



Creative Process of Graphic Design for Muhammadiyah Digital Flyer Greeting Card Production by the Muhammadiyah Central Board Media and Communication Team

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ABSTRACT

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Along with the development of technology and the use of social media, digital greeting card flyers as information media need to be made visually attractive and by the identity of Muhammadiyah as the most prominent Islamic organization in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah uses graphic design as a tool for visual aesthetics in communicating Islamic teachings and values in a modern and easy-to-understand way. This study aims to analyze the creative process of graphic design to produce digital greeting card flyers. This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach, the data for this study were obtained by conducting in-depth interviews with key informants of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Media and Communication Team and conducting observations and documentation. The results of this study indicate that graphic design in the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Media and Communication follows viral trends to increase interaction on social media while adhering to Islamic values and the Muhammadiyah brand guidelines. The main challenge is maintaining relevance to trends, which is overcome through research and team collaboration. Technology facilitates production, and design effectiveness is measured from user interaction data. This study is expected to provide new insights into how the creative process in graphic design affects the effectiveness of digital communication, especially in the context of religious organizations that use social media as their primary channel.

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1. Introduction

Communication media, especially social media, have become very important in the rapidly evolving digital age conveying organizational messages and values to a wide audience (Leli et al., 2023). Social media has changed the way organizations interact with their audiences, enabling faster, more dynamic and interactive distribution of information (Mastarida et al., 2022). By ensuring that every message delivered can reach and influence the audience widely and meaningfully, social media makes it possible to measure responses in real-time and optimize communication approaches (Hidayat, 2021). In this context, Muhammadiyah as one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia with more than 60 million members spread across the country, has a great responsibility in maintaining its image and delivering consistent and relevant messages to the wider community through these digital platforms. In the face of the ever-evolving digital era, Muhammadiyah must adapt its communication methods to the rapid development of information technology.

The digital age is a term used to describe a period in which information and communication technologies, especially the internet and digital devices, have become very important in everyday life (Maduratna et al., 2024). This challenge involves ensuring that messages delivered through various digital platforms remain true to the social and religious values that have long underpinned the organization. As such, Muhammadiyah can utilize social media to strengthen engagement and communication with its members, while remaining true to the core values underlying its movement.

Visual communication is the process of conveying information through visual aids such as pictures, paintings, photographs, and symbols (Thelander, 2018). One form of visual communication that is often used by the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership is the production of digital flyer greeting cards that are distributed through social media. Social media is the main channel in the distribution of this material, given its ability to reach a wider and more diverse audience, including the younger generation who are more familiar with digital technology. To ensure that the message conveyed is not only informative, but also visually appealing and in line with Muhammadiyah's identity and relevant on social media, the creative process in the graphic design of this digital flyer greeting card is very important. The Media and Communication Team of Muhammadiyah Central Leadership is strategically responsible for developing innovative ideas that suit social media, creating graphic designs suitable for various platforms, and disseminating the content through the organization's official accounts.

This creative process involves various structured and complex stages, starting from social media trend analysis, idea brainstorming, theme selection, to design execution that considers important elements such as color, typography, and typical Muhammadiyah symbols. Social media trend analysis is an evaluation of the development and usage patterns of social media platforms that are currently popular (Cahyaningrum et al., 2024). Understanding social media algorithms and user behavior is very important to ensure that the content created can achieve high engagement (Tarigan, 2024). In addition, relevance to Islamic values and adaptation to social media formats are key considerations in every step of the creative process. Islamic values are teachings and principles that guide daily life according to the teachings of Islam (Fitria, 2023).

Along with the development of technology and the increasing use of social media, digital greeting card flyers distributed through these platforms have evolved into a highly effective means of reaching a wider audience. Since they are created in a digital format, they can be shared through various online platforms, such as email, social media, or messaging apps. It is a communication tool that utilizes digital technology to disseminate information efficiently (Fitriani, 2017). Direct interaction with the audience through comments, likes, and shares allows Muhammadiyah to get real-time feedback and build closer relationships with the community. Therefore, an effective social media strategy and a deep understanding of audience preferences are crucial in this creative process.

Overall, the creative process in graphic design for the production of digital flyer greeting cards by the Media and Communication Team of Muhammadiyah Central Leadership associated with social media is not just a mere design and distribution activity, but the production of digital flyer greeting cards by the Media and Communication Team of Muhammadiyah Central Leadership has its own uniqueness compared to other productions because it prioritizes the integration of religious and social values in each design. An integrated strategic effort that aims to improve communication within the organization, keep the messages delivered relevant, and strengthen Muhammadiyah's image as an organization that is contemporary, inclusive, and able to adapt to technological advances.

Although previous studies have discussed the creative process in various media such as interactive content on social media (Ridwan & Sari, 2023), creative dance content on digital platforms (Marsiana et al., 2022), as well as graphic design on the front page of newspapers (Hapsari, 2020), however, there has been no research that specifically discusses the creative process in the production of digital flyer greeting cards in a religious organization such as Muhammadiyah, which emphasizes the integration of religious and social values. This is where the lack of previous research shows. Although a significant amount of research has been conducted on the creative process in various types of digital content, none has thoroughly studied how religious and social values are incorporated into the graphic design of digital greeting cards and flyers designed for religious organizations. Previous research usually concentrates on the technical elements of design or engagement outcomes, but neglects the religious and social context, which is an important element in the visual communication of religious

organizations. To fill this gap, this research investigates how this creative process is carried out within Muhammadiyah, which must remain visually relevant in social media while maintaining strong religious values.

2. Method

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach which is an approach carried out without using numbers by describing descriptively to describe a symptom, event, incident that is happening. Qualitative research is a systematic statement relating to a set of ideas that come from words and are tested empirically (Moleong, 2007). The method used in this research uses the case study method. The case study method is an empirical investigation that investigates phenomena in the context of real life, where the boundaries between context and phenomena are not clear and multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 2013). Depending on the subject to be investigated, a researcher can conduct relevant and high-quality case studies without leaving the literature (Yin, 2013). Case studies can increase our knowledge of organizational, political, social, and individual phenomena. As previously explained, the qualitative research case study method used in this research aims to understand the phenomenon of graphic design through identifying the steps involved in the creative process of graphic design for the production of digital flyer greeting cards carried out by the Media and Communication Team of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership.

This research was conducted at the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership office located at “*Cik Di Tiro street Number 23, Yogyakarta City*”. The object of this research is the creative process applied by the Muhammadiyah Media and Communication Team in producing a creative design of graphic design for the production of digital flyer greeting cards whose purpose is to understand the phenomenon of graphic design through identifying the steps involved in the creative process of graphic design for the production of digital flyer greeting cards carried out by the Media and Communication Team of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership. Informants are those who know all the important information needed for this research, such as data for this research. Informants are divided into key informants and non-key informants. Key informants are those who really understand and know the problem to be studied, and they also have data and are willing to provide complete and precise information. In this research, the key informants are the Chief Editor of Media and Communication of Muhammadiyah Central Leadership and the Graphic Designer of Media and Communication of Muhammadiyah Central Leadership in accordance with the subject of this research.

In collecting data, researchers used several techniques, the main one being unstructured interviews with key informants, such as the Chief Editor and Graphic Designer of the Muhammadiyah Media and Communication Team. Unstructured interviews were chosen because they provide flexibility in exploring more in-depth information related to various creative and technical aspects applied in the design process. This allows informants to provide more detailed and extensive explanations regarding their experiences in the creative process. In addition, the documentation method was also used to complement the data obtained, by analyzing various documents, notes, and visual materials related to the production of digital flyer greeting cards.

After the data was collected, the analysis was conducted by following the Miles and Huberman model which includes four main stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (Herdiansyah, 2010). At the data collection stage, researchers collected various information from interviews and relevant documentation. At the data reduction stage, the information obtained was filtered and classified based on its relevance to the research objectives. The reduced data was then presented systematically in the form of a narrative that describes the creative process in detail. This narrative helps to illustrate how each creative stage was undertaken by the design team. Finally, at the conclusion stage, the researcher formulates the main findings of this research which are expected to provide a clear picture of the creative process and provide recommendations for improving graphic design strategies in the context of religious organizations, especially in Muhammadiyah. In this study, researchers compared the results of informant interviews with information in relevant documentation using the triangulation method. After the data triangulation process was completed to ensure that the results were consistent and accurate, the data was then processed and presented systematically.

The whole research process aims to make theoretical and practical contributions, by exploring how religious and social values are integrated into the graphic design process. This research is also expected to enrich the literature related to graphic design in the context of religious organizations, as well as provide practical guidance for graphic designers and communication teams in religious or non-profit organizations to be more effective in conveying messages through attractive visual designs that are still in accordance with the religious values espoused.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

Media and Communication Muhammadiyah's central leadership is strategically responsible for developing innovative ideas that suit social media, creating graphic designs suitable for various platforms, and disseminating content through Muhammadiyah's official accounts. As the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, it is undeniable that Muhammadiyah-owned social media is the main channel in the distribution of this material, given its ability to reach a wider and more diverse audience, including the younger generation who are more familiar with digital technology. To ensure that the messages delivered are not only informative, but also visually appealing and in line with Muhammadiyah's identity and relevant on social media, the creative process in the graphic design of digital flyer greeting cards is one way of how Muhammadiyah attracts interaction for audiences that remains relevant to the teachings of Islam. The creative process is a process that involves thinking and processing data with the aim of finding solutions to problems that occur (Safanayong, 2006). In the creative process of making digital flyer greeting card graphic design there are steps including, preparation, incubation, illumination, verification.

Based on the results of interviews, observations and documentation in this study, the existence of a structure in a team is a success in the process of making graphic design that occurs in the Media and Communication Team of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership including the Head of leadership in media and communication of Muhammadiyah, Chief Editor, Content Writer, Content planner, graphic designer, Language Translator, social media publication admin, and data analyzer. In order for the creative process in this graphic design to run smoothly, the team must do several things including collecting ideas, conducting research, executing designs, confirming the results of the design, and finally publishing the results of the design that has been agreed upon with the team. Because Muhammadiyah is a large Islamic organization in Indonesia that has a special image to maintain the good name of the organization, of course, the graphic design made by the Muhammadiyah Media and Communication Team cannot be separated from several aspects, namely those that always prioritize Islamic teachings and Islamic propaganda and certainly do not make meanings that offend ethnicity, race and other religions. Although the Muhammadiyah Media and Communication Team is required to always maintain this positive image, in interviews conducted with graphic designers from the Muhammadiyah Media and Communication team, this design must remain creative but also relevant to the purpose of Islamic propaganda and always prioritize being up to date with what is trending on social media now so that it becomes a special attraction for their target audience so that it is attractive to all groups.

3.2 Discussion

The creative process undertaken by the Muhammadiyah graphic design team reflects a highly structured systematic approach, in line with Wallas' theory that divides the creative process into four stages: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification (Sadler-Smith, 2015). In the preparation stage, the team started the process with intense research on trends relevant to the event or commemoration, as explained by Alnindya Nugrahani, Muhammadiyah's graphic designer. This research focuses on visual trends, viral issues, or social phenomena that can attract the attention of the audience. This is an important step to ensure that the design remains up-to-date and relevant to the current social context.

The incubation stage occurs during brainstorming, where the team collectively brainstorms visual ideas that will be used in the design. This brainstorming involves not only the process of idea generation, but also the integration of various perspectives from the team to ensure that the ideas that emerge are in line with the message to be conveyed. This incubation is crucial in creating space for

the exploration of ideas, in keeping with the collaborative approach that emphasizes the importance of intense interaction within the team to come up with innovative solutions (Sufianty, 2014).

Illumination, or the moment when ideas become clear and start to be realized, comes when the team starts designing sketches and visual concepts. In this case, Alnindya and her team designed the initial illustrations by taking into account the latest viral trends as applied in Muhammadiyah's digital flyers. These viral elements were used as a means to attract greater interaction with audiences on Muhammadiyah's social media, given that viral trends have the ability to trigger strong emotional engagement from audiences, as described by McLuhan in the concept of "extensions of man," where digital media extends the reach of human communication and interaction (Logan, 2010).

The last stage is verification, where the finished design is evaluated and revised through discussions with the team and Muhammadiyah leaders. This revision process ensures that the design is not only visually appealing but also relevant to the Islamic message to be conveyed. This verification is done iteratively until the team gets optimal results, ensuring that the design is ready to be published. This process reflects the importance of feedback and collaboration in every stage of design production, in line with the collaboration theory by Katzenbach and Smith, which emphasizes the importance of task sharing and effective collaboration between team members (Katzenbach & Smith, 2008).



Figure 1. Examples of using viral trend elements on digital flyer greeting cards
“National Batik Day” October 02, 2024 (Source: Lensamu, 2024)

One of the main strengths in the creative process of Muhammadiyah's digital flyer design is the utilization of viral visual trends as design inspiration. The use of viral trends, as explained by Alnindya, the use of viral elements on the National Batik Day digital flyer greeting card such as the example of incorporating well-known or recently discussed footballer figures serves to increase interaction with the audience through the use of visual elements that are popular and widely recognized by the public. This is in line with Oberg's cultural adaptation theory, which states that organizations must adapt to changing social and cultural dynamics in order to remain relevant (Oberg, 2006). By placing viral trends as the main inspiration, Muhammadiyah can increase audience engagement, especially from the younger age group that dominates their social media followers..

The use of this trend is not only done to attract the attention of the audience, but it is also done by paying attention to Islamic values and local culture. As explained by Alnindya, the designs produced always integrate elements of Indonesian culture to reflect local identity in every digital flyer produced. This shows a balance between adaptation to modern trends with a commitment to maintaining Islamic identity and local culture. This is also in line with McLuhan's view which emphasizes that media, although expanding the reach of communication, must still maintain the integrity of the culture and values inherent in the organization (Logan, 2010).

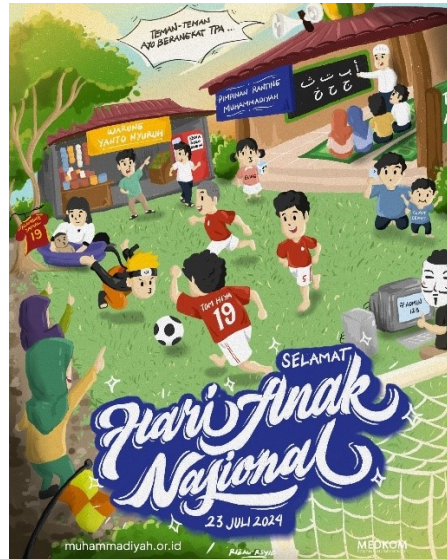


Figure 2. Keeping the Islamic element in the digital flyer greeting card
“National Sports Day” July 23, 2024 (Source: Lensamu, 2024)

Muhammad Abdul Qodar, Chief Editor of Muhammadiyah Media and Communication, also emphasized the importance of creating designs that are in line with modern aesthetics but still carry strong Islamic messages. This reflects that every visual element used in Muhammadiyah digital flyer design is not only for aesthetic purposes, but also as a medium of da'wah adapted to the demands of the times.

The success of this creative process cannot be separated from the close collaboration between divisions within the Muhammadiyah graphic design team. Each division has a clear and specific role in each stage of production, starting from the research team in charge of identifying the latest trends, the design team that executes visual ideas, to the publication team that ensures the distribution of materials on various social media platforms. This clear division of roles allows for a more efficient and directed work process, as described by Katzenbach and Smith in their collaboration theory, where effective collaboration requires a good distribution of tasks (Katzenbach & Smith, 2008).

Brainstorming is one of the most important steps in generating creative ideas. In a brainstorming session, team members from different divisions exchange views and ideas, looking for creative solutions that align with the theme or event at hand. This is very relevant to what Knobens and Oerlemans expressed, which highlights the importance of team interaction to create innovation (Knobens & Oerlemans, 2006). In the context of Muhammadiyah, this brainstorming allows the team to stay up-to-date with rapidly evolving visual trends, while keeping the design relevant to their audience.

One of the main challenges Muhammadiyah's graphic design team faces is keeping designs relevant amidst fast-changing visual trends. In accordance with the diffusion of innovation theory, the team's ability to adapt to new trends is an important key in maintaining the relevance of their designs (Rogers, 2003). Alnindya explained that the team constantly monitors the development of visual trends, using the latest technology, such as Adobe Photoshop, to speed up the design process and adjust to the dynamics happening in social media.

In addition, a revision process involving several stages of evaluation assisted the team in refining the design before publication. This revision process ensures that the design is not only in line with trends but also consistent with the Islamic values at the core of Muhammadiyah's message. Collaboration between divisions is crucial in this stage, allowing every aspect of the design to be reviewed from multiple perspectives to ensure optimal results.

Social media has a very significant role in spreading Muhammadiyah messages through digital flyers. Effective communication requires a deep understanding of the audience (Schram, 1954). In this

case, data from Muhammadiyah's social media dashboard was used to identify audience preferences and measure design effectiveness based on engagement and interaction levels.

The use of social media allows for positive feedback, where feedback from the audience is used to have an important impact on improving future designs. The positive influence of the audience is because it can emphasize to improve the quality of communication between the team for the next design evaluation. The role of social media explains that social media offers a two-way interaction between the organization and the audience, which helps to increase engagement and spread the message more widely and effectively.

Thus, the creative process of Muhammadiyah's graphic design team showed a high ability to adapt to trends, collaborate effectively, and utilize social media as a platform to achieve communication goals. This process succeeded in creating designs that are not only visually appealing but also convey Islamic messages in a relevant and interactive way, especially among young audiences in the digital age.

4. Conclusion

The importance of the creative process in graphic design by the Muhammadiyah Media and Communication Team in maintaining visual relevance on social media while adhering to Islamic values. This process begins with trend research, brainstorming creative ideas, and design verification that ensures consistency between Islamic messages and the latest visual trends. The use of viral elements, such as popular illustrations, is proven to increase audience engagement, especially among the youth. However, the design remains balanced with religious principles and local culture. Collaboration between divisions within the team is instrumental in producing efficient and relevant designs. The success of this strategy relies on the integration of social media technology, visual trends, and Islamic values, allowing Muhammadiyah to continue communicating effectively and modernly in the digital age.

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