

Philanthropic Ads and Social Welfare: How Digital Advertising Promotes Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia

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Abstract: The recent emergence of Islamic philanthropic institutions in Indonesia offer many opportunities for fund raising and donation including zakat, infaq and sodaqoh, as well as solidarity act and humanitarian reliefs towards Muslims hit by disaster or living in an extreme condition. Digital advertising is one of the media used to attract donors so that they are willing to donate some of their wealth to these Islamic Philanthropic institution in the modern era. Islamic philanthropic advertisements is on of the new phenomenon in the advertising world in Indonesia. However, despite operating within the term of Islamic philanthropy, many of the recent ads were observed to not display any message related to Islam, but leaning towards humanitarian act. This paper will analyze the ads made by Islamic philanthropic institutions in attracting philanthropist to engage in the act of donations to see how digital advertising promotes Islamic philanthropy in Indonesia. The analysis was done using Barthes' semiotics approach related to the narrative codes to grasp the meaning behind the ads as well as to see the recurring themes commonly displayed within the ads. The result shows that the advertising promotes philanthropy mission toward social welfare more than promoting Islamic philanthropy as one of the pillar of Islamic faith.

1 INTRODUCTION

Philanthropy is interpreted as a conceptualization of the practice of voluntary giving, voluntary services and voluntary associations to help others in need as expressions of love (Kasdi, 2016). The term philanthropy comes from the Greek words, *philos* which means love and *anthropos* which means human, coined together to refer to the love of humanity (Dwijatmiko, 2009). The term has the meaning that love for humanity in the form of solidarity, sympathy, and empathy does not refer specifically to a particular religion since every core religion teachings always touch the subject of love for fellow human beings.

As one of the five pillars of Islamic faith, Islamic philanthropy in the form of zakat is considered compulsory and important. According to BBC, as a type of worship and self-purification, zakat has its own system and does not refer to the charitable gifts given out of kindness (BBC, 2009). Another form of Islamic philanthropy is sadaqah or alms. According to the Center for Arab American Philanthropy,

sadaqah or alms are more than just a voluntary charity as it holds a high religious value and also religious duty (Center for Arab American Philanthropy, 2014).

Thus, Islamic philanthropy views philanthropy as more than just the love of humanity but also the love of God in related to the act of worship as a religious duty for Muslims. Islamic philanthropy in Indonesia such as qurban, zakat, and alms was promoted by using philanthropic ads to encourage goodwill to engage in charity and donation. Philanthropic institutions having a commitment to support good governance needed some donors to provide donations in making philanthropy a sustainable act. The aspect of good governance such as transparency, accountability, responsibility, and professionalism demand a tangible effort to involve people in becoming a donor. This effort is then carried out through the use of digital advertisement.

The emergence of cityscape and public space in Indonesia enabled by the influence of democratic system has strengthened public religious expression. The public religious expression was faced with modernity and globalism, creating a modernized

Islamic expression in many levels. One of them is in the form of Islamic philanthropic ad. Islamic philanthropic ad is a new phenomenon in the Indonesian advertising sphere that grasp the attention of the community since it shows the adaptation made by the religious expression in the face of modernization. These ads regarding philanthropy are very unique considering that this type of advertisement can be categorized as commercial ads as well as non-commercial advertisements (Dwijatmiko, 2009).

Indonesia has a philanthropic institution that manages zakat, infaq, and alms, namely the Indonesian National Zakat Amil Agency (Badan Amil Zakat Nasional or BAZNAS). BAZNAS is one of the official and the body established by the government based on the Presidential Decree No.8 of 2001 which has the duties and functions of collecting and distributing zakat, infaq, and alms at the national level (Linge, 2015). In addition to BAZNAS, there are many other philanthropic institutions that are incorporated as foundations, associations, community-based, or research-based non-profit institutions.

To attract donors to engage in philanthropy act, these institutions spread their message using, banner, website, social media, and advertising in the form of digital advertising. Digital advertising is one of the media that is easy to be shared and spread around in order to attract donors by utilizing the advancement in the information technology. However, despite operating within the term of Islamic philanthropy, many of the recent ads were observed to not display any message related to Islam, but leaning towards humanitarian act.

This article will analyze the Islamic Philanthropy ads from six institutions, namely Aksi Cepat Tanggap (ACT), BAZNAS, Dompot Dhuafa, Rumah Zakat, LAZISMU, and NU CARE-LAZISNU. The digital advertisements from the philanthropic institutions will then be analyzed by using Roland Barthes's semiotic approach related to the narrative codes. By analyzing the visual appearance, the message delivered as well as the recurring motifs contained within these digital advertisements will be understood. This analysis will bring light on how Islamic philanthropy institutions are using digital advertising to promote Islamic philanthropy in Indonesia.

2 METHODS

This paper uses semiotics methodology to analyze the philanthropic ads, specifically narrative codes proposed by Roland Barthes. Narrative codes are codes that contained stories, sequences, actions, or anti-narratives (Tinarbuko, 2009). The semiotics was also used to analyze visual signs found in philanthropic ads in the form of digital advertisement. Visual semiotics is basically one of the fields of semiotics that specifically has an interest in the investigation of all kinds of meanings conveyed through visual senses (Budiman, 2011).

The six digital ads was compiled from the latest ads featured by six prominent Islamic philanthropic institutions in Indonesia. The six digital ads are then analyzed visually to see the structure forming the ads. This description of the structure of the ads was done in order to observe the narrative codes contained within. After observing the narrative codes, the codes will then be divided into the verbal and the visual codes. The verbal and the visual codes will then be analyzed using semiotics approach related to the narrative codes to grasp the meaning behind the ads as well as to see the recurring themes commonly displayed within the ads.

All narrative codes within the ads, both the verbal and the visual, will be analyzed by using three of the five narrative codes proposed by Barthes: the Semic code, the Symbolic code, and the Cultural code. Tohar, Asaf, Kainan, and Shahar stated that the semic code can be used to identify the recurring motifs or theme while symbolic code and cultural code can be used to reveal the hidden expressions within the narrative (Tohar, Asaf, Kainan, & Rakefet, 2007).

The semic codes will be used to analyze the narrative, specifically related to the setting or object to see the underlying thematic and connotative expression communicated in the ad. The symbolic code analyze the contrasting elements found within the narrative to see the hidden meaning in the ad. The cultural code analyze the expression used in relation to specific identification of a field or culture. The analysis done in the six advertisements emphasizes on the effectiveness of the message delivered and the way it was delivered using visual and verbal narratives to find the commonality between the six ads presented in this paper.

3 DISCUSSION

This paper will analyze six digital advertisements released by six philanthropic institutions: ACT, BAZNAS, Dompot Dhuafa, Rumah Zakat, LAZISMU, and NU CARE-LAZISNU. The six digital advertisements picked are the most recent advertisement to be released, covering a broad range of subject from providing natural disaster relief to encouraging to do qurban or livestock sacrifice.

The discussion will seek to understand the way philanthropic ads are able to arouse and raise awareness to make donations and the motifs contained within the philanthropic ads as well as to shed light on its role in the field of philanthropy in Indonesia.



Figure 1. Digital philanthropic ads by ACT

Figure 1 shows philanthropic ads released by ACT related to the disaster happened in Donggala and Palu regions. Recently Indonesia was rocked by natural disasters such as earthquake and tsunami centered in the Donggala and Palu regions in Central Sulawesi. This incident caused the region to collapse and the victims, both the dead and heavily injured, added to the grief and sadness in facing the aftermath of this natural disaster. ACT as one of the philanthropic institutions in Indonesia quickly moved in to help in terms of providing logistics for the refugees by using digital advertisements delivered through their website in <https://act.id>.

The structure in this advertisement can be divided into three parts: The top, The middle, and the bottom part. The top part consists of a logo showing the word

“Let’s ACT” accompanied by two pictures. The picture on the left shows a surrounding area of a mosque covered in flood while the picture on the right shows a broken building devastated after dealing with earthquake. The middle parts featured the text consisting of a headline and a body text. The bottom part layouted into a footer provides phone numbers that can be contacted and social network addresses that can be accessed along with the logo of ACT Care For Humanity.

The narratives in this ad can be divided into the verbal and visual narratives. The verbal narrative can be seen in the headline “BERSAMA BANTU PALU, MAMUJU & DONGGALA” (Help Palu, Mamuju, & Donggala Together). The body text provides the verbal narrative encouraging people to help those in need in Donggala and Palu who were dealing with the aftermath of a 7.7 richter scale earthquake. The verbal narrative asks the people to help ease the troubling situations by engaging in the area of social solidarity. Meanwhile, the visual narrative can be seen in the use of the image of the mosque and the surrounding environment being submerged in floods on the left side of the ad and the image of the damaged building on the right.

Based on these verbal and visual narratives, we can conclude that the narrative codes in this philanthropic ad heavily advertise the message about social solidarity. The text “ringankan kesusahan seluruh saudara terdampak gempa” (ease the trouble faced by our kin dealing with natural disasters) accompanied by the image of flooded mosque and damaged house solidify this message. The hashtag #BersamaHadapiBencana (face the disaster together) brings the sense of unity and social awareness. The text “salurkan kepedulian anda” (channel your concern) was used to evoke attention to the humanitarian side of all the viewers.



Figure 2. Digital philanthropic ads by BAZNAS

Figure 2 shows philanthropic ads released by BAZNAS, a government institution that conducts the collection and distribution of zakat, infaq, and alms, related to qurban or livestock sacrifice in celebrating the Eid-Al-Adha or the Festival of Sacrifice. Eid-Al-Adha is an annual celebration held in the month of Dzulhijjah by Muslims. This celebration refers to the story of the prophet Abraham and his obedience to Allah to sacrifice his son, Ishmael.

The structure in this advertisement can be divided into three parts: The top, The middle, and the bottom part. The top part consists of a picture showing a middle-aged male carrying a goat over his shoulders and a landscape of rice field. The middle parts featured the text consisting of a headline and a body text featuring the lists of all BAZNAS outlets. The bottom part layouted into a footer provides phone numbers that can be contacted and social network addresses that can be accessed.

The verbal narrative can be seen in the headline "GERAI KURBAN BAZNAS" (BAZNAS qurban outlets) followed by the sub-headline of "Tunaikan kurban, zakat, dan sedekah Anda melalui gerai kurban Baznas" (Do your qurban, zakat, and alms through BAZNAS qurban outlets). The body text which lists the address of BAZNAS outlets that can be contacted encourage people to access the outlets to engage in the philanthropy act as a part of the verbal narrative. Meanwhile, the visual narrative can be seen in the image of a middle-aged male wearing a "Kurban Berdayakan Desa" (qurban empowers rural areas) shirt while carrying a goat in front of the background of a hut and rice field.

Based on these verbal and visual narratives, we can conclude that the narrative codes in this philanthropic ad advertise the message about social welfare and empowerment. The shirt worn by the middle-aged male accompanied by the smiling face and the strength to lift a goat are visual signs that enforce the narrative of empowerment. The wide rice field and bright sky brings the sense of welfare and free from problems.



Figure 3. Digital philanthropic ads by Dompot Dhuafa

Figure 3 shows philanthropic ads released by Dompot Dhuafa, a non-profit organization committed to raise the social dignity of the poor. The ad is related to the act of zakat. As mentioned before, zakat as a part of Islamic philanthropy is one of the five pillars of Islamic faith. It is a compulsory worship for every Muslim in order to express their faith and was outlined in the Quran Surah Al-Baqarah verse 43, "And establish Prayer and give Zakat and bow with those who bow (in worship and obedience)".

The structure in this advertisement can also be divided into three parts, albeit a little different from the previous two advertisements. The top part consists of two logos. The logo on the left side is a logo of Zakatnesia, a program launched by Dompot Dhuafa with its slogan "Berkah untuk Indonesia". The logo on the right side is the logo of Dompot Dhuafa organization. The middle parts featured the slogan of this advertising which is "Berzakat semudah memberi like" and the main illustration featuring a thumbs up icon with a picture of three boys reading a book inside of it. The bottom part layouted into a footer provides bank account numbers and social network addresses that can be accessed.

The verbal narrative can be seen in figure 3 in the headline "Berzakat Semudah Memberi Like" (giving zakat is as easy as giving like). The verbal narrative stressed the easiness of giving zakat. Meanwhile, the visual narrative can be seen from the thumbs up images that refers to the act of liking something in social networks such as facebook. Inside of this thumbs up, there is a picture of three boys reading books and dressed in elementary school uniforms with smiling faces indicating happiness.

Based on these verbal and visual narratives, we can conclude that the narrative codes in this philanthropic ad advertise the message about the social effect of giving zakat. The slogan of Zakatnesia, "Berkah untuk Indonesia" (blessing for Indonesia) and the three boys reading happily means that zakat can help develop the people of Indonesia, preparing for a better future. The smiling faces of the boys shows happiness and reassurance and the act of reading is a sign of a better education.



Figure 4. Digital philanthropic ads by Rumah Zakat

Figure 4 shows philanthropic ads released by Rumah Zakat, a philanthropic institution that manages zakat, infaq, alms, and other social funds through community empowerment programs. The empowerment program is realized through four main clusters, namely Champion Smile (education), Healthy Smile (health), Independent Smile (economic empowerment), and Sustainable Smile (environmental sustainability initiative).

The structure in this advertisement is different from the previous advertisements as it only features two parts, the body and the footer. The body part consists of texts on the left side and illustration on the

right side. The text then can be divided into two, the first featuring headline and body text while the second featuring the slogan and the amount of donation needed. The illustration on the right side featured a smiling girl wearing hijab with hands placed in front of her body, indicating gratitude. The footer provides social network addresses that can be accessed and a word saying "sharing happiness".

The verbal narrative can be seen in figure 4 in the headline "Beasiswa Sekolah Juara" (Scholarship for the champion school). The body text provides the narrative about a smart girl who is a student in one of the champion school located in Medan. She was crying because she neglected her duty to worship by not doing Ashr Prayer because she fell asleep. The narrative emphasized that there are children who has strong religious faith but also excels in studying. The next text "Ayo, bantu wujudkan mimpi anak-anak Indonesia" (let's help the Indonesian children to achieve their dream) brings the narrative to that of social welfare for a better future. The word "sahring happiness" found in the footer contains a verbal narrative of to be happy, you have to make other people happy by the act of sharing. This verbal narrative then was strenthened by the visual narrative in the image of a girl wearing a hijab with a smiling face and hands placed in front of her body.

Based on these verbal and visual narratives, we can conclude that the narrative codes in this philanthropic ad also advertise the message about the social effect of giving zakat. The hand gesture with smiling face is a sign of a gratitude related to the slogan of "let's help the Indonesian children to achieve their dream" and "sharing happiness".



Figure 5. Digital philanthropic ads by LAZISMU

LAZISMU is a national-level zakat institution that is devoted to community empowerment through the productive use of zakat, infaq, alms, and other generous funds from individuals, institutions, and

companies. Founded by Muhammadiyah in 2002, LAZISMU was confirmed by the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia as the National Amil Zakat Institution through Decree No. 457/21 in November 2002.

The structure in this advertisement shown in figure 5 is different from the previous advertisements. The previous ads were structured in a portrait position whereas here, the ad was structured in a landscape position. Here we see the advertisement was divided into two parts, the left and the right part. The left part consists of LAZISMU logo and an illustration of a girl wearing hijab smiling while writing. The right part consists of texts containing headline “Zakat itu gaya hidupku” and the body text explaining about the philanthropic lifestyle. This ad is different from the previous also as it doesn’t contain any social network addresses that can be accessed.

The verbal narrative can be seen in figure 5 in the headline "Zakat itu gaya hidupku" (giving zakat is a part of my lifestyle). The verbal narrative boast the word lifestyle usually found in capitalism world and coined it with an act of giving zakat. Meanwhile, the visual narrative can be seen from the image of a girl sitting in front of the desk. The chair the girl was sitting on is an office chair while the desk is that of an office one. It indicates that this girl is an office worker and having her own means of income. Again, this ad features smiling face indicating happiness.

Based on these verbal and visual narratives, we can conclude that the narrative codes in this philanthropic ad advertise the message about the social duty of giving zakat. The headline accompanied by the body text “Ekspresikan masa mudamu, Salurkan dermamu” (express your youth by engaging in a philanthropy) is a call for every youth who are searching for their own expression in a social setting. The smiling working girl shows happiness and confidence, expressing that she is pleased on her philanthropic act. They used the word “hobby” and “lifestyle” and put the working girl image to be more appealing towards the youth and to introduce Zakat as a part of social expression.



Figure 6. Digital philanthropic ads by NU CARE-LAZISNU

NU CARE-LAZISNU was established in 2004 as a means to help the community, according to the mandate of the 31st NU conference held in Boyolali, Central Java. NU CARE was formally acknowledged by the Decree of the Minister of Religion No. 65/2005 to collect Zakat, Infaq, and Alms to the general public. NU CARE-LAZISNU is a non-profit organization that belongs to the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) association which aims to have the benefit of the welfare of the people by raising social values through Zakat, Infaq, Alms and Endowments funds (ZISWAF).

The structure shown in figure 6 can be divided into two parts, the upper and the lower part. Each part carries a distinct narrative. The upper part consists of NU CARE-LAZISNU logo, A text of “Bantu yatim pelosok desa” and an illustration of a young boy accompanied by an old woman wearing hijab. The bottom part consists of text “untuk bersekolah”, an illustration of three young boys wearing school uniform, and the website that can be accessed.

The narrative in figure 6 is structured differently than the other advertisements. Here, the verbal and visual narrative are linked to each other, featuring two distinct stories based on the ad structure. These two stories are then used to form a main narrative intended by the ad. The upper part featured the text “bantu yatim pelosok desa” (help the fatherless child in rural areas) linked to the image of a young boy facing down, expressing sadness. The absence of male adult figure indicates that this boy is a part of the fatherless children in rural areas. The old woman wearing hijab

was featured with a sad expression to further strengthened the message of a poor life experienced by this fatherless boy. Meanwhile, the lower part featured the text “untuk bersekolah” (to go to school) linked to the image of three boys walking while wearing school uniforms. The visual support the text by giving an image of three boys walking to the school in rural areas.

Based on these verbal and visual narratives, we can conclude that the narrative codes in this philanthropic ad advertise the message about the social effect of philanthropy. The upper part featured a gloomy and sad vibe is contrasted by the lower part featured a happy and gleeful vibe. The contrast help creates a main narrative of philanthropy as a way to improve life to achieve happiness. The word “kita bisa” (we can) as a part of the website name also strengthened the narrative code of having a power to overcome the poor life faced by the fatherless child.

After observing the six narrative codes within these philanthropic ads, we can now see the semic code, symbolic code, and cultural code presented across these six ads. Going through all the narratives, there are many theme and motifs etched inside these six ads such as dream, strength, and community union. However one semic code is persistently shown across the six ads: the social welfare motifs. In figure 1, for example, the visual narrative of damaged building indicates the housing problems. By engaging in Islamic philanthropy, the housing problems will be alleviated, promising a better living condition. This motifs can also be seen in the ads presented in other figures.

In figure 2, social welfare was shown clearly by the use of word “berdayakan desa” (empower rural areas) and the green rice field. In figure 3, social welfare is implied using the smiling three boys reading book indicating happiness. The three boys wearing a school uniform means that they can finally get education and in turn aim for a better living in the future.

In figure 4 and 5, the word “sharing happiness”, “lifestyle”, and the image of the smiling girl formed a semic code of feeling glad of the philanthropy act that leads to a better life. Lastly, figure 6 shows a sad situation that was turned into a happy situation by the act of philanthropy, leading the fatherless child to live a better life. All six ads featured a semic code which conveys about the message of ensuring the people the funds and education needed, so that the long term goal of poverty alleviation can be achieved. In conclusion, the semic code shows us the transitions of Islamic philanthropy from religious duty to social duty.

The symbolic code plays with hidden meaning that is not explicitly present in the narratives by analyzing the contrary. For example in figure 4, The visual narrative emphasized that the girl is feeling grateful while the verbal narrative shows that the girl is feeling sad. This shows the symbolic code that she is now on her way to achieve her dream and she is feeling grateful towards those who helped her by donating their money through Rumah Zakat. This hidden meaning can also be found in other philanthropic ads. The narrative of rural areas and the visual narrative of the strength to lift the goat in figure 2 show the symbolic code of weak versus strong. This symbolic code is related to the socio-economic status symbolized within the advertisement’s narratives. Figure 3 compares the act of giving zakat to the act of giving like while figure 5 compare it to the youth’s lifestyle. It compares the act of religious duty to the daily life act.

This shows a symbolic code of making the religious duty more easy by treating them as a social act done within our daily routine. The most prominent contrast then was shown in figure 6 where the gloomy vibe representing “the poor” in the upper part of the ad is contrasted to the gleeful vibe representing “education” in the lower part of the ad. In conclusion, the symbolic code shows the change from living in poverty to living in adequacy by relegating the act of philanthropy from its position as a religious act to that of a social act.

The cultural code refers to the specific expression related to the underlying theme of the narrative. The expressions found within the six advertisements such as “ease”, “empowers”, and “sharing” can be categorized within the socio-economic jargon. The term “Rural area” and “affected community” along with “better education” conveyed through visual narratives are also a part of this socio-economic jargon. In conclusion, the cultural code shows that these six philanthropic ads from the six Islamic philanthropy institutions are leaning towards embodying the socio-economic purpose rather than the religious purpose.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Philanthropic institutions are presently growing and fastly developing in Indonesia considering that there are still many welfare gaps in Indonesian society. Aside of that, Indonesia also houses many regions that are prone to natural disasters. Philanthropic institutions need to be able to answer these challenges. Thus, it is a challenge for philanthropic

institutions to deliver the message through their advertisement in order to communicate the message clearly and target a specific challenges related to the unique condition in Indonesia.

The six ads advertised through digital advertising discussed from each philanthropic institutions feature more or less the same structure. They feature texts, visuals, and the part which contains the institution's contacts. The texts and the visuals contained within these six advertisements featured different characteristics, but the narrative codes, both the verbal and visual narratives featured in these six digital ads communicate the same message.

The semic code found in these ads shows us the transitions of Islamic philanthropy from religious duty to social duty. The symbolic code shows the change from living in poverty to living in adequacy by relegating the act of philanthropy from its position as a religious act to that of a social act. The cultural code shows that these philanthropic ads are leaning towards embodying the socio-economic purpose rather than the religious purpose. These narrative codes are showing that the digital ads for these six Islamic philanthropy institutions express a shifting of philanthropy act from religious duty towards socio-economic purposes. The analysis shows that the advertising promotes philanthropy mission toward social welfare more than promoting the religious aspect of Islamic philanthropy as one of the pillar of Islamic faith. This phenomenon put the act of Islamic philanthropy in line with the high growth of economic market in Indonesia. This reflects a social changes within the muslim society in Indonesia The mixture of religiosity and socio-economic market in Islamic philanthropy ad creates a shift in Islamic philanthropy by using a trend of social media and marketing in the form of marketization of Islamic philanthropy.

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