

UTILIZATION OF INSTAGRAM AS INFORMATION MEDIA IN SUPPORTING THE ACTIVITIES OF IBNU AQIL ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL MEDAN

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of Instagram by the Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School in Medan (Pondok Pesantren Tahfiz Ibnu Aqil Medan). Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with the school's head, admin/media team, guardians of students, and students. Observations were made of the school's use of Instagram on the @ponpesibnuqil account. Documentation included screenshots of posts and literature related to the study. The results showed that the Instagram account, with 2,062 followers, effectively disseminates information about the school's latest programs, activities, and information. The content includes documentation of activities, student achievements, announcements, and creative videos. The admin and media team, including students and educators, manage the content creation process. Instagram not only improves communication and interaction with the public or followers but also promotes Islamic boarding schools, builds personal branding, and collaborates with other institutions. In conclusion, Instagram's use as an information media by the school is effective in supporting various activities and achieving informative goals.

INTRODUCTION

Information technology has developed very rapidly. This rapid development has made the internet the main information sharing and communication tool that is in great demand by the public. The development of internet usage has become even more rapid after the internet began to be accessible through cellular phones or smartphones. Because of the development of information and communication technology, it is also the background of the emergence of social

media which is now inseparable from the activities or things done by the community.

Currently, social media plays an important role in society by helping to do various things, such as sharing information and finding information more easily, quickly and effectively. Social media is now widely used by various organizations, companies, governments, and educational institutions for various communication-related purposes. Everyone uses social media as a medium of communication and information exchange because of its many

advantages. Therefore, social media is increasingly used by the community, both adults, children, and even parents and social media has now become a necessity for society in general. There are also many kinds of social media, ranging from Instagram, X (Twitter), Facebook and various other social media.

Today's society cannot be separated from using the internet to communicate. Social media is an online media that users use to communicate and interact with each other. With social media, all information can be obtained easily (Rahmayanti & Fauzi, 2021). Everyone strives to obtain information as quickly as possible because they need it to support their activities. Social media emerged along with the development of the internet and information technology. Social media is a medium that allows everyone to interact, communicate, socialize, and exchange information without being limited by space and time (Fitriani, 2017).

One of the fastest and fastest growing means of modern communication is social media. Social media is rapidly evolving in various classifications and types in response to the needs of the global community. Given the background of today's modernity, social media has become a necessity in society. Social media can help people with various needs. Aspects of communication, self-expression, education, entertainment, and health (Rahmayanti & Fauzi, 2021). According to Nasrullah, social media can be used as a platform to publish user profiles, activities, and opinions as well as a means for people to interact and communicate on online social networks (Minin et al., 2021).

Instagram is a widely used social media platform. Since its introduction in early 2024, Instagram has become a popular social media platform among Indonesians. According to the Datareportal.com survey, Instagram users in Indonesia reached 100.9 million users which is equivalent to 36.2% of the 278.7 million people in Indonesia, this figure

shows that almost half of Indonesia's population uses Instagram social media. So it is very feasible if Instagram is used by organizations, corporations, government or educational institutions in various interests.

The utilization of social media, especially Instagram by a company or institution is considered very important. This is because the use of social media is one approach for an organization or other institution to disseminate positive information, and can promote related programs and activities as well as the performance of an organization or institution. So that it can support activities and support the formation of good perceptions and opinions among the public.

In this case in Medan City there are more than 15 boarding school educational institutions and 9 of them have used social media. Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan is one of the most massive and active social media users. As an educational institution that takes advantage of the various benefits of using Instagram social media, through its Instagram account, @ponpesibnuaqil, which has 2,062 followers and will continue to grow. The account is used to disseminate various information to its followers and the general public regarding various activities, information, and interesting content related to Islamic boarding schools.

This research has the purpose of revealing how the utilization of Instagram social media as information media applied by Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan, an innovative approach in islamic boarding school education. In the era of digitalization, Instagram, which is usually used to share photos and videos, is effectively used to disseminate educational information and support boarding school activities. This study also describes the collaborative process of content creation and management by the admin, media team, students, and educators, starting from the idea, creation, editing, to the selection of appropriate uploads by the boarding school leadership. The findings show the potential

of social media in supporting communication, promotion, branding, and collaboration.

This research uses Pierre Levy's New Media Theory, which provides an explanation of media development. New media involves combining various technological advances to create unity. Social media is one example of convergence that falls into the category of technology. In his book *The New Media Reader*, Lev Manovich (2003) defines that new media is a renewal of the information dissemination model through the use of technology such as software (Lailiyah, 2023). Since the main focus of this article is new media facilitated by the internet, especially Instagram social media, new media theory is relevant to this research. By looking at how Instagram is utilized as a means of information by Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan to convey information which then supports activities in the boarding school so that it provides various benefits or good outputs for the boarding school.

Research on the utilization of social media as information media has become an interesting topic and has been widely studied, some studies are also related to the field of education and so on. So that it can be a reference in this research, including the following:

First, *Instagram Social Media as Educational Information Media*, a journal article published in 2020 and written by Dian Nurvita Sari and Abdul Basit. This research combines a phenomenological study approach with qualitative methodology. Followers of the Instagram account @parentalk.id became the subject of this research. This research discusses the phenomenon of using social media as a medium for parenting education among young mothers, showing a shift from previous parental experiences to online platforms as technology and the internet progress. According to the results of the study, the @parentalk.id account educates its users on how to care for children. This gets a response in the form of action,

cognition, and affection from a number of followers of the account (D. N. Sari & Basit, 2020).

Second, *Utilization of Instagram as Information Media of PT Sumber Alfaria Trijaya Tbk* (Descriptive Analysis of @alfamartgemabudaya Account) is a journal article published in 2023 by Navyani Ainul Husnah et al. which describes the utilization of the Instagram social media account @alfamartgemabudaya by PT Sumber Alfaria Trijaya Tbk as a source of information. Based on the results of the study, it can be said that Instagram @alfamartgemabudaya users have utilized social media to disseminate information well. This can be seen from the four conditions of media richness theory, but it still needs to be improved so that it can continue to develop and be even better in the future (Husnah et al., 2020).

Third, a journal article by Alfira Damayanti et al in 2023 entitled *Utilization of Social Media as Information and Publication Media* (Qualitative Descriptive Study on Instagram Account @rumahkimkotatangerang). The results showed that Instagram Rumah KIM Kota Tangerang utilizes platform features to disseminate information as widely as possible based on factual information. However, in this case, there are several indicators that are still considered lacking, including the level of consistency of uploaded content and some designs that are a little repetitive. The following obstacles were encountered, namely public interest, design, and content (Damayanti et al., 2023).

Fourth, a 2019 scientific journal article entitled *Analysis of Social Media Utilization in Supporting the Learning Process of Students of SMAN 1 Makassar* written by Waode Sriwahyuni R. et al. The purpose of this research is to find out the reasons students use certain social media platforms and how they can be used to enhance the learning experience. Qualitative descriptive method was used in this research. The results show that there

are nine social media platforms that can be divided into two groups: Line, which serves as the main source of information, and Instagram, WhatsApp, Youtube, and other platforms, which serve as additional sources to assist the learning process (Waode et al., 2019).

METHOD

The method used in this research is qualitative of the field research type. Qualitative research focuses on the opinions and viewpoints shared by informants. Usually the questions asked in qualitative research are broad and general before becoming more specific (Cantik, 2022). The purpose is to describe the facts about the utilization of Instagram social media @ponpesibnuaqil as an information medium in supporting activities related to the boarding school.

The data were collected through interviews, observation and documentation. The informants of this research are the Head of Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School, Admin and Media Team as the manager of the @ponpesibnuaqil Instagram account as well as the student and student parents. The observation technique is carried out by observing the utilization of the Instagram social media account @ponpesibnuaqil in utilizing the features used in uploading information and content.

This research utilized archives of specific research-related documents, recorded interview responses, and documentary sources. In this research, documentation serves as supporting data (Cantik, 2022). Documentation is in the form of screenshots of @ponpesibnuaqil Instagram posts, besides that, other references and literature relevant to the research focus are also used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, in-depth observations were made on the Islamic boarding school's Instagram account and the research sources were given prepared questions or interview guidelines before the interview was

conducted, in order to obtain appropriate research results.

Instagram has developed into one of the most popular and effective social media platforms as an information medium because the effort to convey information through the Instagram application are quite simple because this application only displays images and videos with a certain duration, given space to write and comment for people who become managers and followers (Y. Sari & Handayani, 2021). The use of Instagram by various groups, including organizations, corporations, government, and educational institutions, shows how important this platform is in disseminating information.

At Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan, Instagram has been used since its establishment in 2018 and is used to support Islamic boarding activities by sharing information about programs, activities, and current news relevant to their audience. The Instagram account @ponpesibnuaqil is one of the main means to communicate various information or in this case it can also be called its social media content. Social media content is anything uploaded on social media that has value or in another sense there is information conveyed. Content can be in the form of images, audio files, or videos (Santoso et al., 2017). The information shared through Instagram uploads by Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan in disseminating information to the public and especially its followers is the content in the @ponpesibnuaqil account.

In the process of utilizing Instagram, content is uploaded through Instagram features such as the 1) Feeds is features that can be used to share photos or videos that equipped with like, comment, hashtags, and captions. Caption is a text description of the uploaded content; 2) Stories is Instagram stories is a feature that allows users to take photos, add effects and layers and add them to their add them to their Instagram stories feed. Images uploaded to a user's story have an expire after 24 hours;

3) Highlights, Allows users to summarize the results of Instagram stories according to the categories created and does not disappear even if more than 24 hours; 4) Reels is one of the features on Instagram that has a certain role or function as a means of expressing yourself through making creative and innovative videos using transitions so that the videos made will look interesting.

So that the uploaded content becomes diverse, ranging from those related to the daily activities of students, academic achievements, teaching videos, informative infographics, all of which are arranged with the aim of providing interesting information and also providing a clear picture of life in Islamic boarding school. So, Instagram provides a flexible and comprehensive platform for various types of content that can support communication and information purposes. Here is the initial look of the @ponpesibnuaqil account on Instagram:



Figure 1. Profile of @ponpesibnuaqil Account on Instagram

Every content uploaded to social media platforms such as Instagram has an explicit (direct) meaning. Therefore, in order to attract audiences to see and read it, the uploaded content must be able to be communicated well and clearly. (Haidar & Martadi, 2021)). The Instagram account @ponpesibnuaqil presents a variety of information that can be categorized into several types of uploads with concise

explanations, including information about academic and extracurricular activities related to Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan and other educational information.

The picture above shows the account profile of @ponpesibnuaqil. There is a description of useful account information related to the islamic boarding school and also various content that has been uploaded by the account through the features previously described.

There are several steps that need to be completed before content is posted, namely determining content ideas and deciding which information should be conveyed immediately to the public and which information is worth presenting.

The content creation process is carried out by the admin and media team as managers, which sometimes also involves students and educators depending on the type of content. Then after content creation, it is continued with editing through editing applications such as Canva, Lightroom and Adobe Premier. After that, the process of determining whether or not information uploads are worthy of information is usually carried out by the Islamic boarding leadership, after which the content is uploaded to the @ponpesibnuaqil Instagram account through its features. Ensuring that the uploaded content is good and correct in all aspects of both the caption and the content is checked a second time by the admin, it is all done in order to minimize errors and avoid unwanted things in the future.

The content or posts uploaded by the @ponpesibnuaqil account displays the types of discussions as discussed earlier, as follows:

1. Documentation of Islamic Boarding School Activities and Events

Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School provides content related to uploads that convey information about various documentation of academic and non-academic boarding school activities, both activities that have been carried out or will be carried out. Uploaded activities and

events include student activities as well as activities of staff, teachers, ustadz and others. The uploads are shared in the form of visual formats, namely photos and videos. Examples of Islamic boarding school activities and events shared on the @ponpesibnuaqil account are Teaching and Learning, Extracurricular, Muhadasah, Memorizing the Qur'an, Tasmi' Qur'an, Munaqosya Session, Grand Graduation and others as the example shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Posts of Teaching and Learning Activities and Emorizing the Qur'an

The image above is an example of content as documentation of activities uploaded through feeds and stories. The results of this documentation can provide a complete picture of life in the Islamic boarding school so as to attract prospective students, this can also be used as a digital archive that facilitates the review of activities in the future.

2. Appreciation and Achievement of Students

This post relates to information about the achievements of various achievements that have been achieved by students of Ibn Aqil Medan Boarding School. This is a form of result achieved from a long process carried out, showing that a person's ability can change or develop (Apriyanti, 2017). This upload is also an expression of appreciation from the Islamic boarding school to outstanding students who have made the Islamic boarding school proud and raised the good name of the Islamic boarding school. Most of these achievements are in the fields of religion and education, but also academic and non-academic achievements. Examples of

appreciation and achievements are memorizing the Qur'an, class champion, science olympiad champion, speech, tahfidzulqur'an, futsal and many other achievements. The students and prospective students can get motivation and support to excel by posting achievements on the Instagram social media account @ponpesibnuaqil and increase the reputation of the Islamic boarding school in the public eye for producing outstanding students. An example of content or posts in the form of appreciation to students who get achievements as in Figure 3.

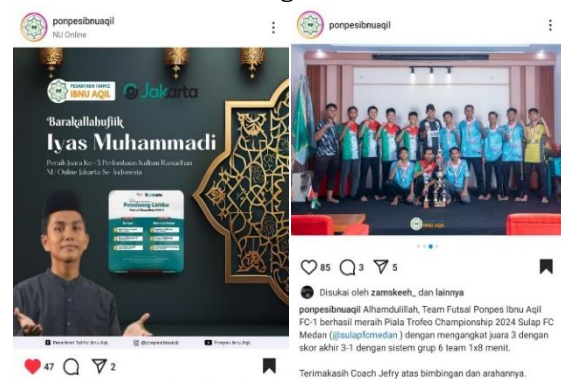


Figure 3. Posts of Appreciation to Students for Their Achievements

3. Announcements

The content of this upload conveys various announcements related to the boarding school. Announcement means to inform, therefore it is general and contains concise text and must be easy to understand (Fajaria & Nuryanto, 2015). Usually this announcement is in the form of long and short-term announcements such as Upgrading, Tasmi' Qur'an Implementation, New Student Admission (PSB), Recruitment of Educators, Graduation to College & others.

Announcements also include supporting information, especially in Story, the Story feature is used in informing the audience briefly and the purpose of this feature is to be a variety of content contained in the @ponpesibnuaqil Instagram account. This can ensure that important information is conveyed properly and in a timely manner and facilitate the fulfillment of information for people related

to the Islamic boarding school. The following below is one example of the many announcement type content on the @ponpesibnuaqil account :



Figure 4. Posts of Announcements PSB Information and Graduation to College

4. Creative Content Videos

Content is information provided through media or electronic devices. Creative content is a form of video information presentation in which entertainment, news or other information is presented in an original way through new media. It is usually uploaded using Reels. Usually, creating this content involves students and educators as the subject of the content to make it more interesting. The result of this content is to show the creative side of the Islamic boarding school and increase the engagement of the Islamic boarding school's Instagram account.

From the content that has been uploaded on the @ponpesibnuaqil Instagram account as a communicative information media for its audience which is the public in general and especially for parents/guardians, staff, teachers, alumni, students and others who are still related to the Islamic boarding school, of course it can support the activities of the boarding school because from these contents it gets good output for the Islamic boarding school, this also means that social media supports or helps in achieving certain goals from utilizing this Instagram social media, namely:

1) To promote the boarding school, since the establishment of Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan, the Instagram social media account @ponpesibnuaqil has been used as the main information media.

In addition to supporting various Islamic boarding school activities, this social media account is very effective in promoting Islamic boarding school to people outside the environment or the boarding school's immediate area, meaning that social media can be easily accessed and has a very wide reach in promoting (Romdonny & Rosmadi, 2018). Promotion can be used to introduce a place to a wide audience besides being able to be used for buying and selling activities (Syarifah et al., 2023). Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan prioritizes social media to promote its educational institutions compared to using print media and advertising through social media, which means that boarding school also spend more money to appear on social media. So, which was initially used as an information medium, the Instagram social media then also played a role in promotion and advertising, which contributed to an increase in the number of enrolled students and reduced promotional costs.

2) Building personal branding, through content that is shared based on the type as described above, if uploaded consistently, will certainly form the perception of people who see that Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan is an educational institution that prioritizes the Qur'an as the main guideline in education which is certainly in line with the vision and mission of the Islamic boarding school. Through these uploads, this boarding school is considered by others to have certain qualities, potentials, and values in the view of others (Mujiyanto et al., 2021).

3) Collaborate, one of the key benefits of social media is its ability to facilitate collaboration with personalities and institutions. Collaborating with reputable parties can increase the reputation of @ponpesibnuaqil and make it even better known. Famous figures such as KH. Dr. Amir Faishol Fath, MA on the @abiamirofficial account who is known as a judge on the Hafiz Indonesia program (RCTI).

The use of Instagram by @ponpesibnuaqil is also not only limited to one-way information dissemination. Through interactive features such as comments, likes, and direct messages, the boarding school can interact directly with its followers, receive feedback, and answer questions. This not only helps in building a good relationship with the community but also builds higher trust in the educational institution.

The @ponpesibnuaqil Instagram account consistently shares content that is beneficial to its audience as long as Instagram social media is used as a means of sharing information. So by utilizing Instagram social media as an information medium, users now have the convenience of fulfilling their information needs related to Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan. The Islamic boarding school utilizes this platform to convey various information that has been explained earlier to the public and its followers, including student families, parents/guardians, and prospective student who plan to continue their education at the boarding school.

Overall, the utilization of Instagram as an information media by Islamic boarding school provides various benefits, ranging from improving communication to expanding the reach of information. When used with the right and sustainable strategy, Instagram can help support Islamic boarding school activities in achieving informative goals which then provide output in the form of building a positive image, attracting prospective students, branding the institution and furthermore becoming an effective promotional tool for boarding school.

CONCLUSION

The utilization of Instagram social media by Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan has proven to be effective in supporting various boarding school activities. Instagram @ponpesibnuaqil is used as the main media to disseminate information about activities, achievements,

announcements, and creative content related to the boarding school. By using Instagram features such as Feed, Story, Highlights, and Reels, the boarding school is able to present interesting and informative content to the public.

The uploaded content varies, ranging from documentation of student daily activities, academic achievements, to important announcements. The content creation process involves the admin, media team, students, and educators, who ensure the quality of the information presented.

The use of Instagram is not only limited to one-way information dissemination, but also allows direct interaction with followers through comments, likes, and direct messages. This helps in building a good relationship with the community, as well as increasing trust in the boarding school.

By utilizing Instagram, Ibnu Aqil Islamic Boarding School Medan is able to promote this educational institution to the wider community, build strong personal branding, and collaborate with reputable figures and institutions. Overall, the utilization of Instagram provides various benefits, ranging from improving communication to expanding the reach of information, which ultimately helps boarding school in achieving informative goals.

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