



Islamic Media Coverage Strategies in Post-Pandemic Hajj Reporting

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Abstract

The Hajj worship in 2022 is the first post-pandemic time for journalists outside Saudi Arabia to report on the Hajj process. This research discusses Islamic media's coverage strategy, which assigns journalists to Saudi Arabia to cover the Hajj. The research utilized a qualitative method with data sources based on interviews with journalists from Republika media, tv Muhammadiyah (tvMu), and NU Online. The research findings reveal that Indonesian journalists can merely cover the Hajj Media Centre of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. Another limitation is the prohibition of Saudi Arabian authorities from taking pictures with professional cameras, so journalists employ smartphones to take photos and videos. Regarding news themes, Republika highlighted the importance of health protocols for Indonesian pilgrims. At the same time, NU Online and tvMu reported on religious principles addressed to their respective organizations' perspectives. Primary news sources included pilgrimage officers in Saudi Arabia and Indonesian authorities. In particular, tvMu and NU Online correspondingly interviewed news sources from their respective organizations.

Keywords: Hajj reporting, editorial management, Islamic media, Hajj coverage strategy

Introduction

The Hajj pilgrimage has high attention and curiosity from the Indonesian people, so the media are competing to report on this fifth pillar of Islam. (Hilmiyah & Nursafika, 2021). The media started reporting on the Hajj from the Dutch East Indies era until the early 20th century (Fikri & Hardi, 2019; Supratman, 2020). This attention contrasts with the media in Saudi Arabia, the host country of the Hajj, which is less intense in reporting on the Hajj process. Several journalists repeat the news, but there are no new themes to raise in the coverage of Hajj, and the publication date is solely changed. As a result, the Hajj process is slightly information and publication (Alnajrani et al., 2018).

The problem occurs when the Hajj organizing country only reports its superficially, but it becomes valuable information for other countries. Indonesia is the country that sends the most pilgrims to Hajj, so the information is crucial for its citizens. The coverage of Hajj is a sexy topic. People are curious about more than just the worship procession; they are also curious about entertainment news accompanying the Hajj process. As a result, the mass media in Indonesia occasionally report that they exceed the essence of the Hajj itself and present attractive information for readers (Kasman, 2019).

Previous studies on the editorial management of Indonesian media about Hajj reports are studies in the context of local

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media (Hilmiyah & Nursafika, 2021; Prastya & Ningsih, 2021) and the editorial management of Hajj news is in a pandemic (Ningsih & Prastya, 2021). The research results reveal the editorial management of Hajj news in Indonesia; only some media cover Hajj directly in Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, this paper is a media platform that covers Saudi Arabia directly. Another research about Hajj coverage discusses exceeding the essence of Hajj, such as the characteristics of pilgrims when they return to the country (Kasman, 2019) and Hajj coverage techniques by KompasTV media during the 2020 pandemic (Kasman, 2020).

Previous research on the coverage of the Hajj by overseas media, for example, has been conducted by media in Islamic or Muslim-majority countries. The Saudi government offers free visas, accommodation, and transport to journalists outside Saudi Arabia to cover the Hajj. This convenience has caused media from outside Saudi Arabia to be unable to present critical news for Saudi Arabia. An example of this case was revealed by several journalists from Egypt (Miladi & Mellor, 2021). Meanwhile, the media in Morocco tend to present positive news about the Hajj services provided by the Moroccan government to the country's citizens. The King of Morocco still has the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad. Islam is packaged as an important part of national identity. In contrast, Moroccan pilgrims use social media to "counter" mainstream media coverage, criticizing the government's delivery of Hajj services (Al-Ajarma & Buitelaar, 2021).

There are 20 names of journalists who passed the Hajj media center selection in 2022. These names passed the selection in 2020 but were canceled due to the Covid-19

pandemic. The 2022 Hajj is the first chance for Indonesian media to cover it directly in the Holy Land after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Islamic media carries out the mission of da'wah and is managed by applying the rules, ethics, and values of Islamic thought in terms of business and editorial. The content of Islamic media is not merely about religious lectures or quotations of verses and hadith. However, it can also present news about politics, economics, technology, social culture, etc. The mission of da'wah includes glorifying Allah's religion, spreading Islamic teachings and values, and educating Muslims (Aziz, 2018).

Another term used in conjunction with Islamic media is Islamic press. The Islamic press aims to spread Islamic values, voice the aspirations of Muslims, be owned by Muslims, and be implemented in an Islamic manner. The Islamic press has the function of educating the public and as a medium for da'wah that plays a role in creating a society with noble character and building the character of the Indonesian nation. The Islamic press is a forum for voicing Islamic aspirations, fighting for Islamic values, or upholding the interests of religion and Muslims (Arnus, 2018).

When referring to the Press Company data on the Press Council website, only Republika has the status of media, while the names NU Online and TV Muhammadiyah (tvMu) are excluded from the list (<https://dewanpers.or.id/data/perusahaanpers> access date April 29, 2023). When referring to factual conditions, NU Online and TV Muhammadiyah are more accurately referred to as representatives of Islamic media organizations, especially since the announcement of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs regarding the Selection

of Hajj Media Center Members in 2020 also states that there is a quota for journalists from Islamic media organizations .

Generally, Islamic media are published by communities such as Islamic organizations. This coverage will affect the target audience and news themes. Regarding readers, media published by Islamic mass organizations target members or congregations of their organizations only. It makes the news theme more about meeting the organization's needs (Adiba, 2020). Islamic media still plays an important role in the country's mass media scene in general (Tabroni, 2017). However, until now, some Islamic mass organizations are small and well-established in terms of material. Based on their circulation, they are small and not widely circulated in the community.

Since its establishment, *Republika* has positioned itself as a general mass media that serves as a forum and channel for the aspirations of Indonesian Muslims. The choice of news themes and presentations should contain Islamic moral teachings taught by the Prophets (Subarkah & Muksin, 2022). In reporting on issues or events related to Islam that invite pros and cons, *Republika* tries to be objective even though there is a tendency to defend Muslims. For example, in the news about the return of Indonesians who previously joined the ISIS group, *Republika*'s news frame tends to prioritize that the community accepts them back. *Republika* figures from Islamic organizations as sources (Hamidah & Nurhalizah, 2020). News coverage of Islam Nusantara *Republika* tends to present opinions that tend to represent the cons of Islam Nusantara. However, it still tries to balance by presenting interviews supporting Islam Nusantara. This effort to be

balanced is an attempt to maintain the media market (Fahmi, 2018).

TV Muhammadiyah (tvMu) is an extension of Muhammadiyah's ideology in spreading moderate da'wah messages. Educational and religious themes are the most frequently aired themes on tvMu. In order to maintain the news content following the organization's ideology, tvMu recruits Muhammadiyah cadres as managers (Handoko et al., 2022).

On the other hand, NU Online is a news site officially introduced to the general public on July 11, 2003. NU Online presents various news themes such as national, regional, and even international news related to NU and Islam, information about NU leaders' appeals, and NU figures' history. NU Online's mission is to broadcast the da'wah of Ahlusunah Wal Jamaah following the role of the NU organization (Aziz & Fahrudin, 2021).

Editorial management is the flow of news production by mass media. A newsroom is an important unit called "the heart of journalistic activity, the place where all journalistic products are processed" (Trianton, 2016).

The activities in editorial management are news planning, organizing, mobilizing, and monitoring. The activities carried out from each stage are planning the theme of the news to be presented by referring to the vision and mission of the editorial team, rubrication, and news values. It also determines the resources and activities needed to achieve editorial goals, the division of tasks and competencies needed, news coverage activities, preparation and presentation of news, and the evaluation stage of evaluating the news presented to the public (Trianton, 2016).

Other literature states that the stage of news production starts with theme observation and access, a key routine related to news sources. The next stage is for the editorial team to discuss the selection of the theme and the highlighting of certain aspects of the news theme. Next comes the information processing and editing stage, which includes selecting which information will be presented in direct quotes, editing, fact verification, and news presentation (Tandoc and Duffy, 2018 in Westlund & Ekström, 2019).

News themes that are generally raised on Hajj news are evocative and inspirational news for the community, information updates on the number of pilgrims departing to and arriving from the Holy Land, transportation and accommodation for pilgrims, weather conditions, things that light features such as typical dishes in the Holy Land, or unique places (Hajj Media Centre Team, 2014).

Hajj coverage is divided into three times. First, before departure, by presenting coverage of the preparation of lodging/maktab, travel documents, accommodation for prospective pilgrims, preparation of health services for prospective pilgrims, and preparation of working area committees in Mecca, Medina, and Jeddah. Second is the arrival of pilgrims in the Holy Land and the implementation of the Hajj pilgrimage, including health conditions, transportation, especially during wukuf, accommodation, and pilgrimage activities. The third is during the return, with news themes such as the health condition of the congregation, congregants who are separated from the group or sick, congregational luggage, and souvenir centers. As for the coverage strategy, sedentary coverage is accomplished by asking for information from residents (citizen reporters), utilizing congregation

officers in various Maktabas, providing mobile coverage to travel around, and providing special coverage of extraordinary occasions (Subiyantoro, 2011).

The next stage of news production is information distribution, which includes the platforms used to deliver information to the public, including live reports or social media (Westlund & Ekström, 2019). Information distribution refers to the platforms used by the media to deliver news. (Winarto, 2019).

Digital technology impacts journalistic practices, from using digital tools to help journalists cover the news to producing and distributing content on multiple platforms through media convergence, giving rise to new roles such as programmers, citizen reporters, and even algorithm engines. Digital technology also creates a new culture in news production: immediacy, interaction, and participation. Immediacy can exclusively be realized for news with a straight format focusing on facts or current events (Priyonggo & Mohd Adnan, 2021). The development of digital technology has increased the need for skills for journalists. Journalists must be able to write news, record images, edit images, display graphics, and process data (Nurlatifah & Mutmainnah, 2021).

Nowadays, the media should consider delivering news on multiple platforms. Media convergence shows how the media practices multiplatform to reach a wider audience by publishing information through websites and social media (Halim et al., 2018). The fifth stage is an evaluation to measure activities in editorial decisions (Westlund & Ekström, 2018).

This article investigates the editorial management of Hajj reporting in Islamic

media in Indonesia. This research's data source was interviews with three Islamic media, specifically *Republika*, TV Muhammadiyah, and NU Online. The media selection was based on the consideration that the three media platforms are official media partners of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia's Media Centre. Furthermore, the legal decision is based on the letter from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Number 132-01/B.VIII.1/HM.00/V/2022 dated May 12, 2022, concerning the Announcement of Hajj Media Center Members 1443H/2022M.

Research Methods

This research was conducted using qualitative methods. Qualitative research has an empirical character. Empirical character means to build knowledge through observation and experience. Data through observation and experience can be collected using the five human senses (Faulkner & Atkinson, 2024).

Data collection techniques include interviews with journalists who cover the Hajj directly in Saudi Arabia. The interview technique offers many opportunities to apply conversational skills to data collection activities. Academics have long agreed that conversation is more than just a ritualized interaction; it is a site where information exchange occurs (Brummans et al., 2024). Therefore, interviewing is a technique that can generate a large, rich, and diverse data set, which is the vital value of interview data collection techniques (Brummans et al., 2024).

The author determined the sources based on the list of journalists who passed

the selection of the Hajj Media Centre in 2022, which was released by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia through a letter dated May 12, 2022. The next step was for the author to request research permission to conduct interviews with journalists covering Hajj and the person in charge of the Hajj coverage team. The author received confirmation (either through a reply email or when contacting the media about 10 days after the letter was sent) and obtained permission to interview. The interviews took place at the editorial offices of the respective media. The interviews were audio-recorded, lasting between 45 minutes and 60 minutes. The interviewees are as follows:

1. Ahmad Syallaby Ichsan, Editor of *Republika Online*, interview date January 16 2023, at *Republika* editorial office, South Jakarta,
2. Ichsan Marscha, Producer of *tvMuhammadiyah (tvMU)*, interview time 18 January 2023, at *tvMU* editorial office, Central Jakarta),
3. Arina Nurrohmah, Producer of *tvMuhammadiyah (tvMU)*. interview time 18 January 2023, at *tvMU* editorial office, Central Jakarta),
4. Ahmad Mukafi Niam, Business Director of *NU Online*, interview date January 19 2023, at *NU Online* editorial office, Central Jakarta. Note: During the coverage of Hajj in 2022, the informant served as editor-in-chief of *NU Online*.

After the data is obtained, the data analysis process is then carried out. In qualitative research, the data analysis process systematically tracks and organizes field notes that have previously been obtained through interviews, observations, and other materials so that researchers can report the results of their research (Kurniasih et al., 2021).

The data analysis process begins with the author transcribing the interview recordings. Then, the transcripts are categorized into sub-chapters based on the news theme, team formation and work team flow, coverage techniques (use of tools, sources, and constraints), and multiplatform in news presentation.

Results And Discussion

A. News Theme

Themes and types of news are components of news planning. News themes generally conform to journalistic standards and the policies of the editorial board of each media (Trianton, 2016; Westlund and Ekstrom, 2019). In general, the three media covered the theme of the condition of pilgrims in the Holy Land in three working areas, specifically Makkah, Madinah, and the airport, as well as weather conditions and pilgrims' health. The media also presented light news from the Holy Land, such as the profiles of Hajj officers with unique characters, such as students or women, facilities for people with disabilities, and tourism.

Each media has its characteristics in reporting. NU Online and tvMu prioritize news themes relevant to their community members. As Ichsan Marsa (TVMu, 2023) revealed in an interview, the Hajj news they report is a general understanding of the implementation of Hajj, focusing on the core of the Hajj pilgrimage. While at NU Online, Ahmad Mukafi (NU Online, 2023), in his interview, explained that their media raised several opinions related to an issue in Hajj but then chose the strongest opinion based on the corridor of NU opinion in general based on the reference books of NU clerics. In addition,

he also explained that as an organization, NU has values and ideology that will also be a guideline, especially for religious news content.

On the other hand, Republika, which is not affiliated with certain organizations, covers themes such as educating pilgrims about weather and health. Especially for 2022, Republika has prepared a theme for post-pandemic Hajj coverage. Although the rules regarding health protocols are flexible in the Holy Land, Republika still preaches the importance of maintaining health protocols for Indonesian pilgrims.

In general, all media chose an identical theme, such as the condition of the hajj pilgrims before departure and while in Saudi Arabia, including the procedures of the hajj pilgrimage, unique stories of pilgrims, hajj officers, and their return from Saudi Arabia (Prastya & Ningsih, 2021; Subiyantoro, 2011; Hajj Media Centre Team, 2014). There is also a special theme on the importance of maintaining health for pilgrims, considering that the 2022 Hajj is the first time it can be carried out massively after the Covid-19 pandemic. It confirms previous research, which states that Muslim journalists in Indonesia argue that it is important for journalists to support national development and social change through education (Mughtar et al., 2017). This study confirms previous research stating that Indonesian Muslim journalists believe that it is important for journalists to support national development and social change through education (Mughtar et al., 2017) and the principles of Islamic journalism, such as educators (*muaddib*), informers (*musaddid*), reformers (*mujaddid*), unifiers (*muwahid*), and fighters (*mujahid*) (Saragih, 2021).

Republika and tvMu started reporting on Hajj about one month before the departure of Indonesian pilgrims. The news theme is about the situation of the pilgrims at the embarkation, preparation during the pilgrimage, and guidance during worship. Information is presented as news and non-news, such as talk shows or discussions by presenting experts. NU Online gave a different answer, which presents hajj news during the pilgrimage. Informants from NU Online stated that the news follows the development of the situation in the field.

The research findings on the theme of this news show that the Hajj event attracted the attention of the Indonesian people, so the media covered it with various themes (Hilmiyah & Nursafika, 2021). Furthermore, they had reported on the Hajj long before the peak of the Hajj season. This is contrary to the media in Saudi Arabia, the host country of the Hajj, which is less enthusiastic in presenting coverage of the Hajj (Alnajrani et al., 2021).

Republika's news strategy reflects the media's ideology as "a mass media that channels the aspirations of Indonesian Muslims" (Subarkah & Muksin, 2022). To maintain market share, Republika seeks to present news that fulfills the general needs of the Indonesian Muslim community (Fahmi, 2018; Hamidah & Nurhalizah, 2020). Moreover, exclusivity should be avoided (Arnus, 2018).

TVMu and NU Online published different news themes. In addition to covering the current situation in the Hajj pilgrimage, Indonesian government policies regarding pilgrims, stories, events, and unique features from Saudi Arabia. Both media have specific content that aligns with the ideology of their respective organizations, especially topics

related to religious guidance, and sources from their respective organizations.

The informants' statements from NU Online and tvMu exhibit that one of the themes of Hajj news in each media is that religious principles are adjusted to their respective organization's perspectives. NU Online and tvMu informants also explained that media based on Islamic organizations have values, opinions, and obligations to share information and education with their audiences, especially for religious news content.

B. Establishment of a coverage team and workflow

Managing and determining human resources, division of tasks, authority, and responsibility is the organization stage in editorial or news management (Trianton, 2016).

Republika and tvMu give special assignments to producers or editors as the person in charge of Hajj news. During an interview, Arina Nurrohmah (tvMu) explained that an additional producer for tvMu News helps the media with breaking news. She will coordinate with the producer who collects news, then with the production department, master control room, and reporters covering Hajj in the Holy Land. It is accomplished to facilitate the division and organization of work.

Republika conducted another strategy. Achmad Syallaby Ichsan (Republika) explained that Republika prepared two editors for the Hajj journal rubric (alternating with the editor of the Islamic rubric called Khazanah). The Khasanah rubric in Republika will be published during the Hajj season, but the issues published are non-Hajj information. News about Hajj goes into the

Hajj Journal. A week after the completion of the Hajj pilgrimage, the Hajj Journal will be discontinued and updated with the *Khazanah* rubric to accommodate information about the Hajj.

The third media in this study is NU Online. This media divides personnel in the editorial office into three different tasks: reporters who cover news directly, news editors who process news from press releases or other news agencies, and writers who present news or information that is Islamic studies (Ahmad Mukafi Niam, NU Online).

The findings of this study show differences compared to previous research (Prastya & Ningsih, 2021). It is stated that the editorial team in local media did not construct a special team or task force to report on the Hajj, considering that local media could assign reporters to Saudi Arabia every Hajj season.

A challenge in the workflow is the time difference between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, especially for television media with live programs. Arrangements and work patterns are also part of the organizing stage. The time difference between the location of the coverage (Saudi Arabia) and Indonesia is a challenge in reporting the Hajj because it must adjust to the deadline of each media. *Republika's* Informants stated that the coverage results in Saudi Arabia must be sent to the editorial team by 12:00 Saudi Arabia time (or 16:00 Western Indonesian Time). In addition to direct reporting, coordination is also carried out with journalists or contributors in cities outside the Jakarta area.

On the other hand, it explains when coordination is carried out between the editorial team in Indonesia and the reporters covering directly in the Holy Land. The

allotment of Hajj news on tvMu amounts to seven daily news items, whether live reports from the Holy Land or recordings. The news is aired on programs that air at 06:00, 12:00, 15:00, and 21:00. There are also breaking news sessions at 10:00 and 14:00 (Western Indonesian Time).

News about the Hajj also raises information from embarkations in the regions. *Republika* assigns contributors or reporters in the bureau or regional office—meanwhile, tvMu calls "regional reporters" volunteers.

The resource person from NU Online explained the distribution of NU Online offices in several cities, and each has its duties to present news in written form through the website, video shows, or information uploaded on NU Online's official social media. It is explained that NU Online's editorial office in Jakarta is tasked with processing information from Instagram's website. The Semarang area will manage video content and Facebook, and the Rembang area will manage Facebook.

C. News Source

Each media has priority sources, which are primary news sources. Primary news sources are those directly involved with the event and can give their opinions or arguments on a particular event or issue. Primary sources will be interviewed directly by journalists, either by meeting in person or through long-distance communication technology such as telephone or chat. Secondary news sources include reference books, official government releases, and credible websites/internet sources (Tate & Taylor, 2013).

NU Online uses press releases from the Ministry of Religious Affairs for information that is a technical explanation from the government. For sources of pilgrims, NU

Online, through an interview with Ahmad Mukafi Niam (NU Online), explained that it does not limit it to pilgrims and NU pilgrims because it will depend on the moments and issues to be covered.

TVMu chooses sources with priority from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs to gather information about regulations and services provided by the Ministry of Religion. Hajj supervisors from Muhammadiyah are interviewed regarding worship practices by Muhammadiyah and pilgrims. Especially for pilgrims, similar to NU online, tvMu does not limit the sources to be members of Muhammadiyah. Meanwhile, Republika makes the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Hajj officers, and pilgrims priority sources. In particular, Republika makes pilgrims the priority source.

The first secondary source is the coverage material uploaded to the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Hajj Media Centre (MCH) Google Drive. All journalists who are members of the MCH are required to upload raw materials such as photos, videos, or audio from interviews to Google Drive. These materials are free to be accessed by all journalists and used as news sources. For information, the Hajj Media Centre has three working areas, specifically in Makkah, Madinah, and the airport. Journalists can only cover directly in the work area where they are assigned.

In the context of information sources, the priority news sources of the three media are the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Saudi Arabian Hajj authority, pilgrims, and officials who serve Indonesian pilgrims as news sources; this finding is almost the same as the previous literature (Ningsih & Prastya, 2020; Prastya & Ningsih, 2021). In particular, NU Online and TVMu include sources from

their respective organizations, especially for religious guidance and principles news, to disseminate appropriate messages. Although the government is the priority source, the Indonesian media system allows the media to be independent and objective in determining news sources and not necessarily be the government's mouthpiece. Indonesian media covering Hajj news differs from the media practice in Morocco, which has to be the government's mouthpiece (Al-Ajarma & Buitela, 2012). The tvMu and NU Online, as media operated by Islamic organizations, tend to focus on fulfilling the information needs of the organization's members or pilgrims (Adiba, 2020; Fahmi, 2018). NU Online and tvMu aim to spread messages that align with the parent organization's guidance and ideology (Aziz & Fahrudin, 2021; Handoko et al., 2022).

An informant from working in the Medina area explained that the information on the MCH Google Drive is useful as additional information and material for analysis and provides context in reporting events. Journalists who are members of MCH can use the information freely. The time informant explained that the information in the Hajj media center can be used while still using the principle to produce as much content as possible to fulfill the diversity of information in their media.

Republika also uses raw coverage material on the MCH Google Drive to obtain information that occurs outside the work area. In using this material, informants from Republika said it was necessary to change the angle of coverage. It is because the duplicate data will differentiate the news angle from that of other media. In an interview, Achmad Syallaby Ichsan (Republika) also explained

that this MCH information is significantly helpful for them when they are far from the location of the news event.

Further secondary sources that are frequently utilized are the official website of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs press releases, other news agencies, and references. A source from NU Online stated that releases are news sources for highly technical information. A source from tvMu explained that releases are used for confirmed information, while visuals still use pictures from reporters covering the Holy Land. For other media, sources from Republika conveyed the names of news agencies commonly used as secondary sources: Antara, Al Jazeera, Saudi Press Agency, and Saudi Gazette. Meanwhile, tvMU relays the live broadcast of wukuf in Arafat on SaudiTV. The statement regarding reference sources for information related to the history of Hajj and the demands of worship was conveyed by sources by NU Online.

The use of secondary sources in raw coverage from other journalists is one of the differences in this study with previous references, which only mention that one of the sources of secondary sources is processed information published by credible internet source websites such as other news agencies (Tate & Taylor, 2013).

D. Tools and Constraints

Informants from all three media platforms explained that smartphones are the most commonly used tools to cover Hajj from the Holy Land. Local authorities' restrictions on coverage, especially picture-taking, make "professional" tools such as DSLR cameras, tripods, and lighting lamps less used. NU Online also mentioned the use of smartphones.

This media prioritizes information in written form, so it only requires a little audiovisual material. The need for audiovisual material is fulfilled by using shared material on MCH's Google Drive.

Sources from Republika and tvMu explained the restrictions on shooting during coverage in Saudi Arabia because the security authorities in the country are concerned with images, photos, and audiovisuals. The points restrictions on coverage from the Saudi Ministry of Information to take pictures, based on a briefing from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs to Indonesian journalists; broadly speaking, it is not allowed to cover around the haram area, not allowed to take audiovisual images in the area, as well as prohibiting the recording of government buildings, close-ups to the faces of women and children. In addition, the use of smartphone cameras during Hajj coverage is considered safer than recording with professional cameras.

Saudi Arabia facilitates and provides open access for journalists to cover the Hajj. Even so, several restrictions are imposed. Although in this study, the informants did not mention examples of cases of the consequences of such violations, the literature written by Miladi & Mellor (2021) mentioned that there is a risk that the Saudi Arabian government could revoke access and permission to cover the Hajj for journalists who violate these provisions.

This situation poses a challenge, especially for media whose main news presentation is audiovisual. All research informants mentioned that using a smartphone camera during Hajj coverage was safer than recording with a professional camera to get around this restriction. Smartphones are used to take photos and record videos. The use of

smartphones is also faced with the challenge of the air temperature in Saudi Arabia, which, during the coverage of the Hajj in 2022, could reach more than 40 degrees Celsius, making the equipment easily overheat.

Some specific obstacles, such as tvMu, added that the time difference between Saudi Arabia and Indonesia is challenging to coordinate, especially live coverage. In addition, the editorial team's limited Human Resources (HR) is also an obstacle in itself. It is experienced by tvMu to be a challenge regarding human resources regarding time and the physical/performance of reporters and other officers.

The next challenge was determining the location of the coverage because it had to be accomplished with journalists from other media with different news priorities. Meanwhile, the available means of transport are limited. It is a technical obstacle that Hajj news reporters often face in the holy land.

E. Multiplatform in News Presentation

Finding information, compiling, editing, and presenting news fall into the actuating stage (Trianton, 2016). This stage includes the platforms to deliver information to the public, including direct reports or social media (Westlund & Ekström, 2019; Winarto, 2019).

All three media present news on various platforms, such as written news published on websites, videos in live reports and recordings, and information through social media. That means journalists in the Holy Land must send news on various platforms. Informants from Republika explained that the editorial team needed to set a target for the number of news reports from the Holy Land on various platforms. However, Republika has

a special Hajj section published from the first departure of Indonesian pilgrims until a week after the peak of Hajj.

Informants from NU Online stated there was no specific target from the editorial team. NU Online uses material from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' press releases as a source of news about the latest developments in Hajj from the Holy Land. The NU Online editorial team in the office then processes the press release before publishing it on the website.

Informants from tvMu stated that the news target is at least three news items per day during the Hajj season, with most coverage being live reports from the Holy Land. Even so, there are times when journalists who cover directly can send more news than the set target.

All three media present Hajj news multiplatform, where news in writing and photos is displayed on the website, while information material in photos and videos is displayed on social media. Interviewees from NU Online explained that the main source of news is on the website and special content for social media, such as Instagram content about Hajj education, for example, the requirements of Hajj, how many types of tawaf, short Islamic quotes, and others (interview Ahamd Mukafi Niam, NU Online, 2023).

A source from tvMu stated that the main focus of journalists covering the Holy Land directly is audiovisual news because the main focus is on television. Meanwhile, materials in photos, writings, or short videos are processed, uploaded, and coordinated through Google Drive to become appeal or feature content. This content is processed by the editorial team at the head office or the

social media teams on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

Similarly, sources from Republika stated that the main priority is to present information on the media's main platform, specifically writings and photo information. Hajj news is presented in Republika's online media, such as Ihram.co.id, Republika.co.id, harianrepublika.co.id, the printed version of the newspaper (at that time), and social media. Journalists covering the Holy Land send raw news material by writing the results of coverage, photos, and videos, then later process it in the editorial office. The limitations of tools and technology made the presentation of information outside the main platform accomplished by the editorial team in the office.

Previous research only discussed the importance of media convergence for Islamic media (Arnus, 2018) but needed to explain content production techniques or news coverage in media convergence practices. Previous research also should have mentioned the restrictions on coverage from the Saudi Arabian authorities (Kasman, 2019, 2020; Ningsih & Prastya, 2020; Prastya & Ningsih, 2021).

Digital technology impacts journalistic practices, including the emergence of a new culture in news production, specifically freshness, interaction, and participation (Priyonggo & Mohd Adnan, 2021). As stated by the three media objects of this study, they provide special space for light themes and types of information such as features, tips, and brief information about Hajj to be shared through their social media. It is aligned with the context of freshness, interaction, and participation that has become the new culture in journalism nowadays.

The field does not always deliver news on multiplatform. On many occasions, reporters in Saudi Arabia send raw materials such as video footage, photos, or interview transcripts to the editorial office in Indonesia. The team in Indonesia processes, edits, and converts news to other platforms. NU Online shows that some raw content will be sent to the drive and processed by the editorial team at the head office to be posted on their social media accounts, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Media convergence can show how a media company practices the idea of multiplatform to reach a wider audience by publishing information through websites and social media (Halim et al., 2018). It is in contrast to previous literature, which states that one journalist in the field must have a variety of abilities, ranging from writing news, recording, editing images, displaying graphics, and processing data (Nurlatifah & Mutmainnah, 2021). The interviewees' statements demonstrate that field reporters must send materials in various formats and forms, but journalists still do the processing in the editorial office.

Conclusions

In terms of news themes, the three media covered newsworthy events such as the condition of pilgrims in the Holy Land, weather conditions, and pilgrims' health, educational themes such as how to maintain health and Hajj rituals, and Indonesian government policies related to Hajj. The media also presented entertainment news from the Holy Land, such as the profiles of Hajj officers with unique characters, students or women, facilities for people with disabilities, and tourism. Regarding the formation of the Hajj coverage team, Republika and tvMu formed

a special Hajj team at the level of editors or producers of news programs. Meanwhile, NU Online did not construct a special team. The three media generally divide the tasks between journalists covering the Holy Land.

The three media used primary news sources: pilgrims, hajj officers in Saudi Arabia, and the Indonesian government. In particular, tvMu and NU Online also use sources from their respective organizations, especially for themes related to worship guidance. Secondary news sources use raw information uploaded in the Hajj Media Centre cloud or quoting from other news agencies—all three media practice convergence in news coverage and presentation.

In reporting, journalists from the Holy Land send news either in the form of finished news (writing or video) or raw material such as videos or interview results. The editorial team in the office processes it. Journalists in the Holy Land can solely use smartphones as a tool to take photos and videos, as the Saudi Arabian authorities impose several restrictions. News presentation is accomplished on multiple platforms, including writing, pictures, or videos through the website, YouTube, and Instagram.

The limitation of the research is that the results of this study cannot be generalized because the data sources only come from 3 (three) Islamic media that dispatch reporters to cover the Hajj directly to the Holy Land. Several Islamic media platforms in Indonesia have reported on the Hajj but have not covered it directly. In addition, the media covered directly (through the Ministry of Religious Affairs Media Centre) are not the only three Islamic media platforms. Suggestions for future research discuss the reporting strategies of other Islamic media

in the coverage of Hajj or the reporting strategies of Hajj by non-Islamic-based media by focusing on broadcast media such as radio or television, considering that broadcast media require several coverage tools such as professional cameras, microphones, lighting. At the same time, there are restrictions on using coverage tools in the Holy Land.

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