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Daftar Isi

Ethical Conduct Towards Students Implied in Surah Al-Kahf (18:60-82) (A Study of Quraish Shihab's Tafsir Al-Misbah) <i>Hakiman, Noor Alwiyah, Bayu Iskandar</i>	1
TikTok and Hijab: Questioning Islamic Values in Digital Sphere <i>Riza Adrian Soedardi</i>	16
A Study on Moslem Behavior Toward Khutbat Al-Jum'a <i>Barotun Mabaroh</i>	24
Studi Islam untuk Kemanusiaan: Pendekatan Sosiologis <i>Miftahuddin</i>	35
Sengketa Harta Waris: Tinjauan Perbandingan Hukum Waris Berdasarkan Naskah <i>Hukum Waris</i> <i>Nurfitri Okinawa</i>	45
Remoderasi Islam Melalui Reinterpretasi Al-Qur'an <i>Agus Wedi</i>	58



TikTok and Hijab: Questioning Islamic Values in Digital Sphere

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Abstract

TikTok as a new social media provides many features for users to self-generate content expressively. In its platform, most of users producing dancing content excessively and some of the users are women who wear hijab. This article will examine the concept of hijab and hijab women in digital sphere like TikTok. The method of this article utilizes qualitative and it also take library research for looking some theories of hijab and digital sphere phenomena. The result shows that many Muslim scholars consider that dancing is allowed in four condition, which are no alcohol, no gender mix, no effeminate moves, and not to do it excessively. By those condition, this article invites Muslim scholars to question the phenomena on digital sphere.

Abstrak

TikTok sebagai media sosial baru menyediakan banyak fitur bagi pengguna untuk menghasilkan konten sendiri secara ekspresif. Dalam platformnya, sebagian besar penggunanya memproduksi konten menari secara berlebihan dan sebagian dari penggunanya adalah wanita berhijab. Artikel ini akan membahas tentang konsep hijab dan wanita berhijab di ranah digital seperti TikTok. Metode penulisan artikel ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan juga studi pustaka untuk mencari beberapa teori tentang fenomena hijab dan ranah digital. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa banyak cendekiawan Muslim yang menganggap bahwa menari diperbolehkan dalam empat syarat, yaitu tanpa alkohol, tidak ada campuran gender, tidak ada gerakan benci, dan tidak boleh berlebihan. Dengan kondisi tersebut, tulisan ini mengajak para ulama mempertanyakan fenomena di ranah digital.

Keywords: tiktok; hijab; islamic studies; digital phenomena

Introduction

Social media nowadays is being a part of human needs, either for communication or gaining existence. The development of social media itself goes through many stages. HootSuite, a company which presents content management of social media, compiled some of the most pivotal moment in social media history (Samur, 2018).

It began sixdegrees.com as the first social media site in 1997 and provided users to set up a profile page, create lists of connections, and send messages within networks. Later, amihotornot.com invited users to submit photos of themselves and others could rate their attractiveness. Some people believe that amihotornot.com influenced the creator Facebook and Youtube.

The third moment of social media history is Friendster. It was originally going to be a dating site and users could create a profile and message friends of lists. Myspace, then, was become popular after Friendster collapse. In 2006, Twitter and LinkedIn were becoming popular social media. In 2007, Youtube and Tumblr gained their popularity among users. In 2009, there were Weibo, FarmVille, Forsquare, and Grindr. In 2010, Instagram and Pinterest launched premiere and became popular among users for showing users existence. In 2012, Facebook celebrated one billion users. In 2016, TikTok released worldwide for the first time.

Adobe Spark as a product of Adobe family launched press release about seven top social media site in 2020. Adobe Spark declared that TikTok is one of seven top social media site that brand must invest into it (Robinson, 2020). It indicates that TikTok has many users worldwide, so the brand must aware to bring it as a channel distribution. TikTok users has reached one billion users since its released, and it grows 315 million for three months in global pandemic (Annur, 2020).

By the fact, TikTok popularity increases rapidly because it provides users to expose their existence and performance. Most of users installing TikTok for entertaining themselves, although some of them use it for business purposes. Yet, this article does not only present TikTok history and achievement. The purpose of this article will be examining TikTok phenomena among users, especially moslem women who wear hijab.

As Moslem knows that hijab is a part of Islamic tenet, so many women cover their head by hijab because women hair is a genital for some reasons. In Islamic tenets, women genitals are not only about sexual body but also their behavior. Therefore, Islam prompts women to take care of their behavior. On contrary, women who wear hijab are actively exposed their feeling by singing, dancing, and acting in TikTok even though they wear hijab.

This article attempts to examine the phenomena of women wearing hijab in TikTok because most of their activities exposing their body and soul. Some of researches held capturing phenomena of hijab among women. Yulikhah (2017) elaborated that hijab is not only about spirituality but also for lifestyle purpose. There is also research that elaborating hijab meaning from students of university. It explained that there are three reasons of wearing hijab among collage, for theological motives, psychological motives, and fashion motives (Ahmadi & Yohana, 2007). Newly research of hijab derives from research experiment of visual impact on drawn from television news about woman accused of consorting with terrorist group elaborated that hijab was also a part of political identity and to have impact on news judgment (Connolly-Ahern et al., 2019).

The previous researches show that many researchers have been taken research for hijab phenomena. However, this article takes a research of hijab phenomena in TikTok because it

is not only about motives of persons who wear hijab, but also it relates to Islamic values in digital sphere that is well-known as *borderless*. To capture Islamic values in digital sphere, it will utilize qualitative. This approach will question phenomena TikTok and hijab users in qualitative ways which are dealing with objective and dynamic result (Creswell, 1994).

The Journey of TikTok in Indonesia

TikTok is a social media that has millions of users around the world. Historically, Tik Tok was created by Zhang Yiming in September 2016. It allows users creating video creatively with backsong and filter option. Basically, TikTok is social media for embracing users to create short video easily and its idea derives from previous apps named Douyin.

In fact, Yiming, who is a founder of TikTok, explained that first stage of TikTok as social media had reached 500 million downloads either in AppStore or Playstore. Under ByteDance corporation, Yiming only hires eight persons for establishing TikTok for 200 days. However, Yiming and eight teams have been successfully growing the apps and earning much money on it (Anggraini, 2018).

Senior strategist of Wearesocial, reports that TikTok lauched the app on time. She also elaborates that Instagram turned everyone into a photographer, TikTok wants to turn everyone into a videographer (Wharfe, 2019). So, TikTok provides users create short video with music background and filters option easily. TikTok, thus, grew in popularity when Kylie Jenner used it for business endeavors.

Other social media experts put testimony for TikTok such a platform perspective. Many users use it for a larger strategy toward promoting positivity and fighting these issues. It seems to be more of a due diligence effort than something that is going to curb any creative thingking. In cultural perspective, TikTok has provided a space for people to be imperfect online and be themselves (Dennis, 2020).

Moreover, many marketers recommend TikTok as a potential social media in the future. TikTok released demography data of users that 60% of users TikTok globally are Z Generation and some contries, which are China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Uni Emirate Arab, are dominated by millennials generation. Marketers claim that brand must be tapped into TikTok for reaching the consuments (Dubras, 2020).

In Indonesia, TikTok has a million users. Even though, TikTok was ever banned by Ministry of Communication and Informatics in middle of 2018. The government claimed that TikTok brought negative attitude for adolescent in Indonesia. Director of Application and Informatics of Ministry of Communication and Informatics declared that TikTok presented pornography, religious harassment, and violation contents (BBC, 2018).

At that time, most of Indonesian claimed that TikTok as a foolish social media app. There was campaign for forcing government to remove TikTok as a social media in Indonesia. Moreover, Play Store users were familiar with TikTok as stupid application. They would find out TikTok if they typed *aplikasi goblok* in search engine of Play Store. That was a big drama of TikTok in Indonesia.

However, one of TikTok artist, Bowo Alpenliebe, had been bullying victim from social media users in Indonesia. I assume that most social media users in Indonesia was to have fully hateful with TikTok and Bowo Alpenliebe at that time. They thought that Bowo Alpenliebe was over acting in TikTok instead of considering as TikTok celebrity. Because of many hateful social media users to Bowo Alpenliebe, TikTok developed their system to restrict Bowo Alpenliebe in TikTok till now.

Nowadays, TikTok becomes popular social media used by Indonesian. In previous moment, TikTok was only used by persons who wanted exists. Recently, TikTok is commonly used by anybody either celebrities, businessman, or politicians. The existence of TikTok as popular social media is influenced by global pandemic. When World Health Organization (WHO) declares that covid-19 spreads rapidly around the world, they suggest every country to stop this virus by working and studying at home.

For those reasons, government of Indonesia takes several policies for society which are lockdown for some regions, working from home, and studying from home. These phenomena lead society spending time in their house. And, TikTok provides entertaining features in its apps. Users are able to create short video content easily to express their feeling. Sometimes, users of TikTok, who are businessman, create content about their business such as branding their company, promoting their values, and selling their products.

Other users of TikTok, who are doctor, create several tips for healthy life and hygiene behavior. They optimize TikTok not only for gaining entertainment but also for sharing to each other. In this case, TikTok brings their values preposition as social media which is suitable for current condition.

Meanwhile, users TikTok are not only person who bring positive values but there some users still create inappropriate content in their account. Some TikTok users utilize its app in search of popularity with negative contents. For instances, there are contents consist of pornography, harassment, and bullying. Even though most of users put negative comments on their content but it is useful for gaining popularity of the creators.

For the reason, this article will not examine the positive or negative content on TikTok that derives from the creators. I assume that positive and negative content depend on the side of human perspectives. In this section, the journey of TikTok in Indonesia is only elaborating the phenomena of TikTok during the year. It is a bridging for questioning of TikTok users who are wearing hijab and doing sexual rocking.

Hijab, Lifestyle, Dance, and Erotic

Historically, hijab's verses revealed after second decade of emerging of Islam in Madinah. At first, it was obligatory for Prophet's family (verses of Al-Ahzab 32-53) and then to all the faithful and Muslim ladies (verses of Al-Ahzab 59 and Noor 30-31) and it has been used by some Arab tribes. Increasing number of bondwomen decreased the men's zeal and it effected the men were suspected to women and avoided to trust them. In the end of this

historical story, men used to keep women at home and close the door and window to prevent them to go out (Zaydan, 1888).

On progress of women's hijab in Indonesia is quite different with other nations. The first obligatory wearing hijab was for prophet's family. And, prophet Muhammad (SAW) has repeatedly said in his advises that luxury should not get into his statement. There was not unlawful design for hijab but if it was for pride and showing off was not allowed. So, there are many design of hijab around the world. In Indonesia, hijab is regarding to head coverage. And, it becomes popular in year 1980 in Indonesia. In recent centuries, western colonialist with internal tyrant mercenaries have culturally changed Islamic countries. It was in line with contriving for political domination by cultural penetration, economic colonialism by issuing culture of modernism and consumerism (Sadatmoosavi, 2011).

Further progress of women's hijab in Indonesia replace recognition that hijab is not only for obligatory as a Muslim but it is beyond that religion. In modern Muslim perspectives, marketing studies divided Muslim into four sides which are apathies, rationalist, conformist, and universalist. Apathies side is Muslim who have low adherence to religion; rationalist side is open-minded Muslim who always puts a critic towards anything which happen to religion phenomena; conformist side is Muslim who always obey worship and tends to be a conservative Muslim; and universalist side is knowledgeable Muslim who always understanding and implicating Islamic values in their lives (Yuswohady, 2015).

Based on the classification of Muslim perspectives, hijab revolution emerged in Indonesian. The end of hijab revolution brought hijab was not only for obligatory cloth but also for becoming fashionable lifestyle. Gallup, which is an organization for global analytic and advise firm, explained that Indonesia became top ten religious nation because 99% of Indonesia recognized that religion is important for their life (Crabtree, 2010).

In digital era, hijab's style becomes more variative because many digital sources provides tutorial wearing hijab easily and trendy. Many celebrities invite audience of Indonesian to wear hijab in their social media platform. This phenomena also implied to digital marketplace which sell hijab for cheaper price rather than offline shop. The lists of e-commerce hijab which are affected by popularity of hijab lifestyle such as hijup.com, elxattaonline.net, elevania.co.id, and irnalaperle.com.

Moreover, there are hijab community well-known as *hijaber* among Indonesian. Popular hijab community that emerged in Indonesian are hijaberscommunity.blogspot.com, Komunitas Hijab Style Indonesia, and Komunitas Hijab Syar'i (Yuswohady, 2015). This phenomena of hijab communities lead women who wear hijab going further for expressing their style. Some of them convince that hijab is not barrier to self-expression.

I assume that hijab is recognizing as not barrier to self-expression lead women easily express themselves on their social media. One of phenomena which will be discussed in this article is about TikTok phenomena among *hijaber*. TikTok as a new social media becomes popular among Indonesian because it provides features for self-expression such as dancing, singing, editing, etc. In search of TikTok and Hijab, questioning Islamic values in digital sphere are answered in previous elaboration about TikTok and Hijab.

Firstly, as if we talk about hijab as obligatory prophet's family and as an Islamic values, verses in Holy Quran commands wearing hijab to women have purposes for protect themselves. We know that prophet Muhammad (SAW) recommended women wearing hijab but to not luxury even though there was unlawful design. The main point of wearing hijab is to self-protection and to decrease men's zeal.

Secondly, concept of hijab is not barrier to self-expression comes from hijab celebrity statements. By the reasons, it is such self-understanding as a person who wear hijab as a cloth. None of ulama explanation about hijab and self-expression indicates that some of *hijaber* declare to gain freedom for themselves. Yuswohady (2015) coined that *hijaber* is actively communicating to support each other in several discourses. The community is a part of modernism phenomena and it represents that hijab is not only for exclusive communities but also for inclusive social life. Therefore, they also actively discuss each other both offline and online to catch up with religiosity issues or Muslim fashion.

Third, there is no direct relation between hijab and TikTok as social media. Hijab is a part of cloth for women and TikTok is a social media which becoming popular recently. The connection of hijab and TikTok is the users. TikTok provides user-generate to create contents with easily editing and posting. All the same way, most of contents TikTok provides dancing and self-expression without barrier. So, does the women dancing on social media while they wear hijab is a part of Muslim obligaroty? I assume that the phenomena of women wearing hijab on TikTok will be debateable among Muslim's perspectives.

Fourth, dance and eroticism in TikTok is the main question for Islamic values among Muslim. There are two concepts about dancing in Islam. Washington Post released the news about questioning dancing in Islam with the tittle of *Are Muslim are allowed to dance? Depend you ask*. The Holy Quran never mentions dancing as an commend or forbid but Muslim scholars examine dancing in the value of Islam. Even though there are scholars who forbid dancing but there is a long tradition of dancing in Muslim culture. A majority scholars permit dancing in several conditions which are no alcohol, no gender mixing, no effeminate moves, and do not do it excessively (Sacirbey, 2012).

Meanwhile, eroticism is depicted as psychological understanding of human mind. It follows the way humans experience sexuality as a self-sufficient mental activity. Eroticness is also considered a central factor in the process of human being that differentiates human species to others. So, the concept of eroticness itself can be define into different approaches depending on each personality. In other words, something can be called as erotic action and it is able to not erotic.

By those reasons, dancing on TikTok can be forbidden for Muslim if they break one of four condition. We can make sure if women hijab dancing on TikTok are not drinking alcohol while dancing but we are able to not sure that they are no gender mixing, no effeminate moves, and not excessively dancing. Meanwhile, eroticness itself is depicted as psychological understanding of human mind that are to have differentiation each other. In other words, some of women hijab dancing on TikTok have potentially erotic for someone. Instead, most of dancing on TikTok has been doing excessively for self-expression. Some models of dance

also allow mixing gender as a group dance. In this case, Muslim who dances in gender mixing or dancing excessively are not allowed.

Conclusion

Hijab as a part of obligatory for Muslim women in its first appearance has developed understanding. As the Muslim cloth for veiling women body, hijab becomes modern lifestyle among women recently. Many marketers claim hijab brings economic issue that elevate production to create variant products of Muslim. The new concept of understanding hijab is a recognition that wearing hijab is not barrier to self-expression, so hijab lifestyle increases rapidly afterward.

The best practice of new concept that hijab is not a barrier can be seen in many social media platforms. One of social media platform which is provides *hijabers* doing self-expression is in TikTok. Many hijab women as Tiktok users produce dancing contents on their personal account to reach audiences' like. Meanwhile, Muslim scholars considers that dancing is not allowed if breaking four condition which are drunk, dance with another gender, dance in effeminate moves, and dancing excessively to show off theirselve. The basic reason of the four condition is to prevent women triggered men eroticism although eroticism itself comes up from personal psychological condition.

In other words, dancing and hijab in the phenomena of TikTok needs to be questioned further by Muslim scholar. In digital sphere, most of social media users want to self-expression in their personal account. It can lead breaking the Islamic values among Muslim if there is no particular guidance for Muslim using social media. Moreover, the phenomena women hijab who consider the headcover is not a barrier to self-expression can be misunderstood by most of Muslim who do not have sufficient knowledge.

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