Apr	Alfi Yuda

Readings Together the Virtues	Intention Meaning, Know	Iktikaf	22 2022,	Apr	Faozan  Tri Nugroho
Ramadan that Muslims Must Know			22 2022	Apr	Alfi Yuda
Reading the Intention of Tayamum and the Methods and Conditions for Implementing It			22 2022,	Apr	Alfi Yuda
Quotation to Give Alms in the Month of Ramadan	Motivation	Islamic	23 2022,	Apr	Rheza Aditya Gradiano
Vehicle Ride Prayer Readings and Their Meanings, Know Their Virtues			25 2022	Apr	Faozan  Tri Nugroho
Eid al-Fitr Takbiran Reading in Arabic, Latin, and Translation			25 2022	Apr	Faozan  Tri Nugroho
Various Unique Traditions of Eid Al-Fitr in Various Countries			28 2022	Apr	Alfi Yuda
Types of Virtues of Eid Al-Fitr Prayer that Muslims Need to Know			29 2022,	Apr	Alfi Yuda
System Fitr Along with the Reading of the Intention	Manner Salat	Eid al-	29 2022	Apr	Rheza Aditya Gradiano
Example of Eid Al-Fitr Prayer Sermon Text That Can Be Used as a Reference			29 2022	Apr	Alfi Yuda
Collection of Examples of Eid Themed Poems			29 20 22	Apr	Alfi Yuda

40 Happy Eid Wishes				1	May	Faozan	T ri
Fitri	1443	H	Brief	20		Nugroh	
	Appropriate			22		o	
Share on Social Media							

The results of researchers' observations on Bola.com media that have published articles on Islam as many as 39, these articles are written by permanent authors from Bola.com, some of which have been published on other websites. Then it was remastered by the Bola.com author. Looking at the above data, the researcher came to the conclusion that Bola.com is trying to provide education and make it easier to search for prospective readers related to Islamic articles. In addition to his website, Bola.com also spreads the content to social media through various platforms, such as Facebook and his Instagram.

#### **Readers' Responses Bola.com regarding Islamic Religious Content in Bola.com**

To get a response from readers in Bola.com, the author uses a Netnography approach, which means that the researcher tries to get an answer to the readers and followers of Bola.com. interview results.

The user of @Gegen account gave an opinion, that seeing Bola.com publish an Islamic content in the media is a natural thing, when he saw that other media also took part in writing Islamic articles. coverage<sup>6</sup> and so on. So there is no problem, in fact, it helps the adherents of Islam to make it easier to get such information.

From several interviews that according to the researcher have given results about the response to Islamic content in Bola.com. The researcher came to the conclusion that the content in the Bola.com religion, as a form of creativity of a media to meet the demand of the public, and competition between media to publish content that is likely to sell in the market.

To provide satisfaction to the researcher, the researcher made a questionnaire to be answered to the respondents, to find out and answer the formulation of the problem in the previous chapter. The results are as follows:

Of the 11 respondents who followed the Bola.com on Facebook gave an answer about Islam-articles on Bola.com, 81.8% knew Bola.com publish articles related to religious tranquility and as many as 18.2% did not know about it. And of the 9 respondents, an average of 66.7% knew through google.com and 33.3%; others find out through other social networks. Reviewing the results given by the respondents above, it gives a conclusion that most of the followers Bola.com know about the religious article through search results on the google.com. When researchers made observations on Google searches related to practices in the month of Pauasa, Bola.com ranked 2nd in the search rankings in google.com.

#### **Forms of religious commodification in Online Media Bola.com**

This commodification begins when the media crew changes a message through technology packaged into a meaningful interpretation of the message, so that the message



becomes marketable. Commodification of messages is packaged in such a way that it attracts interest and diverse images according to the needs of the market and a wide audience.

The results of the observation in this study bola.com found some data on the content that has been published based on exposure in analyzing the forms of commodification of religious content in Bola.com.

Looking at the results presented above, we can understand that the phenomenon of commodification of religion is still a trend, especially the commodification of Islamic religious content in Indonesia, which is indeed Islam is the majority religion embraced by its people. Adding discourse or religious symbols to a commodity is often an effective attraction in promoting, selling, or advertising a product.

This is often not realized by the public how religion is wrapped as a tool to reap profits for capitalists or capital owners. In the articles published on the bola.com that the author researched in addition to the Islamic content on the website, the post Bola.com also displayed several commercial advertisements on the page. the content of the discourse on the commodification of Islam contained in it. How Islamic values are also presented in the content which is basically a sports website.

The forms of commodification in this Bola.com are broadly divided into two, namely content commodification and commodification of merit. This religious content has various other forms of commodification that are at the same time an additional facility and attraction for media content. Of course, by commodifying texts or images and providing various categories of posts themselves and changing the function and role of the website.

All of these things are produced and packaged in such a way to become an interesting content. Meanwhile, the commodification of the audience, namely the media, has analyzed the market and targeted certain groups as readers of the content, such as religious groups, who have touched the hearts of readers and have an interest in the content. Mita Chatarina Heny, 2020 Dwi Surwati emphasized that the commodification of religion makes us redefine religion as a market commodity to be exchanged.

### **Implications of Commodification of Islamic Religion**

The commodification of Islam does not always mean negative, even in certain aspects there are positive things. Moreover, the commodification process is also an unintended consequence of the increase in the spirit of Islam among the ummah. This phenomenon is then facilitated by technological advances, especially communication and information technology that allow for an increase in Islamic commodification.

In this era of industry 4.0, people, especially millennials, learn more about religion through social media, with religious content provided by media industries in cyberspace as a form of progress in the field of da'wah. In a recent study directly supervised by the Professor of UIN Bandung, 58 percent of young people prefer to learn religion through social media such as Youtube or Instagram. In addition, not many young people know about religious organizations, and tend to know more about individual preachers who are active in cyberspace.<sup>82</sup>

The trend of Islamic content on social media has a positive impact on public awareness. The use of halal products, both food and cosmetics, educates the Indonesian people that halalness in consuming a product is a must in Islamic teachings. In terms of religious content, Aziz Nasution said that around 58 percent of young people learn religious content through social media. The reasons are varied, ranging from ease of access, interest in preacher figures, content conveyed is easy to understand, and content conveyed in accordance with the problems being faced.

The commodification of religion also has an impact on the transformation of useful values in religion, where religion previously functioned as a guideline for life and also a source of normative values based on divine beliefs but shifted to exchange value due to the process of religious commodification. At this time, many religious attributes have been traded with various models due to religious commodification. One of the examples that has changed the most due to the impact of the emergence of religious commodification is the phenomenon of the emergence of da'wah content in social media which is increasingly diverse. Where commodification in religion makes da'wah content not only used as a dissemination of da'wah, more than that content that discusses religion at this time has developed into a media production to get viewers.

## **Conclusion**

With the advancement of information technology in the current era of media disruption, everyone is able to create information with one click, so that the information is packaged in such a way as possible, by relating religious issues will become an interesting discourse for a wide audience, the impact of this. Commodification of religious content on social media is commonplace today, religious content on social media makes it easier for people to find information about religion, but apart from that, religious commodification needs to be considered not only for the economic interests of the media, but also for the benefit of the people.

Commodification is actually inseparable from capitalism. From his womb was born a trade practice that no longer cares about the urgency of the goods sold, as long as they can be money, then in the lens of commodification, everything is halal. The commodification of religion, including da'wah, is also a victim of the practice of capitalism. The root is the presence of media in the community who compete to broadcast religious spectacles as an inseparable part of the programs produced.

Meanwhile, the media is not a selfless institution. They also need costs and even profits from the da'wah programs produced, because of the concept of capitalism. However, this kind of condition does not need to be worried in the sense that it must be monitored intensely. Because after all, with the presence of da'wah through the mass media, Islamic da'wah in the context of modern society is actually more segmented by choosing certain media for people with certain types and characters.

Bola.com, which is an online sports media in Indonesia, produces calm content of religious articles on its website, which is inseparable from the media business strategy for the media economy itself.

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